Thematic Evaluation


Independent Evaluation ADB

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Abbreviations

ADB – Asian Development Bank
ADF – Asian Development Fund
ANR – agriculture and natural resources
BISP – Benazir Income Support Program
CDTA – capacity development technical assistance
CGA – country gender assessment
COBP – country operations business plan
CPS – country partnership strategy
CSP – country operations and program
DLI – disbursement-linked indicators
DMC – developing member country
DMF – design and monitoring framework
EARD – East Asia Department
EGM – effective gender mainstreaming
FGD – focus group discussion
GAD – gender and development
GAP – gender action plan
GBV – gender-based violence
GDCF – Gender and Development Cooperation Fund
GEN – gender equity theme
JFPR – Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction
Lao PDR – Lao People’s Democratic Republic
MDB – multilateral development bank
MFF – multitranchance financing facility
MSMEs – micro, small and medium enterprises
NGE – no gender elements
NGO – nongovernment organization
OCR – Ordinary Capital Resources
PBL – policy-based loan
PCR – project completion report
PNG – Papua New Guinea
PPTA – project preparatory technical assistance
PRC – People’s Republic of China
PSO – private sector operations
PSOD – Private Sector Operations Department
PSM – public sector management
SDCC – Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department
SDG – Sustainable Development Goal
SERD – Southeast Asia Department
SGE – some gender elements
SMEs – small and medium-sized enterprises
SPD – Strategy and Policy Department
TA – technical assistance
ToC – theory of change
WID – women in development
WUS – water and other urban infrastructure and services
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C. People’s Republic of China
D. Indonesia
E. Pakistan
F. Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste

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Acknowledgments

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IED retains full responsibility for this report.
Foreword

Gender equality is an urgent development agenda in Asia and the Pacific. Restrictions to women's rights and access to opportunities cost the region more than $3 trillion in income losses. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has set itself an objective to help narrow gender disparities in the region, and this evaluation assesses its progress in promoting gender and development (GAD) during 2005–2015.

ADB approved its Policy on Gender and Development in 1998, and its Strategy 2020 adopted gender equity as a driver of change in 2008. It also included corporate targets on gender mainstreaming in its results framework. Since then, ADB has made considerable progress in advancing its GAD agenda. ADB is recognized as a pioneer among multilateral development banks for adopting corporate targets on gender mainstreaming. These targets, which ADB surpassed over 2012–2016, contributed to the steady increase of ADB’s gender-mainstreamed portfolio since 2009 across all sectors, most notably in agriculture and natural resources, education, health, and water and urban development. ADB has also been a pioneer in using project-specific gender action plans, and insisting that executing agencies regularly report on these plans.

Overcoming gender discrimination and inequality remains a challenge in Asia and the Pacific. While gains have been made in increasing women and girls’ access to education and health care, the region needs to do more in tackling gender-based discrimination in labor markets and gender-based violence, and promoting gender-inclusive social protection and safety nets.

This evaluation suggests a threefold emphasis. First, ADB’s forthcoming Strategy 2030 should identify and prioritize the specific gender outcomes that the institution intends to support. The gender results pursued should be aligned with the gender targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, and address critical gender gaps in economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and resilience to risks and shocks.

Second, efforts should be made to encourage governments to invest in strongly gender-focused projects directly aimed at gender outcomes, which have declined in ADB’s portfolio since 2010. With transport and energy accounting for more than half of ADB’s portfolio during 2005–2015, ADB should continue to seek innovative opportunities for gender work. Gender action plans can help achieve greater results if they are made as project- and location-specific as possible, while retaining indicators and targets that can be also used to monitor and report progress in aggregate terms.

Third, staffing, skills, and financing are crucial for supporting pilot innovations, knowledge solutions, and advocacy work for gender equality. Coupled with a strengthened commitment by staff and Management to gender equality, ADB should invest in the staffing and skills to promote this, and ensure sufficient resources for gender-related projects, technical assistance, and knowledge products.

These three directions can help ADB accomplish its mission of deepening inclusion in Asia and the Pacific through its GAD agenda. ADB is well positioned to play an important role in narrowing the divide between women and men, which will have an enduring impact on eradicating poverty and fostering inclusive and sustainable growth in the region.

