

Section 5: Development Issues in the Asia and Pacific Region

Assessments of ADB's operations and performance are shaped within the larger context of individual country developments, regional affairs, and views about foreign development assistance agencies more broadly. Opinion leaders are not only positive in their assessment of ADB, they are also largely positive about the impact that their government is having on their country and its role in development efforts. A majority of opinion leaders believe their government supports and takes responsibility for development efforts in their country, including acknowledging that ultimate responsibility for achieving the Millennium Development Goals rest with the country's government, not foreign development assistance organizations.

Foreign development assistance organizations are also viewed positively but there is disagreement over how wisely foreign assistance money is being spent overall. There is much less disagreement over corruption hampering development efforts, with many opinion leaders saying that development assistance is wasted because of corruption.

But corruption is not the only threat to development. According to opinion leaders, two threats to development stand out in addition to corruption—poor governance and poor infrastructure. A variety of other economical, social and environmental threats are of some concern as well.

In this section we outline what opinion leaders think when it comes to the impact their government is having and to what extent governments pursue development efforts and embrace the MDGs. We also detail views on foreign assistance—how well it is used, whether there should be more or less, and whether corruption is a problem. We conclude the section by reporting on the extent to which opinion leaders believe that nine distinct development hurdles pose a threat to development in their country.

Impact of governments

Governments bear the responsibility for a wide variety of economic and social policies. And solid majorities of opinion leaders say that their government is having a very good or somewhat good impact on the way things are going in their country.

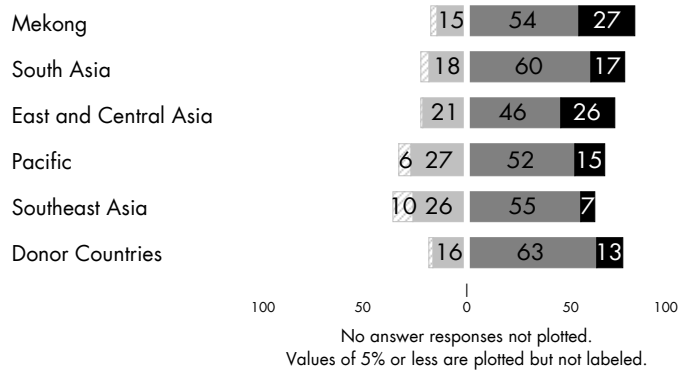
These assessments vary somewhat by region. Large majorities of opinion leaders in Mekong (81%), South Asia (77%) and East and Central Asia (72%) say their government is having a good impact on the way things are going, followed by solid majorities in the Pacific (67%) and Southeast Asia (62%).

However, this largely positive assessment is qualified. Only a minority of opinion leaders say the impact is *very* good, while roughly half or more in every region say the impact is only *somewhat* good. Moreover, each region has its contingent of government critics, with as many as a third of opinion leaders in some regions—namely Southeast Asia (36%) and the Pacific (33%)—of the opinion that their government has a negative impact.

Chart (Q6a)

Impact of governments

► For each, please tell me what kind of impact it is having on the way things are going in [name of country] [developing countries in Asia and the Pacific]. Is the government of [name of country] having a [●] very good, [●] somewhat good, [●] somewhat bad or [●] very bad impact?



Throughout, plotted and tabulated values represent percentages of respondents.

Don't know/Refused Percentages: Mekong: Don't know (2%), Refused (0%); South Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (4%), Refused (1%); Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Southeast Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%); Donor Countries: Don't know (1%), Refused (1%)

Government support for development efforts

Large percentages of opinion leaders commend their governments' for supporting and taking responsibility for development efforts in their country.

