

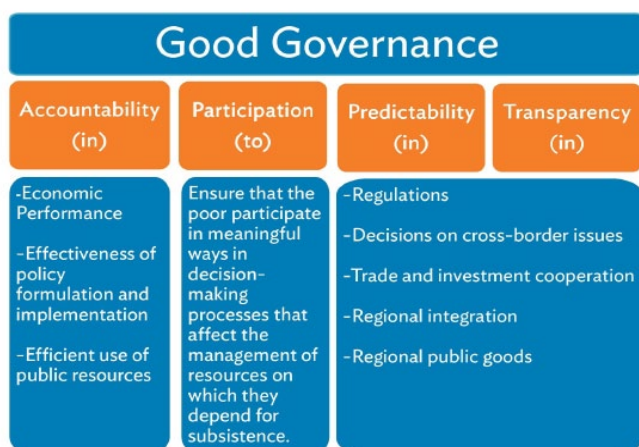
Opportunities for Internal Audit Capacity Development

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THRUST OF GOVERNANCE AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Governance and capacity development is one of the five drivers of change for Asian Development Bank (ADB) operations.¹ Support for good governance and capacity development of the developing member countries (DMCs) is being pursued in ADB operations with multiple aims, key of which are to ultimately improve the delivery of public goods and services, broaden inclusiveness, and reduce the impact of corruption on development effectiveness. Good governance embodies the principles of accountability, participation, predictability, and transparency.²



In this context, the Second Governance and Anticorruption Action Plan (GACAP II) was intended to enhance ADB's performance in strengthening country systems and its investments.³ GACAP II identified three priorities: (i) public financial management (PFM); (ii) procurement; and (iii) combating corruption, where actions could be applied at the country (systems), sector, and project levels. Through governance, institutional and corruption risk assessments, opportunities for supporting good governance and capacity development are being identified and built into ADB-funded projects, programs, and technical assistance (TA).

Highlights

- Ten (out of 1,825) projects, programs, and technical assistance from 2010 to 2014 had intended outcomes that relate to institutional strengthening and/or capacity development of internal audit activities in the developing member countries.
- Building and developing internal audit activities in the developing member countries could reinforce the counterparts' capacity to ensure that funds from ADB loans, grants, and technical assistance are used effectively, with economy, and for the intended purposes.
- Building and strengthening internal audit activities have demonstrated improvements in the governance processes and systems of counterparts in the DMCs.

The nature, extent, and objectives of capacity development activities included in ADB operations have been varied. Efforts have been expended to the development and institutional strengthening of external audit, anticorruption, and procurement capacities in the DMCs along the lines of GACAP II priorities.⁴ Development support for the DMCs' internal audit capacity had been negligible considering the volume of funds provided through ADB's loans, grants, and TA. See tables summarizing related figures below.

Only 10 (of 1,825) projects, programs, and TA projects had intended outcomes relating to institutional strengthening or capacity development of the concerned DMCs' internal audit activities.⁴ Compared to the total inventory of PFM and public sector management (PSM) operations, development efforts for internal audit activities were included in 1.8% over the past 5 years. It may be inferred that the potential value of fostering internal audit activities in the DMCs is overlooked for more pressing governance activities when capacity development opportunities for ADB-funded projects are being explored.⁵

Projects, programs, and TA projects with capacity development component for internal audit activity identified by operational departments		
Departments (DMCs where projects /programs are implemented)	Number of project/ programs/ TA projects	Total project financing* (US\$ million)
Central and West Asia Department (Program in Armenia; Project in Pakistan)	2	628
Pacific Department (Subproject in Samoa)	1	1
Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (Subproject in the People's Republic of China)	1	3
SARD South Asia Department (Two programs in the Maldives; Program in Bhutan; Program in India.)	4	479
Southeast Asia Department (Subprogram in Cambodia; Project in Indonesia)	2	85
Total	10	1,196
% to total inventory	0.5%	1.5%
% to total PSM- and PFM-related operations	1.8%	2.8%

Source: Report and recommendations of the President, TA reports, project and output documents shared by designated focal points and project teams from concerned operational departments.
* Amount represents total financing cost of projects, programs and TA projects – not capacity development component.

¹ Governance and capacity development were thematic priorities under the first long-term strategic framework. Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank, 2008–2020 reinforced these priorities as one of the drivers of change.

² ADB. 1995. *Governance: Sound Development Management*. Manila.

³ ADB. 2006. *Second Governance and Anticorruption Action Plan (GACAP II)*. Manila.

⁴ Review undertaken by OAG (Capacity Development Working Group) on capacity development activities incorporated into projects, programs, and TA projects submitted to the Board for approval from 2010 to 2014.