Marvin Taylor-Dormond
Director General
Independent Evaluation
Executive Summary

This evaluation of the Asian Development Bank’s (ADB) support for gender and development (GAD) examined the relevance and results of ADB’s gender priorities at the corporate, country, and project levels during 2005–2015. It found that ADB’s Policy on Gender and Development, 1998 led to a greater focus on the process of mainstreaming gender content in projects and less attention to specifying the broader gender results that ADB should pursue. While the number of gender-mainstreamed projects has increased in all sectors, this was driven by a notable rise in the share of projects with effective gender mainstreaming, which do not have gender outcomes in their main objective but instead aim for outputs contributing to gender equality. Support for projects with a gender equity theme—aiming for outcomes directly addressing gender equality—has declined since 2010. Gender-mainstreamed projects were most prevalent in agriculture and natural resources, education, health, and water and other urban infrastructure. There are various entry points for ADB to scale up gender mainstreaming in transport and energy projects, which accounted for over half of ADB’s total portfolio.

The evaluation found that of the 72 projects reviewed that were approved during 2005–2015 and had a project completion report and a gender success rating, 47 successfully delivered gender results—a 65% success rate. However, gender results at the country partnership level, as expressed in results frameworks, were not systematically monitored and reported. Eight countries were visited to conduct gender portfolio assessments—Bangladesh, Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste. The review of results in these countries indicated that projects in education, health, transport, and urban water helped promote gender equality particularly in human development, by enhancing education and health outcomes of women.

Transport and urban water projects helped women to save the time they spent in travel and fetching clean water. There was more limited policy and institutional support to address gender-based discrimination in labor markets, combat gender-based violence, and promote gender-inclusive social protection and safety nets. This, in combination with lack of governments’ commitment, constrained ADB’s contribution to narrowing gender gaps in economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and vulnerabilities to risks and shocks.

Using gender diagnostics during project design, tailoring gender action plans to project-specific circumstances, and monitoring these plans are crucial lessons as ADB advances its GAD agenda. Sufficient staffing, skills, and resources are needed for ADB to improve the delivery of this agenda. As ADB prepares its new long-term strategy, Strategy 2030, the time is right to reconfirm the goals and targets of its GAD agenda.

Gender Equality: Concepts and Challenges

Gender equality is an urgent development agenda in Asia and the Pacific. Narrowing gender disparities is widely acknowledged as a prerequisite for advancing the region’s development agenda. Gender equality is the outcome to be achieved through gender equity, which is the process of ensuring the fair treatment of women and men. This evaluation analyzes Asian Development Bank’s (ADB) support for gender and development (GAD) using the framework of the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Operational Plan, 2013–2020. The plan views gender equality in five dimensions—human development, economic empowerment, reduced time poverty, voice and decision-making, and reduced vulnerability to risks and shocks.

The region has made strides in reducing gender gaps in human development and time poverty in the last 2 decades. Education, particularly at the primary level, is now more accessible to girls. Women have greater access to health services in some countries. These improvements, however,
have not yet been translated into enhancements in the quality of these services in many countries. The provision of basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and water supply and sanitation services has improved, but rural areas still lag behind urban communities in their access to these services. The uneven progress in providing time savings that allow women to go to school or work, and attend to unpaid domestic work is an unfinished agenda.

Persistent and emerging gender challenges hamper the reduction of gender disparities in economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and resilience to shocks in the region. Women continue to be overrepresented in the informal sector, which pays lower wages and offers fewer benefits than the formal sector. With aging populations, the increased burden of caregiving for the elderly could further restrict women’s participation in formal labor markets. The pervasiveness of gender-based violence (GBV), a major concern in the region, greatly hinders women’s voice and decision-making capacity. Climate change, conflicts, and economic shocks affect more women than men, underscoring the need for strong social protection systems with a gender perspective.

ADB has established an institutional framework on GAD—consisting of its GAD policy and operational plans, and four gender categories—to address gender challenges. The Policy on Gender and Development, 1998 aimed to promote gender equity mainly through gender mainstreaming; this calls for gender considerations to be included in all aspects of ADB’s operations. There were several action plans subsequent to the policy. The Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Operational Plan, 2013–2020 is the latest action plan to operationalize the GAD policy. The plan adopts a twin approach of gender mainstreaming and targeted investments in women and girls. The four gender categories—gender equity theme (GEN), effective gender mainstreaming (EGM), some gender elements (SGE), and no gender elements (NGE)—distinguish which operations count as gender mainstreaming. GEN and EGM projects are regarded as gender-mainstreamed and are required to have gender action plans (GAPs). GEN projects have outcomes that directly address gender equality and women’s empowerment by narrowing gender disparities. By contrast, EGM projects need to have several outputs that contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment. SGE and NGE projects are categorized as non-gender-mainstreamed.

