

Responding to CSO Requests for Information

Civil society activists representing advocacy NGOs or labor unions frequently request information about ADB-financed projects that they monitor. Under the PCP, ADB commits to disclosing information in response to individual requests. In the case of people affected by particular projects, the PCP states that ADB will share information with them early enough to provide meaningful inputs into project design and implementation.

To accomplish this goal, the PCP provides that ADB work with borrowers or project sponsors to develop a comprehensive communications plan for communicating with affected people throughout the life of a project. All departments and offices are responsible for implementing the PCP. Staff members from operational departments play a key role in communicating with project-specific stakeholders, and in ensuring that disclosure requirements are met. Team leaders should identify the necessary resources or budget that supports communication with affected peoples and CSOs (e.g., activities such as producing information materials in local language, organizing workshops or events).

Team leaders are responsible for ensuring that people from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors with whom they interact are aware of the PCP and the public's right to access information from ADB. ADB does not selectively disclose information; all people have equal access to information that ADB makes available under the PCP.

Notwithstanding staff obligations to respond to information requests and to monitor project communication activities to ensure compliance with the PCP, much of the responsibility for disclosing information about ADB-financed projects rests with the borrowing government or private sector sponsor.

The borrower will work with staff from operations departments to provide focal points in project areas relevant to the dialogue with people affected by the project. In some instances, these project focal points can use ADB's website to access project- and country-related information and to disclose such information to interested parties, using locally and culturally appropriate delivery mechanisms.

The PCP calls for presumed disclosure of information. However, full disclosure is not always possible for legal and practical reasons. For example, ADB must explore ideas, share information, hold frank discussions internally and with its members, and consider the special requirements of its private sector operations. Specific exceptions to disclosure are delineated in paragraph 126 of the PCP. Any request for information or a document denied by ADB must be based on one of these exceptions.

The PCP requires that ADB acknowledge receipt of a request within 5 working days, and that it notify the requester as soon as a decision has been made. In any event, notification must occur no later than 30 calendar days after the request is received.

Staff members with questions relating to whether or not to disclose particular documents or information should contact the Department of External Relations (DER) for guidance.