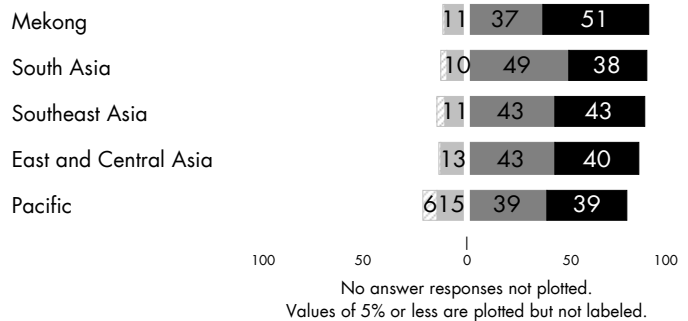
This support comes from every region surveyed in Asia and the Pacific. A vast majority of opinion leaders in Mekong (88%), South Asia (87%), Southeast Asia (86%), East and Central Asia (83%), and the Pacific (78%) say that their country's government supports and takes responsibility for development efforts in their country. And this assessment is particularly positive, with four in 10 or more in each region *strongly* agreeing their governments are responsible and supportive of development efforts.

Not surprisingly, opinion leaders in the government sector are more likely than those in other professional sectors to think that government has a positive impact on the way things are going and that government supports and takes responsibility for developments in their country.

Chart (Q5a)

Support for development efforts by developing countries

► The government of [name of country] supports and takes responsibility for development efforts in [name of country]. –[●] strongly agree, [●] somewhat agree, [●] somewhat disagree or [●] strongly disagree?



Don't know/Refused Percentages: Mekong: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); South Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Southeast Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (3%), Refused (0%); Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%)

Responsibility for MDGs

A large majority of opinion leaders think that achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is ultimately the responsibility of developing countries and not foreign assistance organizations.

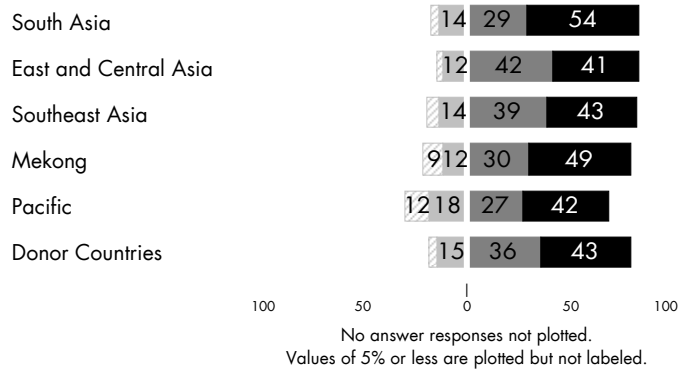
There is considerable agreement from region to region on this issue. Large majorities of opinion leaders in South Asia (83%), East and Central Asia (83%), Southeast Asia (82%), Mekong (79%), the Pacific (69%) and donor countries (79%) agree that MDGs are ultimately the responsibility of developing countries and not foreign assistance organizations.

Moreover, support for this view is strong across all regions. Half of opinion leaders in South Asia and Mekong, and nearly as many in all other regions *strongly* agree that developing countries rather than foreign assistance organizations bare the ultimate responsibility for reaching MDGs.

Chart (Q5c)

Responsibility for Millennium Development Goals lies with developing countries

► The ultimate responsibility for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (which set global targets for poverty reduction, maternal and child health, education, gender and access to water) in Asia and the Pacific rests primarily with the developing countries and not with the foreign assistance organizations. –[●] strongly agree, [●] somewhat agree, [●] somewhat disagree or [●] strongly disagree?



Don't know/Refused Percentages: South Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (3%), Refused (0%); Southeast Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Mekong: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Donor Countries: Don't know (1%), Refused (1%)

Funding by foreign development assistance organizations

On the topic of foreign development assistance organizations, opinion leaders generally credit these organizations with allocating their aid resources wisely. But this view is somewhat tempered. Only a few say that foreign development assistance agencies allocate their resources very wisely; rather many say they allocate their resources only somewhat wisely.

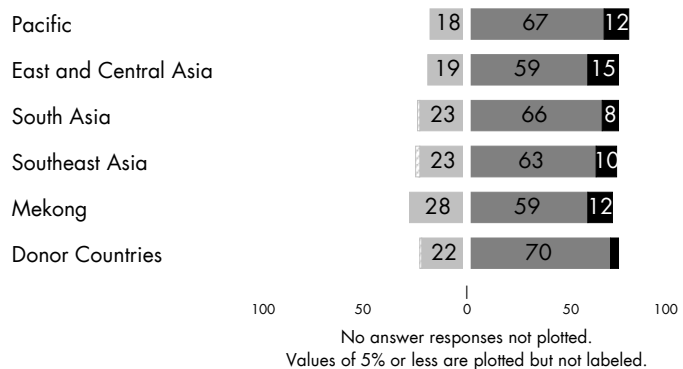
This assessment is fairly even by region. Substantial majorities everywhere—the Pacific (79%), East and Central Asia (74%), South Asia (74%), Southeast Asia (73%), Mekong (71%) and donor countries (74%)—say foreign assistance agencies allocate their resources at least somewhat wisely, although only a few opinion leaders say resources are allocated very wisely.