Scope of the Evaluation

From 2005 to 2015, ADB approved 504 gender-mainstreamed projects funded by its Ordinary Capital Resources, the Asian Development Fund, or the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR). By the time of this evaluation, 92 of these had been completed and self-evaluated through project completion reports (PCRs). Seventy-two were assigned ADB’s gender success ratings, which are assessed by the gender unit in the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (SDCC) in consultation with operations departments. All of them were reviewed in this evaluation. Most of the 20 projects not reviewed were grants funded by the JFPR, which SDCC does not rate for gender success. The 72 projects reviewed were spread across 20 developing member countries.

The evaluation visited eight countries to conduct gender portfolio assessments: Bangladesh, Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste. Over 2005–2015, 215 gender-mainstreamed projects were approved for these countries, accounting for 43% of the total number of gender-mainstreamed projects in the period, and 60% of the total amount approved for these projects. The evaluation took a broad approach in these countries. It reviewed all 33 completed and self-evaluated projects approved over 2005–2015 that have ADB’s gender success rating. It also looked at (i) all 41 GEN and EGM projects approved before 2005 but closed with PCRs during the review period; (ii) ongoing gender-mainstreamed projects; (iii) technical assistance (TA) projects and JFPR grants; and (iv) projects, classified as SGE and NGE, deemed to have potential gender impacts. Document reviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions were also undertaken, providing a robust basis for assessing the results of in-country gender work.
Relevance of ADB Support for Gender and Development

The GAD policy focused on the process of mainstreaming gender issues in the portfolio and paid less attention to specifying and prioritizing the gender results it aimed to achieve. The policy discussed in detail what gender mainstreaming is and why it is needed. But it only broadly stated that the objective was to achieve gender equity, and it did not set out what types of gender results—for example, equality in rights, access to opportunities, or well-being between women and men—ADB should prioritize in its gender-mainstreamed operations. From 2008, gender mainstreaming was driven by a corporate target in ADB’s results framework. Initially, the target was to have 40% of public sector operations gender-mainstreamed by 2012, rising to 45% by 2016.

ADB’s gender-mainstreamed portfolio expanded during 2005–2015, especially after the introduction of the corporate results framework and gender targets. The increase was, however, driven by a sharp rise in EGM projects. Support for GEN projects declined after 2010 and was confined to certain sectors. Even so, ADB achieved its targets over 2012–2016. The share of GEN projects declined from 21% in 2005 to about 8% during 2011–2015. The share of EGM projects tripled from 15% in 2009 to 45% in 2015. The limited support for GEN projects suggests that only a small number of ADB’s projects has objectives that squarely focus on gender equality outcomes. A much larger share deals with one or more gender-related outputs in projects that do not directly pursue gender equality objectives.

ADB’s focus on infrastructure in practice, especially since Strategy 2020, diminished the focus on sectors that used to be more important in ADB’s portfolio such as agriculture and natural resources (ANR). This could have reduced opportunities for pursuing projects with gender objectives because the limited support for GEN projects inhibits ADB’s efforts to concentrate on sectors and subsectors where there are more opportunities to meaningfully narrow gender gaps. For instance, gender-mainstreamed ANR projects tend to focus more on rural infrastructure than on agriculture-value chains and extension services, and labor-saving technologies, which can directly target the needs of smallholder women farmers. ADB has provided little policy and institutional support to address GBV despite its prevalence in the region.

ADB’s gender-mainstreamed portfolio by amount during 2005–2015 was mainly in ANR, education, health, and water and other urban infrastructure and services (WUS), even though transport and energy projects accounted for a large share of ADB’s total portfolio. Of the 504 GEN and EGM projects, 304 were in ANR, education, health and WUS. By amount, about two-thirds of project approvals in these four sectors were gender-mainstreamed during the review period. By contrast, only 11% of the energy portfolio was gender-mainstreamed, 19% of the public sector management portfolio, 20% of the finance sector portfolio, and 26% of the transport portfolio—and most of these projects were in the EGM category. On a positive note, gender mainstreaming did improve especially in transport during 2013–2015, and in energy to some extent, although this was not fully sustained in 2016.

The uneven increase in ADB’s gender-mainstreamed portfolio highlights the remaining challenges in incorporating gender in ADB’s work. ADB has demonstrated that there are entry points for gender work in infrastructure to improve gender mainstreaming. This was evident in some SGE-classified infrastructure projects evaluated that had shown gender benefits at completion. It is likely that these benefits would have been greater if they had been actively supported by a GAP.

