
V. ADVICE FOR ADB STAFF

The information and experience currently available about making country strategies more participatory and better owned within DMCs provide set of principles, processes, steps, methods, and caveats that CSP teams can apply. Following is a series of steps that summarize the information on designing and implementing a participatory CSP process given in the previous chapters.⁴⁷

- In consultation with the Resident Mission, create a DMC participation scenario. How can participation be optimized, given the constraints in the ADB and DMC?
- Discuss the scenarios with manager, country desk, CSP team, government, other donors, and other stakeholders.
- Prepare an information plan and package about ADB and its way of designing country strategies and carrying out business in general.
- Include a discussion on the DMC environment for participation, participation strategy, stakeholder identification, enlistment, and proposed participatory mechanisms.
- Obtain preliminary approval from ADB management for necessary resources.
- Clarify disclosure policy and any limitations on information.
- Explain CSP process, participatory strategy, and rules of the game.
- Seek revisions and endorsement.
- Create joint participation plan and local counterpart institutions.
- Test participation plan against the intentions of the Initiating Paper.
- Allocate necessary resources.
- Implement participation strategy and plan, with revision as necessary.
- Identify points of stakeholder influence as they arise.
- Prepare CSP synopsis for stakeholder briefing.
- Evaluate stakeholder participation for any necessary adjustment.

- Compare CSP participation against minimum standards.
- Explain any variance between ADB and stakeholder-preferred strategies.
- Highlight DMC stakeholders' impact on CSP.
- Evaluate the participation process, summarizing lessons learned.
- Show indicators of DMC commitment and ownership.
- Detail follow-up action for stakeholder involvement in CSP implementation.

Two key factors make a CSP participation process effective: establishing appropriate preconditions and ensuring adequate follow through. In addition, there are a number of useful 'dos and don'ts' that can act as a shorthand guide to best practice. These are presented below.

Get the Preconditions Right

Initiation. The quality of a participatory CSP process is strongly determined by how it is initiated. While it is never too late to start participation, doing it properly from the start obviates any additional cost of making good the initial weaknesses. For example, superficial local knowledge and analysis may lead to the neglect of important and influential stakeholders. Such omissions can sour relationships. Remedying poor relations is time consuming and can negatively color the whole exercise. Participation is well initiated when

- the ADB's country desk officers and management fully support, rather than simply acquiesce to, enhanced participation in a CSP;
- the CSP team is convinced of the merits of participation and has the insights and competencies to oversee the process (this does not mean being a participation specialist, but knowing enough to ensure that it is done well; assistance in this task can be gained from other parts of ADB, like the Social Development Division and through recruiting staff consultants);

-
-
- identification of stakeholders and ways to enlist them are done early on, if for no other reason than the need to establish front-end resource needs;
 - the necessary budget, time, and other resources are available for the whole exercise, not allocated bit by bit, which creates uncertainty and doubt about ADB commitment;
 - a comprehensive (public) information strategy covering the whole participation process has been formulated;
 - outsiders' pre- or misconceptions about ADB have been eradicated; early, easily accessible information to stakeholders about ADB is vital if the playing field is to be made level;
 - limits to participation and disclosure are understood by key stakeholders, even if not fully accepted; and
 - the ground-rules of participation and criteria for using stakeholder inputs are clear to everyone within and outside ADB.

Building-in Transparency through an Information Strategy. The quality and transparency of consultation are vital for preventing charges of misuse of stakeholder inputs and the mobilization of active lobbies against a CSP. This is why clarity about rules of the game can act as a preventive measure in terms of stakeholders' not overestimating what they can achieve. But, once embarked on the participation path, you can expect stakeholders to continue to press for greater depth. Negotiating rules of the game can help stem the tide, but not turn it away. Thus, be prepared for stakeholders to treat participation as their (taxpayers') right, not a discretionary privilege.

An important factor in dealing with stakeholder pressure is to make information available in an appropriate form and a timely manner, especially where stakeholders' representatives must consult with their constituencies. Inadequate and late information shows disrespect for stakeholders' own participatory processes, inviting accusations of hidden agendas and lack of transparency. It is

obviously essential to avoid creating this type of suspicion. Preplanned and careful investment in information sharing, including with the local media, is one way of doing so. Sound information strategies are a vital ingredient in successful participation in a CSP.

Planning to Create Local Institutions. A useful element in any CSP design is to establish, right from the start, a local multistakeholder 'counterpart'. In other words, facilitate/co-create a recognized participatory structure to act as a CSP sounding board, to function as a resource for later programming, and to generate social learning as a matter of course, both for and after the CSP process. Success in this approach means that a concerned constituency has become part of the institutional landscape that co-owns and, depending on the extent to which its input has influenced the CSP, is committed to the follow through.

Following Through

At present, there is little systematic engagement of nonstate actors in the final decision-making process of an MDB's strategy. Nevertheless, it behooves CSP teams to ensure that they provide periodic feedback on their thinking and prioritization. Progressively explain why a CSP takes a particular direction, even if at variance with what a DMC wants. This approach is far better than presenting stakeholders with only a finished document. Adopting such an iterative approach not only enhances trust, it supports local ownership and commitment, speeding up participation downstream and paving the way for the next CSP.

Dos and Don'ts

The Dos

- Start participation as early as feasible, but remember it is never too late.

-
-
- Mobilize the financial resources and time allocations required for the whole process. Credibility drops if you cannot complete what you start, leaving stakeholders frustrated.
 - Do your best to create a level information playing field right from the beginning.
 - Try to get nonstate stakeholders, such as NGOs and the private sector, to identify their own participants and ensure that they have mandates. Be prepared for the fact that nonstate stakeholders will always criticize your initial selection. Thus, put the ball in their court where it belongs by asking them who should participate and why, with attention to representativeness.
 - Anticipate the likelihood of differences and conflict between stakeholders. Use 'neutral' facilitators wherever possible to make conflict constructive.
 - Ensure that there is an agreed sequence of feedback. Within the limits of disclosure policies, sharing the principal content and ideas in successive drafts or, for example, in a synopsis of the CSP, can be very effective.

The Don'ts

- Do not promise a depth of participation you cannot deliver. Establish the limits. Recriminations and mistrust may result otherwise.
- Do not treat every type of interaction with participants as a 'consultation'. You are not the only judge of when stakeholders consider that they have really 'participated'.
- Do not forget to negotiate the rules of the game of stakeholder involvement. How will their inputs be used and

when? What sanctions are there when people and organizations do not do as agreed?

- Do not neglect sister organizations that may have information and experience to share from a similar institutional perspective.