



ADB and Civil Society

INFOCUS

ADB works with a broad range of civil society organizations to strengthen our efforts to reduce poverty

Challenge: How can ADB partner more effectively with civil society organizations (CSOs) to reduce poverty in Asia and the Pacific?

Strategy: ADB cooperates with CSOs to increase the effectiveness, quality, and sustainability of our operations.

Response: Our policies, strategies, and practices have been adapted to embrace and facilitate more active collaboration with CSOs. Most recently, our Strategy 2020 identifies partnerships with CSOs and other organizations as one of ADB’s five drivers of change.

“From community-based organizations to national NGOs, and international nonprofit development agencies, ADB cooperates with diverse CSOs that share our commitment to improving livelihoods in the Asia–Pacific region.”

—ADB NGO and Civil Society Center

ADB’s Strategy 2020 meeting the needs of Asia and the Pacific

Strategic Direction

- Inclusive Economic Growth
- Environmentally Sustainable Growth
- Regional Integration

Drivers of Change

- Private Sector
- Good Governance
- Gender Equity
- Knowledge Solutions
- Partnerships

Read more at www.adb.org/Strategy2020/

Working from the grassroots upward, CSOs fill a vital space in the development process, giving voice to marginalized communities, providing expertise and knowledge, testing innovative approaches to poverty reduction, and ensuring beneficiary participation in projects.

Stimulated by democratization and the spread of information and communication technologies, civil society has blossomed in the Asia and Pacific region. CSOs manage billions of dollars in development assistance, raising their profile and public expectations for transparency and accountability.

Increasing ADB’s efforts with CSOs

ADB collaborates with CSOs in sectors such as water and sanitation, agriculture, irrigation, and transport. In addition to providing project-level collaboration, CSOs have contributed to policy dialogue and stakeholder consultations on ADB’s country strategies, and thematic and sector policies and strategies.

Under ADB’s long-term strategic framework 2008–2020 (Strategy 2020), ADB’s partnerships with nongovernment organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, labor unions, and foundations will become even more central to the planning,

financing, and implementing of ADB operations. They will also help ADB deliver aid more effectively and improve development results.

Making CSOs a part of the development process

About three quarters of ADB loans include some kind of CSO involvement—from consultations about design to surveying communities to project implementation to monitoring. Below are just a few examples.

Working with CSOs in the health sector. ADB’s Health Sector Support Project in Cambodia provides basic health services to poor and disadvantaged persons in 21 provinces. It engages international NGOs such as Health Net International and Save the Children Australia to deliver medical services.

The project improves access to quality health services, upgrades commune health centers and district referral hospitals, and enhances the skills of health care service providers.

It also builds the planning, financing, and health management services capacity of the Ministry of Health, while NGOs implement capacity building activities by conducting training programs.

ADB receives top marks from One World Trust

In its yearly *Global Accountability Report*, One World Trust—an independent NGO—rated ADB as one of the top three organizations with respect to overall accountability capabilities. Thirty global organizations were rated on their accountability to civil society, affected communities, and the wider public. ADB was also a top scorer for transparency and evaluation capabilities, ability to engage external stakeholders, and complaint response mechanisms.

INFOCUS

Working with CSOs in water and sanitation.

Our Community-Based Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Nepal aims to provide rural water supply and sanitation services to improve community health and provide job opportunities in 21 districts.

More than 50 NGOs are engaged as service providers for subproject development and implementation, including social mobilization and formation of water users and sanitation committees.

NGOs have also conducted subproject feasibility studies on socioeconomic issues, engineering aspects, the environment, and sanitation. ADB has organized training programs to enhance the capacity of implementing NGOs on the delivery of water and sanitation projects.

Working with CSOs to fight HIV/AIDS. ADB has provided small grants for CSOs working to combat corruption and to prevent the spread of the HIV/AIDS virus in the region. Through the project Fighting HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, ADB has built the capacity of civil society groups in more than 10 countries to support local responses to HIV/AIDS.

Through the ADB-assisted NGO Initiatives to Prevent HIV/AIDS project, the Constellation for AIDS Competence introduced an “AIDS Competence Process” in Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, and Thailand. The process has been successful in building up community resistance to HIV/AIDS.

Workshops, support visits, coaching, and other learning events were organized in each country. National reviews by facilitators and coaches discussed progress and impacts, and developed action strategies.

Developing country partnership strategies with CSO help

ADB’s country partnership strategy (CPS) is the primary planning instrument guiding our operations in a member country. The CPS is prepared through consultation with government and other country stakeholders, including the private sector, other development agencies, and civil society.

ADB’s *CPS Guidelines* (February 2007) underscores the importance of stakeholder consultation at an early stage of the CPS process. This lets ADB identify priority areas for providing support in the most responsive, relevant, and results-oriented manner to align with the country’s development strategy.

ADB also works closely with CSOs through the Civil Society Program at ADB Annual Meetings, ongoing dialogue with labor organizations, and outreach on ADB’s Accountability Mechanism.

ADB’s NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC)

The NGOC (www.adb.org/NGOs/ngocenter.asp) facilitates ADB collaboration with CSOs. Launched in 2001, the NGOC

- expedites integration of CSO knowledge and experience into ADB operations;
- stays current on CSO issues of concern and areas of work in Asia and the Pacific;
- engages CSOs in continuing dialogue and manages ADB’s overall communications with civil society;
- identifies and develops strategic alliances between ADB and CSOs;
- improves ADB’s institutional capacity to collaborate productively with CSOs; and
- provides resources and guidance to ADB staff on consultation and participation issues.

Experience shows us cooperation with CSOs can improve the effectiveness, quality, and sustainability of ADB-assisted activities. We will continue to build our relationships with CSOs in the years ahead.

ADB Focal Point:
NGO and Civil Society Center

www.adb.org/NGOs/

For inquiries, contact
ADB Media Center
mediacenter@adb.org
Tel +63 2 632 5090