While a useful instrument, many GAPs were found not fully tailored to conditions on the ground. Across sectors and subsectors, GAPs usually include a set of indicators covering: (i) jobs and income generated by projects, (ii) participation of women in ADB projects and their representation in groups at the national and subnational levels, (iii) capacity building of women through livelihood training, and (iv) collection of sex-disaggregated data for project monitoring and reporting. This allows for aggregate reporting of gender results. But the indicators within these four categories tended to be uniform, reflecting a lack of quality assessments of sector-, project- or community-
specific circumstances; and the differing needs and priorities of women in various situations. This has led to perfunctory or unattainable targets in some cases. The formulation of quality GAPs was also hampered by the lack of time required to undertake detailed analyses of project-specific gender challenges; and the weak capacity of executing and implementing agencies to design, implement, and monitor gender projects.

The GAD policy and operational plan are generally aligned with the gender policies of partner governments. However, governments’ limited understanding of and capacity for gender work is hindering the implementation of ADB’s institutional priorities on gender. ADB is helping to improve the capacity of executing and implementing agencies for gender mainstreaming and a better understanding of gender issues.

ADB demonstrated that various financing modalities can be used for gender work. Sector development programs, which combine projects and policy-based loans (PBLs), are effective modalities to ensure that gender benefits of project components are complemented by policy and institutional systems that encompass a gender perspective. PBLs are being used to develop gender-mainstreaming measures and gender-responsive budgeting processes at various levels of government. Results-based loans are fairly new and their effectiveness in generating gender benefits has yet to be demonstrated. TA projects are essential for ensuring that gender-mainstreamed interventions are properly designed, and for identifying activities and indicators in GAPs. But funding for this modality has declined in real terms.

**Results of ADB Support for Gender and Development**

Of the 72 projects reviewed that were approved during 2005–2015 and had a PCR and a gender success rating, 47 successfully delivered gender results—a 65% success rate; 65% for GEN projects and 66% for EGM projects. The success rate is presented with some caution as an indicator of ADB’s overall performance because the sample is small and contains a greater percentage of GEN projects approved before 2010. Women’s participation in community-based activities and organizations, as well as the involvement of nongovernment organizations (NGOs) in implementing gender activities were common to projects with a successful gender rating. Other reasons were the use of grants or TA projects linked to loans that helped implement gender activities, and the reporting of sex-disaggregated data successfully. Issues common to projects with a not successful gender rating were the limited engagement of gender specialists, lack of sex-disaggregated data, and design issues.

The evaluation found a strong correlation between the gender success and overall project success ratings in the sample of 72 projects. With an estimated correlation coefficient of 0.83, gender-mainstreamed projects reviewed in this evaluation as successful overall were also likely to be successful in realizing their intended gender equality results. This correlation may be explained by the fact that gender-mainstreamed projects have additional design requirements such as GAPs and gender analysis, highlighting the importance of robust design in ensuring project success.

**TA projects played catalytic roles in delivering gender results.** Of stand-alone TA amounts, 7% were categorized GEN and 14% EGM during 2010–2015. But 27% of stand-alone TA amounts in this period were not classified under any of the four gender categories, because ADB has neither definitions for gender classification of TA projects nor incorporates targets for gender mainstreaming in TA projects—and so there is less diligence and urgency to categorize them. Even so, TA projects played a vital role in the design and implementation of gender-mainstreamed projects and their GAPs. This was corroborated during the country visits. ADB’s efforts to provide livelihood training to women, enhance government capacity for gender work, and include gender-inclusive design features in infrastructure projects were mainly accomplished through TA projects.

Gender results at the country partnership level are not well formulated and their achievement is not well monitored and reported. The gender indicators were often limited to education, health, and WUS, where sex-disaggregated
targets are easier to identify. Country partnership strategy (CPS) final reviews did not always report on the progress of gender indicators in their results frameworks. The gender indicators are often derived from national targets. As the baseline and completion targets for outputs and outcomes of ADB projects are often not quantified, it is difficult to isolate ADB’s contribution. Reporting the progress of gender indicators against the national targets is uneven and often delayed.

This evaluation took a closer look at the gender results achieved by ADB’s projects on the ground in the eight countries chosen for deeper analysis. The assessments indicated that greater contributions were being made to narrowing gender gaps in human development and time poverty than in economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and vulnerability to risks and shocks. This was largely due to the concentration of gender-mainstreamed interventions in social sectors and urban water. In Bangladesh and Pakistan, for instance, more than half of the completed and rated GEN and EGM projects assessed were in ANR, education, health, and urban water. In Indonesia, all completed and rated gender-mainstreamed projects examined were in these four sectors.

The country assessments also showed that ADB’s education, health, transport, and WUS projects helped reduce gender gaps in human development by improving education and health outcomes among women. More than two-thirds of the surveyed female beneficiaries of the Metropolitan Health and Sanitation Project in Indonesia said the overall environment around their houses improved because of better sanitation and water quality. The evaluation’s beneficiary survey for the Second Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project in Bangladesh showed that more than 80% of female respondents reported that their access to educational institutes and health facilities increased owing to the ADB-funded road.

