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Implementation Review of the Policy on Gender and Development

Asian Development Bank

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
ADF	–	Asian Development Fund
BPFA		Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	–	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGA	–	country gender assessment
CSP	–	country strategy and program
CSPU	–	country strategy and program update
DMC	–	developing member country
EFG	–	External Forum on Gender and Development
GAD	–	gender and development
GAP	–	gender action plan or program
GMS	–	Greater Mekong subregion
HIV/AIDS	–	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome
IADB	–	Inter-American Development Bank
Lao PDR	–	Lao People's Democratic Republic
MDG	–	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	–	nongovernment organization
OCR	–	ordinary capital resources
PCR	–	project completion report
PPR	–	project performance report
PRC	–	People's Republic of China
RCSP	–	regional cooperation strategy and program
RETA	–	regional technical assistance
RGA	–	rapid gender assessment
RRP	–	report and recommendation of the President
RSDD	–	Regional and Sustainable Development Department
RSGS		Gender, Social Development and Civil Society Division
RSPR	–	Poverty Reduction and Social Development Division
SMEs	–	small and medium enterprises
TA	–	technical assistance
UNAIDS	–	United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	–	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	–	United Nations Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific
UNRISD	–	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
WHO	–	World Health Organization

NOTE

In this report, "\$" refers to US dollars.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In 1998, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) adopted its policy on gender and development (GAD) to replace the 1986 policy on the role of women in development. The GAD policy marked a shift from targeted interventions in selected sectors, mainly the social sectors, to a gender mainstreaming approach recognizing gender as a cross-cutting issue influencing all development activities.

The policy requires a full review of implementation experience after 5 years. The review, which commenced in 2004, includes desk studies, rapid gender assessments of selected loans under implementation, consultations with and technical inputs from ADB's External Forum on GAD, and selective consultations with developing member country (DMC) officials and ADB staff.

This report (i) reviews general trends and prospects related to gender equality in Asia and the Pacific; (ii) discusses key elements of the GAD policy and relevant changes in ADB's strategic framework and structure; (iii) reviews ADB's implementation experience in key areas of the GAD policy, and the contribution of various institutional mechanisms to results; (iv) provides an overall assessment of ADB's performance in gender mainstreaming, and draws lessons from the experiences of other development institutions; and (v) outlines steps for improving the scope and quality of ADB's gender-related work and mechanisms for monitoring progress.

Gender Trends and Issues in Asia and the Pacific

Since the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, a number of advances for gender equality and women's empowerment have been made across Asia and the Pacific. Girls' school enrollment, female literacy, women's life expectancy, and economic participation have generally improved. However, these regional trends mask wide differences between and within countries, and gender gaps persist in access to education, quality health care, employment and business opportunities, political participation and decision-making, personal security, and justice.

Virtually all countries in the region have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and amended or enacted laws to promote gender equality and protect women's personal security and rights. Virtually all countries have designated a national focal agency for gender, and most countries have developed national action plans to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

Despite substantial progress in narrowing gender gaps in educational enrollment, the region's overall performance in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment has been mixed. The latest regional progress report found that while more than three quarters of countries are on track in narrowing gender gaps in educational enrollment (goal 3, target 4), more than two thirds are clearly off track in reducing maternal mortality (goal 5, target 6). When all the goal 3 indicators—gender equality and the empowerment of women—are considered, including nonagricultural wage employment and representation in national parliaments, the picture is even more mixed.

Virtually no country in Asia and the Pacific is making equal progress on all the goal 3 indicators. While several countries in Southeast Asia and the Central Asian republics have

achieved gender parity in education, this has not translated to equal participation in economic and political affairs. In the Central Asian republics, women's wage employment and representation in national parliaments have declined dramatically.

Regional experience also shows that economic growth in itself does not necessarily reduce gender disparities. Perhaps the most dramatic examples of gender inequity in the midst of rapid economic growth are the deteriorating sex ratios in the People's Republic of China and India. In both countries, improvements in basic health care have improved the life expectancy of women and men, but a strong traditional preference for sons combined with access to new medical technology has led to a distortion in sex ratios. Consequently, these two large and dynamic economies account for 80% of the world's "missing women," or about 80 million women.

Research and experience over the last 10 years confirm the importance of gender equality, not only as a fundamental human right, but also as essential to poverty reduction and improved living standards, sustainable economic growth, and effective and accountable governance. To pursue gender equality in the region requires coherent, gender-responsive policymaking at all levels, and strong partnerships involving governments, development institutions such as ADB, and civil society groups.

The GAD Policy and Institutional Context

Under the GAD policy, ADB adopted a gender mainstreaming approach with an emphasis on several areas: (i) undertaking upstream work, including economic and sector studies, country strategies and programs (CSPs), and policy dialogue; (ii) increasing the number of loans directly addressing gender disparities, (iii) mainstreaming gender concerns more generally in ADB's loan portfolio; and (iv) building gender capacity of the DMCs for more gender-responsive policymaking, and implementing commitments under the Beijing Platform. The policy includes a commitment to improve the gender balance of all ADB professional staff.

Subsequent changes in ADB's strategic framework, policies, and strategies had a bearing on the GAD policy and its implementation. For example, the 1999 adoption of the poverty reduction strategy, which recognized improving women's status as critical to poverty reduction efforts, and ADB's endorsement of the MDGs, reinforced and provided positive impetus to GAD policy implementation. At the same time, exclusion of gender equality as an overt strategic priority in ADB's 2001 long-term strategic framework to some extent undermined GAD policy implementation. The 2004 review of the poverty reduction strategy acknowledged this lapse and reinstated gender equality both as a thematic priority and a cross-cutting concern. But this priority is still not reflected in the development of new business processes. The accumulation of new development priorities has also led to concerns about "goal congestion" and a tendency to deemphasize long-standing priorities such as gender equality in favor of newer ones.

Implementation Experience

Country Strategies, Programs, and Policy Dialogue. During the review period, ADB prepared 21 country gender assessments, which formed the basis for country gender strategies included as appendixes in virtually all CSPs. The country gender assessments have significantly enhanced ADB's diagnostic work related to country-specific gender issues and priorities. Nevertheless, the country gender strategies are only partially reflected in the core sections of CSPs and in the assistance pipeline. Gender considerations are typically discussed in the

inclusive social development section and only rarely mentioned in the CSPs' economic growth and governance sections. As a result, the particular needs, priorities, and constraints of women and girls, and DMCs' own national gender policies and priorities, are not thoroughly considered and reflected in these key upstream documents.

In terms of policy dialogue, ADB has raised substantial gender issues with only a few DMCs, mainly in the context of technical assistance (TA) projects and policy-based loans. Ongoing policy dialogue on gender concerns—at the sector level—appears to be more sustained in DMCs where a national gender consultant is working in ADB's resident mission. ADB could do much more in this area.

Loan Operations. ADB has continued to increase the number of loans that directly address gender disparities, and to integrate gender considerations more widely in its lending operations. During the review period, the number of loans classified with a GAD theme at loan approval increased from 5 (8%) in 1998 to 13 (18%) in 2004. The number of additional loans that effectively mainstream gender considerations—although they were not classified with a GAD theme—also increased from 4 (7%) in 1998 to 15 (20%) in 2004. Combined, these two categories represent an increase in gender-responsive loans from 15% in 1998 to 38% in 2004.

During the review period, 80% of loans with a GAD theme or gender mainstreaming features were funded from Asian Development Fund resources, with only 20% funded from ordinary capital resources. More than 70% of the loans in these categories were made to countries in the Greater Mekong subregion and South Asia. A sector analysis indicates that gender considerations are gradually being mainstreamed into less traditional sectors such as law and economic management, finance, industry and trade, and transport and communications. During 2002–2004, loans approved with GAD themes or gender mainstreaming were primarily in agriculture and natural resources (27%); followed by multisector (17%); education (16%); health (10%); law, economic management, and public policy (8%); finance (7%); water supply and sanitation (6%); industry and trade (6%); and transport and communications (3%). However, inconsistent approaches to gender mainstreaming are evident even within the same sector.

A number of good gender practices emerged in the design of ADB loans. These include (i) development of a detailed gender action plan (GAP) as part of the loan project design, (ii) inclusion of gender-related policy changes and legal reforms in loan projects and programs, and (iii) various techniques to incorporate a gender perspective in physical infrastructure projects. Nevertheless, weaknesses in loan design (including the design and monitoring frameworks), limited gender capacity of executing agencies, and inadequate supervision and monitoring during implementation reduce gender-related benefits and their overall success and sustainability.

Aside from assessing the gender quality of ADB loans at entry, the review also assessed the impact of gender-responsive loan designs during implementation. Rapid gender assessments (RGAs) were undertaken for selected loans being implemented in four DMCs. While the projects and programs were at various stages of implementation, the RGAs were able to identify some intermediate results. The most impressive were found in projects that included a detailed project GAP linked to the project's main components with clear targets and indicators for monitoring. These projects were mainly agriculture and rural development projects in which ADB's resident mission gender consultants had worked closely with the executing agency to develop, refine, and implement a detailed GAP. The RGAs were supplemented by desk reviews of a sample of project completion and project performance reports.

The review finds that inclusion of project GAPs, provision of technical gender support to executing agencies, and careful monitoring of gender and other software elements, such as women's participation, during implementation are critical to success and development impact.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Development. During the review period, ADB supported gender capacity development through TA projects and ongoing work of the resident mission gender team. ADB continued to provide selected technical support to some national gender focal agencies, while expanding gender TA to sector ministries and supporting a number of regional initiatives. Nevertheless, TA grants addressing gender issues continue to represent a small fraction of ADB's overall TA activities, only 2.4% of advisory TAs and 4.7% of regional TAs approved during 1998–2004.

Support for the Beijing Platform for Action. Most of ADB's support to the Beijing Platform for Action commitments of its DMCs was implicit in its loans and TA activities, particularly in the education, health, water supply and sanitation, microfinance, and agriculture sectors. ADB also took some steps to address emerging concerns highlighted in the Beijing Platform, such as the spread of HIV/AIDS and trafficking in women and children. ADB also supported some DMCs in developing or implementing their national plans of action on women and regional activities related to the 5-and 10-year reviews of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Institutional Support

GAD Plan of Action for Operations

The GAD policy provides for the development of an ADB-wide plan of action to operationalize the policy and enable periodic reviews of implementation. The original plan, developed in 1999 in close consultation with the operations departments, was revised to reflect ADB's reorganization in 2002. The GAD plan encourages the regional departments to integrate gender concerns more widely in their lending operations.

Organizational Structure and Staffing

Gender Specialists. The GAD policy recognizes the need to increase the complement of in-house gender specialists to facilitate policy implementation. Under the policy, two additional gender specialists were recruited at ADB headquarters bringing the total number to four, and six national gender specialists were engaged as long-term consultants under a regional TA to work in resident missions. These modest increases in gender expertise in-house contributed substantially to the expansion of ADB's gender-related activities during the review period. The gender consultants in ADB's resident missions have been instrumental in expanding ADB's portfolio of loans addressing gender issues and strengthening the gender capacity of executing agency staff. However, the review also finds that the policy underestimated the number of specialists required for policy implementation. Furthermore, changes in organizational structure and institutional commitment to thematic issues such as GAD have undermined policy implementation and pose a challenge to improved policy implementation in the future. A review and assessment of the organizational structure for improved policy implementation are required. The terms of reference and location of gender specialists in the regional departments should be reviewed to facilitate and ensure optimal utilization of their skills, provision of support across sectors, and support to CSP and other upstream activities.

Grant Funds. To test new gender-responsive approaches, the GAD policy recommends establishing a small-grant fund under a regional TA to fund gender-related initiatives of governments and nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and cofinance GAD activities with other development agencies. The resulting regional TA financed 56 initiatives over 3 years. These initiatives tested new approaches to gender mainstreaming and strengthened ADB's partnerships with other agencies and NGOs working on gender issues. The GAD Cooperation Fund, established in 2003 with support from the governments of Canada, Denmark and Norway, is providing valuable resources to continue and expand these activities.

External Forum on GAD. ADB established the External Forum on GAD in 2001 to facilitate dialogue with gender experts from government and civil society, keep informed on current issues and approaches to gender equality in Asia and the Pacific, and provide oversight on policy implementation. The forum met 7 times at ADB headquarters, and is playing an important role in raising the profile of gender issues within ADB, sharing knowledge and experience on regional gender concerns, and providing independent feedback and guidance on ADB's performance under the GAD policy.

Coordination and Partnership. ADB has expanded its collaboration with other development agencies, governments, and NGOs to promote gender equality at the institutional level and in DMCs where the resident missions have a gender consultant. Greater focus on joint activities and partnership, for example, through joint country gender assessments, coincided with the commitment of development agencies to harmonize and align with the DMCs' national development priorities. However, in DMCs without a resident mission gender consultant, ADB's engagement with local partners on gender issues has been much more limited, ad hoc, and often nonexistent.

Knowledge Products and Services. ADB has produced a variety of knowledge products on gender-related topics for both internal and external audiences, including practical tools for gender mainstreaming. However, no systematic tracking of demand for and use of these resources has been undertaken. General briefings and training on the GAD policy have been provided to ADB staff and DMC officials, but sector-specific training has been limited to a few sector divisions at headquarters and key executing agencies in DMCs. ADB must continue to produce relevant and accessible knowledge products on gender-related topics for staff, consultants, and DMC audiences; and to provide more sector-specific training to ADB staff, based on demand assessments and subject to staffing and other constraints.

Internal Gender Action Programs. The GAD policy includes institutional commitments to achieve a critical mass of female staff, improve the gender-balance across all skill areas, and increase the number of professional women in senior positions. To achieve this, a series of gender action programs for professional staff was implemented to address gender issues in recruitment and staffing activities. Steady progress has been achieved, although progress in achieving gender balance across all skill areas and increasing the number of women in senior positions remains a challenge. From 1998 to 2004 the number of women professional staff increased from 111 (or 16.7% of all professional staff) to 255 (29.8%). But the vast majority of these females continue to work in areas other than operations, with only 25.4% in nontraditional operations. Progress on increasing the number of women in senior positions has remained slow with an increase from 5 (representing 5.1% of senior staff) in 1998 to 12 (9.4%) in 2004. To renew and strengthen efforts in the human resource area, a review of the second gender action program commenced in 2005 with plans for development of a third program with greater focus on increasing women's representation in senior positions, and other initiatives to enable women's full participation in the organization.

Challenges of Gender Mainstreaming

The improvements in ADB's performance, especially in integrating gender-responsive approaches in loan designs, have been facilitated by institutional mechanisms such as the GAD plan of action and the placement of long-term national gender consultants in several resident missions. But weaknesses and gaps remain in policy implementation, particularly in integrating country gender diagnostics in CSPs, providing gender technical support to executing agencies, and monitoring gender-related aspects of loan projects and programs. Promoting gender as a cross-cutting consideration within ADB continues to be a challenge, since its operations are structured primarily along sector and regional lines.

Although responsibility for GAD policy implementation rests with the regional departments and the Regional and Sustainable Development Department, in practice much of the progress in implementing the policy has been due to the advocacy and effort of a few staff. This is not a sustainable basis for GAD policy implementation. Institutional responsibility for implementation remains weak. An updated GAD plan of action, developed in cooperation with the regional departments, would reestablish ADB-wide commitment and accountability for GAD policy implementation. A moderate increase in the number of gender specialists at headquarters, and a review of their terms of reference and their strategic placement in the regional departments would significantly enhance ADB's gender mainstreaming activities.

Future Directions

The review finds that the gender mainstreaming approach and priorities identified in the GAD policy continue to be relevant. The gender mainstreaming mechanisms introduced under the policy have contributed substantially to ADB's progress in addressing gender concerns in its CSPs, loans, TA, and capacity development activities. However, gaps and weaknesses in upstream and downstream implementation of the policy continue. Going forward, ADB will strengthen its gender mainstreaming approach to better ensure success in reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs in the region. This will involve consolidating the progress it has already made, and addressing weaknesses identified in this review. Given ADB's commitments to development effectiveness and managing for development results, future implementation of the GAD policy will also focus more strongly on identifying and monitoring gender-related results. An ADB-wide GAP will be prepared with concrete and monitorable departmental commitments to guide policy implementation.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) adopted its policy on gender and development (GAD) in 1998.¹ The policy built on ADB's earlier efforts to improve the status of women in the region, and the gender priorities identified by governments at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The policy signaled a shift in ADB's approach, from targeted interventions mainly in the social sectors, to the promotion of gender equity as a cross-cutting concern in all areas of ADB operations. An interim progress report on the GAD policy, covering 1998–2001, was prepared in 2002.² The report found that ADB was broadening its attention to gender concerns in country operations and developing some good practices, particularly in the design of loan projects and programs. However, the report also found that progress was uneven, and that more consistent effort was needed to fully integrate gender considerations in ADB's activities.

2. The GAD policy provides for a full review of implementation experience after 5 years. This review, which commenced in 2004, is timely in light of the 10-year review of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), as well as important institutional and policy changes within ADB. The review process, coordinated by the Poverty and Social Development Division,³ included (i) desk reviews of ADB reports, evaluation studies, and other relevant documents; (ii) gender assessments of selected loan projects and programs that are being implemented, and a gender review of loans in the water sector; (iii) review and technical input by ADB's External Forum on GAD; and (iv) selected consultations with developing member country (DMC) officials and ADB staff.

II. GENDER TRENDS AND ISSUES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

3. Since the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, a number of advances in gender equality and women's empowerment have been made across Asia and the Pacific. Girls' school enrollment, female literacy, women's life expectancy, and economic participation have generally improved (Appendix 1). However, these regional trends mask wide differences between and within countries; and gender gaps persist in access to education, quality health care, employment and business opportunities, political participation and decision-making, personal security, and justice. Gender equality and the empowerment of women remain a significant development challenge in the region.