Views about how wisely foreign development assistance organizations allocate aid resources vary by both knowledge level about ADB and involvement in ADB activities. Opinion leaders who are more knowledgeable about ADB and ADB clients, i.e., opinion leaders who have had experience working on ADB projects or programs in the past three years, are more likely to say that foreign assistance organizations allocate aid resources wisely. Opinion is also related to professional sector, with opinion leaders who work for the government more likely than those in civil society organizations, the private sector, and media to think that foreign development organizations are allocating resources wisely.

Chart (Q2)

Allocation of aid resources by foreign development assistance organizations

► In your opinion, how wisely are foreign development assistance organizations allocating aid resources to [your country] [developing countries in Asia and the Pacific]—[●] very wisely, [●] somewhat wisely, [●] not too wisely or [▨] not wisely at all?



Don't know/Refused Percentages: Pacific: Don't know (3%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (6%), Refused (0%); South Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%); Southeast Asia: Don't know (2%), Refused (0%); Mekong: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%); Donor Countries: Don't know (2%), Refused (<1%)

Developing countries' use of funds

Despite the generally positive assessments of developing country governments reported earlier, only modest majorities of opinion leaders think that developing country governments use foreign assistance funds wisely.

Majorities of opinion leaders in most regions—the Pacific (69%), East and Central Asia (67%), Mekong (67%), South Asia (58%), Southeast Asia (51%) and donor countries (68%)—believe that governments use foreign assistance very or somewhat wisely.

Opinion leaders in Southeast Asia are split—half say funds are used wisely (51%) and half say they are not (50%). In the other regions, a quarter or more of the opinion leaders surveyed express concern that foreign development assistance is not used wisely.

Again, government officials (76%) are more likely than opinion leaders in most other sectors to think that their country is using foreign assistance wisely—academia (57%), private sector (56%), media (55%), and civil society organizations (52%). ADB clients are also slightly more likely than non-clients to share this view.

Efficacy of foreign assistance spending

Opinion leaders have more mixed views on the broader issue of how wisely foreign assistance money is being spent overall. While opinion leaders are somewhat positive about how their *own government* is using foreign assistance funds, many opinion leaders are less sanguine about the use of foreign assistance funds *in general*. This finding suggests that while opinion leaders may be vocal in criticism about how foreign assistance is used in general, opinion is likely to be more positive about foreign assistance to their country.

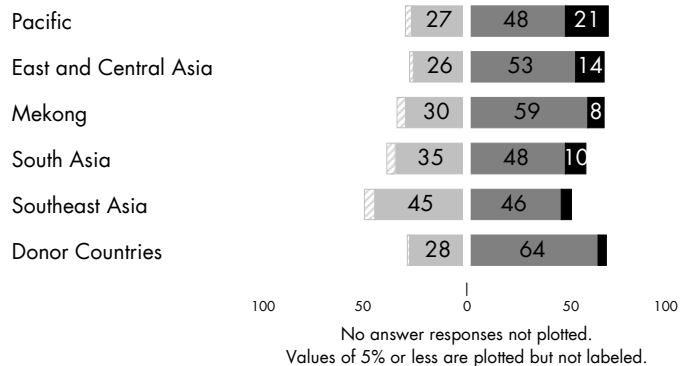
Many feel that enough money is spent on foreign assistance but that the money is not being spent wisely. These opinion leaders think that corruption accounts for some of the abuse. Fewer give a positive assessment and say that enough money is being spent and that these funds are being spent wisely. And for a minority, not enough is being spent on foreign aid.