In the eight countries, transport and WUS projects were seen to mainly help lessen women’s time poverty in travel and fetching potable water. The beneficiary survey for the Rural Road Improvement Project in Cambodia showed that the proportion of women using motorbikes to go to markets increased from 32% to 67% after project completion, reducing their travel time to markets from an average of 36 minutes to 13 minutes. In addition, the WUS projects examined such as the Urban Water Supply and Environmental Improvement Project in India helped reduce women’s time poverty through better access to clean water. The project helped provide 80% of households in project areas with clean and reliable water supply.

Results in the eight countries indicated that while projects in ANR, rural roads, and developing skills helped narrow gender gaps in economic empowerment, much less was done to systematically address legal and institutional constraints on women’s participation in formal labor markets. Of the 23 gender-mainstreamed ANR projects that were completed and rated during 2005–2015, 13 focused on the provision of rural infrastructure such as irrigation, rural water supply and sanitation services, and rural roads. Six of these projects had components for livelihood or technical training on farm activities targeting women. No completed ANR project explicitly indicated support for or targeted labor-saving technologies for women.

Over 2005–2015, 31 projects included skills development components, which provided technical training to women farmers and entrepreneurs, and helped increase women’s representation in skills development councils. Rural road projects helped augment women’s income by increasing their access to markets and workplaces, and sale of their produce. This was shown in the beneficiary surveys for four infrastructure projects in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, and Indonesia. Nearly 75% of surveyed female beneficiaries of the Rural Road Improvement Project in Cambodia reported an increase in sales from farm produce because of road improvements. ADB has yet to optimize its policy and institutional support in labor markets that would have more lasting impacts on gender-based discrimination.

The eight country portfolio assessments showed that ADB’s contribution to enhancing women’s voice and decision-making was mainly by promoting their participation in projects or membership in community groups. Combating GBV was not addressed by the projects reviewed.
GAPs often include quotas for women’s participation in project consultations and community groups overseeing the management and maintenance of project outputs, usually in infrastructure. About 44% of the surveyed female beneficiaries of the Second Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project in Bangladesh reported greater roles in decision-making in the community because of their contributions to the project’s design and implementation. More than two-thirds of the female respondents said the project increased the mobilization of women into community groups. Self-help groups solely comprised of women accounted for about one-fifth of loans provided by the North Karnataka Urban Sector Investment Program in India to strengthen micro-businesses. The eight country portfolio assessments did not substantiate that priority was given to targeted support to combat GBV.

ADB provided limited project support for social protection and safety nets in the eight countries. Its support for microfinance loans served more as safety nets than tools for income generation. This constrained the contribution of ADB’s GAD agenda in bolstering women’s resilience to shocks. Of the projects reviewed, few interventions focused on social protection and safety nets. For the Social Protection Development Project supporting the Benazir Income Support Program—Pakistan’s largest safety net program—other development partners supporting this program used independent feedback to help evaluate results, which ADB did not do. In Bangladesh, ADB’s budget support during the 2008 food crisis included provisions to strengthen social security, particularly for women. The Rural Pension Reform TA Project in the PRC recommended eliminating gender differences in the retirement age by fixing it at 60 for men and women.

ADB’s legal and regulatory support that encourages women’s entrepreneurship to sustain the demand for microfinance loans was not strong in the eight countries. Governments’ demand for such ADB support is also necessary. ADB’s microfinance projects mainly covered the supply-side provision of finance. Of the 15 GEN-classified microfinance initiatives during 2005–2015, 4 were supported by PBLs. However, the policy matrices of three of these PBLs did not support reforms tackling underlying legal and regulatory issues to encourage women’s participation in entrepreneurship.

Delivering Gender Results

The introduction of corporate targets for gender mainstreaming and delivering gender results attests to ADB’s commitment to improve its performance in GAD. ADB was a pioneer among multilateral development banks in including gender targets in its corporate results framework. ADB also specifies the criteria for the gender success rating of projects. But effective arrangements for monitoring gender indicators in CPS results frameworks were found to be often lacking.

Gaps were found in staffing and skills for carrying out gender work in several ADB resident missions, including for supervision and monitoring. Some resident missions, including those in the PRC and Indonesia, do not have a national GAD staff specialist or a long-term GAD consultant. ADB has, however, increased the number of gender specialists at Headquarters. The evaluation’s gender perception survey showed that ADB staff see strengthening technical capacity on gender as useful for integrating gender into their work, and this should be a priority for ADB. Staff generally expressed a willingness to take part in gender training on sector- and project-specific issues, and other operational needs. Staff also suggested other forms of training including practical or on-site coaching on gender integration in projects and workshops on good practices for gender mainstreaming across countries and sectors. Such training would be effective if coupled with Management and staff commitment to the GAD agenda.