4. Recognizing that gender equality is intrinsic to achieving national economic, poverty reduction, and social development goals, virtually all countries in the region have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and several have ratified the Optional Protocol to CEDAW (Appendix 2). Many countries have amended or enacted laws to promote gender equality and to protect women's personal security and rights. However, lack of awareness and weak or biased enforcement of these laws undermine their effectiveness. Virtually all countries have designated a national focal agency for gender, and most countries have developed national action plans to implement the BPFA. Unfortunately, in many countries the policy prescriptions and formal commitments are yet to be fully translated into implementable and meaningful actions.

¹ ADB. 1998. *Gender and Development*. Manila.

² ADB. 2002. *Interim Progress Report on the Policy on Gender and Development*. Manila.

³ Renamed the Gender, Social Development, and Civil Society Division following the restructuring of the Regional and Sustainable Development Department in July 2005.

5. International consensus is that poverty reduction and the other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be achieved without making meaningful progress toward gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (Table 1). The MDGs are not new commitments. They advance progress in several of the critical areas identified in the BPFA, and support key provisions of CEDAW.⁴

Table 1: Gender Equality and Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

Millennium Development Goal	Importance of Gender Equality for Specific Goals
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender equality in capabilities and access to opportunities can accelerate economic growth ▪ Equal access for women to basic transport and energy infrastructure can lead to greater economic opportunity ▪ Gender equality in interventions helps increase agricultural production since women farmers are a significant proportion of the rural poor ▪ Equal investment in women's health and nutrition contributes to reducing chronic hunger and malnourishment, increasing productivity and well-being
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educated girls and women have greater control over their fertility and participate more in public life ▪ Mothers' education is a strong and consistent determinant of their children's school enrollment and attainment, and health and nutrition
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Related indicators include parity in educational enrollments, wage employment, and representation in national parliaments
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mothers' education, income, and empowerment have significant impacts on lowering child and maternal mortality rates
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women's economic independence, ability to negotiate safe sex, awareness of need to alter traditional sexual norms, access to treatment, and support for the care function that women perform are essential to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender-equitable property and resource ownership policies enable women to manage their resources more sustainably
Goal 8: Develop global partnership for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender equality in the political sphere may lead to higher investments in development cooperation

Source: United Nations Millennium Project. 2005. *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*. New York.

6. The year 2005 marked the 10-year review of the BPFA and the 5-year review of the MDGs. Recent assessments of progress in implementing the BPFA and in achieving the MDGs have provided valuable information on regional and national achievements and challenges in the BPFA's 12 areas of concern and related MDGs⁵ (Box 1). For example, a recent regional progress report on the MDGs found that while more than three quarters of countries are on track in narrowing gender gaps in educational enrollments (the target for MDG 3—gender equality and women's empowerment), more than two thirds are clearly off track in reducing maternal

⁴ United Nations Millennium Project. 2005. *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*. Task Force on Education and Gender Equality; United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). 2004. *CEDAW, Beijing and the MDGs: Pathways to Gender Equality*. New York; World Bank. 2003. *Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals*. Washington, DC.

⁵ Asia Pacific NGO Forum. 2004. *Big Purple Book: Celebrating Women's Gains, Confronting Emerging Gender Issues* [draft]; United Nations Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). 2005. *Gender Equality and Empowerment: A Statistical Profile of the ESCAP Region*. Bangkok; UNESCAP. 2004. *Review of Regional Implementation of Beijing Platform for Action and its Outcome*. Bangkok; UNESCAP, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and ADB. 2005. *A Future Within Reach: Reshaping Institutions in a Region of Disparities to Meet the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok.

mortality (the target for MDG 5—maternal health).⁶ A related progress report on gender-related MDGs found that when all of the indicators are considered for MDG 3 including nonagricultural wage employment and representation in national parliaments, the picture is even more mixed.⁷

7. Virtually no country in Asia and the Pacific is making equal progress on all of the indicators for MDG 3. Several countries in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand; as well as Sri Lanka and some Pacific countries have achieved gender parity in education, but this has not translated into equal participation in economic and political affairs. In fact, the Pacific has the lowest level of women's political participation in the world. Many Central Asian countries such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Uzbekistan have struggled to maintain education services in the post-Soviet Union period, and experienced dramatic declines in women's wage employment and representation in national parliaments (footnote 7). In India, Kazakhstan and Pakistan official maternal mortality rates have actually increased since 1995.⁸

Box 1. Beijing Platform for Action: Critical Areas of Concern

- Women and Poverty
- Education and Training of Women
- Women and Health
- Violence against Women
- Women and Armed Conflict
- Women and the Economy
- Women in Power and Decision-Making
- Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women
- Human Rights of Women
- Women and the Media
- Women and the Environment
- The Girl Child

8. Regional experience also shows that economic growth in itself does not necessarily reduce gender inequalities. Perhaps the most dramatic examples of gender inequity even in the midst of rapid economic growth are the deteriorating sex ratios in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and India.⁹ For example, between 1991 and 2001, the national sex ratio for children ages 0–6 in India dropped from 945 to 927 girls for every 1,000 boys, with the lowest child sex ratio (793) in the economically prosperous state of Punjab.¹⁰ In both the PRC and India, improvements in basic health care have improved life expectancy for women and men, but a strong traditional preference for sons combined with access to new medical technology have led to the increasing distortion in sex ratios at birth. Consequently, these two large and dynamic economies account for 80% of the world's "missing women," or about 80 million women.¹¹ Such examples confirm that economic growth is not a sufficient condition for achieving gender equality. Entrenched gender stereotypes and biases can negate expected benefits from growth.

9. Recent assessments of progress related to the BPFA and MDGs also highlight the impact of macroeconomic and other trends on gender relations and national gender equality goals in the region. A discussion of some of the key gender-related trends noted in these reports follows.

⁶ UNESCAP, UNDP, and ADB. 2005. *A Future Within Reach: Reshaping Institutions in a Region of Disparities to Meet the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific*.

⁷ ADB, UNDP, and UNESCAP. 2006. *Pursuing Gender Equality through the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific*.

⁸ Recorded increases in maternal mortality rates may be due to better reporting.

⁹ Similar trends are emerging in Viet Nam and Azerbaijan.

¹⁰ Government of Punjab. 2004. *Human Development Report 2004: Punjab* (118–22).

¹¹ United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). 2005. *Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World*. Geneva. (pp. 6–7). Amartya Sen initially estimated that about 100 million women were "missing" as a result of excess female mortality in several countries. This estimate was recently updated using different assumptions and techniques. Klasen, Stephan and Claudia Wink. 2003. Missing Women: Revisiting the Debate. *Feminist Economics* 9 (2–3): 26–99.

10. **National Poverty Reduction Strategies and National MDGs.** Several countries in the region prioritize poverty reduction in their national development plans. However, these poverty reduction strategies have not always fully considered women's and men's different experiences of poverty. For example, male migration to urban centers for work and the loss of male family members due to armed conflict or HIV/AIDS¹² have resulted in a large number of households headed by women, particularly in rural areas where they have limited mobility, access to resources, and control over assets such as land. While gender inequalities in access to education and health care are addressed in national MDGs, relatively less attention is given to gender gaps in access to agricultural inputs, wage employment, and public decision-making. National gender focal agencies and women's groups have had mixed experience in participating in the development of national poverty reduction strategies.

11. **Globalization, Regional Integration, and Connectivity.** Over the last 10 years, countries in the region have experienced both the benefits and costs of integrating in the global and regional economies. Increased trade has expanded markets; and the growth of export manufacturing, information technology services, and tourism increased employment opportunities for women. But this trend has also raised concerns about job security and working conditions in export firms. While employment opportunities increased for women in the 1990s, more recently women's participation in manufacturing has either stabilized or fallen in several countries. The export-oriented garment factory jobs in small countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) are now threatened by competition from larger countries such as the PRC and India. Informal employment has increased, including home-based subcontracting work for formal sector firms.

12. Improved transport links between countries support increased regional trade and migration, but also facilitate trafficking in people, the spread of communicable diseases including HIV/AIDS, and the depletion of forest products and wildlife on which rural communities depend. Increasing numbers of young women are migrating to neighboring countries for work, but their opportunities are generally limited to domestic service, small-scale factory work, and low-paying service jobs (including work in restaurants and bars). Since many are irregular migrants, they are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Regional infrastructure projects, such as highway construction, improve rural communities' access to markets and basic services, but they also draw large numbers of construction workers and transport operators, mainly males, into relatively remote areas. Such conditions give impetus to the emergence of the sex industry and increase the risk of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections in communities along the highway corridor.

13. **Gender and Governance.** Women's representation in national parliaments in the region presents a mixed picture. While gradual increases are noted in women's representation in some countries, several countries have experienced notable declines. A promising development is the introduction in some countries of reservations or quotas for women representatives in national and/or local governments. Increasing women's representation in local bodies has become particularly relevant as countries decentralize basic services. In countries that have legislated reserved seats for women at national or local governments, elected women face challenges in gaining the acceptance of male colleagues and carrying out their duties. However, in countries where elected women have received training and other support, they have demonstrated

¹² Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

capacity to use government resources efficiently, to improve the delivery of government services, and to discourage corruption.¹³

14. Several countries have introduced constitutional amendments or law reforms to eliminate discrimination in the areas of employment, property, inheritance, and family matters; and to address domestic violence and human trafficking. However, in many areas, customary practices or religious laws continue to be followed, even though they may contradict the equality provisions of the constitution and national laws. Poor women, especially those in rural areas and socially excluded groups, tend to be unaware of their legal rights and have no practical access to the formal court system. However, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) providing legal aid have made great strides in empowering and representing poor women, and in encouraging more gender-equitable outcomes in community dispute resolution.

15. **Reconstruction after Conflicts and Natural Disasters.** Countries such as Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Tajikistan, and Timor-Leste are at different stages of postconflict reconstruction, while local conflicts continue to affect areas of Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, and Sri Lanka. Armed conflict has left many women in these countries as widows and heads of households with little means of support, as well as displacing them and exposing them to insecurity and violence. The survivors of the recent tsunami disaster also include large numbers of women who have lost family members and have been displaced and deprived of their traditional livelihood activities. Yet women have been largely excluded from reconstruction and rehabilitation planning and programs, and in peace and nation-building efforts.

16. **Gender-Based Violence.** Over the past 10 years, several countries in the region have adopted laws or policies against domestic violence and human trafficking, and established shelters and support programs for victims. In both South Asia and the Greater Mekong subregion (GMS), governments have also signed regional agreements to jointly address the problem of human trafficking, especially of women and girls. Greater efforts are also being made in some countries to collect and analyze data on violence against women, and to sensitize police and court officials to deal with victims. However, violence against women both inside and outside the home continues to be pervasive, and new forms of violence have emerged in some countries, such as acid throwing and the kidnapping and selling of young women as brides. Gender-based violence, including rape and forced sex work, is linked to rising HIV infection rates among women in some countries.

17. Research and experience over the last 10 years confirm the importance of gender equality, not only as a fundamental human right, but as essential to poverty reduction and improved living standards, sustainable economic growth, and effective and accountable governance (footnote 3). At the same time, efforts to narrow gender gaps and empower women in the region have been strained or sidelined by rapid economic change; armed conflicts; and increased concerns about security, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and policy changes that do not adequately take into account different impacts on women and men.¹⁴ Entrenched social norms

¹³ Swamy, Anand et al. 2001. Gender and Corruption. *Journal of Development Economics* 64: 25–55.

¹⁴ United Nations (UN). 1999 *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Globalization, Gender and Work*. New York; UN. 2004 *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women and International Migration*. New York; United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and World Health Organization (WHO). 2004. *AIDS Epidemic Update*. Geneva; UNDP. 2000. *Women's Political Participation and Good Governance: 21st Century Challenges*. New York; UNIFEM. *Progress of the World's Women 2002, Vol. 1: Women, War, Peace*. New York; UNRISD. 2005. *Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World*. Geneva; World Bank. 2001. *Engendering Development through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*. Washington, DC.

and gender stereotypes also continue to exert a powerful influence. These factors point to the need for coherent, gender-responsive policymaking at all levels, and for strong partnerships among governments, development institutions such as ADB, and civil society groups to pursue gender equality in the region.

III. THE GAD POLICY AND ITS INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

18. ADB's GAD policy is grounded in considerations of social justice and equity, as well as economic efficiency and development effectiveness. Under the policy, ADB adopts a gender mainstreaming approach with an emphasis on several areas: (i) conducting upstream work, including economic and sector studies, country strategies and programs (CSPs), and policy dialogue; (ii) increasing the number of loans directly addressing gender disparities and integrating gender concerns more generally in ADB's loan portfolio; (iii) assisting DMCs in building capacity for more gender-responsive policymaking and implementing commitments under the BPFA; and (iv) addressing emerging issues for women in the region. These areas are related and mutually reinforcing.

19. To support its implementation, the GAD policy introduced a number of operational requirements and several institutional mechanisms, including (i) preparation of country briefing papers on women (now country gender assessments) and country-specific gender strategies as inputs to ADB's country strategies and programs; (ii) an ADB-wide GAD action plan; (iii) recruitment of gender specialists as long-term consultants to work in several of ADB's resident missions; (iv) establishment of a small-grant facility to support GAD initiatives; (v) appointment of an external forum of gender experts; and (vi) development of guidelines, checklists, and good practice cases. The policy also includes commitments to improve the gender balance of all ADB professional staff, including senior staff.

20. Since adoption of the GAD policy, ADB has made a number of changes to the strategic framework, strategies, and policies that have a bearing on the GAD policy and its implementation. Since the late 1990s the international development community has prioritized poverty reduction as the overarching development goal, and emphasized the multiple dimensions of poverty including qualitative factors such as limited capabilities, insecurity, and disempowerment. ADB's poverty reduction strategy, approved in 1999,¹⁵ recognizes that "improving the status of women is critical to any strategy to reduce poverty in the region," and therefore highlights gender as an important cross-cutting theme in ADB's poverty reduction work. In 2000, the international community adopted the MDGs as a framework for reducing poverty and promoting human development through the achievement of concrete targets. The MDGs include two gender-specific goals, and the international community widely recognizes that gender equality is essential to the achievement of the other goals. ADB's endorsement of the MDGs and commitment to help its DMCs achieve them reinforced and provided positive impetus to GAD policy implementation.

21. At the same time, some institutional changes have presented challenges for the GAD policy and its implementation. ADB's long-term strategic framework, adopted in 2001,¹⁶ excluded gender as a strategic priority, on the basis that it would be mainstreamed through the inclusive social development pillar of the framework. In practice, however, this led to some

¹⁵ ADB. 1999. *Fighting Poverty in Asia and the Pacific: The Poverty Reduction Strategy of the Asian Development Bank*. Manila.

¹⁶ ADB. 2001. *Moving the Poverty Reduction Agenda Forward in Asia and the Pacific: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank (2001–2015)*. Manila.

confusion in the development of new business processes to support the strategic framework, and a dilution of focus on gender in the development of CSPs and the design of loan projects and programs. The 2004 review of the poverty reduction strategy acknowledged this lapse, and reinstated gender as both a thematic priority and a cross-cutting issue.¹⁷

22. The addition of new priority themes and strategies to ADB's agenda presents both opportunities and risks for core policies such as the GAD. For example, ADB's adoption of regional cooperation as a new thematic priority underscores the relevance of addressing emerging gender concerns in the region, such as cross-border trafficking of women and children. The recent addition of capacity development as another thematic priority reinforces the importance of addressing the weak capacity of line ministries to integrate gender concerns in their projects. ADB's new HIV/AIDS strategy also recognizes the HIV risks that large construction crews and new road corridors can introduce into remote areas—highlighting the particular vulnerability of young rural women. However, the opportunities presented by these new initiatives will only be realized if the gender dimensions of the issues are recognized and addressed. The accumulation of new development priorities also has led to concerns about “goal congestion” and a tendency to deemphasize long-standing priorities such as gender equality in favor of newer ones. The GAD policy and more recently adopted policies and strategies should not be seen as mutually exclusive but as complementary and mutually supportive.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE

23. This review of ADB's experience in implementing the GAD policy covers 1998–2004, and builds on the findings of the 2002 interim progress report. The key substantive areas of the policy discussed in this section include (i) CSPs and policy dialogue, (ii) lending operations, (iii) technical assistance (TA) and capacity development of DMCs, and (iv) support to the BPFA.

A. Country Strategies, Programs, and Policy Dialogue

24. The GAD policy recognizes that gender mainstreaming must begin upstream with the development of CSPs, which provide the frameworks for assistance to DMCs. The policy requires that country gender assessments (CGAs)¹⁸ be prepared as background documents for each CSP. The CSP must then include a country gender strategy as a core appendix and incorporate gender considerations in the main text. The annual CSP update (CSPU) should also specify how ADB's operational program will support these gender goals. Appendix 3 describes the inclusion of gender considerations in CSPs and regional cooperation strategies and programs (RCSPs).

1. Country Gender Assessments

25. During 1998–2004, ADB prepared 21 CGAs as background documents for CSPs. Six of these are second generation CGAs that update and expand on earlier country briefing papers. Experience has shown that CGAs need to be updated every 3–5 years in order to remain current. Two recent CGAs—for Cambodia and Mongolia—were prepared jointly with other development agencies and the national gender focal agency. Two other CGAs—for Bangladesh and the Lao PDR—are specifically linked to the MDGs. Several additional CGAs are under development, including CGAs being prepared by several development partners for the PRC,

¹⁷ ADB. 2004. *Review of the Asian Development Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy* (R95-04). Manila.

¹⁸ CGAs were previously called country briefing papers on women.

Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam. The recent trend to preparation of multiagency CGAs is a positive development, and should foster greater country ownership of the gender diagnostics as well as more effective aid coordination on gender issues. For example, the multiagency-developed CGA for Cambodia was used recently by ADB, United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), and World Bank as the common gender resource for their coordinated country strategies.

