

Methodological report

In late 2005 the Asian Development Bank (ADB) commissioned Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI) to conduct a multinational survey of opinion leaders and stakeholders in ADB member countries. The goal of this research was to assess attitudes toward the role ADB plays and its effectiveness within the development context of the Asia-Pacific region. PSRAI hired local research firms to conduct interviews in 30 countries, including ADB donor countries both within and outside the Asia-Pacific region and developing member countries in the five ADB geographic regions—East and Central Asia, Mekong, the Pacific, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.¹⁸ Between April and June 2006, interviewers spoke with more than 700 individuals who hold senior-level positions in government, multilateral and bilateral development agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, media, and academia. To qualify for the study, opinion leaders had to describe themselves as at least somewhat knowledgeable about ADB and its activities. Below we discuss details of the survey methodology, including country selection, sample sizes, sample selection, questionnaire design, and fieldwork logistics.

¹⁸ These were the regions at the time the survey was conducted. ADB has since changed the regional definitions.

Country Selection

Opinion leader interviews were conducted in 21 developing and 9 donor countries. The primary consideration in country selection was ADB's preferences. Given their expertise, the central and regional offices of ADB are the most knowledgeable about the geographic, political, and informational significance of individual countries to the Bank.

Survey countries		
East and Central Asia China Kazakhstan Kyrgyz Republic	Mekong Cambodia Thailand Vietnam	South Asia Bangladesh India Pakistan Sri Lanka
Southeast Asia Indonesia Philippines	Pacific Fiji Marshall Islands Micronesia Papua New Guinea Samoa Timor-Leste Tonga Tuvalu Vanuatu	Donor countries Australia Canada France Germany Japan Korea Sweden UK US

Sample sizes

Number of interviews conducted

In most countries between 20 and 50 opinion leaders were interviewed for a total of 706 interviews. Regionally, 147 interviews were conducted in South Asia, 111 in East and Central Asia, 105 in Southeast Asia, 94 in Mekong, and 33 in the Pacific. A total of 216 interviews were conducted in donor countries—80 in the Asia Pacific region and 136 in Europe and North America. For the full regional samples, the margin of error is ± 8 percentage points for South Asia, ± 9 for East and Central Asia, ± 10 for Southeast Asia, ± 10 for Mekong, ± 17 for the Pacific, and ± 7 for the donor countries. Margins of error for individual country samples are displayed in the table on the right. Because of the small sample sizes and large margins of error, any country-level findings should be interpreted with a high level of caution.

Because extra interviews were conducted in some countries, the survey results were weighted to approximate the original sampling plan and to ensure that no countries or professional sectors are overrepresented in the final analysis and that there was equal representation from different countries within a region.

Country sample sizes

	Number of interviews	Margin of error
East and Central Asia	111	9
China	51	14
Kazakhstan	30	18
Kyrgyz Republic	30	18
Mekong	94	10
Cambodia	33	17
Thailand	30	18
Vietnam	31	18
South Asia	147	8
Bangladesh	38	16
India	49	14
Pakistan	30	18
Sri Lanka	30	18
Southeast Asia	105	10
Indonesia	55	13
Philippines	50	14
Pacific	33¹⁹	17
Donor countries	216²⁰	7
Australia	20	22
Canada	20	22
France	20	22
Germany	21	22
Japan	30	18
Korea	20	22
Sweden	21	22
UK	21	22
US	33	17

¹⁹ In the Pacific region, 14 interviews were conducted in Fiji, 7 in Timor-Leste, 4 in Papua New Guinea, 3 in Samoa, and 1 each in the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. These small sample sizes do not allow analysis by country. The results for the Pacific should only be analyzed for the region as a whole.

²⁰ In addition to the donor countries listed, the donor sample includes 10 interviews conducted in Hong Kong. Due to the small sample size, these results should not be analyzed separately.

Professional sectors

The survey sample consists of opinion leaders from the following six categories: (1) government, (2) multi- and bilateral donor agencies, (3) civil society organizations, (4) private sector, (5) media, and (6) academia. In the table below, we outline the definitions that were used to classify opinion leaders:

Category	Eligible Organizations	Eligible Individuals
Government 1	Prime Minister's office (where applicable) and the Ministries of Finance, Development and Planning	Senior Civil Servant level and above (typically Director or Director General level) Ministers or Deputies may be considered for small economies if deemed appropriate.
	Parliamentarians or politicians, where applicable	Parliamentarians or Politicians or senior staff of relevant committees, such as finance, development, or foreign affairs
Government 2	Technical ministries (e.g. Energy, Agriculture, Health, Education)	Senior Civil Servant level and above (typically Director or Director General level) Ministers or Deputies may be considered for small economies if deemed appropriate.
Multilateral and Bilateral Donor Partners (Developing countries only)	The leading multilateral partners for ADB in a developing member country plus a selection of the most important bilateral partners for ADB in a given developing member country	Heads of local offices of multilaterals or bilaterals or senior staff as deemed appropriate
Civil Society	Both local and multinational nongovernmental, nonprofit, religious, and/or advocacy organizations, foundations, and movements whose mission is related to international affairs, economic development, environmental issues, or poverty alleviation	Heads of or senior staff of non-governmental organizations
Private Sector	Reputable large and medium-sized private sector firms involved in development work (to include a range of financial institutions involved in development co-financing projects)	CEOs or other senior business people, including financial consultants or business experts who are known for their international expertise
Media	An organization that derives its business from media driven activities including both publicly and privately funded radio, television, press, and the Internet	Editors or journalists who report on finance, economics, international affairs, or development and who are knowledgeable about the Asia Pacific region
Academia	Any university, college, or think tank	Professors within relevant departments, such as Finance, Economics, International Affairs, Political Science, Sociology Heads of, or senior staff of, relevant think tanks or institutions

Targeted sample sizes for the professional sectors were arrived at in consultation with experts at ADB. In the developing member countries, about a third of the interviews were with opinion leaders in government, about 20 percent with the private sector, roughly 15 percent each from multi- and bilateral donor agencies and from civil society organizations, and roughly 10 percent each from media and academia. In donor countries, bilateral donor agencies were a part of the government sample and, to compensate, the proportion of civil society organizations, media, and academia was slightly higher than in the developing countries.

Professional sector²¹

	Developing countries	Donor countries
Government	33%	30%
Private sector	20	19
Multi- and bilateral donor	16	-
Civil society organizations	14	24
Media	10	13
Academia	7	14

Sample selection

Names of potential respondents were compiled from two sources. PSRAI and individual survey research firms in each country used publicly available material for each of the sectors mentioned above to compile lists of opinion leaders. ADB provided separate lists of opinion leaders. The two lists were combined and duplicate names were removed. From the combined list, PSRAI randomly drew approximately three times as many contacts as the target number of completed interviews in each category. Opinion leaders were randomly chosen to be contacted. For example, if the goal was to complete 5 interviews in a particular category, 15 contacts were randomly chosen.²² Before fieldwork began, ADB reviewed the combined lists and further refined them based on the survey objectives.

Recruiting opinion leaders

The randomly chosen opinion leaders were sent letters inviting them to participate in the survey and explaining the purpose of the survey. These letters consisted of two components: (1) a letter written by the local firm inviting participation and (2) a letter from ADB signed by the Director General of ADB's Department of External Relations that explained the purpose of the survey. To protect the respondents' privacy, the letters signed by the ADB official did not identify the respondents by name. The letters were emailed, faxed, mailed, or hand-delivered to the respondents depending on what was determined to be the most reliable and time-efficient method in the particular country.

PSRAI's local partner firms would send out at least as many letters as the targeted number of interviews. If the local firms anticipated refusals and felt that it was necessary to send out more, they were allowed to do so. But the local firms were instructed to avoid sending letters out to people who they may not need to contact for an interview.

Each respondent's office was contacted at least five times before replacing the respondent with another. Only conversations with an actual person counted as contacts. If the respondent clearly refused to participate, he or she would be replaced with the next person on the list of randomly selected names.

Response to the survey was generally positive and most opinion leaders were happy to participate once the obstacles of gatekeepers and busy schedules were overcome. At the same time, however, many of our local partners reported that it was hard to contact high-level officials personally and in some cases refusals were communicated through assistants or secretaries. Almost all of the local partners also stated that even when contact was established it was difficult to arrange appointments with the opinion

²¹ The percentages presented in this table have been weighted to account for the fact that extra interviews were conducted in many survey countries. The weighting ensures that certain professional sectors are not overrepresented in the sample.

²² If these contacts were not sufficient for achieving the target number of complete interviews, more contacts were randomly drawn as necessary.

leaders, most of whom have very busy schedules and many of whom travel a lot. In addition, our local partners in most of the non-regional donor countries experienced difficulties locating respondents who had a sufficient level of knowledge about ADB. Nevertheless, the response rate averaged roughly 60 percent, ranging from about 20 percent to over 90 percent of the eligible respondents contacted.

Screening

To qualify for the study, opinion leaders had to describe themselves as at least somewhat knowledgeable about ADB and its activities. If a potential respondent indicated that he or she did not have too much knowledge of ADB and its activities or had no knowledge at all, the respondent was asked a small subset of questions after which the interview was terminated. Data from these interviews were not recorded.

Overall, roughly a quarter of the opinion leaders interviewed describe themselves as very knowledgeable about ADB and its activities, with the rest describing themselves as somewhat knowledgeable.²³ Two in three said they have a great deal or moderate amount of professional experience working with ADB. About half had been involved in an ADB project, program, or research study within the past three years.