Reliable financing for TA projects and grants, and expanded partnerships greatly influenced the delivery of ADB’s GAD agenda. Apart from their usefulness in the design and preparation of GEN and EGM projects, TA projects and grants were crucial in supporting pilot innovation and knowledge solutions on gender equality. ADB’s stronger partnerships with other development partners, the private sector, and NGOs have been useful for attracting cofinancing and ensuring greater synergies in gender equality programs.
Recommendations

Based on these findings, the Independent Evaluation Department offers the following main recommendations to assist ADB’s corporate policy directions and operations management improve the delivery of the GAD agenda. Chapter 6 contains the full extent of the recommendations.

A. Policy Directions

Specify the types of gender results to be supported in Strategy 2030, with the achievement of gender results reported more systematically by type. Gender equality needs to be retained as a priority theme in Strategy 2030, and targets for it need to be continued. ADB’s GAD agenda needs to focus on the specific gender outcomes that it aims to support such as equal economic opportunities for men and women. The GAD agenda can be linked to the gender targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, and made responsive to gender issues, particularly in economic empowerment and voice and decision-making. Both are urgent gender challenges in the region.

ADB’s gender classification of projects and its design of GAPs must be complemented by a clear understanding among ADB’s operations departments on a more systematic method of assessing and reporting gender results of completed projects based on the five dimensions of gender equality.

B. Operations Management

1. Country Level

Conduct regular updates of country gender assessments (CGAs) and develop gender knowledge products through concerted efforts among development partners, and ensure that the findings of both are reflected in the strategies and results frameworks of CPSs and related documents. This is important since the new CPS guidelines subsume gender analysis under the inclusive growth assessment. ADB should earmark core funding for regular updates of CGAs and gender knowledge products.

Increase the number of GEN projects in ADB’s portfolio. Such projects often have a more direct impact on gender equality, and help address policy and legal issues, weak social protection systems, and institutional constraints on women’s labor force participation.

2. Project Level

Design projects that use gender diagnostics, build on lessons learned across regions, and rigorously monitor results.

(i) Strong gender diagnostics in projects to tailor GAP indicators and activities to conditions on the ground;
(ii) Better integration of gender measures in infrastructure projects, notwithstanding ADB’s progress in this area, to maximize the impact of its GAD support;
(iii) Scaling up ADB’s support for skills development targeting women and addressing institutional constraints on women’s labor force participation;
(iv) Increasing ADB’s support to improve women’s voice and decision-making, and reduce their vulnerability to risks and shocks through TA projects and possibly through PBLs or sector development programs;
(v) Supporting capacity building in implementing and executing agencies in gender, especially at the subnational level; and
(vi) Forging stronger partnerships with other funding agencies to support and deliver ADB’s GAD agenda, and ensuring reliable funding for TA projects and continuing to seek funding for the Gender and Development Cooperation Fund.

C. Organizational Requirements

Strengthen the technical capacity of ADB staff to support the integration of gender work into projects. ADB must ensure sufficient staff resources, and equip its staff with skills to design, implement, and monitor gender interventions. ADB must also identify and monitor the responsibilities of staff at Headquarters and in resident missions for gender mainstreaming in projects and country and sector work. This work should not be left only to gender specialists.
Management Response

On 18 May 2017, the Director General, Independent Evaluation Department (IED), received the following response from the Director General, Strategy, Policy and Review Department, on behalf of the Management:

I. General Comments

We appreciate the Thematic Evaluation on Asian Development Bank’s (ADB) Support to Gender and Development (GAD) (2005–2015), which includes gender portfolio assessments of eight countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste). Overall, we welcome the report’s recognition of significant achievements made in ADB’s GAD operations in terms of approving more projects with gender mainstreaming and monitoring to enhance gender equality results at project completion. We also note the report’s appreciation that ADB is at the forefront of multilateral development banks (MDBs) in adopting gender categories and corporate targets and having executing agencies monitor gender equality results. We wish to add that ADB is often regarded as at the frontier of innovating gender-inclusive designs in infrastructure, particularly renewable energy and urban infrastructure services.

II. Management Response

Recommendation 1: Policy directions. Specify the types of gender results to be supported in Strategy 2030, with the achievement of gender results reported more systematically by type.