26. The CGAs were assessed for quality and relevance in (i) providing an overview of the sociocultural, political, and economic context of women and gender relations in a DMC, using current statistics and other data; (ii) identifying key strategic gender issues in the country; (iii) highlighting government policies, institutions, and programs promoting gender equality, and related development partner and NGO activities; and (iv) recommending a gender strategy and specific interventions for ADB to incorporate in its overall CSP. These diagnostic studies were generally of high quality, and relevant to ADB's operations. The review finds that CGAs have significantly enhanced ADB's diagnostic work related to country-specific gender issues and gender priorities. However, the CGAs rarely inform the overall formulation of the CSP, including the proposed lending pipeline.

27. CGAs were originally envisaged as resources to inform the preparation of CSPs. They have also been used by ADB staff and consultants in preparing individual projects and programs, and more recently, in carrying out country performance assessments of DMCs eligible for Asian Development Fund resources.¹⁹ CGAs have proved to be of wide interest within DMCs as knowledge products for government agencies, development partners, and others interested in gender issues (paras. 105–107). CGAs therefore serve several functions: to improve the quality of CSPs, country performance assessments, and individual projects and programs; and to contribute to the knowledge base on gender issues within DMCs.

2. Country Strategies and Programs

28. During 1998–2004, 25 CSPs were prepared.²⁰ This review focused on the 14 CSPs prepared during 2001–2004.²¹ It considered (i) the depth and relevance of the country gender strategy, based on the CGA; (ii) any reference to gender issues in other thematic and sector strategies appended to the CSP; (iii) the inclusion of key aspects of the country gender strategy in the main text of the CSP; and (iv) the inclusion of loans with a GAD theme and gender-related TA in the assistance pipeline.²² The review also examined three RCSPs prepared during 2003–2004 (Appendix 3). Eight country assistance program evaluations carried out during the review period were also examined.

¹⁹ ADB. 2004. *Review of the Asian Development Bank's Policy on the Performance-Based Allocation of Asian Development Fund Resources*. Manila. Consistent with the World Bank's country policy and institutional assessments, ADB's revised country performance assessment framework includes gender among its 16 performance criteria.

²⁰ Eleven of these were in the previous format of country operational strategy studies.

²¹ The interim progress report reviewed the CSPs prepared in the previous format, and found considerable variation in the depth of gender analysis and integration of gender concerns.

²² The World Bank assesses the gender focus in its country assistance strategies according to four criteria: (i) Are gender issues covered? (ii) Does the strategy discuss why gender issues are relevant or not relevant? (iii) Are actions proposed, or if they are not does the strategy discuss why no actions are needed? and (iv) To what extent do the proposed interventions cut across sectors? World Bank country assistance strategies do not routinely include gender strategies. Since ADB's CSPs already include gender strategies, the gender assessment of CSPs focuses more on the integration of the gender strategy in the core sections of the CSP and in the proposed assistance pipeline.

29. The country gender strategy, included as an appendix to each CSP, is derived from the CGA and operates as a road map for mainstreaming gender concerns in the CSP. Country gender strategies were included as appendixes in all but four CSPs. The review found substantial variations in quality and extent of incorporation in the main CSP text. Within the streamlined CSP format, most country gender strategies present a summary situation analysis of gender issues in the country, a summary of relevant government policies and programs promoting gender equality, and a strategy with recommended interventions and approaches for ADB.²³ However, a general disconnect was noted between the country gender strategy, the main CSP text, and the assistance pipeline. The country gender strategies are not only partially reflected in the main CSP text, but gender issues are also rarely mentioned in the other thematic or sector strategies and road maps appended to CSPs (and typically only under education, health, and water supply and sanitation). One notable exception is the Nepal CSP, in which gender concerns are highlighted in the appendixes on conflict, poverty, governance, agriculture, and education (Box 2). The recent Cambodia CSP also mentions gender concerns in its appendixes on poverty, the Tonle Sap Basin strategy, and education; and to a lesser extent in appendixes on agriculture and transport.

30. All of the CSPs examined in the review include some discussion of gender issues in the main text, but the treatment is inconsistent, particularly in the core sections outlining ADB's strategy and program. Specific strategies for overcoming social barriers to women's and girls' participation in development activities are rarely mentioned. Although the CSPs routinely state that gender considerations will be mainstreamed in ADB's country operations, in several cases the discussion of gender issues is confined to the section of the strategy on inclusive social development and rarely mentioned in the strategy sections on economic growth or governance. Similarly, in the discussion of sector priorities, gender considerations are routinely mentioned with respect to education, health, and water supply and sanitation; but they are not consistently addressed in the sections on agriculture, small business development, and governance. Although governance is a strategic priority in most CSPs, the governance section rarely addresses legal, policy, or institutional barriers to gender equality (although these issues are usually highlighted in the country gender strategy). In contrast, the Nepal CSP discusses gender in several background assessments including governance, and in the main text of the strategy and results framework (Box 2). The Cambodia CSP refers to continuing support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs for policy analysis and advocacy, and strengthening its operational links with line ministries. In Cambodia, ADB joined with DFID and the World Bank to include

Box 2: Gender Considerations in the Country Strategy and Program for Nepal

The core sections of the country strategy and program (CSP) highlight gender equality and women's empowerment as central to the Asian Development Bank's focus on inclusive development in Nepal. The country gender strategy included as an appendix draws on the country gender assessment prepared in 1999, but also stresses the gender implications of the Maoist insurgency and the position of women within disadvantaged castes and ethnic groups. These themes are carried through the background assessments on conflict, poverty, and governance, as well as the main CSP text. The preparation of the CSP included a consultation with women from several ethnic groups and castes, as well as the inclusion of women's groups in other consultations; gender-related recommendations from these consultations are reported in a CSP appendix. The results framework includes several gender-related goals, outcomes, and indicators, although some are quite general. The loan pipeline includes two loans with gender and development (GAD) themes. However, the pipeline has much greater potential for loans with GAD themes or gender mainstreaming elements (based on the concept papers for proposed loans).

²³ The Pakistan CSP is so streamlined that it includes no thematic or sector strategies at all. However, the 2004 CSPU for Pakistan does discuss ADB's gender-related work.

gender equity as a common outcome in their coordinated country strategies, in alignment with the Government's national poverty reduction strategy.

31. The review finds a frequent disconnect between the treatment of gender issues and priorities in the CSP and the proposed pipeline of loans and grant-based assistance. In some cases, specific sector investments are identified to address gender disparities or to promote other gender-related goals, but the corresponding loans in the proposed pipeline are not assigned a GAD theme. While this gap seems particularly stark with respect to gender, it reflects to some extent a general discontinuity between country strategies and country programs.²⁴

32. The streamlined CSP format necessarily limits the space for in-depth discussion of gender and other thematic priorities. However, the scope is still considerable for sharpening the discussion of gender priorities and gender-responsive approaches in core sections of the CSP, and for linking these priorities and approaches to the pipelines of lending and nonlending products. This would be enhanced if gender concerns were treated more systematically in the other thematic and sector strategies included in the CSP. However, even if gender issues were addressed more consistently in the poverty assessment, sector road maps, and other thematic assessments, a country gender strategy would still be required to identify cross-cutting as well as sector-specific gender concerns, and to outline a consistent approach to gender in ADB's country operations.

33. ADB recently prepared RCSPs for Central Asia, GMS, and the Pacific to provide more coherent support for subregional cooperation. These new strategies and programs have great potential to support subregional cooperation on gender issues. However, only the Pacific RCSP includes a regional gender strategy. The RCSP for Central Asia includes only brief references to regional gender issues and possible interventions by ADB (mainly related to HIV/AIDS and human trafficking); references to regional gender issues are more extensive in the RCSP for the GMS, but the main focus is also on mitigation of HIV/AIDS and human trafficking risks. None of the regional assistance pipelines includes a loan with a GAD theme, although the GMS and Pacific pipelines include loans with potential for gender mainstreaming, and all three pipelines include grant-based activities with gender dimensions.

3. Country Strategy and Program Updates

34. This review examined the annual CSPUs prepared in 2004 (or the most recent year),²⁵ and found wide variations in the attention to gender concerns in these streamlined CSPUs, from no reference at all in some to a substantial (but condensed) discussion in others (Appendix 4). The most recent CSPUs contain only brief references to gender indicators, mainly in education and health; a few also highlight key gender issues in the DMC and ADB interventions to address them. The streamlined CSPU format generally provides little space for discussion of gender issues. Nevertheless, recent CSPUs for Bangladesh, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Tonga, and Vanuatu demonstrate that a focused discussion of national gender concerns and related ADB interventions can be included even within the streamlined format.

²⁴ A similar observation was made with respect to governance in the recent review of implementation of the governance policy. ADB. 2005. *Review of the Implementation of ADB's Governance and Anticorruption Policies: Findings and Recommendations*. Manila.

²⁵ The interim progress report reviewed the CSPUs for 2001. It noted that the new streamlined CSPU format did not require a discussion of gender issues, unlike the previous format of annual country assistance plans, which had included sections on gender issues and the gender dimensions of ADB operations.

4. Country Assistance Program Evaluations

35. Country assistance program evaluations carried out during the review period provide perspectives on ADB's progress in integrating gender concerns in CSPs over time, and draw relevant lessons for future CSPs. Recent program evaluations for Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Nepal are particularly helpful because they take into account CSPs prepared in compliance with the GAD policy. The most extensive treatment of gender issues is in the Nepal country assistance program evaluation, which evaluates ADB's lending program in terms of its gender impact as well as other development impacts. In general, the program evaluations confirm the importance of systematic, country-specific attention to gender issues in preparing CSPs, and the benefits of gender-specific interventions to the overall success of loan projects (Box 3).

Box 3: Country Assistance Program Evaluations: Selected Findings and Recommendations

Nepal (2004): Projects that attempt to address, through innovative and imaginative means, cross-cutting issues such as gender equality are more likely to be efficiently and effectively implemented and to have a high degree of positive development impact in the Nepal context.

Cambodia (2004): Future assistance related to gender should cut across all sectors by incorporating gender issues in the design of individual projects at the project formulation stage. Various gender issues should be addressed, including vulnerability, social inclusion, and empowerment. Gender issues should be the concern of male as well as female staff.

Bangladesh (2003): The evolving country program is increasingly oriented to promoting women's interests, but does not clarify if more general constraints to women's advancement, for example, related to land titling and inheritance rights, have been addressed through policy dialogue. Non-sector-specific technical assistance could explore ways in which pro-women institutional reform could be most appropriately pursued.

Papua New Guinea (2003): A number of earlier projects, for example in agriculture, made generic statements about the important role of women in the sector and assumed they would benefit, but no consideration was given to how this would happen. Consequently, the projects did little to meet women's needs. In contrast, some recent projects were more explicit about involving women and targeting them as beneficiaries, with more positive results.

Philippines (2003): The success of future Asian Development Bank (ADB) assistance depends on ADB's capacity to deepen its relationships with women's groups and other segments of civil society. Their active participation in country strategy and program formulation, economic and sector work, and project preparation and implementation will improve the relevance and quality of ADB interventions.

5. Policy Dialogue

36. The GAD policy calls for the inclusion of gender concerns in ADB's policy dialogue with DMCs, especially those countries with high gender inequality. ADB's performance in this area is difficult to measure because of the fluid nature of policy discussions and the variety of settings in which these discussions can take place. Possible settings include country consultations in connection with preparing a CGA or CSP, loan fact-finding and appraisal missions and loan negotiations, country program and project review missions, and meetings and workshops with executing agency officials related to program or project implementation. The review finds that while ADB has taken promising steps in a few countries and sectors, gender issues are not routinely included in high-level policy discussions with DMC counterparts. Most gender policy discussions tend to occur with sector ministries in the context of project design and implementation. Gender issues are rarely included on the policy dialogue agenda with ministries of finance and planning. While some efforts have been made in a few countries to involve the

national gender focal agency in discussions with sector ministries, ADB has rarely facilitated links between the gender focal agency and ministries of finance and planning.

37. Despite limited progress in this area, some recent experiences have demonstrated ADB's potential to play a more constructive role in gender policy dialogue with government counterparts and other stakeholders in its DMCs. In preparing new CGAs and country gender strategies for Fiji Islands, Mongolia, Nepal, Timor-Leste, and several Central Asian republics, ADB organized workshops in which government and nongovernment participants discussed national gender concerns, law and policy reforms, and other actions to reduce gender gaps and empower women and girls. Through loans and TA, ADB is supporting government-wide gender action programs in Pakistan, gender strategies for the agriculture sector in Cambodia and Viet Nam, preparation of a gender equality law in Viet Nam, and amendment of discriminatory laws and submission of bills to parliament on gender equality and domestic violence in Nepal. In each of these cases, the national focal agency for gender has been closely involved in the gender policy dialogue.

38. Ongoing gender policy dialogue—particularly at a sector level—has generally been more sustained in countries where ADB's resident mission has a national gender officer or long-term national gender consultants. Through their involvement in the design and implementation of ADB-supported projects and involvement with CSPs, the resident mission gender team is engaged in ongoing policy dialogue on gender issues with key line ministries, government focal points, and civil society groups.

B. Lending Operations

39. The GAD policy endorses a two-track approach to address gender concerns through ADB's lending operations: (i) increase the number of loans that directly address gender disparities, and (ii) mainstream gender analysis and gender-responsive approaches in all ADB-financed projects and programs. This review considered trends in ADB's lending operations over the entire review period, focusing in particular on lending activities over 3 years (2002–2004). The review considered the gender-responsiveness of ADB loans, both at the time of approval and during implementation. The assessment of gender quality in loan design was based mainly on a desk review of reports and recommendations of the President (RRPs) for loans approved during the period. For this purpose, loans were assigned one of four gender ratings: (1) a GAD theme under ADB's project classification system, (2) gender mainstreaming characteristics, (3) some gender benefits, and (4) no gender elements (Appendix 5).²⁶ The assessment of gender quality in loan implementation was based mainly on the rapid gender assessments (RGAs) of selected loans in implementation and reviews of project performance reports.

²⁶ This gender rating system was developed in 2001 to monitor the gender content of ADB loans. The rating system is generally comparable to the numerical rating systems that the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) use to monitor gender mainstreaming in their projects. Based on ADB's rating system, the interim progress report found that in 1998–2001 the number of loans that directly address gender concerns (i.e., loans with a GAD theme) had not increased notably, but other loans with gender mainstreaming characteristics had steadily increased across a wide range of sectors.

1. Trends in Loan Approvals

a. Overview

40. During 1998–2004, ADB substantially increased the number of loans that directly address gender disparities, as reflected in loans classified with a GAD theme. The number of GAD thematic loans increased from 5 (or 8% of loan approvals) in 1998 to 13 (or 18%) in 2004.²⁷ ADB also substantially increased the number of loans that effectively mainstream gender considerations, although they are not classified with a GAD theme. These loans increased from 4 (or 7% of loan approvals) in 1998 to 15 (or 20%) in 2004. Combined, these two categories represent an increase in gender-responsive loans from 15% in 1998 to 38% in 2004. In other words, by 2004 more than a third of ADB loans either had a gender theme or effectively mainstreamed gender concerns. This is a significant achievement and clearly demonstrates the relevance of gender issues and the GAD policy for ADB's core lending operations. Table 2 provides a summary of these trends over the entire review period.²⁸ Summaries of the gender-related design elements in loans approved during 2002–2004 are provided in Appendix 6.²⁹

41. Although the gender content of ADB loans improved substantially over the review period, the number of GAD thematic and gender mainstreaming loans decreased notably in 2003 and 2004. This can be attributed in part to shifts in the sector composition of loans toward the end of the period. In 2003, the portfolio of new loans included a substantial proportion of loans in agriculture, and water supply and sanitation, as well as several urban development and social services loans categorized as multisector.

42. All of these sectors lend themselves to GAD themes and gender mainstreaming. In contrast, the 2004 loan portfolio showed a sharp decline in agriculture, water supply and sanitation, and urban development loans; and a sharp increase in governance, industry and trade, and transport loans, with a concomitant decline in GAD responsive loans. ADB has relatively less experience in gender mainstreaming in the governance, industry and trade, and transport sectors, which explains in part the limited attention to gender in the 2004 loans.

43. The review found that an additional 124 loans approved in 1998–2004 (24% of the total) provide some gender-related benefits (Table 2 and Appendix 6). While the percentage of loans in this category remained fairly stable over the period, the composition of loans within the category shifted. The interim progress report found that most of the loans approved during 1998–2001 were likely to provide benefits to women and girls because of the sector involved (e.g., health, education, rural water supply, or microfinance). However, the loan designs did not include measures to maximize these benefits, and therefore represented missed opportunities from a gender perspective. In contrast, during 2002–2004, the majority of loans providing some gender-related benefits were infrastructure projects (mainly in transport) in which substantial

²⁷ ADB's loan classification system changed twice during the review period. Appendix 5 describes the criteria used to assign a GAD classification to loans under the different systems.

²⁸ For consistency, loans for separate purposes (e.g., policy reform, investment, or technical assistance) and from different sources (e.g., Asian Development Fund or ordinary capital resources) are counted separately, although they may relate to the same project or program. Table 2 provides information on both loan approvals and loan amounts. However, the discussion in this subsection focuses primarily on trends in loan approvals because they are considered more indicative of progress in gender mainstreaming. (The size of a loan does not necessarily indicate the quality or extent of its gender inclusiveness.)

²⁹ Gender-related loan summaries for loans approved during 1998–2001 are included in the interim progress report.

effort was made to provide indirect benefits to women and to mitigate possible negative impacts on them. All health and microfinance projects, and most agriculture, education, and rural water supply projects approved in 2002–2004 either had a GAD theme or gender mainstreaming elements. Two positive trends can be inferred: (i) ADB is more effectively providing gender mainstreaming in sectors with the greatest potential for addressing gender disparities (education, health, agriculture, and water supply and sanitation); and (ii) ADB is addressing gender issues in a larger number of infrastructure projects.