Views about how foreign assistance funds are being spent vary by region. The Pacific (79%) stands out with eight in 10 opinion leaders critical of how money is being spent, saying it is not a matter of spending more money but spending it more wisely. The Pacific is not alone, with over half in Southeast Asia (58%), Mekong (53%), and South Asia (52%) concurring. Smaller but notable

Chart (Q3)

Use of aid resources by developing countries

► And in your opinion is [name of country] [are developing countries in Asia and the Pacific] using the foreign development assistance [it receives] [they receive] –[●] very wisely, [●] somewhat wisely, [●] not too wisely or [●] not wisely at all?



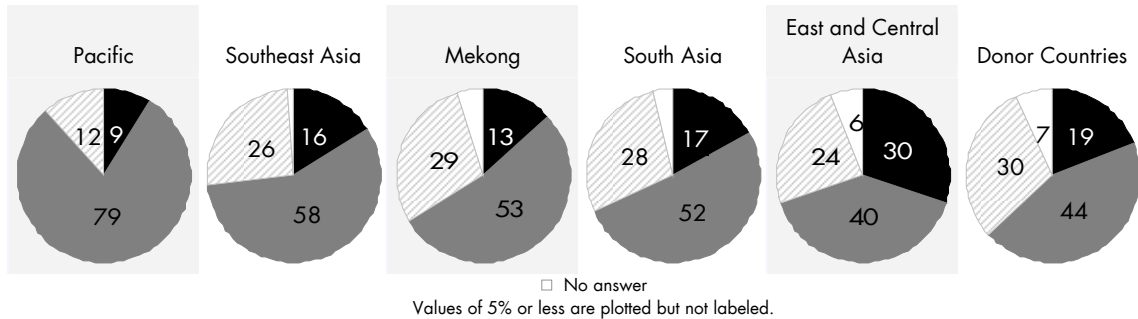
Don't know/Refused Percentages: Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (5%), Refused (0%); Mekong: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); South Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%); Southeast Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Donor Countries: Don't know (3%), Refused (0%)

percentages in East and Central Asia (40%) and the donor countries (44%) also worry about how wisely foreign assistance funds overall are being spent.

Chart (Q1)

Amount of foreign assistance

► Thinking about foreign development assistance in general, some people say that not enough money is spent on foreign assistance to developing countries in Asia and the Pacific. Others say that enough money is spent, but that it is not spent wisely. Still others say that enough is being spent and that it is being spent wisely. Which view is closest to yours? [☐] Not enough spent, [◐] enough (or too much) spent but not wisely, [●] enough spent wisely.



In most regions, small minorities think that enough money is allocated and that the money is spent wisely. An exception is East and Central Asia where three in 10 (30%) express this positive view.

Likewise, roughly a quarter or more of opinion leaders in every region except the Pacific (12%) think that not enough money is spent on foreign assistance.

Involvement with ADB and the professional sector that opinion leaders work in help shape views about how wisely foreign assistance is being spent. ADB clients, opinion leaders who have had experience working on ADB projects or programs or participating in ADB research studies, are slightly less likely to think that enough money is being spent but not being spent wisely than non-clients (45% versus 54%). And government officials (42%) are less likely than opinion leaders in civil society organizations (60%), academia (59%), and the media (57%) to believe that enough money is being spent but not being spent wisely.

Corruption and waste of foreign assistance funds

Many opinion leaders think that corruption eats into foreign assistance funds and produces substantial waste. Opinion leaders in Southeast Asia feel particularly strong about the effects of corruption, while opinion leaders in East and Central Asia and donor countries are less likely to share this view.

More than eight in 10 opinion leaders in Southeast Asia (82%), followed by solid majorities in the Pacific (66%), South Asia (64%), and Mekong (59%) agree that corruption is to blame for waste in foreign development assistance. However, only four in 10 opinion leaders in East and Central Asia (39%) and donor countries (43%) concur.

In greater detail, half of opinion leaders in Southeast Asia (50%) and three in 10 in the Pacific (33%), South Asia (28%), and Mekong (27%) strongly agree that assistance is wasted because of corruption compared with fewer opinion leaders in East and Central Asia (17%) and donor countries (4%).

