

Completed Questionnaire on the Review of ADB's Disclosure and Information Policies

Policy on Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

ADB's policy is to provide the greatest possible degree of transparency and disclosure in all areas of operations, subject to practical and legal constraints.

1. Public Perception of ADB in Implementing the Policy

A. What is your view of ADB regarding access to information? Why? Please provide examples.

I think it is a move in the right direction. Transparency will mean more information being available. With the public being more informed, expectations can be made more realistic, and the general public can participate better in the undertakings of ADB. For example, when the public knows more about what ADB is doing (and will be doing), they can support the process of fine tuning the series of activities ADB wishes to pursue. Sort of the more heads are better than just one or a few.

B. What is your view of ADB regarding transparency? Why? Please provide examples

Transparency indeed has to be balanced with protecting the right of the institution and its partners from unfair competition and unwanted interferences including possible legal implications. ADB's business partners being an independent entity may adhere to a different transparency policy. To require them to follow ADB's lead (but their competitors who are not within the influence of ADB might not) might not be beneficial to the partners/clients such that ADB might eventually find itself having to pay for the 'transparency cost' in an imperfect market environment. For example, if ADB requires clients/partners to adhere to its transparency policy, they might shy away from ADB and therefore instead of influencing them they will be less influenced.

C. What can ADB do to strengthen public participation and communication with people living in project areas?

- One is the posting of notices in billboards, newspapers, local cable TV.
- Encouraging dialogues prior to the project to get people's concerns about the project
- Survey/research can be conducted prior to the sending of information and after the notices and dialogues.

2. Disclosure of Documents to the Public during the Operational Cycle

A. At what stage in the project cycle (identification, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation) would it be most appropriate for ADB to share information? At what stage would the information be most useful to your organization or affected communities in project areas?

I suppose all stages of the project but better if at the stage prior (i.e., project identification stage) and post-project evaluation. Prior to the project so that concerns and issues can be raised to guide and improve the project design. And post-project evaluation so that we can learn whether the concern/issues raised were indeed valid and addressed, and so that we can see what to learn from the experience.

The views expressed in this paper are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), or its Board of Directors or the governments they represent. ADB makes no representation concerning and does not guarantee the source, originality, accuracy, completeness or reliability of any statement, information, data, finding, interpretation, advice, opinion, or view presented.

- What kind of information?
General breakdown of funding and their intended use, activity milestones, geographic coverage, brief about what it is suppose to do to improve lives (advantages), trade-offs (disadvantages), project proponents, key contact persons and their mailing addresses, and the like
 - What do you need the information for?
To see whether what is being spend is really worth it. It allows also use to check whether proponents are aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the project (there are always trade-off in the end but are we facing the issue?).
- B. Please give examples (if any) where failure to disclose information has decreased program or project effectiveness, or cost time and resources? Why?
- Chico river basin dam is the best example for the Philippines
 - Nuclear power plant in Bataan
- C. Have you requested a document/information about a project while it is being designed or implemented? If so, what kind of document/information? No
- Why did you want the document?
 - From which ADB office did you request the document? Not applicable
 - Did you receive it? If not, why not? How long did you wait? Not applicable
- D. ADB's Country Strategy and Program (CSP) process requires consultation with external stakeholders, including civil society. What information do you need about the CSP and its process to contribute to your country's strategy and program? When do you need it?
Our organization is a repository of ADB information materials so I believe we are better off than other organizations. However, we would always look for information about ADB's priorities and how we can be involved in them so that we can ADB participate projects and funding, and contribute our own 'expertise'.
- E. English is the working language of ADB. However, in your opinion, when would it be most useful for ADB to translate documents into other languages in your country?
I think the cost does not justify translation. English is already a generally accepted medium in my country. For people living near project areas, I would agree some translation into local dialects of some basic information like the one I have identified above.
- What should be the criteria for translation? (i.e., what kind of documents, at what stage, etc.)
General breakdown of funding and their intended use, activity milestones, geographic coverage, brief about what it is suppose to do to improve lives (advantages), trade-offs (disadvantages), project proponents, key contact persons and their mailing addresses, and the like

Information Policy and Strategy

ADB's information policy supports its strategic agenda and objectives, and the information strategy is based on the messages ADB intends to convey, the target audiences, and the modes of delivery it deems relevant to use.

- A. How well is ADB known in your country? Quite known and respected

- B. Do you think ADB should be doing more to raise its profile in your country? If so, why? And how?
- Yes. I think it makes good business sense to ADB to be of influence to good governance especially that it represents governments.
 - I can use its lending portfolio to be of influence to proper and good governance. ADB should also ensure civil society's participation in projects as a check to government clients. The same goes to civil clients being checked by government.
- C. What are the most important channels in your country for ADB to communicate information about its mission, objectives and operations? Print media? Radio/TV? Internet? Community presentations? Others (please specify):
- TV is the most powerful and I believe even the poor have access to it already (not necessarily own one).
 - Billboards
 - Print (especially newspaper)

Other Recommendations

What should be done to strengthen the *Policy on Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information* and the *Information Policy and Strategy* or make them more relevant?

- Placing the information in the internet.
- Do include "disclosure cost" and information dissemination in the project budget.
- Establish or join networks in this area (those organization who supports disclosure should be ready to disclose their own organizational information as well).

Thank you for taking the time to give us feedback. The following information is optional, but would allow ADB to keep you informed of the status of the policy review:

Vicente C. Evan
Marketing Officer
International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR)
IIRR, Km. 39 Biga, Silang, Cavite 4118
Philippines
vic.evan@iirr.org