Table 2: Loans Addressing Gender Concerns 1998–2004

Year	WID or GAD Thematic Classification	Gender Mainstreaming		Total Loans Mainstreaming Gender		Some Gender Benefits		Total Loans Addressing Gender Concerns		Total Loan Approvals (ADB)		
		(a)	% of Total Loan Approvals	(b)	% of Total Loan Approvals	(a)+(b)	% of Total Loan Approvals	(c)	% of Total Loan Approvals		(a)+(b)+(c)	% of Total Loan Approvals
1998	Number	5	8	4	7	9	15	14	24	23	39	59
	Amount (\$m)	144	2	327	6	471	8	1,403	24	1,874	32	
1999	Number	2	3	8	13	10	16	11	18	21	34	62
	Amount (\$m)	107	2	499	10	606	13	749	15	1,355	28	
2000	Number	5	6	16	19	21	24	21	24	42	49	86
	Amount (\$m)	233	4	691	12	924	16	1,367	24	2,291	40	
2001	Number	6	8	13	18	19	26	22	31	41	57	72
	Amount (\$m)	521	10	456	9	977	18	2,328	44	3,304	62	
2002	Number	12	14	15	18	27	32	23	27	50	59	85
	Amount (\$m)	518	9	412	7	930	17	1,658	30	2,588	47	
2003	Number	20	25	19	24	39	49	17	21	56	70	80
	Amount (\$m)	526	9	1,175	20	1701	29	2,448	41	4,150	70	
2004	Number	13	18	15	21	28	38	16	22	44	60	73
	Amount (\$m)	611	12	527	11	1138	23	1,756	36	2,894	59	
7 Years Total	Number	63	12	90	17	153	30	124	24	277	54	517
	Amount (\$m)	2,660	7	4,087	11	6,747	18	11,709	31	18,455	48	

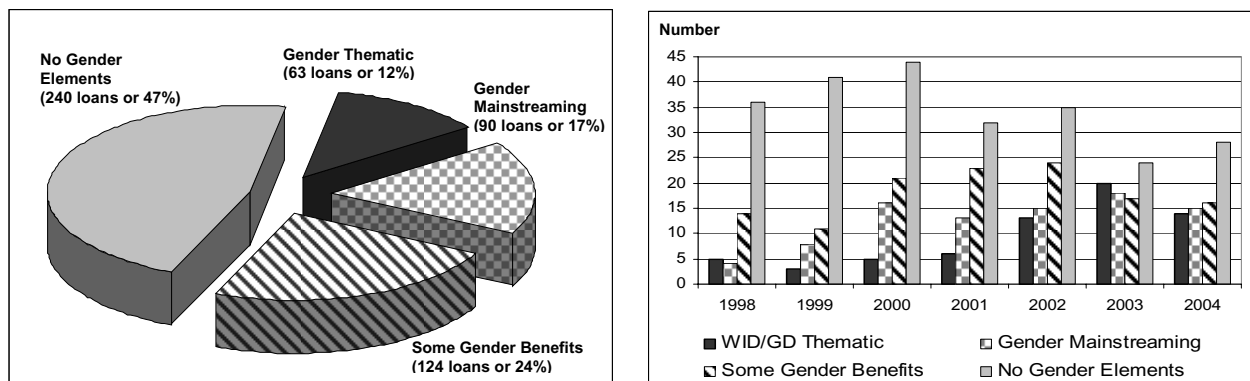
GAD – Gender and Development; WID – Women in Development.

Note: Small discrepancies in some percentages are due to rounding differences.

Source: Asian Development Bank estimates.

44. Despite progress in gender mainstreaming in loans during 1998–2004, 241 loans (47% of the total) were approved without any notable gender elements. Even so, the proportion of loans with no gender elements declined from 61% in 1998 to 40% in 2004 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Loans Addressing Gender Concerns (1998–2004)



GAD/GD = Gender and Development; WID = Women in Development.

45. Several factors contributed to improved gender content of ADB's loan portfolio. First, the GAD policy provided for the development of an ADB-wide GAD plan of action, including department commitments for their loan and TA pipelines over 3 years. The GAD plan of action identified a larger number of proposed loans with a GAD theme or gender mainstreaming potential (compared with the previous period and 1998 baseline). Most of the loans identified in the GAD plan of action as potential GAD or gender mainstreaming loans retained those characteristics through loan approval, and several gender mainstreaming loans were upgraded to GAD thematic loans by the time of loan approval. Second, during the review period the number of gender specialists working at ADB headquarters increased from two to four, and long-term national gender consultants were assigned to six resident missions under a regional TA grant. While the staffing increase was modest compared with subsequent staffing additions in other thematic areas, it did enable ADB to develop more loan projects and programs with GAD themes and gender mainstreaming features. Third, ADB's poverty reduction strategy encouraged the design of more loans with potential for addressing gender as well as poverty concerns. Fourth, gender specialists—or social development specialists with gender-specific terms of reference—were increasingly included in the consultant teams preparing loan projects.³⁰

46. During the review period, the number of proposed loans identified with GAD themes in CSPs and CSPUs remained relatively small, compared with the number of GAD theme and gender mainstreaming loans that were ultimately designed and approved. This indicates that gender is still not considered a thematic priority at the country strategy and programming stage. This deficiency was remedied to some extent at the project processing stage, mainly through the interventions of gender specialists at headquarters and resident missions.

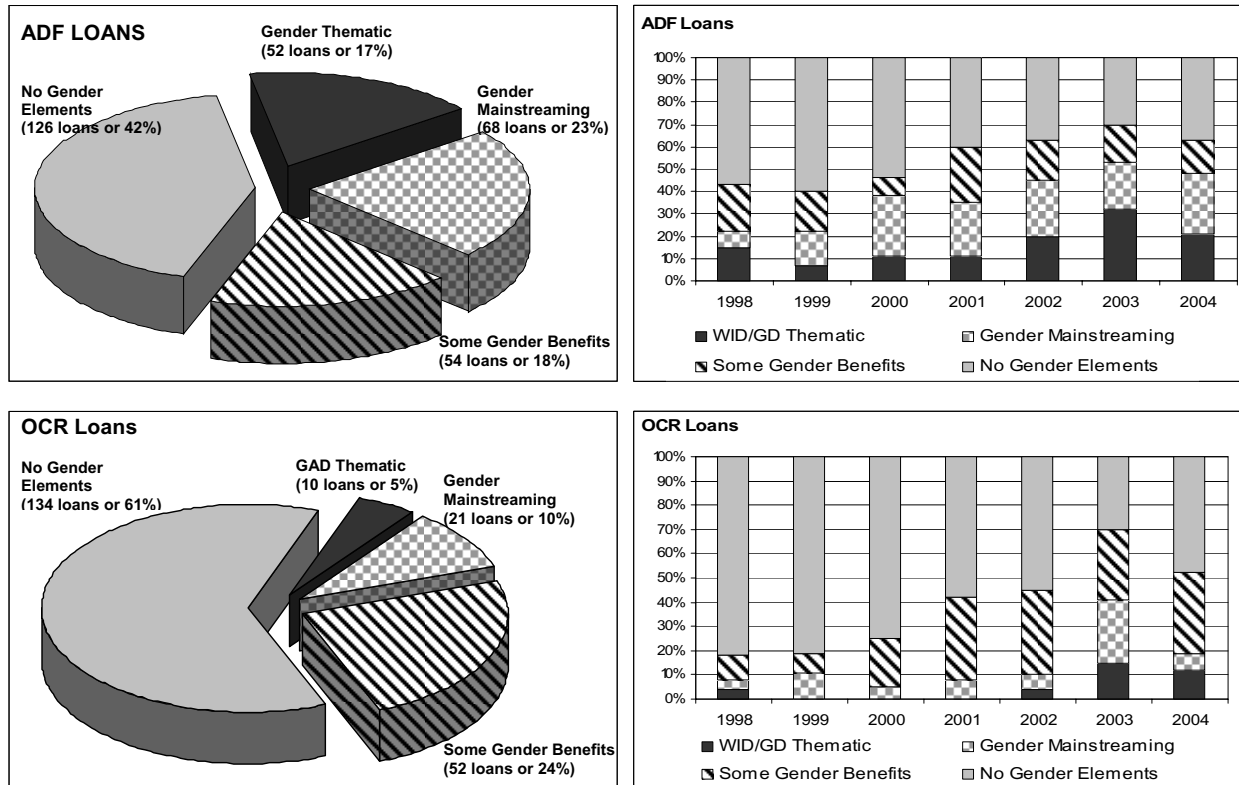
b. Loans by Source of Funds

47. During 1998–2004, 40% of loans from Asian Development Fund (ADF) resources had either a GAD theme or effective gender mainstreaming features, compared with 15% of loans from ordinary capital resources (OCR). The gender profile of both ADF and OCR loans improved during the period. For example, the proportion of ADF loans with either a GAD theme or effective gender mainstreaming increased from 22% in 1998 to 50% in 2004, while the proportion of OCR loans increased from 6% to 19%. (The proportion of GAD and gender mainstreaming loans actually peaked in 2003 and declined somewhat in 2004, which is reflected in both the ADF and OCR portfolios for those years). However, by 2004, more than 80% of loans in these categories were still funded from ADF resources, with less than 20% of loans funded from OCR (Figure 2).

48. The gender composition of the ADF portfolio increased steadily during 1998–2004, with a slight decline in 2004. By the end of 2004, ADF loans were fairly balanced among the four gender classifications. In contrast, changes in the OCR portfolio were more abrupt, with a sharp increase in the gender content of OCR loans in 2003 followed by a sharp decline in 2004. By the end of 2004, the vast majority of OCR loans still reflected no gender elements or limited gender considerations.

³⁰ A review of project-preparatory TA reports found that the percentage of the TA teams including a gender specialist increased from 12% in 1998 to 19% in 2004, and teams whose social development specialist had gender-specific terms of reference increased from 25% in 1998 to 43% in 2004.

Figure 2: Asian Development Fund and Ordinary Capital Resources Loans Addressing Gender Concerns (1998–2004)



GAD/GD = Gender and Development; WID = Women in Development.

c. Loans by Region

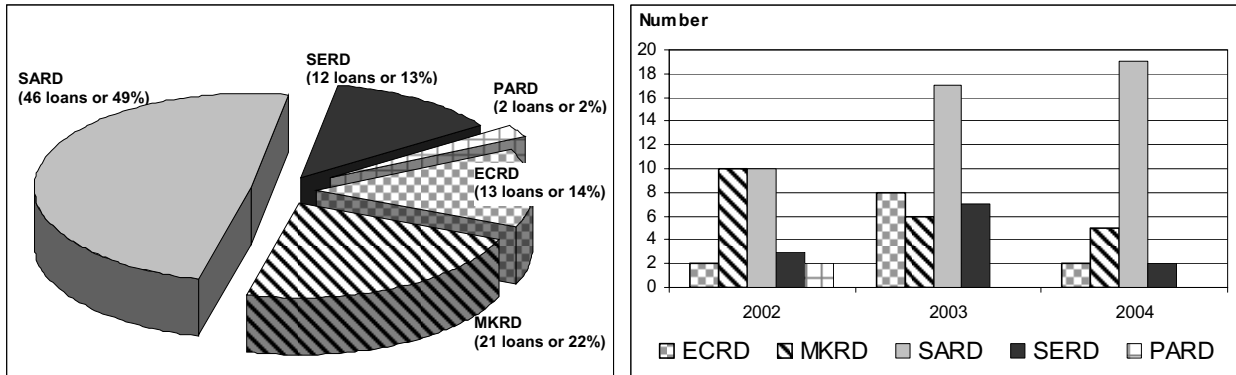
49. Since ADB reorganized its operations departments in early 2002, the review focused on the gender content of loans by region during 2002–2004.³¹ The review found that close to half of the loans approved with GAD themes or effective gender mainstreaming features were in the South Asia region, followed by the GMS (22%), East and Central Asia (14%), Southeast Asia (13%), and the Pacific (2%). This regional imbalance worsened over the period. By 2004, close to 70% of loans approved with GAD themes or effective gender mainstreaming were in South Asia, and the Pacific had no GAD or gender mainstreaming loans (Figure 3). The gender content of loans in the East and Central Asia region improved markedly in 2003, but slipped back in 2004. Notably, only 2 Pacific loans (out of 11 approved in 2002–2004) had a GAD theme or gender mainstreaming elements, although all Pacific DMCs except the Fiji Islands have access to ADF resources.

50. In terms of the gender content of ADB loans, a strong correlation generally exists between the source of funds and regional focus. During the review period, 80% of ADB loans with a GAD theme or gender mainstreaming elements were ADF-funded. More than 70% of loans in these categories were made to countries in the GMS and South Asia. One explanation is that countries with access to concessional loans and grants, which are mainly in the GMS and South Asia, are more willing to borrow for projects with a strong gender focus. Historically, the sector mix of loans to these countries has also lent itself more easily to integrating gender

³¹ The interim progress report found that most loans approved in 1998–2001 with a GAD theme or effective gender mainstreaming were in the former Region West (equivalent to the Mekong and South Asia departments).

concerns in project designs, although the loan portfolios of most borrowing countries include a mix of hard and soft sectors. The GMS and South Asia also include countries with some of the largest gender disparities in the region in terms of human development indicators and the MDGs. The relationship between source of funds and regional focus does not hold, however, for the Pacific, where very few loans have had GAD themes or gender mainstreaming elements despite access to ADF resources.

Figure 3: GAD and Gender Mainstreaming Loans, by Region (2002–2004)

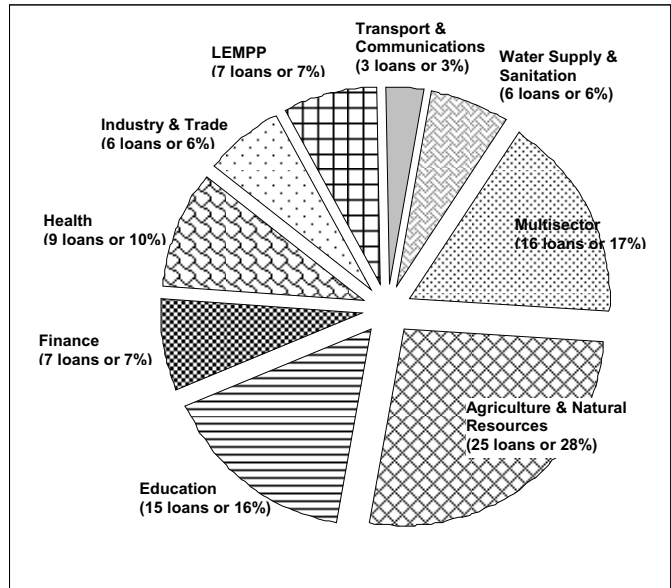


ECRD = East and Central Asia Regional Department; MKRD = Mekong Regional Department; PARD = Pacific Regional Department; SARD = South Asia Regional Department; SERD = Southeast Asia Regional Department.

d. Loans by Sector

51. ADB revised its sector classifications in 2004. This review used the new classification system to analyze the gender content of loans approved during 2002–2004 by sector. Loans approved with GAD themes or effective gender mainstreaming were primarily in agriculture and natural resources (27%); followed by multisector (17%); education (16%); health (10%); law, economic management, and public policy (8%); finance (7%); water supply and sanitation (6%); industry and trade (6%); and transport and communications (3%). The multisector loans in these categories are in the general areas of rural development, urban development, and social services. In contrast, during 1998–2001, the interim progress report found that close to 40% of loans with GAD themes or gender mainstreaming were in the health and education sectors.

Figure 4: GAD and Gender Mainstreaming Loans, by Sector (2002–2004)

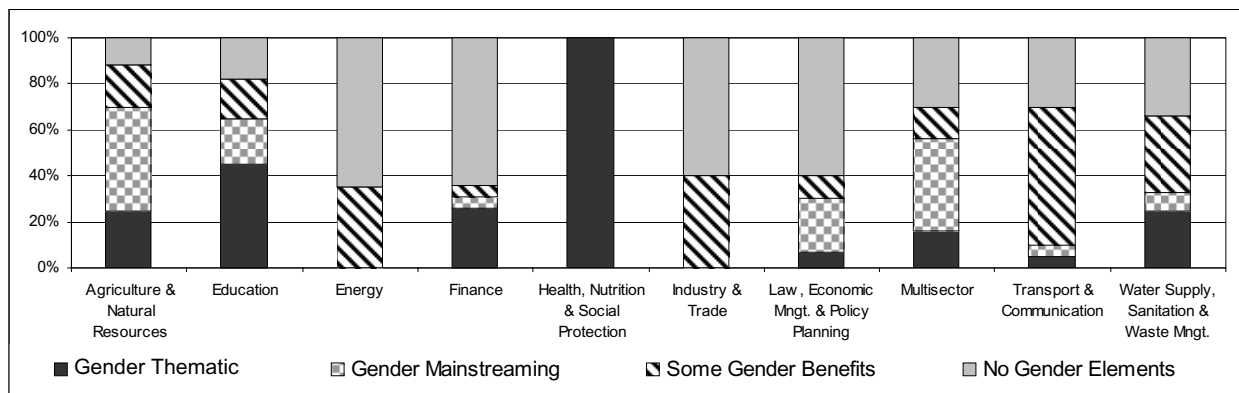


LEMPP = Law, economic management, and public policy.

This reflects the gradual mainstreaming of gender into less traditional sectors such as law and economic management, finance, industry and trade, and transport and communications (Figure 4). If loans with some gender benefits are included in the analysis, the sector composition of 2002–2004 loans would include a much larger proportion of loans in transport (29 loans or 19% of the total) as well as several in the energy sector (8 loans or 5% of the total).