Level of knowledge about ADB and opinion leaders' professional sector play a role in shaping opinion about how much assistance money is wasted due to corruption. Opinion leaders who describe themselves as very knowledgeable about ADB are less likely than those only somewhat knowledgeable about ADB to agree that because of corruption foreign development assistance is mostly wasted (48% versus 59%). Opinion leaders in academia (72%), media (70%), civil society organizations (66%), and the private sector (65%) are more likely than those in donor agencies (45%) and government (40%) to think that because of corruption foreign development assistance is mostly wasted.

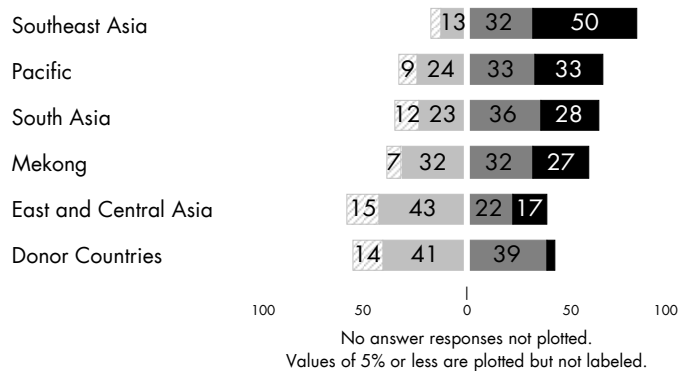
Impediments to development

Opinion leaders in developing countries in Asia and the Pacific see a number of impediments to economic and social development in their country. Poor governance, poor infrastructure, and corruption top the list with overwhelming majorities saying these three problems threaten their country's economic and social development to a great or moderate extent.

Chart (Q5d)

Development assistance is mostly wasted because of corruption

► Because of corruption, foreign development assistance to [name of country] [developing countries in Asia and the Pacific] is mostly wasted. Please tell me whether you [●] strongly agree, [●] somewhat agree, [●] somewhat disagree or [●] strongly disagree



Don't know/Refused Percentages: Southeast Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (1%); Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); South Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%); Mekong: Don't know (2%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (3%), Refused (0%); Donor Countries: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%)

Governance

There is considerable concern among opinion leaders about how the quality of governance—the rule of law, free and fair elections, civil society, and transparent procedures and administrative policies—may affect development in their country.

Most opinion leaders in the Pacific (94%), Mekong (91%), Southeast Asia (90%), South Asia (83%) and East and Central Asia (81%) say poor governance threatens development at least to a moderate degree.

And this concern is particularly acute—modest majorities in every region say poor governance threatens economic and social development to a *great* extent.

Infrastructure

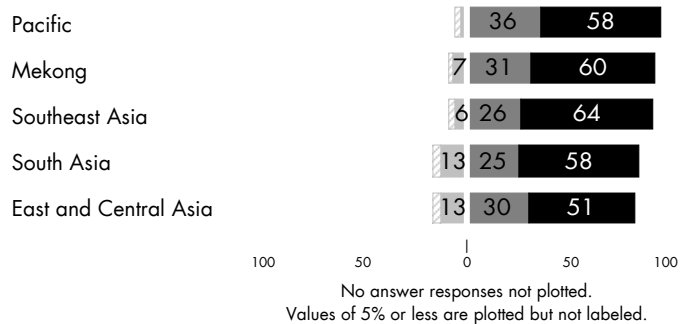
Poor infrastructure is also a problem. Most opinion leaders in the Pacific (94%), South Asia (93%), Southeast Asia (91%), Mekong (86%), and East and Central Asia (85%) say poor infrastructure threatens economic and social development in their country.

Many opinion leaders feel strongly about this problem, with solid majorities in the Pacific, South Asia, and Mekong along with half of opinion leaders in Southeast Asia reporting that poor infrastructure threatens development to a great extent. By contrast, just over a third of opinion leaders in East and Central Asia feel as strongly.

Chart (Q4h)

Extent to which poor governance threatens development

► In your opinion, to what extent does poor governance threaten [name of country]'s economic and social development—[●] great extent, [●] moderate extent, [●] small extent or [■] not at all?