⁵ Such as public expenditure and fiscal management, public administration, external and tax audits, law and judiciary systems, economic and public affairs management.

Inventory of projects, programs, and TA projects submitted for approval from 2010 to 2014 (Source: Board Document System)				
Projects / programs / TA projects	Number of projects, programs, TA projects	Total project financing in US\$ million	Number of projects, programs, TA projects with PFM- and PSM-related operations	Total project financing in US\$ million - projects, programs, TA projects with PFM- and PSM-related operations
OCR, ADF, and JFPR projects and programs	472	76,080	275	42,265
TA projects (including regional and small-scale TA projects)	1,353	1,400	285	365
Total	1,825	77,480	560	42,630
OCR = Ordinary Capital Resources, ADF = Asian Development Fund, JFPR = Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction projects and programs including piggyback TA projects.				

Of the 10 operations, capacity development component for internal audit was completed for two programs and one TA project as part of the concerned DMCs' structural reforms in PFM. ADB supported three internal audit functions to establish and align their reporting lines, processes, and systems to the best practices of the internal audit profession—these being requisites to fulfill the oversight role of ensuring and promoting efficiency, accountability, and transparency in the DMCs' governance processes and systems.⁶

For one (of the three) internal audit function, the successful deployment of an audit resource management system; development of internal audit manual, and training of internal audit staff resulted in the use of best practices in performing internal audits, risk and fraud management, and strategic audit planning. Sustainability of the internal audit function is backed by the ongoing implementation of comprehensive policies and measures, and commitment from the government in related PFM reforms. Sustainability of the other two internal audit functions remains a lingering concern due to the discontinued or unpredictable DMC's commitment and support to fund the internal audit operations, staffing, and skills development.

It is also noteworthy that four operations approved prior to 2010 included internal audit capacity development components for three Southeast Asia DMCs.⁷ In general, insufficient data and information about the internal audit status, maturity, and capacity obscure the awareness for internal audit capacity development and/or how internal audit may complement the DMC's governance processes and systems.

WHY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR INTERNAL AUDIT?

An internal audit function is intrinsic for sound governance and accountability where public sector institutions can rely on

internal audits to provide oversight and assurance over its operations, delivery of services, and use of public funds.⁸

By the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) definition, "Internal Auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations. It helps an organization accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes." In principle, an effective audit function that provides the appropriate oversight and assurance over the organization's internal controls and processes will help advance and uphold good governance, accountability, and transparency.

Translated into ADB's reality, building and developing the internal audit activities of the executing and implementing agencies, state-owned enterprises, and project partners will essentially support and improve their capacity to provide the oversight and assurance that:

- Proceeds from ADB's loans, grants, and technical assistance are used economically and effectively to achieve the intended project and program outcomes; and
- Their risk management, internal control, and governance processes are appropriately designed and functioning effectively to help attain the operational objectives and outcomes.

LOOKING AT POSSIBILITIES

The value of building and developing effective internal audit capacity in the DMCs can further contribute to GACAP II within its three thematic priorities. When viewed from the perspective of having a strong and effective internal audit function within the executing and implementing agencies, state-owned enterprises, and project partners, counterparts will be encouraged, if not prompted to:

- Be more responsible in discharging their PFM, procurement, and anticorruption obligations during the implementation of projects and programs;
- Manage or mitigate the risks in their financial and procurement activities and operations; and
- Improve their governance in PFM and operations, so they may better respond to the growing demand for public expenditure and fiscal accountability in the DMCs.

From ADB existing efforts in capacity development, it should be recognized that building and strengthening internal audit activities have demonstrated improvements in the governance processes and systems of counterparts in the DMCs.

⁶ Technical Assistance Consultant's Final Report for TA-6507(REG), Samoa: Strengthening Public Financial Management in Pacific Developing Member Countries; Completion Report for Project Number: 39658, Maldives: Economic Recovery Program; and Project Completion Report for Grant0338/Loan 2994 - BHU: Strengthening Economic Management Program.

⁷ Development Policy Support Program and Governance in Justice Sector Project in the Philippines; TA for Improved Public Financial Management Systems in Lao People's Democratic Republic; and Public Financial Management for Rural Development Project in Cambodia. Total project financing of these operations was \$1.06 billion. Information/data provided by SERD.

⁸ Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Center report on An Evaluation of Internal Audit in Pacific Countries - The Way Forward (November 2008) illustrated cases where internal audit as a "portal of good governance" is conducive for financial accountability in an environment of fraudulent practices, internal control weaknesses, and disregard for fiscal discipline.

KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTORS



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