52. The gender composition of ADB loans approved in 2002–2004 varied substantially across sectors, from the health sector in which 100% of loans had a GAD theme, to the energy sector in which no loans had a GAD theme or gender mainstreaming (Figure 5). Some interesting comparisons can be made between sectors. For example, although health and education are often considered together as gender-friendly sectors, ADB’s recent health loans have a stronger and more consistent gender focus than education loans. In terms of loans with GAD themes or gender mainstreaming, the education and agriculture sectors have similar gender profiles. Loans in the water supply and sanitation sector have a much higher gender content than loans in transport or energy, which reflects the varied scope for integrating gender concerns in different types of infrastructure projects. The split gender profile of finance loans, including a large proportion with GAD themes and an even larger proportion with no gender content at all, reflects the mix of microfinance, rural finance, and financial sector reform projects in that sector. Similarly, the split gender profile of industry and trade loans reflects the mix of trade facilitation, tourism, and small and medium enterprise (SME) development projects in that sector. However, the review also found inconsistent approaches to gender mainstreaming within the same subsector. For example, of the five SME development projects approved in 2002–2004, one included gender mainstreaming elements while the other four paid little or no attention to gender concerns. In the law and economic management sector, access to justice and decentralization support programs were generally more successful at integrating gender concerns than other programs.

Figure 5: Gender Composition of Loans, by Sector (2002–2004)



e. Different Loan Products

53. During the review period, most ADB loans with a GAD theme or effective gender mainstreaming were traditional investment loans. However, an increasing number of sector and policy-based loans were approved with GAD themes or gender mainstreaming characteristics. The structure of ADB-financed projects and programs also became more complex, as reflected in a large number of sector development program loans (which include both policy and investment components). Several of these loans have GAD themes or gender mainstreaming characteristics, and demonstrate the possibilities of combining gender-related policy reform with gender-responsive project designs.³²

³² Some recent examples include Bangladesh: Small and Medium Enterprise Sector Development Program (2004), Cambodia: Second Education Sector Development Program (2004), Philippines: Health Sector Development Program (2004), Sri Lanka: Rural Finance Sector Development Program (2003), and Tajikistan: Microfinance Systems Development Program (2003).

2. Innovations in Loan Design

54. The review found a number of good gender practices have emerged in the design of ADB loans. Three areas of innovation include (i) development of a detailed gender action plan (GAP) as part of the project design (paras. 55–56); (ii) inclusion of gender-related policy changes and legal reforms in loan projects and programs (paras. 57–59); and (iii) various techniques to incorporate a gender perspective in infrastructure projects (paras. 60–62). In addition, the review found greater attention in recent loans to the needs and constraints of women within ethnic minority groups,³³ and to the gender dimensions of decentralization.³⁴ National gender focal agencies have also been included more frequently in steering committees for loan projects and programs, and Nepal's Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Project approved in late 2004 is the first ADB loan for which the focal agency on gender is the executing agency. Despite these innovations and improved practices, weaknesses and inconsistencies in loan design and the limited capacity of executing agencies may limit the gender-related benefits of loans.

a. Gender Action Plans

55. GAPs as road maps to guide the implementation of gender design features of loan projects were introduced in 2000 as midcourse corrections for projects already in implementation. Increasingly, project GAPs have been developed for new loans, and are included as core appendixes for the RRP. By 2004, virtually all new loans with a GAD theme or effective gender mainstreaming included a GAP in their design, and about 30% of project preparatory TAs required the preparation of a GAP. The project GAPs vary considerably in scope and level of detail. At their best, they track the main components of the project or program design, and for each component they identify measures to facilitate women and men's participation in and benefit from the project activities. They also provide for the collection of sex-disaggregated data and monitoring of gender-related indicators. In several cases, the project includes the engagement of a gender specialist to develop a more detailed GAP during loan implementation. Examples of well-developed GAPs for two urban development projects are described in Box 4.

56. The inclusion of GAPs in ADB loan designs is an important innovation. The GAP provides a road map for translating the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming into the reality of a specific project or program. Project GAPs are evolving and improving over time, becoming more detailed and more closely aligned with the main components of the loan project. They are user-friendly tools that can be replicated and adapted in similar projects, thereby supporting a more consistent gender mainstreaming approach by the same executing agency and within the same sector. They can also be supported by a single loan covenant. However, the review found that in many cases key provisions of the GAP, such as targets for women's participation in project activities, were not mentioned in the description of the project components in RRP and were not included in the design and monitoring framework. In several instances, the GAP was included as a supplementary (rather than a core) appendix, and could not be easily located for

³³ These include Cambodia: Health Sector Support Project (2002), Indonesia: Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Project (2002), Lao PDR: Nam Ngum River Basin Development Sector Project (2002) and several other Lao PDR loan projects, Nepal: Secondary Education Support Project (2002) and other Nepal projects, and Viet Nam: Upper Secondary Education Development Project and other Viet Nam projects.

³⁴ These include Cambodia: Commune Council Development Project (2002), India: Modernizing Government and Fiscal Reform in Kerala Program (2002), Indonesia: Sustainable Capacity Building for Decentralization Project (2002), Nepal: Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihoods Project (2004), and Pakistan: Devolution Support Program (2002) and several other Pakistan loans.

review. In these cases, the serious risk exists that the GAP will be ignored during implementation, or will not be implemented fully or monitored as planned. The key provisions of a GAP must be incorporated in the description of the project components and in the design and monitoring framework, and the GAP must be summarized in a core appendix. A GAP should be developed as part of the overall project design, and in close consultation with the executing agency. Since most executing agencies have limited gender capacity, providing them with technical support is crucial—either from the gender consultants, national officers in ADB’s resident mission, or from a gender specialist in the project implementation team—to help refine and adapt the GAP during project implementation.

Box 4: Gender Action Plans for Urban Development Projects

Bangladesh: Secondary Towns Integrated Flood Protection Project (Phase 2). Approved in 2004, a gender action plan (GAP) was developed through a participatory process involving a workshop attended by women and men, and consultation with town officials. The comprehensive GAP integrates activities, targets, and indicators for each project component. It includes targets for women’s employment in flood protection, tree planting, and maintenance; formation of women’s labor contracting societies; location of public toilets to meet women’s needs; and gender training of executing agency staff and female ward commissioners. The project provides for gender specialists to help with GAP implementation by project management and towns. The project framework includes several gender-related targets and indicators, as well as GAP activities and monitoring mechanisms. The GAP is also supported by a covenant in the related loan documents.

Viet Nam: Central Region Urban Environmental Improvement Project. Approved in 2003, the project aims to enhance the role of women in urban environmental management, and provides for the Viet Nam Women’s Union to be the implementing agency for the household sanitation component of the project. The project GAP includes targets for women’s participation in community groups and household sanitation activities, and provides for gender-sensitive design of facilities, capacity building of the Women’s Union to implement project activities, and gender consultants to assist in refining the GAP and developing a gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system. The project framework includes gender-related outcomes and gender-related performance indicators. The GAP is supported by a covenant in the loan documents.

b. Gender Reforms in Policy-Based Loans

57. During the review period, ADB integrated gender-related policy changes and law reforms into a number of policy-based loans. Through some sector development programs, ADB supported the development of a new gender policy and strategy for Cambodia’s Agriculture Sector, strengthening of an existing gender policy in the Philippine Health Sector, representation of women stakeholders in the development of a new SME sector policy in Bangladesh, and establishment of new sector institutions with gender-responsive mandates in Pakistan.³⁵ In the area of governance, some program loans incorporated measures to increase the proportion of women in the civil service (or to protect the small number of women in the public sector from layoffs); increase women’s representation in supervisory bodies; analyze the gender impact of public sector reforms; and integrate gender concerns in planning, budgeting, and monitoring frameworks.³⁶ The proportion of policy reform programs with GAD themes or gender mainstreaming elements rose sharply from 0% in 1998 to 39% in 2004. However, in most cases

³⁵ Cambodia: Agriculture Sector Development Program (2003), Philippines: Health Sector Development Program (2004), Bangladesh: Small and Medium Enterprise Sector Development Program (2004) and Pakistan: Microfinance Sector Development Program (2000). The program supported the establishment of a new microfinance bank with gender balance at the management, staff and client levels, as well as a social development fund and community investment fund with gender-related goals.

³⁶ Some examples include Nepal: Governance Reform Program (2001), Pakistan: Devolution Support Program (2002), Pakistan: Punjab Devolved Social Services Program (2004), Pakistan: Sindh Devolved Social Services Program (2002), and Tonga: Economic and Public Sector Reform Program (2003).

the gender-specific policy changes represented a small proportion of the overall policy reform programs.

58. ADB's most extensive support for gender mainstreaming in governance has been in Pakistan, where several interlinked program and TA loans are supporting federal and provincial implementation of gender reform action plans. Cabinet approval of the action plans was a condition under the Devolution Support Program, and their implementation is part of the policy reform agendas in the provincial Devolved Social Services Program and Resource Management Program (Box 5). ADB's first loan to Nepal directly supporting gender equality and women's empowerment also includes a number of institutional and law reform measures (Box 6).

Box 5: Gender Reform Action Plans in Pakistan

Pakistan's Devolution Support Program, which is being supported by a cluster of Asian Development Bank (ADB) program and technical assistance (TA) loans approved in 2002, aims to improve the representation, accountability, and efficiency of local government to delivery basic services. The program includes a number of measures to mainstream gender equality principles and practices in federal, provincial, and local governance. A condition for release of the first tranche of the loan was the promulgation of the Local Government Ordinance, stipulating that 33% of elected seats at all three levels of local government would be reserved for women. A condition for release of the second tranche was Cabinet approval and implementation of federal and provincial gender reform action plans. The federal and provincial plans were initially developed with support from an ADB TA, and include proposed actions and related costing in four reform areas: (i) improved representation and participation of women in political and administrative structures; (ii) a policy shift from social welfare to social development, and from women's development to gender equality; (iii) restructuring of government institutions and procedures to better address gender and social development issues; and (iv) changes in planning and budgetary processes to narrow the gender gap in public expenditure and service delivery. The action plans, which were developed through extensive consultation with local stakeholders, are based on Pakistan's National Plan of Action (1998) and National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women (2002). Implementation of the plans will be supported through a TA loan and TA grant under the program.

59. For policy-based loans, strong government commitment and ADB support is needed to ensure that gender-related policy measures are implemented as intended, and are not delayed or undermined by other reform measures or intervening events. Despite ADB's successes in integrating gender reforms in some policy loans, its performance in this area has been somewhat inconsistent. For example, in 2004, only one of five governance programs effectively mainstreamed gender considerations.

c. Addressing Gender Concerns in Infrastructure Projects

60. Several good gender practices were developed for infrastructure loans, particularly in urban development, rural development, and transport over the review period. These trends, identified in the interim progress report for 1998–2001, were continued and expanded in 2002–2004. By 2004, 46% of urban and rural infrastructure development projects had GAD themes or gender mainstreaming characteristics. Many of these loans include GADs (Box 4). They typically provide for gender-sensitive design of project facilities such as separate toilets; market and meeting spaces; and waiting areas for women and girls in schools, flood shelters, markets, and local government buildings, especially in countries where social norms restrict women's mobility and interaction with men in public areas. The loans also typically include measures to facilitate women's employment and other involvement in project activities, including through community decision-making processes, and gender-sensitive monitoring of project impacts. However, the executing agencies for these projects generally have very weak GAD capacity to implement gender-related activities, and they tend to prioritize hardware components even where software elements such as women's participation are clearly critical to the project's

success and sustainability. Therefore, capacity support to the executing agencies to implement these gender-related measures, and careful monitoring by ADB, is critical to their success.

**Box 6: Gender Equality and Empowerment
of Women Project in Nepal**

This loan project approved in late 2004 aims to improve the socioeconomic conditions of poor rural women in Nepal through interventions to promote (i) economic empowerment, (ii) legal empowerment, (iii) social empowerment, and (iv) strengthening of institutions for gender mainstreaming. It is the first Asian Development Bank-supported project in which a national focal agency on gender—Department of Women Development—is the executing agency. The project supports a number of gender-related legal reforms and policy changes. For example, one condition for loan effectiveness is the passage of legislation to eliminate several provisions in existing laws that discriminate against women. Under the project, the Government also committed to pass legislation on domestic violence and on the powers of the National Women's Commission and National Dalit Commission (initially by the Cabinet). The legal empowerment component of the project will support (i) a large-scale awareness-raising campaign on legal issues related to gender, caste, and ethnicity; (ii) preparation of a specialized university law course on rights of women and other vulnerable groups; (iii) training of judicial and local government officials and police officers on rights of women and other vulnerable groups; (iv) establishment of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and training of mediators and paralegals; and (v) legal aid to poor women in project districts. The institutional strengthening component supports an organizational audit of the Department of Women Development, to identify the training and capacity-building needs of central and local staff.

61. An increasing number of physical infrastructure projects, particularly transport projects, are including gender considerations in their design. By 2004, 67% of transport projects included mitigation measures to address HIV/AIDS and/or trafficking risks, and some also included positive measures to provide women with employment or other benefits. In terms of positive benefits for women, some recent transport projects include targets for local women's participation in road construction or rehabilitation work, based on an assessment of women's interest in doing this work. ADB loans with major construction components now routinely include covenants requiring equal pay for equal work and prohibiting use of child labor; some also include provisions for facilities for workers and safe working conditions. In terms of mitigating social risks, large infrastructure projects now routinely include covenants requiring awareness programs on the risks of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections to be carried out in construction camps and the surrounding communities, and by transport operators. In the best cases, some recent transport projects have included specific components to support health awareness campaigns, provision of condoms, access to health services, and other activities. These components are supported either by loan funds or TA grants. Several of these components also address risks of human trafficking, drawing on research and recommendations from an ADB-supported regional study on trafficking in women and girls (Box 7).

62. The inclusion of mitigation and livelihood activities in the design of physical infrastructure projects also raised the awareness of the executing agencies to the magnitude of the social risks involved in projects of this nature and the importance of addressing them in locally appropriate and realistic ways. However, the capacity and motivation of these executing agencies to implement gender and social activities is generally very weak. In addition, the social risk mitigation components are often supported by parallel grants or by links to existing government programs, and the obligations to mitigate risk extend to third parties such as civil works contractors and transport operators. In these projects, providing an adequate budget for any gender-related activities is especially important to provide technical gender support to the executing agency and its project implementation team, and to monitor the gender and other software elements of the project carefully during implementation. To date, most of the physical infrastructure loans that address social risks in a meaningful way have been in the GMS and

South Asia regions. These risks need to be more consistently and effectively addressed in East and Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific regions.

3. Loan Implementation: Gender Results and Impact

63. In addition to assessing the gender quality of ADB loans at approval, this review also sought to assess the impact of gender-responsive loan designs in implementation. Rapid gender assessments (RGAs) of several ongoing loan projects and programs were carried out as part of this review. The RGAs cover 12 projects and programs in four DMCs (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Pakistan), and include three sector areas: agriculture and rural development, governance, and education and health.³⁷ These RGAs were supplemented by review of a sample of project completion reports (PCRs) and project performance reports (PPRs) for loans approved during the review period.

a. Rapid Gender Assessments of Loans in Implementation

64. The RGAs focus on gender-related results in terms of (i) participation in project activities; (ii) access to project resources; (iii) practical benefits of the project for women and men; and (iv) changes in gender relations at the individual, household, community, and in some cases, state or national level. While the projects and programs were at various stages of implementation, the RGAs were able to identify some intermediate results related to gender, as well as positive and negative factors contributing to these results.³⁸ The RGAs also identify a number of factors for improving the quality of GAPs.

65. The RGAs provide strong evidence that comprehensive project GAPs introduced in ADB loan projects in 2000 have a significant impact on improving results for women and on making

Box 7: HIV/AIDS and Measures to Prevent Human Trafficking in India's National Highways Sector Project I

This transport project approved in 2003 aimed to rehabilitate and widen sections of the east-west highway corridor through Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. Studies carried out during project preparation found that communities along the corridor were highly vulnerable to both HIV/AIDS and human trafficking risks because of the poverty and low status of women and children in the area, the presence of tribal communities with a history of sending women and children into prostitution in tea shops and red light areas, and the expected increase in demand for commercial sex workers along the corridor from both highway construction workers and truckers. To address these risks, the loan project included a component on HIV/AIDS and human trafficking. The HIV/AIDS activities supported by the loan include (i) awareness-raising for contractors and construction workers; (ii) a program on public awareness and behavior change aimed at both the general public and high-risk groups; (iii) strengthening of referral systems for HIV testing and sexually transmitted disease treatment; (iv) condom promotion; and (v) capacity building of local nongovernment organizations, pharmacists and health workers, motivators in service areas, and others. The activities to prevent trafficking that the loan supports include (i) a program on public awareness and safe migration aimed at both the general public and target groups; (ii) linkage with existing government programs that focus on educational and economic empowerment of women and children, especially those from scheduled castes and tribes; and (iii) capacity building of local nongovernment organizations, community vigilance groups, police and local government officials, motivators in service areas, and others.

³⁷ The sample was small and not necessarily representative, but the sample size is comparable to recent ADB special evaluation studies. For example, the 2004 ADB *Special Evaluation Study on Effectiveness of Participatory Approaches: Do the New Approaches Offer an Effective Solution to the Conventional Problems in Rural Development Projects?* includes case studies of six projects in five countries; while the 2003 ADB *Special Evaluation Study on Participatory Approaches in Forest and Water Resource Operations in Selected Developing Member Countries* reviews six projects in three countries.