Management agrees. Consultations on Strategy 2030 are ongoing. However, given that gender equality is a critical development need in the region, it is likely to be one of the priorities in Strategy 2030. Once the new strategy is developed, discussion will take place on how to strengthen gender equality targets and indicators in the new corporate results framework, which will be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 5 on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. Per the Gender Operational Plan results framework, gender equality results of completed projects have been aggregated each year according to the five dimensions of gender equality (economic, human development, reduced time poverty, voice and decision-making, and reduced vulnerability to risks and shocks). The methodology used for this exercise can be further reviewed for improvement.

Recommendation 2.a: Operations management at country level: (i) conduct regular updates of Country Gender Assessments (CGAs) and develop gender knowledge products through concerted efforts among development partners, and ensure that the findings of both are reflected in the strategies and results frameworks of Country Partnership Strategies (CPSs) and related documents; and (ii) increase the number of gender equity theme (GEN) projects in ADB’s portfolio.

Management agrees. Under the refined CPS business processes, which formally came into effect in September 2016, CGAs are updated as part of the sustainable and inclusive growth assessment, which is one of the three core linked documents under the new CPS template. Gender considerations should also be presented in the CPS main text so as to clearly identify and elaborate how ADB intends to operationalize improvement of women’s status in the country.
ADB may also undertake standalone gender knowledge products depending on specific country priorities and needs, in partnership with governments and development partners. These should be included in the country knowledge plan and operationalized through the Country Operations Business Plan. Regarding inclusion of gender results in the CPS results framework, as per the Management Response to the 2017 Annual Evaluation Review, Management is exploring options for improved CPS performance measurement with IED to identify what changes are realistic and feasible.

The twin-track approach of exploring more GEN projects—while simultaneously continuing with effective gender mainstreaming (EGM) across operations—has been a key approach pursued by ADB in the 1998 GAD Policy, Midterm Review of Strategy 2020, and the Gender Operational Plan 2013–2020. This will be continued. Moving forward, we will explore further alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals which contain more “transformative” gender agenda, such as addressing gender-based violence, economic empowerment of women, enhancing voice and decision-making of women and girls, and reducing vulnerability to shocks and risks through gender-responsive social protection systems. These critical issues can be explored, not only through GEN projects, but also EGM projects and technical assistance (TA) operations across a range of sectors.

**Recommendation 2.b:** Operations management at project level. Design projects that use gender diagnostics, build on lessons learned across regions, and rigorously monitor results, including: (i) strong gender diagnostics in projects are necessary to identify gender action plan (GAP) indicators and activities tailored to circumstances on the ground; (ii) gender design elements need to be better integrated in infrastructure projects to improve the impact of ADB’s GAD support, though ADB has made progress in this area; (iii) ADB’s support for skills development interventions targeting women and addressing institutional constraints to their labor force participation needs to be scaled up across sectors in the portfolio; (iv) opportunities to increase ADB support for improving women’s voice and decision-making, and reducing their vulnerability to risks and shocks, should be utilized to the full extent; (v) ADB should continue supporting capacity building in implementing and executing agencies in gender, especially at the subnational level; and (vi) ADB must forge stronger partnerships with other funding agencies to support and deliver its GAD agenda.

*Management agrees.* We will continue to allocate adequate gender expertise resources to conduct project gender analysis and collect sex-disaggregated baseline data to set evidence-based gender targets in project GAPs. We have significantly improved and systematized the GAP implementation monitoring and reporting by project executing and implementing agencies during project implementation. Our GAP monitoring and reporting system is considered exemplary across MDBs. Lessons from monitoring of gender results across ADB have been shared regularly in the Gender Specialists Annual Consultation Meetings and the Gender Equity Thematic Group Retreat.

We will continue to pay attention to gender pipeline in infrastructure sectors and better capture gender equality results of infrastructure projects. It should be noted that ADB has been recognized widely as a front runner of integrating innovative gender-inclusive designs into infrastructure projects, such as, measures for women’s personal security in public transport services; employment generation for women in skilled and/or “non-traditional” work through scholarship provisions, job training, and mentoring, and supporting women’s participation in deciding local budget priorities in small towns development.

Management supports skills training for women to achieve inclusive growth agenda, not only in technical and vocational education and training projects, but also across sectors (including infrastructure projects). ADB’s private sector development operations (both sovereign and
nonsovereign) have been increasingly addressing workplace gender equality issues. The efforts will be scaled up in sovereign operations, and supported by nonsovereign operations through the engagement with the clients. Furthermore, the opportunity to collaborate with our developing member country (DMC) partners to address unpaid care and domestic work agenda (SDG Goal 5.5) will be explored.