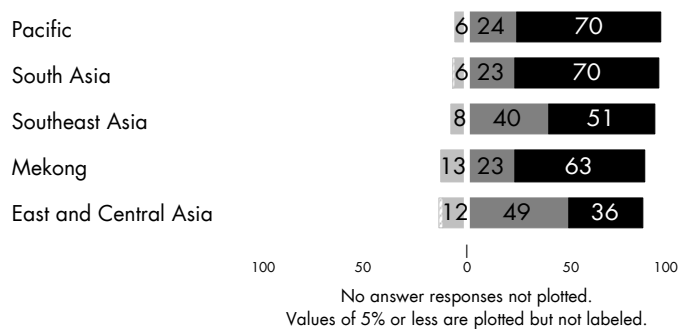


Don't know/Refused Percentages: Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Mekong: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Southeast Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (1%); South Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (4%), Refused (0%)

Chart (Q4b)

Extent to which poor infrastructure threatens development

► In your opinion, to what extent does poor infrastructure threaten [name of country]'s economic and social development—[●] great extent, [●] moderate extent, [●] small extent or [■] not at all?



Don't know/Refused Percentages: Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); South Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Southeast Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (1%); Mekong: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (2%), Refused (0%)

Corruption

The same pattern holds for corruption. Nearly all opinion leaders in Southeast Asia (96%), Mekong (94%), the Pacific (91%), East and Central Asia (87%) and South Asia (85%) say that corruption threatens economic and social development.

Furthermore, most opinion leaders in Southeast Asia (87%) and Mekong (82%) say corruption threatens development to a great extent, followed by solid majorities in the Pacific (67%), East and Central Asia (64%) and South Asia (55%).

Education and health services

Limited educational opportunities and inadequate health services are cited almost as frequently by opinion leaders as threats to their country's economic and social development. Consistent with the findings thus far, opinion leaders from every region surveyed are concerned about these threats.

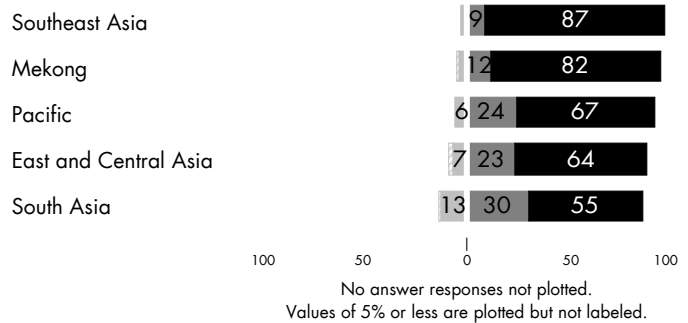
Education and health, two areas that many experts believe significantly affect development, are top concerns of opinion leaders. Most opinion leaders in Southeast Asia (93%), the Pacific (88%), Mekong (88%), South Asia (83%) and East and Central Asia (81%) say limited educational opportunities and inadequate health services threaten development.

Here again, concern runs deep—majorities of six in 10 in Southeast Asia and (65%), the Pacific (61%), Mekong (59%) and half in South Asia (50%) say health and education constraints threaten social and economic development in their country to a great extent. However, only about a third of opinion leaders in East and Central Asia (36%) feel as strongly.

Chart (Q4d)

Extent to which corruption threatens development

► In your opinion, to what extent does corruption threaten [name of country]'s economic and social development—[●] great extent, [●] moderate extent, [●] small extent or [■] not at all?

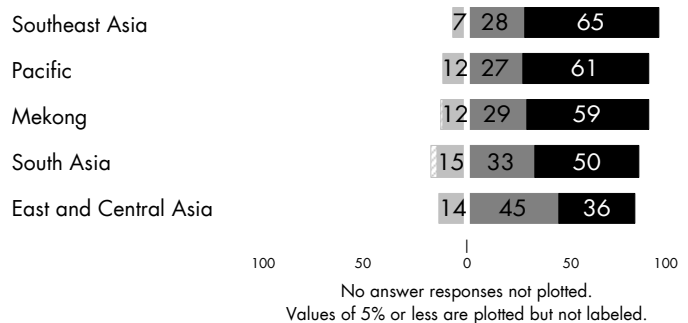


Don't know/Refused Percentages: Southeast Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (1%); Mekong: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Pacific: Don't know (3%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (3%), Refused (1%); South Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%)

Chart (Q4e)

Extent to which limited education opportunities and inadequate health services threatens development

► In your opinion, to what extent do limited educational opportunities and inadequate health services threaten [name of country]'s economic and social development—[●] great extent, [●] moderate extent, [●] small extent or [■] not at all?



