

# PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM



27 October 2003

Disclosure Review  
Office of External Relations  
Asian Development Bank  
PO BOX 789  
0980 Manila, Philippines

Dear Sirs/Madams:

We take the opportunity to make some comments on the Disclosure Policy of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As a group of journalists interested in access to information, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) would like to express its concerns about the ADB's information disclosure rules. The PCIJ has had experience in trying to obtain information from the ADB, and would like to put on record the following for your consideration:

1. Information on ADB-funded projects should be made available *throughout* the project cycle. Information disclosure should begin at the stage when the ADB identifies a project for development. The Bank should then release regular updates during the project-preparation phase. Before Board approval, the Bank should release the final draft Report and Recommendation of the President (RRP), which provides the most detailed description of the project. During project implementation, monitoring reports must be made public. The ADB should continue its policy to release project completion reports and evaluation material after project completion. As much as possible, project-related information must be made available online.
2. Consistent with existing Freedom of Information laws in many parts of the world, there should be a mechanism within the Bank for appealing denials of information. The fundamental principle in the ADB's Disclosure Policy is a "presumption in favor of disclosure of information." The Bank, however, currently has no provision to ensure that such a presumption is made. An information panel or committee should be set up to ensure prompt response to information requests and to provide a forum to contest denials for information that information seekers feel violate the presumption in favor of disclosure.

We sincerely hope that the ADB Disclosure Review will take these considerations into account. We hope for the best in the interest of transparency and accountability.

Sincerely,



**SHEILA S. CORONEL**  
Executive Director