³⁸ ADB. 2005. *Gender Equality Results in ADB Projects: Rapid Gender Assessments of 12 Projects* (Synthesis Report). Manila; and *Gender Equality Results in ADB Projects: Bangladesh Country Report, Cambodia Country Report, Nepal Country Report, and Pakistan Country Report*. Manila.

progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment. Project GAPs are found to be an effective tool for gender mainstreaming as they provide a road map for implementing the project's gender design features. The RGAs demonstrate that projects with detailed design or implementation GAPs have the most comprehensive results for women, including participation in most project activities, access to project resources, practical benefits, and progress toward more equal gender relations. Projects with delayed or partial implementation of GAPs demonstrate fewer results but had significant potential to deliver benefits if GAPs were fully implemented. In contrast, projects without comprehensive GAPs achieved some practical benefits but generally demonstrated the least progress toward strategic changes in gender relations. Based on the successful experience with implementing project GAPs, some executing agencies have adopted the GAP designs as general models for gender mainstreaming across the sector. Further information on the RGA methodology and findings is provided in Appendix 7.

66. The RGAs identify a number of common findings within sectors:

- (i) **Agriculture and rural development.** The five projects in the sample all included GAPs. Three were found to be achieving very positive results in terms of participation, access to project resources, practical benefits, and positive changes in gender relations. The GAPs were also found to be contributing to the overall project objective of reducing vulnerability to poverty. In the remaining two projects, implementation of the GAPs was delayed, and therefore the projects demonstrated fewer results but significant potential. In the three high-performance projects, a gender specialist—generally the national gender consultants in ADB's resident missions—had worked with the executing agency to refine and implement the GAP, and continued to monitor its implementation. Some of the intermediate results from these projects are summarized in Box 8.
- (ii) **Governance.** Two of the three loans in the sample included gender-related policy reforms as conditions for the release of loan funds. These conditions raised the profile of gender concerns to the policy level, introduced specific gender policy changes, and opened up space for policy dialogue and reform measures. However, the RGAs found that systematic follow-up was needed to ensure that the gender reforms were fully implemented. Indeed, one of the loans, the Nepal Governance Reform Program, has already encountered delays in introducing gender-related changes to the Civil Service Act.
- (iii) **Health and education.** Most of the projects in the sample had gender-related objectives but no GAP (or a GAP that was not being implemented). All of the projects were found to be delivering benefits to women and girls, but the project objectives were not being fully realized because inadequate attention was being paid to the social and institutional constraints on women's and girls' access to education and health services. In particular, the RGAs noted the importance of recruiting female teachers and health personnel to work in rural areas, involving both women and men in school and health committees, and promoting positive changes in attitudes and behavior.

67. The RGAs also found a strong two-way relationship between strategic changes in gender relations and practical benefits for women in terms of access to basic services, resources, and income. For example, in the rural development projects studied, enlisting the support of local leaders and male family members was an important strategic step in encouraging women to form work or savings groups, through which they could access project resources and other practical benefits. Through these groups, women were also beginning to address concerns about domestic violence, alcohol use, and gambling. In the governance

program loans studied, the gender strategies and plans were strategic in nature, aiming to influence government policy, staffing, and budgeting.

Box 8: Intermediate Gender Results in Agriculture and Rural Development Projects

Bangladesh: Third Rural Infrastructure Development Project

- 816 shops allotted to female traders in growth center markets, with 733 female traders receiving shop management training
- 4.62 million days of construction work generated for female laborers (compared with 14.56 million days for male laborers), based on fair wage standards
- 1.34 million days of tree planting and road maintenance work generated for female laborers
- 74 union parishad complexes built with separate room and toilet for female members, and training for 938 female members on financial management and local resource mobilization
- 14 flood refuges built with private corners for women
- management rules for women's market sections and gender-sensitive union parishad complex design adopted by government for general use
- gender design features of the loan replicated and adopted across the sector

Nepal: Third Livestock Development Project

- women's participation in livestock groups increased from 26% in 1999 to 51% in 2004 (after introduction of the gender action plan as a midcourse correction)
- women represent 44% of participants in on-site training, and 35% of participants in training outside the village
- women are 44% of representatives in executive committees of community-based organizations
- women's workloads have decreased due to project-supported fodder production
- women are more likely to participate in district livestock action teams, and to be consulted in decision-making about agroprocessing and use of credit
- Department of Livestock Services applied the project gender action plan to other projects across the sector

Pakistan: Malakand Rural Development Project

- 322 women's organizations mobilized (first opportunity for women's collective action in their communities, supported by male leaders and family members)
- more than 1,000 women received training under the project, including 108 female poultry entrepreneurs and 154 lady health workers and traditional birth attendants (who also received first aid and safe delivery kits)
- new water supply schemes provide time savings to women and are expected to provide health benefits as well
- improved roads benefit women in remote areas, mainly for access to emergency health services
- gender awareness of executing agency staff and nongovernment organization partners has increased, although gender-related activities are still given lower priority than others

68. The encouraging findings from some of the RGAs can be compared with earlier special evaluation studies of gender issues in ADB loan projects.³⁹ For example, the special evaluation study completed in 2001 found that the projects reviewed had provided some practical benefits to women, but did not adequately consider the structural barriers to women's access and participation in project activities, and therefore made little or no contribution to women's status in the project areas. The same study also found that the project designs had assumed a much greater capacity than existed in the executing agencies to carry out gender-related activities. In contrast, the RGAs found evidence of strategic as well as practical benefits to women in several projects that included project GAPs, and improved capacity in some executing agencies to implement projects in a more gender-responsive way. However, some of the projects in the RGA sample, especially those without detailed project GAPs, exhibited the same weaknesses found in earlier projects, indicating the need for improved gender-responsive design and implementation of loan projects

³⁹ ADB. 1995. *Review of Performance of WID and Poverty Reduction Efforts in Bank-Financed Projects*. Manila; and ADB. 2001. *Special Evaluation Study on Gender and Development*. Manila.

b. Project Completion Reports

69. As of June 2005, very few PCRs were available for loans approved in 1998 or later. Of these, none were for loans with GAD themes, only two were for loans with gender mainstreaming characteristics, and three were for loans rated with some gender benefits.⁴⁰ Four of the loans were fast-disbursing program loans (including loans to Indonesia and Thailand to mitigate the social impacts of the Asian financial crisis) and one was a flood damage rehabilitation project loan. The gender results from these few loans are hardly representative of ADB's overall loan portfolio. However, most of the gender-related targets in the Indonesia and Thailand crisis loans were achieved or exceeded, with related improvements in education and health indicators, and the most successful programs (such as block grants to village midwives in Indonesia) were extended or enhanced by the governments after the program period.

c. Project Performance Reports

70. PPRs, which are periodically updated by project review missions, provide another source of information about the implementation of gender-responsive loans during the review period. Because of delays in loan effectiveness and commencement of project activities, PPRs provide little information on recently approved loans. Since the PPR generally follows the format of the design and monitoring framework, reporting on gender results depends on the extent to which expected gender outcomes (and related indicators, activities, assumptions, and risks) were included in the design and monitoring framework for the loan. The review examined a sample of 59 PPRs for loans with GAD themes or gender mainstreaming characteristics approved in 2000–2002. Around 80% of recent PPRs for loans with GAD themes report on the status of gender-related objectives and activities, compared with 55% of PPRs for loans with gender mainstreaming characteristics. Only one PPR specifically refers to the project GAP,⁴¹ although 33 of the related projects and programs include GAPS in their design.

71. Because the projects and programs are still being implemented, the PPRs report mainly on inputs and outputs; for outcome and impact indicators, many of the PPRs simply state that data is not yet available. Even so, some PPRs do refer to intermediate outcomes. For example, the PPR for the Bangladesh Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement (Sector) Project reports on the review mission's meetings with female ward commissioners in the project towns, who expressed their commitment to improve municipal services and support implementation of the project GAP. The PPR for the Papua New Guinea Coastal Fisheries Management and Development Project reports on the success of a draft HIV/AIDS workplace policy prepared under the project, which led the National Fisheries Authority to establish a committee to promote HIV/AIDS workplace policies in the fisheries industry. On the other hand, the PPR for the Nepal Governance Reform Program notes delays in amendments to the Civil Service Act (including amendments intended to increase the proportion of women in the civil service). In general, the PPRs provide limited snapshots on the implementation of gender-related provisions in ADB loans. However, they underscore the importance of including gender-related targets and indicators in the design and monitoring frameworks for loans. Otherwise, ADB will not likely be able to monitor these gender-related measures, and their implementation as planned is not assured.

⁴⁰ Indonesia: Social Protection Sector Development Program (1998); Indonesia: Health and Nutrition Sector Development Program (1999); PRC: Northeast Flood Damage Rehabilitation Project (1999); Thailand: Social Sector Program (1998); and Vanuatu: Comprehensive Reform Program (1998).

⁴¹ ADB. 2002. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors on a Proposed Loan to Bangladesh for the Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement (Sector) Project*. Manila.

C. Technical Assistance and Capacity Development

72. Most DMCs have now adopted gender mainstreaming as their strategy for promoting gender equality. However, effective gender mainstreaming requires capacity not only in the national focal agency on gender, but also in other key ministries and agencies. The GAD policy attempts to address these capacity needs by providing TA to national gender focal agencies, and more recently, extending gender-related TA to line ministries. The policy also initiated a regional TA project to provide long-term national gender consultants to several of ADB's resident missions to strengthen the gender capacity of executing agencies.

73. ADB's experience in gender capacity development confirms the lessons learned from other development agencies. Gender capacity development, like capacity development more generally, is a long-term process of institutional change.⁴² This process is more successful when it (i) is based on a realistic assessment of existing capacities and constraints, (ii) builds on existing capacities, and (iii) includes a continuum of capacity development activities that are part of the work program of the institution or individuals concerned. ADB's support for gender capacity development has been more successful when senior staff of the ministry or agency concerned are strongly committed and when ADB provides practical support directly linked to implementation of loan projects over an extended time.

1. Trends in Technical Assistance

74. During the review period, ADB continued to provide TA support to some gender focal agencies in DMCs (Cambodia, Fiji Islands, Lao PDR, and Vanuatu). ADB also expanded its technical and capacity support to other areas, including (i) gender audits in key sector ministries, (ii) development of sector gender strategies and action plans, (iii) gender-related law reform, (iv) gender capacity development of local government officials, and (iv) increased government capacity to address emerging issues such as the displacement of female workers due to changes in international trade rules. Most of these activities were supported through advisory TA to individual DMCs. Regional TA (RETA) projects were also undertaken to support improvements in gender-related statistics and budgeting, gender capacity building of locally elected women officials, and national and regional initiatives to combat trafficking in women and girls (Appendix 8).

75. Despite this expansion of TA activities, TA grants for gender still represent a small fraction of ADB's overall TA activities. During the review period, 25 advisory TAs (representing 2.4% of all advisory TAs) and 23 RETAs (4.7% of all RETAs) addressing gender issues were approved.⁴³ Grant funding for these TAs totaled \$22.44 million, or 2.4% of total grant funding for

⁴² Capacity development is defined as "the process by which individuals, groups, organizations and countries develop, enhance and organize their systems, resources and knowledge—all reflected in their abilities (individually and collectively) to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives." UNDP. 2002. *Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results*. New York. In addition, gender capacity development involves challenging deeply rooted assumptions about the capabilities and roles of women and men in a particular society.

⁴³ For 1998–2001, TAs addressing gender issues were identified based on a review of TA titles, and confirmed by a review of the related TA reports. For 2002–2004, identification of the TAs was based on a review of TA titles and GAD classifications of TAs in the project performance information system, also confirmed by a review of the related TA reports. TAs were considered to address gender issues if they included (i) gender-related objectives, (ii) gender-related outputs, (iii) a gender specialist on the TA team, or (iv) a participatory process explicitly including women's NGOs or women's groups. Several recent TAs classified with a GAD theme in the system did not meet these criteria, and therefore were dropped from the review list. The review included advisory TAs and RETAs, but excluded project preparatory TAs.

advisory TAs and RETAs. In 2004, the number of gender-related advisory TAs and RETAs increased significantly, but they still represented less than 8% in number and less than 5% in amount for all advisory TAs and RETAs in that year. In contrast, governance theme TAs comprised 17.5% in number and 15.3% in amount during 2002–2004.⁴⁴ Moreover, most gender-related TAs approved in 2002–2004 were financed from special grant funds such as the Poverty Reduction Cooperation Fund and the GAD Cooperation Fund, with very few funded from ADB's general TA resources.

2. Capacity Development through Technical Assistance

76. ADB's approach to building gender capacity through TA projects evolved substantially over the review period. In earlier years, ADB provided TA for gender capacity development mainly to national focal agencies for gender, as the logical starting point. These TA projects were developed on an ad hoc basis, in response to demand from national gender focal agencies and willingness of program staff to allocate TA resources to gender, subject to the availability of TA resources. The completion reports for these TAs indicate that their objectives and time frames were often too ambitious; and overestimated the available staff, resources, internal commitment, and external influence of these gender focal agencies to act as advocates and facilitators of gender mainstreaming within their own governments (rather than as implementers of women's projects).⁴⁵

77. ADB's most successful experience in providing TA to a national gender focal agency has been in Cambodia, where ADB supported a series of TA projects beginning in 1994. High-level commitment within the ministry, coupled with ADB's continuing support over several years, contributed to the success of these TA projects. A recent audit report confirmed that the TAs resulted in strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs to contribute to various national planning processes.⁴⁶ The audit report recommended, however, that ADB and other development partners consider using a multipronged approach that includes both continued support for the ministry in its role as gender facilitator together with direct support for building gender mainstreaming capacity in sector ministries.

78. More recently, ADB has been providing gender capacity development TAs to sector ministries such as agriculture and rural development in Cambodia and Viet Nam, with similar sector-specific TA projects under development. TA support is also being provided to key ministries and provincial governments to integrate gender concerns in the decentralization programs under way in Indonesia and Pakistan. In contrast to earlier gender-related TAs, these TA projects are closely linked to ADB financed loan projects in the sector. As such, they are considered to have greater potential for sustainability because of ADB's continuing engagement in the sector and relationship with the respective sector ministries and provincial governments.

3. Capacity Support from Gender Consultants in Resident Missions

79. The main objective in placing long-term national gender consultants in some resident missions was to help develop the gender capacity of executing agencies and to engender ADB's loan portfolio. A recent assessment found that the consultants have been particularly successful in this area as they provide practical, sector-specific support to project design and

⁴⁴ ADB. 2006. Draft Summary Report on Improving Governance and Anticorruption Policies of the Asian Development Bank. Manila. Similar data for other thematic areas were unavailable.

⁴⁵ Similar weaknesses were noted in the completion reports for many nongender TA projects.

⁴⁶ ADB. 2003. *Technical Assistance Performance Audit Report on Gender and Development in Cambodia*. Manila.

implementation teams on an ongoing basis and have built up credibility with executing agency staff.⁴⁷ While the resident mission gender teams have conducted formal gender training workshops for executing agencies, they have generally been more effective in building GAD capacity of executing and implementing agencies through the process of developing and implementing GAPs for ongoing and new loan projects. Through this process, executing agency staff have become more familiar and sensitized to gender issues in their sector, while developing and testing practical approaches to address these issues in specific projects and across the sector.

80. Beginning in 2004, this practical approach to gender capacity development was extended through several lateral learning events, including a regional workshop in which executing agency officials from several DMCs shared their successful experiences in mainstreaming gender. The presentation of good practices and approaches in gender mainstreaming by engineers and other sector specialists had credibility and was well received by sector experts from other agencies. This led to requests for similar peer training programs to be conducted for other executing agency staff in their home countries.

81. To date, most of the resident mission gender teams have focused on capacity development within key sectors such as agriculture, rural infrastructure, and water. In addition, the gender national officer in the Pakistan Resident Mission initiated an ambitious, government-wide gender capacity-development program involving the development of federal and provincial gender reform action plans, which are linked to several policy reform initiatives that ADB is supporting (Box 5).

D. Support to the Beijing Platform for Action

82. ADB's GAD policy includes a commitment to support DMCs in implementing their commitments under the BPFA. During the review period, ADB supported some DMCs to develop or implement their national plans of action on women, and supported regional activities related to both the 5- and 10-year reviews of the BPFA.

83. Most of ADB's support to the BPFA commitments of its DMCs was implicit in its loans and TA activities and is reflected most directly in education, health, water supply and sanitation, microfinance, and agriculture projects. This support was reinforced by ADB's poverty reduction strategy and commitment to the MDGs. A review in 2003 found that virtually all recent ADB loans that had poverty reduction objectives also carried a GAD theme. During 2002–2004, all health loans; over two thirds of agriculture, education, and microfinance loans; and one third of water supply and sanitation loans had either a GAD theme or gender mainstreaming features. However, these loans do not consistently address the social norms, assumptions, and gender stereotypes that prevent women and girls from accessing basic services and the gender design features in the loans are often not monitored.

84. ADB also took some steps to assist DMCs in addressing emerging concerns highlighted in the Beijing Platform. In the area of power sharing and decision making, ADB supported affirmative action policies, other gender reform measures, and capacity development of locally elected women officials in a few DMCs through loans and TA grants. Through regional TA grants and some health and transport loans, ADB also supported initiatives to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and human trafficking (especially of women and children) (Appendix 8).

⁴⁷ ADB. 2002. *Enhancing Gender and Development Capacity in Developing Member Countries: A Review*. Manila.

However, these initiatives require careful monitoring and capacity support to the government agencies and other stakeholders involved to ensure their implementation.

85. The recent 10-year review of progress in implementing the BPFA noted that despite many gains, gaps remain in all critical areas of the BPFA (Box 1). Therefore ADB's continuing support for the DMCs' national action plans to implement the BPFA is important. This is also consistent with ADB's commitment to align its assistance more closely with the national priorities of its DMCs.

V. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE GAD POLICY

86. To support policy implementation and improve ADB's performance in addressing gender concerns in its operations, the GAD policy introduced several institutional mechanisms. This review considers the extent to which these mechanisms have contributed to improvements in ADB's gender-related work in the main policy areas discussed.

