

Chapter 3

STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF CPS BUSINESS PROCESSES FOR ETSW



This chapter presents findings on staff perceptions about ADB's business process for CPS-related ETSW. The findings are based on surveys of and interviews with the five CPS team leaders and 35 team members with a view to identifying the constraints ADB staff faced in their conduct of CPS-related ETSW. The analysis covers four areas: (i) availability of budget and time; (ii) staff expertise and incentives; (iii) management guidance and interdepartmental support; and (iv) guidelines, templates, and business processes. The key findings are summarized below.

Most team members considered availability of time and budget a major constraint to undertaking ETSW. Most team member respondents (71%) spent 1 week to 1 month preparing each thematic or sector road map. About 9% of the respondents spent 1 week or less per assessment. If a new background study had to be commissioned, about 2.0 months of staff time and 2.1 months of consultant time were used per study. Most respondents considered the availability of time a major constraint to undertaking CPS-related ETSW, and found allocating time for ETSW moderately difficult (37%) or difficult (34%). Among the reasons cited for the difficulty were heavy and conflicting work assignments and extremely short notice when ETSW was assigned.

Budget became an issue when consultants were needed. The survey results show that while sector road maps and thematic assessment appendixes were mostly prepared by ADB staff themselves, consultants

contributed significantly to the preparation of thematic background studies—10% of studies were prepared solely by consultants, 80% were joint work of ADB staff and consultants, and 10% were exclusive work by ADB staff. Interviews with some team members revealed that because there was really no special budget for CPS-specific thematic assessments and sector road maps, they had to independently seek funds from other allocations. This problem was aggravated by the fact that CPS team leaders sometimes had different views regarding the adequacy of data, time, and budget.

Some also considered the adequacy of staff expertise a constraint. The adequacy of staff expertise was considered a constraint by many (particularly by team leaders), but not all, respondents. To examine if this was due to a mismatch between staff expertise and job assignment, the composition of CPS teams was inspected. It turned out that there was little evidence of such mismatch—most team members were assigned to areas that match their position titles. However, a few themes (i.e., economic growth, poverty, regional cooperation, and private sector development) noticeably had no assigned team members and had to be analyzed by the CPS team leaders, occasionally with support from country directors and other departments.

Team members generally received adequate recognition for their ETSW as inputs to the CPS papers; and, despite some concerns, they considered guidance from CPS team leaders adequate in

preparing CPS-related ETSW. CPS team leaders implicitly recognized a team member's work on sector road maps or thematic assessments by incorporating his or her contributions in the final CPS papers. The survey found that most team members perceived that their work was adequately reflected in the final CPS documents. About 90% of respondents believed that their work was given importance, relative to other tasks, by the country directors or sector directors. Team members were also generally satisfied (80%) with the guidance received from the CPS team leaders, but only moderately satisfied (50%) with the guidance received from country or sector directors. The dissatisfaction with country or sector directors emanated from the perception that they did not allocate enough staff time and resources to produce ETSW, but expected the staff member to deliver within a short time period—somewhat like “wanting the milk, but not willing to raise the cow.”

CPS teams considered the assistance from support departments inadequate and that communities of practice (CoPs) played a limited role in preparing ETSW. The surveys showed a low satisfaction level among respondents regarding help from support departments. About half of the respondents indicated that they never received help from support departments through either formal comments or joint work. Only a few respondents indicated that the support was helpful through formal interdepartmental comments (14%), joint work with support departments (14%), and informal interdepartmental discussions

(23%). The surveys also asked questions about the role of CoPs in supporting the preparation of ETSW. Half of the respondents never consulted a CoP and less than a quarter indicated that the guidance they received from a CoP was adequate (9%) or moderately adequate (14%). A reason twice cited was that CoPs had not been formed at the time the CPS was being prepared. Other reasons revealed a weak appreciation for the CoPs' potential to enhance CPS work through a constructive exchange of expertise and experience. A few respondents were more positive as they thought that the CoPs' observations were appealing and, thus, consultations with the CoPs needed to be institutionalized or CoP members should be part of a CPS team from the very start.

The CPS guidelines and templates did not seem to constrain the undertaking of ETSW. A majority of the respondents indicated that the CPS guidelines did not constrain their preparation of ETSW. The survey results also suggest that the respondents were ambivalent regarding templates: about half of the respondents found the templates for thematic assessments and sector road maps too restrictive and the other half found them too general. Those who were dissatisfied with the templates raised two issues: (i) sector distinctiveness could be lost in the sector road map template because different sectors have different coverage/issues that may not be analyzed well given the required topic headings and page limitations; and (ii) the template did not seem to encourage highlighting best practices.