Knowledge level and experience of survey respondents



²³ Eight in 10 of the opinion leaders interviewed were male. The average age was 48 and most opinion leaders had five or more years of experience working on international development issues (more than half had worked on development issues for more than 10 years).

Questionnaire design and translations

The questionnaire was designed by PSRAI in consultation with ADB experts and is seen as a benchmark for future research efforts and for use over time.

The format for the questionnaire was mostly close-ended, although a few open-end questions were also included. Coding frames for the open-end questions were developed and data for the open-ends coded at PSRAI.

PSRAI gave most respondents the opportunity to take the survey in the language of their choice. As is standard PSRAI practice for international work, we employed independent translators to either review the questionnaires or translate them back to English. If the independent translator voiced concern about how a question was translated, alternative wording was proposed. This alternate wording was then sent to the survey firm's translator to determine if that person agreed with the revisions. The languages in which interviews were conducted in each country are listed in the table on the right.

Survey language

East and Central Asia

China
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyz Republic

Mekong

Cambodia
Thailand
Vietnam

South Asia

Bangladesh
India
Pakistan
Sri Lanka

Southeast Asia

Indonesia
Philippines

Pacific

Donor countries

Australia
Canada
France
Germany
Japan
Korea
Sweden
UK
US

Language

Chinese, English
Russian, English
Russian, English

Khmer, English
Thai, English
Vietnamese, English

English, Bangla
English
English, Urdu
English

Bahasa, English
English
English, Bahasa, Tetun

English
English
French, English
German
Japanese
Korean
Swedish, English
English
English

Fieldwork logistics

To accommodate the respondents' busy schedules, multiple modes of interviewing were offered. Roughly half of the respondents were interviewed face-to-face, while about a quarter were interviewed over the telephone. The rest responded to the survey questions online or filled out the questionnaire on paper. The interviews were completed between April and June 2006. PSRAI's partner firms in each country, the field dates, and the mode of interview are displayed on the right.

PSRAI expects its partner research firms to maintain the highest ethical standards. Nearly all of our partner firms are members of their regional survey research professional association, which also seeks to hold its members to the highest ethical standards.

Only skilled interviewers who have experience interviewing opinion leaders were employed in this study. In developing countries, many of our partner survey firms have their executives conduct high-level interviews, as this is often the only means to get an appointment with a high-level government official. In other countries, the firms employ specially trained, well-educated elite interviewers.

Before an interviewer is certified to conduct an interview, the survey firms conduct final mock interviews with the interviewer to verify that the person is fully prepared to conduct the survey. It is also common procedure in survey research to conduct a certain number of back-checks (normally 20 to 50 percent of respondents) to verify that the interviewer conducted the survey with the correct respondent.

	Local company conducting the interviews	Interviewing dates	Mode of interview
East and Central Asia			
China	Horizonkey	04/25-06/07/06	Phone, paper, face-to-face, online
Kazakhstan	BRIF Central Asia	04/25-06/01/06	Paper, face-to-face, online
Kyrgyz Republic	BRIF Central Asia	04/20-05/30/06	Face-to-face, paper
Mekong			
Cambodia	TNS Vietnam	04/21-06/05/06	Face-to-face, online
Thailand	TNS Thailand	04/21-05/26/06	Face-to-face, online, paper
Vietnam	TNS Vietnam	04/27-05/23/06	Face-to-face, paper, phone, online
South Asia			
Bangladesh	SRGB	05/09-06/05/06	Face-to-face, paper, online
India	TNS India	04/24-06/07/06	Face-to-face, phone, paper
Pakistan	AC Nielsen Pakistan	04/19-05/30/06	Face-to-face
Sri Lanka	TNS Lanka	04/26-05/24/06	Face-to-face, paper, phone
Southeast Asia			
Indonesia	TNS Indonesia	05/01-06/13/06	Face-to-face, online
Philippines	TNS Philippines	04/27-06/02/06	Face-to-face, paper
Pacific			
	Tebbutt Research, TNS Indonesia	04/19-05/23/06	Phone, face-to-face
Donor countries			
Australia	TNS Australia	05/02-05/24/06	Phone
Canada	Environics	04/26-06/05/06	Phone, online
France	IFOP	04/19-05/29/06	Phone, online
Germany	TNS Emnid	04/18-05/09/06	Phone
Japan	Lyncs	04/19-05/12/06	Phone
Korea	Gallup Korea	04/25-05/30/06	Paper, face-to-face, phone
Sweden	IMRI	04/19-05/29/06	Online, phone
UK	Gfk NOP	04/24-06/07/06	Phone, online
US	Princeton Data Source	04/21-06/02/06	Phone, online