Don't know/Refused Percentages: Southeast Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Mekong: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); South Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (5%), Refused (0%)

Investment rates

A vast majority of opinion leaders in the Pacific (97%), Southeast Asia (92%), South Asia (81%), and Mekong (79%) say a low rate of investment threatens development in their country compared with half of opinion leaders in East and Central Asia (52%).

About half of opinion leaders in Southeast Asia (53%) and the Pacific (52%), and four in 10 in Mekong (40%) believe that a low rate of investment in their country threatens development efforts to a great extent. Fewer opinion leaders in East and Central Asia (22%) share as much concern, while opinion leaders in South Asia (33%) fall in the middle.

Although there is widespread agreement that the low rate of investment threatens development efforts, ADB clients (82%) and opinion leaders in the government sector (82%) are slightly more concerned about this than non-clients (70%) and opinion leaders in civil society organizations (68%).

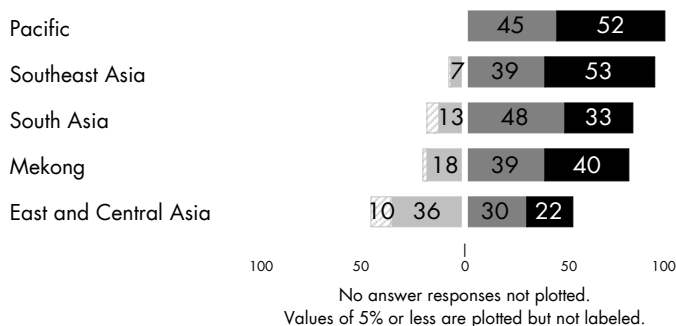
Lack of private sector activity

Opinion leaders in the Pacific (87%) and Mekong (83%) fully agree, with nearly half saying lack of an active private sector threatens development to at least a moderate extent. Fewer but still solid majorities in East and Central Asia (70%), Southeast Asia (69%) and South Asia (63%) agree.

Chart (Q4f)

Extent to which low investment rates threaten development

► In your opinion, to what extent does low rate of investment threaten [name of country]'s economic and social development—[●] great extent, [●] moderate extent, [●] small extent or [●] not at all?

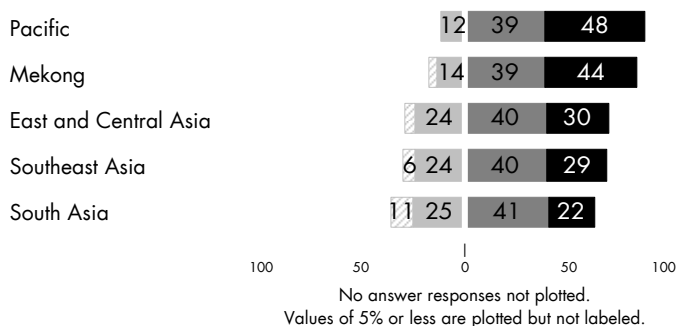


Don't know/Refused Percentages: Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (3%); Southeast Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (1%); South Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (1%); Mekong: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (3%), Refused (0%)

Chart (Q4g)

Extent to which lack of active private sector threatens development

► In your opinion, to what extent does lack of an active private sector threaten [name of country]'s economic and social development—[●] great extent, [●] moderate extent, [●] small extent or [●] not at all?



Don't know/Refused Percentages: Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Mekong: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (2%), Refused (0%); Southeast Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (1%); South Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (1%)

Income Inequality

Most opinion leaders in the Pacific (90%), Southeast Asia (88%), South Asia (85%) and Mekong (83%) say income inequality threatens economic and social development in their country. Fewer opinion leaders in East and Central Asia (71%) hold this view.

And six in 10 in Southeast Asia (58%) and South Asia (58%), and nearly as many in Mekong (51%) and the Pacific (45%), report that income inequality is a hindrance to a great extent. By contrast, only a third of opinion leaders in East and Central Asia (34%) feel as strongly.