A. GAD Plan of Action for Operations

87. The GAD policy provides for the development of an ADB-wide GAD plan of action to operationalize the policy and enable periodic reviews of implementation. The original plan was developed in 1999 in close consultation with the operations departments, and was revised following the ADB reorganization in 2002.

88. The revised GAD plan of action encourages regional departments to identify a larger number of loans with a GAD theme or gender mainstreaming potential (compared with the previous period and with the 1998 baseline). The GAD plan provides a basis for following these loans through the design and approval process. The review tracked the loans identified in the revised GAD plan of action. Most of the loans included were subsequently approved with a GAD theme or gender mainstreaming characteristics, and several originally identified with gender mainstreaming potential were upgraded to GAD thematic loans by the time of loan approval.

89. The GAD plan of action proved to be a useful mechanism for promoting gender mainstreaming in ADB's lending operations and for tracking purposes. Given the heightened focus on managing for results, this practice should be continued and strengthened. Under the current organization, ADB's Gender, Social Development, and Civil Society Division (RSGS) is best positioned to coordinate this exercise, in close cooperation with the regional departments.

B. Organizational Structure and Staffing: Gender Specialists

90. The GAD policy recognizes the need to increase the complement of in-house gender specialists to implement the policy across the full range of ADB operations. Under the policy, two additional gender specialists were recruited at ADB headquarters—bringing the total number to four—and six long-term national gender consultants were engaged under a regional TA to work in resident missions. The four gender specialists at headquarters originally were located in the Social Development Division. Following the 2002 reorganization, two were devolved to regional departments, with the remaining two located in the newly created Poverty Reduction and Social Development Division (RSPR), now RSGS.

91. The gender specialists at headquarters and the resident mission consultants serve complementary functions. The gender specialists in RSGS coordinate ADB implementation of the GAD policy, including (i) policy development, policy compliance, performance monitoring,

and reporting; (ii) gender training; (iii) production of gender-related knowledge products; (iv) administration of gender-related funds; (v) training and technical supervision of the resident mission gender teams; and (vi) partnerships and networking. The regional departments and resident mission gender teams provide direct technical support to country and project teams on CSPs and loans, and also design and supervise gender-related TA projects. The resident mission gender teams also participate in development partner and/or government working groups on gender, engage regularly with the national gender focal agency and NGOs, and act as ADB's in-country gender focal point.

92. The review finds that the increased in-house gender expertise contributed substantially to the expansion of ADB's gender-related activities during 1998–2004. The sharp increase in 2000 of GAD theme and gender mainstreaming loans coincided with the recruitment of additional gender experts at headquarters and in the resident missions. This trend continued to 2004. The increase in gender-related TAs can also be attributed to the expanded complement of gender experts, who designed and supervised virtually all of these TAs.

93. The review also finds that the GAD policy underestimated the number of specialists required to support policy implementation. Subsequent organizational changes resulted in weakened capacity and some confusion on gender as a cross-cutting concern.

1. Gender Specialists at Headquarters

94. The four gender specialists at headquarters contributed to both operational and institutional results under the GAD policy. While they have been instrumental in moving implementation of the GAD policy forward, their effectiveness has been hampered by organizational factors. Until 2002, all four gender specialists were located in the Social Development Division where they operated as a small but effective and flexible team that could respond to shifting demands for technical support from the operations departments. This flexible gender team was fractured in the 2002 reorganization with two specialists being relocated to regional departments. As a result, (i) critical mass was lost; (ii) three of the five regional departments had no gender specialist to provide technical gender support to country and project teams; (iii) the gender specialists relocated to regional departments were given expanded responsibilities covering all social development functions (including social safeguard functions) resulting in a diluted focus on gender; (iv) their location in a sector division constrained their potential to work across sectors or to contribute to upstream CSP, policy, and program issues; and (v) only two gender specialists were left in the central division to coordinate ADB-wide GAD policy implementation. In some instances, the location of regional department gender specialists in a sector division also meant they were given responsibility for loan administration and processing. Their location in social sector divisions implied gender is only relevant to the social sectors rather than to economic sectors, governance, and infrastructure. In the regional departments, the gender specialists became isolated, marginal, and to some extent, demoralized given the limited career prospects for thematic specialists in regional departments.

95. Other recent ADB policy reviews have similarly noted both the organizational problems and the insufficient number of crosscutting and thematic specialists to support ADB's core thematic policies. This deficiency is particularly stark in the case of gender because the GAD policy has been seriously understaffed since the time of its approval, in comparison with all

other thematic policies and strategies.⁴⁸ Currently, the breakdown of thematic/cross-cutting specialists in ADB (Regional and Sustainable Development Department (RSDD) and regional departments) are as follows: 20 environment, 7 resettlement and indigenous peoples, 11 poverty reduction, 4 gender, 11 social development, 5 social protection, 11 governance and capacity development, 7 financial management, and 7 private sector.⁴⁹ These figures clearly indicate that gender as a thematic priority is significantly understaffed compared with other thematic areas. Notably, gender is the only cross-cutting thematic priority without at least one full-time specialist in each regional department. However, a few social development and poverty reduction specialists with gender skills in the regional departments provide intermittent gender technical support to CSP and loan processing teams.

96. The number of gender specialists in the central support division, RSGS, is smaller than in any of ADB's comparator institutions, which each have central gender units with at least four gender specialist staff.⁵⁰ International experience has found that gender mainstreaming requires technical experts strategically located in a central unit and in operations areas to provide support to key operations.⁵¹ Under ADB's current organizational structure, the modest complement of gender specialists at headquarters is inadequate to support continued progress under the policy. At least three additional gender specialists are required at ADB headquarters so that each regional department will have at least one gender expert on staff.

97. Since an increase in the number of gender specialists is unlikely on its own to resolve identified weaknesses in policy implementation, a review and assessment of the organizational structure for improved policy implementation is required. The terms of reference and location of gender specialists in the regional departments should be reviewed to facilitate and ensure optimal utilization of their skills, provision of support across sectors, support to CSPs and other upstream activities, as well as functioning as anchors for the resident mission gender team. Ideally, given the limited number of gender specialist in regional departments, they should be located in a central unit to provide gender support across sectors and to upstream strategy and program support.

2. Gender National Officers and Consultants in Resident Missions

98. Under a regional TA project, long-term national gender consultants were placed in several resident missions to strengthen the gender capacity of executing agencies to engender the design and implementation of ADB's loan activities.⁵² An assessment of ADB's resident mission gender teams found that their performance exceeded expectations in virtually all areas of work.⁵³ To a large extent, ADB's improved gender performance, especially in the loan portfolio, was largely attributed to the consultants. Based on this positive assessment, ADB approved a second 3-year phase of the RETA project. In this phase, 3 of the original 6 gender consultant positions were converted to resident mission national officer positions and new

⁴⁸ In comparison, the *Review of the Implementation of ADB's Governance and Anticorruption Policies* [draft] cites 12 approved positions for governance in addition to other relevant disciplines such as financial, economic, public resource management, and law.

⁴⁹ Budget and Management Services Division data; some minor inaccuracies may exist.

⁵⁰ The central gender units in the African Development Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) each include 4 gender specialists (the IADB gender unit also employs 5 long-term consultants). The Gender and Development Division in the World Bank includes 10 gender specialists.

⁵¹ United Nations Millennium Project. 2005. *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*. Task Force on Education and Gender Equality.

⁵² This RETA was supported by the Government of Denmark. ADB. 1999. *Enhancing Gender and Development Activities in DMCs*. Manila.

⁵³ ADB. 2002. *Enhancing Gender and Development Capacity in Developing Member Countries: A Review*. Manila.

gender consultants were recruited for 4 additional resident missions, extending coverage to a total of 10: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, and Viet Nam.

99. The 2002 assessment of the resident mission gender specialists found that some had made more progress than others in various areas. All required substantial technical guidance and support from the principal gender specialist in RSPR (now RSGS), particularly in their first few years. Experience shows that the resident mission gender teams operate most effectively, and have the greatest impact when they receive strong support from their country directors. Similar to the experiences of headquarters gender staff devolved to regional departments, the more experienced resident mission gender consultants tend to be assigned additional tasks that are not directly focused on gender. The three gender specialists converted to regular national officer positions in resident missions have struggled to retain their functions as cross-cutting gender specialists. In one case, the specialist was reassigned as a project implementation officer; in the second case the national officer's task was expanded to include loan administration and social safeguards; and in the third NGO coordination responsibilities were added to those of gender. This has resulted in diluted focus on gender. Ensuring that resident mission gender teams continue to work full-time on gender activities is extremely important. To provide them with more coordinated support, this review recommends that the resident mission gender teams continue to be supervised jointly by their respective country directors and RSGS, on the basis of jointly developed annual work programs.

C. Grant Funds

100. To test new gender-responsive approaches, the GAD policy includes establishing a small-grant fund under a RETA, to finance gender-related initiatives of governments and NGOs, and cofinance GAD activities with other development partners. The RETA,⁵⁴ approved in 1999, financed 56 initiatives over 3 years.⁵⁵ The interim progress report found that some of the projects strengthened the gender focus of several operational activities (including poverty assessments, CSPs, and loan projects). The RETA also supported innovative NGO programs addressing violence against women, legal empowerment of women, and other issues; and cofinanced gender-related activities with other agencies in the region. It also served as a model for a subsequent RETA on ADB and NGO partnership.

101. The GAD initiatives RETA demonstrated the value of small-grant funds to test new approaches to gender mainstreaming and to strengthen ADB's partnership with other agencies and NGOs working on gender-related issues. The new GAD Cooperation Fund (Box 9), funded by the governments of Canada, Denmark, and Norway, is providing valuable resources to continue and expand these activities, as well as supporting the second phase of ADB's resident mission gender consultant program. However, ADB's ability to make effective use of these grant resources is constrained by the limited number of gender specialists working in the regional departments. Although all staff in the regional departments and resident missions are encouraged to tap the GAD Cooperation Fund, gender specialists play an important role in developing and processing the proposals to utilize these funds.

⁵⁴ The RETA was supported by the Government of Japan. ADB. 1999. *Regional Technical Assistance for Gender and Development Initiatives*. Manila.

⁵⁵ The ADB website adb.org/gender/working/ provides details.

D. External Forum on GAD

102. ADB established the External Forum on GAD (EFG) to facilitate dialogue with gender experts from government, academia, and civil society; keep informed on current gender issues in Asia and the Pacific; and provide oversight and guidance on policy implementation. The EFG was established in 2001 and has met six times at ADB headquarters.

103. During its sessions, the EFG has met with Management, some Board members, and senior staff to discuss how ADB could strengthen its attention to gender concerns. In conjunction with these sessions, EFG members have conducted seminars for ADB staff on relevant gender issues. The EFG contributed to the ADF VIII progress report, commented on several policy initiatives, and provided technical input to this review. Individual EFG members have participated in ADB workshops and gender training activities in DMCs. Outcome documents from EFG sessions, including recommendations for further action, have been sent to Management, senior staff, and Board members, and posted on ADB's website. The EFG's main recommendations for strengthening ADB's gender mainstreaming approach, and the results of its self-assessment, are provided in Appendix 9.

104. The EFG is ADB's first standing advisory group on a thematic priority. Given the limited staff and financial resources dedicated to gender mainstreaming, the EFG has played an important role in raising the profile of gender issues within ADB, sharing knowledge and experience on regional gender concerns relevant to ADB's operations, and providing independent feedback and guidance on ADB's performance under the GAD policy. It is being considered as a model for advisory groups in other thematic areas.

Box 9: GAD Cooperation Fund

Established in 2003, this fund aims to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific by assisting the Asian Development Bank to improve implementation of the gender and development (GAD) policy and related plan of action. Initial contributions totaling \$4.4 million from the governments of Canada, Denmark, and Norway support activities over 3 years. The fund supports several key areas under the GAD policy: (i) country strategy and program activities; (ii) gender strategies and plans, and other gender-related support for loan projects; (iii) placement of gender specialists in three additional resident missions; (iv) capacity development of national focal agencies for gender equality and executing agencies; (v) gender impact assessments of loan projects and programs; and (vi) partnerships with women's organizations, development partners, and gender networks. To date, the fund has supported two regional technical assistance (TA) projects (including a regional TA to extend support for the gender specialists in resident missions), three advisory TAs, and 22 subprojects.

E. Coordination and Partnerships

105. Under its GAD policy, ADB committed to expand cooperation with other development agencies, government focal points, and women's NGOs to promote gender equality. The review finds that ADB's collaboration with these key stakeholders has improved, mainly at the institutional level and in DMCs with a resident mission gender national officer or consultant. In DMCs without a resident mission gender specialist, ADB's engagement with local partners on gender issues has been much more limited, ad hoc, and often nonexistent.

106. At the country level, ADB has begun to collaborate with the World Bank, United Nations agencies, and other partners in preparing multidonor CGAs in coordination with national gender focal agencies. Joint CGAs for Cambodia and Mongolia have been published and preparations are ongoing for multiagency CGAs for PRC, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam. These joint CGAs provide a common reference on gender for development partners and governments, encourage greater consistency and coordination among development partners in their gender-

related work, and simultaneously lower the transaction costs for DMCs. The resident mission gender teams have expanded and strengthened ADB's collaboration with these country-level partners by participating in development partner/government working groups; commenting on draft laws, policies, and action plans of the governments; and engaging with women's NGOs.

107. At the institutional level, ADB has participated actively in the Multilateral Development Bank Working Group on Gender, Gendernet of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and other interagency networks on gender issues. At both the institutional and country levels, several ADB member countries have provided valuable support to ADB's gender-related work, including Denmark's initial support of the gender specialists in resident missions; Japan's support for the GAD initiatives RETA; and the contributions of Canada, Denmark, and Norway to the GAD Cooperation Fund. Additional information on ADB's coordination and partnership activities related to gender is provided in Appendix 10. Given ADB's commitment to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Harmonization, ADB must expand its collaboration on gender to maximize the effectiveness of its assistance in this area.

F. Knowledge Products and Services

108. ADB has produced a variety of knowledge products on gender-related topics. These include CGAs, RGAs, reports from regional studies, gender and sector checklists, project profiles and case studies, newsletters, and videos (Appendix 11). Although many of these publications were prepared for the use of ADB staff and consultants, requests for reprints and translations, and downloads from the ADB website indicate strong external demand. For example, CGAs have generally been reprinted after 2 years due to high demand, and the gender and sector checklists have been translated into several languages in response to requests from country partners. ADB's website on GAD was substantially restructured and is now an increasingly important vehicle for sharing publications and other information on ADB's gender-related work with external parties. In the first half of 2005, the website averaged over 19,000 hits per month.

109. During the review period, the gender team in RSPR and in resident missions conducted various orientation and training activities on GAD. These include (i) a GAD session in the operations induction program for new staff; (ii) selective sector-specific GAD training for operations staff; (iii) GAD modules in ADB's annual seminars for DMC officials and project implementation seminars for project directors; and (iv) client-oriented gender capacity development programs developed by resident mission gender teams for executing agency staff (included peer training by executing agency officials from different DMCs). Since 2002, over 400 new ADB staff have received basic gender training through the staff induction program (records were not available for previous years). Since 1998, more than 540 DMC officials have been briefed on the GAD policy through the orientation program for DMC officials and regional seminars on project implementation. The GAD module in these seminars generally receives high marks for relevance and quality in the evaluations that participants complete.

110. With limited staff resources, ADB has produced a wide range of knowledge products that are of interest and relevance both inside and outside ADB, including practical tools for gender mainstreaming. However, no systematic tracking of demand for, and use of, these resources has been undertaken. To support the GAD policy, ADB should continue producing relevant and accessible gender-related knowledge products for staff and DMC audiences, and provide more sector-specific training to ADB staff based on appropriate demand assessments. However, ADB's ability to expand its gender knowledge products and services (including gender training)

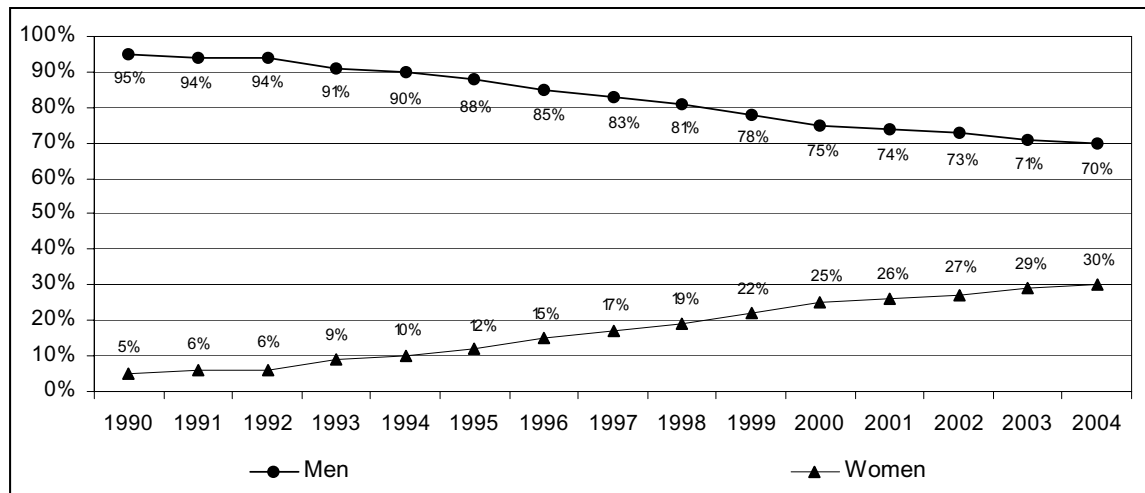
is constrained by the limited number of gender specialists on staff. In addition, the heavy travel commitments make scheduling training sessions difficult, especially for operational sector staff.