Environment and natural resources

Opinion leaders have concerns about the effects of environmental damage on development efforts.

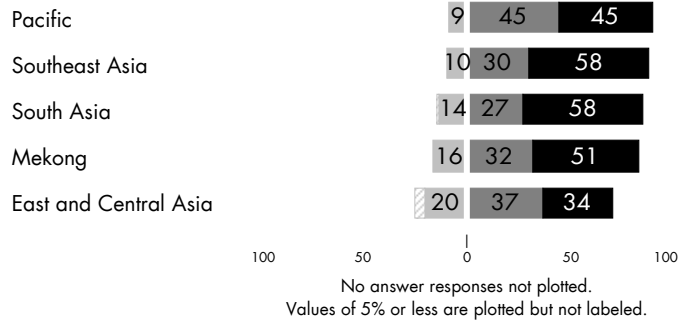
Large majorities of opinion leaders in Mekong (94%), Southeast Asia (85%), East and Central Asia (84%), the Pacific (78%) and South Asia (73%) say environmental degradation threatens development at least to an extent.

However, only in Mekong (58%) do a majority say environmental damage affects development to a great extent—fewer in Southeast Asia (40%), East and Central Asia (36%), the Pacific (30%) and South Asia (29%) concur.

Chart (Q4a)

Extent to which income inequality threatens development

► In your opinion, to what extent does income inequality threaten [name of country]'s economic and social development—[●] great extent, [●] moderate extent, [●] small extent or [▨] not at all?

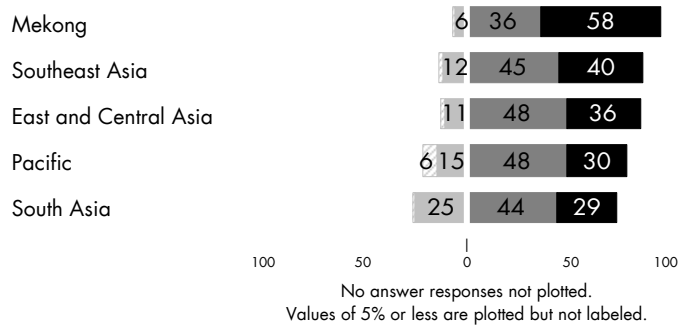


Don't know/Refused Percentages: Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Southeast Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (1%); South Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%); Mekong: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (5%), Refused (0%)

Chart (Q4c)

Extent to which environmental degradation threatens development

► In your opinion, to what extent does environmental degradation threaten [name of country]'s economic and social development—[●] great extent, [●] moderate extent, [●] small extent or [▨] not at all?



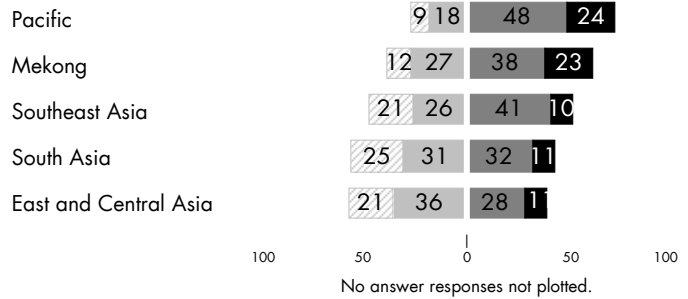
Don't know/Refused Percentages: Mekong: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Southeast Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (3%), Refused (1%); Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); South Asia: Don't know (1%), Refused (0%)

Lack of natural resources is seen as less threatening to economic and social development. Although solid majorities in the Pacific (72%) and Mekong (61%) say lack of resources threatens economic and social development in their country, just half in Southeast Asia (51%) and only four in 10 in South Asia (43%) and East and Central Asia (39%) see it as a threat.

Chart (Q4i)

Extent to which lack of natural resources threatens development

► In your opinion, to what extent does lack of natural resources threaten [name of country]'s economic and social development—[●] great extent, [●] moderate extent, [●] small extent or [●] not at all?



Don't know/Refused Percentages: Pacific: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Mekong: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); Southeast Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (2%); South Asia: Don't know (0%), Refused (0%); East and Central Asia: Don't know (5%), Refused (0%)