G. Internal Gender Action Programs

111. ADB recognizes that a more focused approach is needed to achieve a critical mass of women professional staff decision makers as well as a more representative professional staff gender profile. In September 1998, as a complement to the newly approved GAD policy, ADB prepared its first internal gender action program to address gender issues in ADB's recruitment and staffing activities for professional staff. In late 2002, the program was reviewed and while progress had been made, the outcomes from the review were used to develop a second program for 2003–2005. Both programs focused on the recruitment and progress of women within the institution, including in senior positions. A discussion of ADB's performance in these key areas during 1998–2004 follows.

112. ADB has made steady progress on increasing the representation of female professional staff, from 111 women staff members (16.7% of all professional staff) at the beginning of 1998 to 255 (29.8%) at the end of 2004 (Figure 6). The appointment rate of women professional staff averaged 34.6% of all appointments with a high of 48.5% in 1999. About 72.0% of appointments were at levels 3 and 4, 2.0 % at levels 5 and 6, and 2.5 % at the senior levels.⁵⁶ The number of women professional staff in operations has increased but not as quickly as that of women in the nonoperations areas. Furthermore, the percentage of women working in nontraditional operations areas remained at about 25.4%.⁵⁷

**Figure 6: Professional Staff by Sex^a
1990–2004^b**



^a Excludes Management (i.e., the President and vice-presidents) but includes director's advisers, and staff on loan to the Asian Development Bank Institute, secondments, and special leave without pay.

^b 2004 statistics are as of 31 December 2004.

Source: ADB: Human Resources Division.

⁵⁶ Senior levels are defined as levels 7–10. Comparative figures for males are as follows: 72.4% at levels 3–4; 8.6% at levels 5–6; 4.4% at senior levels.

⁵⁷ Monitoring of women professional staff in operations departments and in nontraditional areas commenced in 2002 as part of Gender Action Program II.

113. The recruitment rate of women professional staff has varied with the type of vacancies. In skill set areas with a reasonable number of women candidates, such as social development and law, women have successfully been recruited. However, in other skill set areas with fewer women candidates, such as infrastructure and energy, recruitment rates have been lower. Furthermore, women candidates in nontraditional areas are in demand in the job market and thus attracting them is more difficult. ADB's location impacts recruitment due to security concerns, professional isolation, and limited opportunities for employment of spouses. The recruitment of women will continue to be a challenge since ADB's future skill set requirements are in areas with fewer qualified and experienced women candidates. ADB must intensify its search for qualified women candidates in all skill set areas, especially nontraditional areas.

114. In addition to overall representation, participation of women at senior levels is critical because these are key decision-making positions and heavily influence the culture of the organization. Between 1998 and 2004, the number of senior women professional staff increased from 5 (5.1% of senior staff) to 12 (9.4%). Of the 12, 5 are in operations and 7 are in advisory and support areas; operations constitute ADB's core business area. Ensuring that women participate fully in the core business areas is important to ADB's business as well as its profile. Recruitment directly into the senior levels has been low, with only 5 women direct entrants.⁵⁸ Recruitment is difficult given the small pool of suitable candidates, who are usually in great demand. The senior women who have been directly recruited mainly have been entering the last stages of their careers, especially given ADB's retirement of 60 years; and so their period of service is relatively short.

115. Eight women have been promoted internally to senior positions. The number of women in the pipeline levels (levels 5 and 6) has increased from 16 (representing 6.4% of staff at these levels) to 98 (27%). This significant increase is promising for the future progression of women into the senior ranks. However, ADB needs to ensure that well-qualified and experienced women progress into the senior positions.

116. Women's share of total promotions averaged 27.6% with attrition rates averaging 5.3%. While the promotion rate is reasonable given that women's participation in ADB only commenced in a meaningful way in the past 5 years,⁵⁹ most of the promotions have been at nonsenior levels. Women's representation in resident missions increased from 8.6% at the beginning of 1998 to 18.3% as at the end of 2004, demonstrating that women are increasingly participating in the important work of the resident missions. A comparison of representation by level and sex between the beginning of 1997 and end of 2004 is shown in Figure 7.

117. The second gender action program was subsequently incorporated as a key action into the new human resource strategy.⁶⁰ The strategy has a number of initiatives that will strongly contribute to strengthening gender equality at ADB by improving institutional human resource processes and procedures, such as recruitment and selection, and performance management. The initiatives are providing opportunities to strengthen gender mainstreaming into these key processes and create a better institutional human resource environment for the implementation of the gender interventions.

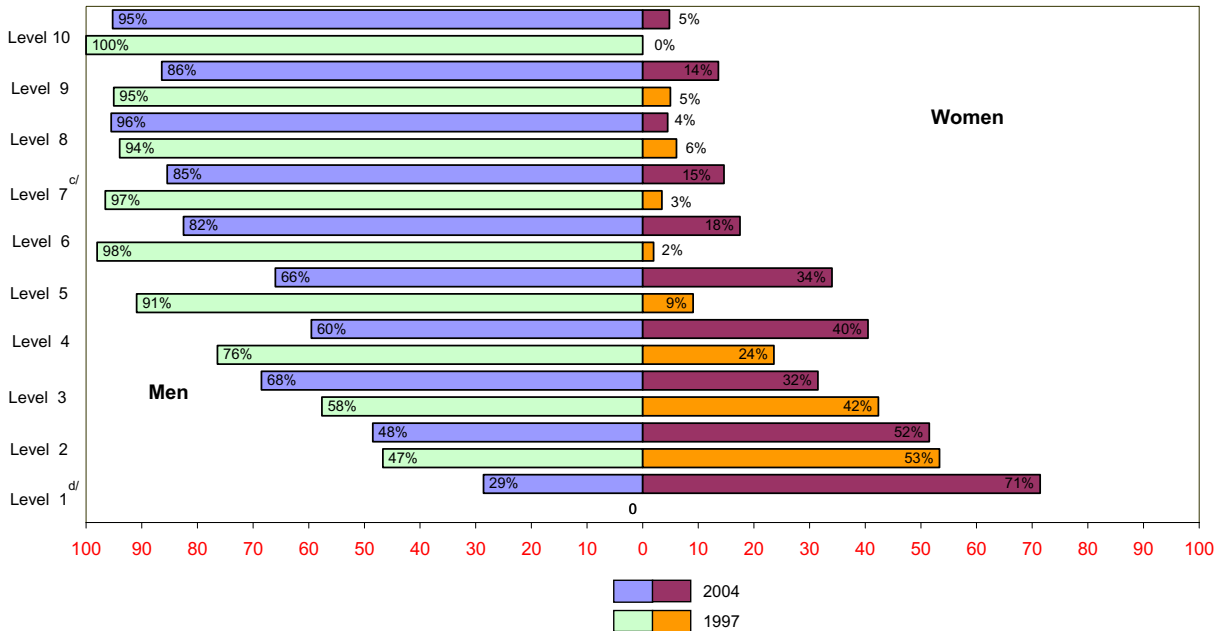
⁵⁸ One woman was appointed and also left during 1998–2004. During 1998–2004, 16 males were directly appointed to senior positions

⁵⁹ Women's participation reached 25% of total professional staff only in 2000.

⁶⁰ ADB. 2005. *Gender Action Program*. Manila.

118. To renew efforts on this important human resource issue, a review of the second gender action program commenced in late 2005 with a third gender action program planned to commence in late 2006. The focus on increasing women's representation will continue, particularly in senior positions, and initiatives to enable their full participation in the organization.

Figure 7 Professional Staff by Personal Level and Sex^{a/}
Comparison 1997 and 2004^{b/}



^{a/} Excludes Management (i.e. The President and Vice Presidents) but includes Directors' Advisors, and staff on loan to DBI/secondment/special leave without pay.

^{b/} 2004 Statistics is as at 31 December

^{c/} 2004 Statistics includes five (5) professional staff at personal level 7 but occupying non-managerial positions.

^{d/} In 1997, there were no level 1 positions.

VI. CHALLENGES OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING

A. Overall Assessment of ADB's Experience

119. Measurable progress in gender mainstreaming has been made across all major areas of ADB operations. The improvements in ADB's performance, especially in loan operations, have been facilitated by institutional mechanisms such as the operational GAD plan of action and the placement of gender consultants in several resident missions. Nevertheless, weaknesses and gaps remain. Promoting gender as a cross-cutting theme remains a challenge in an organization such as ADB with operations structured primarily along sector and regional lines,⁶¹ and with a limited number of gender thematic staff.

120. Although the responsibility for implementing the GAD policy rests with the regional departments and RSDD, in practice most of the progress to date has been due to the advocacy and effort of the few gender specialists and resident mission consultant teams. This is reflected, for example, in the relatively few loans with GAD themes originally included in CSPs, compared with the number of loans with GAD themes or gender mainstreaming that are ultimately

⁶¹ This is also a challenge for other cross-cutting concerns, such as poverty, environment, and governance.

approved. The improvement in the gender content of ADB's loan pipeline between the CSP and loan approval stages is due largely to the intervention and follow-up of individual loans by the resident mission and headquarters gender specialists during loan processing. This is not a sustainable basis for implementation of the GAD policy.

121. Gender as a thematic priority is yet to be fully institutionalized. This could be the result of a combination of factors: (i) inadequate staff incentives for promoting gender inclusiveness, (ii) lack of clear accountability mechanisms in regional departments for GAD policy implementation, (iii) the erroneous assumption that GAD policy compliance is optional since it is not one of the social safeguard policies, (iv) limited gender awareness and sensitivity among staff, (v) lack of appreciation of the relevance of gender issues to ADB operations, (vi) excessive staff workloads combined with limited staff and financial resources resulting in less priority on gender, and (vii) limited institutional commitment to GAD.

B. Experience of Other Development Organizations

122. In developing the GAD policy, ADB drew heavily on the experience of comparator organizations such as the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and bilateral development agencies. Since 1998, these and other development organizations have been confronting similar challenges in endeavoring to mainstream gender concerns in their operations. Gender mainstreaming continues to be the preferred approach, and was recently affirmed in the 10-year review of the BPF. ⁶² However, mainstreaming entails some risks and may lead to "policy evaporation," ⁶³ especially where gender equality goals are not supported by an adequate number of staff, specific implementation plans and budgets, and clear institutional accountability. In organizations where gender is treated as a cross-cutting issue, a gender policy can also become "institutionally homeless," ⁶⁴ as gender mainstreaming becomes everyone's responsibility (and therefore no one's responsibility).

123. The experience of other development organizations confirms that gender mainstreaming is a valid strategy for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, but that it is a long-term process requiring concerted effort and resources. In particular, it requires (i) high-level commitment, (ii) a critical mass of gender experts with an institutional anchor, (iii) capacity development of all operations staff (including senior staff), (iv) adequate funding, (v) specific mechanisms to ensure that gender analysis is undertaken and that gender-responsive approaches are developed and followed in the organization's activities, and (vi) institutional accountability. ⁶⁵ Most of ADB's comparators therefore have established central gender units and developed detailed action plans to guide implementation of their gender policies, with

⁶² In connection with reviewing the Beijing Platform, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women adopted a resolution in support of gender mainstreaming as "a tool for effective policy-making at all levels." However, the commission also noted that gender mainstreaming is "not a substitute for targeted, women-specific policies and programs." United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. 2005. Report on the Forty-Ninth Session (28 February–11 and 22 March 2005), Chapter I.D, Resolution 49/4, "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all national policies and programs."

⁶³ Derbyshire, Helen. 2002. *DFID Gender Manual: A Practical Guide for Development Policy Makers and Practitioners*. London.

⁶⁴ UNDP. 2003. *Transforming the Mainstream: Gender in UNDP*. New York.

⁶⁵ Canadian International Development Agency. 2000. *Accelerating Change: Resources for Gender Mainstreaming*. Gatineau, Quebec; Helen Derbyshire (footnote 63); United Nations Millennium Project. 2005. *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*. Task Force on Education and Gender Equality; UNDP (footnote 64).

gender-related targets and indicators increasingly included to facilitate monitoring for results.⁶⁶ Several development partners are currently reviewing their gender policies with a focus on gender-related results.⁶⁷ A consensus emerging from these reviews is that a two-track approach—combining gender mainstreaming with gender-specific activities—is still appropriate and necessary, especially to address wide gender disparities, restrictive social norms, or new gender concerns.⁶⁸ New financing modalities for development assistance—such as sector approaches and general budget support—are now seen as presenting challenges for gender mainstreaming and may require new tools to integrate gender concerns and monitor gender impacts.

124. Development organizations are also learning from each other's experience with various gender mainstreaming approaches. In some instances, ADB's experience has been specifically noted. For example, a recent World Bank evaluation of its gender mainstreaming activities favorably noted ADB's requirement that all CSPs include consideration of gender issues.⁶⁹ The World Bank's new gender mainstreaming strategy now requires preparation of multisector country gender assessments to inform its country assistance programs.⁷⁰ A survey of development agencies' gender mainstreaming approaches recently undertaken for the Nordic Development Fund concludes that "ADB is arguably the most successful MDB [multilateral development bank] when it comes to integrating gender dimensions into loans."⁷¹

C. Implications and Lessons for ADB

125. ADB, like many of its comparators, is in the process of redefining its operational priorities and processes to better serve the development needs of its DMCs. This is already reflected in a greater emphasis on aligning ADB's development assistance with DMCs' national priorities, and identifying desired results in the preparation of CSPs and individual projects and programs. Steps are being taken to further streamline ADB's business processes. ADB's Medium-Term Strategy II⁷² prioritizes support to some sectors and deemphasizes others. What are the implications for the GAD policy? Gender equality—a core policy goal of ADB, its DMCs, and other development partners—will remain fundamental to ADB's support for poverty reduction, economic and inclusive social development, and regional cooperation. As the experience of ADB and its comparators shows, gender mainstreaming is a flexible institutional strategy for promoting gender equality. Country gender diagnostics and gender analysis of specific projects are basic building blocks of CSPs and project design. However, different country contexts, different modalities of development assistance (e.g., policy-based loans, sector development loans, project loans, or grants), and support to different sectors may call for new and different approaches to address gender concerns and monitor gender-related results in ADB-supported projects and programs.

⁶⁶ For example, the World Bank's 2002 gender mainstreaming strategy includes a detailed implementation timetable; IADB is currently implementing a detailed gender mainstreaming action plan for 2003–2005, and is developing a new action plan to commence in 2006; and the African Development Bank recently approved a plan of action to support its new gender policy.

⁶⁷ These include IADB; UNDP; and bilateral development agencies of Australia, Austria, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and United Kingdom.

⁶⁸ For example, the new gender equality strategy of the Danish International Development Agency reaffirms this dual approach. DANIDA, Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2004. *Gender Equality in Danish Development Cooperation Strategy*. Copenhagen.

⁶⁹ World Bank. 2001. *Integrating Gender in World Bank Assistance*. OED Report No. 23035. Washington, DC.

⁷⁰ World Bank. 2002. *Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work: A Strategy for Action*. Washington, DC.

⁷¹ Nordic Development Fund. 2004. *Gender Equality Study: A Study on Addressing Gender Aspects in Projects Co-financed by NDF in Developing Countries*.

⁷² ADB. 2006. *Medium-Term Strategy II*. Manila.

126. Based on ADB's priorities in terms of greater sector selectivity and focus, and new modalities and products for development assistance as articulated in MTS II, operations staff are likely to need increased gender capacity and technical support from gender specialists. In line with its commitment to better align its development activities with DMC priorities and to focus on measurable and monitorable results, ADB's implementation of the GAD policy should focus in particular on (i) ensuring that its country operations are aligned with DMCs' national gender policies, strategies, and action plans; and (ii) ensuring that gender-related objectives, activities, targets, and indicators are included in the design and monitoring frameworks for loan projects and programs, and that these provisions are monitored carefully during loan implementation.

VII. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

127. The review finds that the gender mainstreaming approach and priorities identified in the GAD policy continue to be relevant to regional needs and ADB's priorities. Moreover, ADB's new thematic priorities of capacity development and regional cooperation complement and reinforce the importance of gender capacity development and attention to regional gender concerns, such as those related to HIV/AIDS and human trafficking. The review also finds that institutional mechanisms introduced under the GAD policy have contributed substantially to ADB's progress and performance in addressing gender concerns in its operations. However, gaps and weaknesses continue in implementing the policy, both upstream (in integrating country gender diagnostics in CSPs) and downstream (in providing gender support to executing agencies and monitoring the gender-related aspects of loan projects and programs). Going forward, ADB will strengthen its gender mainstreaming approach to better ensure success in reducing poverty, promoting growth with equity, and achieving the MDGs in the region. This will involve consolidating the progress made, and addressing the weaknesses identified in this review. Given ADB's commitment to development effectiveness and managing for development results, future implementation of the policy will focus more strongly on gender-related results.

128. To ensure sustainable progress and results in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the region, ADB will take actions in several areas. To ensure institutional commitment and accountability for results under the GAD policy, ADB will

- (i) develop a new 3-year GAD plan of action for ADB operations by April 2007;
- (ii) undertake a review of the institutional arrangements for optimum use of staff resources for GAD policy implementation; and
- (iii) to ensure accountability for results in future implementation of the GAD policy, conduct a progress report and another implementation review of the GAD policy as required. Both the progress report and implementation review will be submitted to the Board of Directors.

VIII. CONCLUSION

129. The GAD policy adopted in 1998 continues to provide a sound and relevant framework for ADB's support to its DMCs in their promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, poverty reduction, and the MDGs. Since 1998, ADB has made good progress in mainstreaming gender concerns in its operations, but its performance has been inconsistent and the good practices introduced are not yet fully institutionalized. ADB therefore will take a number of concrete actions, to be described in the GAD plan of action, to expand and strengthen its gender-related activities with an emphasis on relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, and results.