We agree to explore the full range of appropriate modalities (such as TAs, project and program loans, cofinancing grants) to support gender-responsive legal and institutional reforms in such areas as improving women’s voice and decision-making, and reducing vulnerability to risks and shocks.

ADB has made a significant progress in building gender mainstreaming capacity in implementing and executing agencies through its popular tools, such as sector gender toolkits and TIP Sheets on gender mainstreaming in the project cycle. These efforts will be continued.

We will expand partnerships to narrow gender gaps in DMCs, particularly in areas that ADB needs to work more on or may not have sufficient expertise in, such as gender-based violence, women’s economic empowerment, and reducing climate change vulnerabilities.

**Recommendation 3:** Organizational requirements. Strengthen the technical capacity of ADB staff to integrate gender work into projects.

*Management agrees.* ADB will undertake Midterm Review of the Gender Operational Plan later this year. This will include review of the implementation of priorities identified in the Operational Plan, and how to continue enhancing ADB’s GAD operations, including alignment with the SDGs as well as financial and staff requirements. Ongoing workforce analysis and the mobility framework consultations with the Gender Equity Thematic Group will identify the required core gender staffing level, taking into account the volume of gender portfolio and pipeline. Together with ensuring core gender staffing, technical skills training on (i) gender mainstreaming in key sectors, (ii) how to prepare gender action plans, and (iii) integrating gender results and issues in project completion reports will continue to be conducted regularly. Operations departments will ensure participation in such training by relevant non-gender staff (particularly project task team leaders) at both Headquarters and resident missions. However, the recommendation to develop “budgetary incentives” to be directed to operational departments for the design, monitoring, and implementation of gender mainstreamed projects will require further assessment.
Chair’s Summary: Development Effectiveness Committee

The Development Effectiveness Committee (DEC) considered the Independent Evaluation Department (IED) report, Thematic Evaluation Study: Asian Development Bank (ADB) Support for Gender and Development, 2005–2015 (IN.115-17) on 25 May 2016. The following is the Chair’s Summary of the Committee discussion:


The Development Effectiveness Committee (DEC) discussed the Thematic Evaluation on ADB’s Support for Gender and Development (GAD) during 2005-2015. The evaluation looked at 504 gender-mainstreamed projects approved during the said period. This covered closed and ongoing loans, grants (including grants funded by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction), and technical assistance (TA) projects linked to loans approved during 2005–2015. Of these 504 projects, 92 were completed and self-evaluated through project completion reports. Seventy-two of these 92 projects were assigned ADB’s gender success ratings—all of which were reviewed by the evaluation. The evaluation conducted gender portfolio assessments for eight countries, which accounted for 60% of ADB’s total portfolio over the review period. The eight countries included the top three borrowers in developing member countries (DMCs) during the period namely India, PRC and Pakistan, as well as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste.

Findings and Recommendations by IED

Director General (DG), IED explained that the evaluation was made to shed more light on gender equality’s impact on development work, how it affects productivity and how it eliminates barriers that discriminate against women working in certain sectors and occupations. The intent is not to approach gender equity or equality from a moral or ethical perspective, but from the lens of economic and social development. Greater and better inclusion of women in the development process is critical to the process itself. It also makes good business sense for the region, for countries and for ADB to pursue gender equality as it is crucial for achieving inclusive growth.

The evaluation’s key messages are:

(i) ADB has been a pioneer among multilateral development banks (MDBs) in ensuring quality at entry for gender projects;
(ii) ADB needs to provide greater support for gender equity theme (GEN) projects, which directly address gender equality;
(iii) Factors common to projects with successful gender ratings were women’s participation in community-based activities and organizations, involvement of nongovernment organizations to implement gender activities, and use of grants or TAs to carry out gender components;
(iv) Gender results at the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) were not well formulated, monitored and reported;
(v) There is room for scaling up gender mainstreaming in infrastructure projects;
(vi) ADB contributed more to narrowing gaps in human development and time poverty, than in women’s economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and resilience to risk and shocks; and
(vii) ADB’s gender work can be enhanced with sufficient staffing, skills and funding.

To address the issues, IED offered recommendations for ADB’s policy directions, operations management, and organizational requirements. These recommendations apply to both ADB’s sovereign and nonsovereign operations.

(i) For policy directions, ADB should specify and prioritize the types of gender results to be supported in Strategy 2030. These results could be linked to the gender targets and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those for the unpaid work of caring for children and the elderly, productive assets, institutional and legal reforms, and reproductive health and rights. Doing so would align ADB’s efforts with the international agenda on GAD and address the region’s pressing gender issues, particularly in economic empowerment and voice and decision-making.

(ii) In terms of operations management at the country level, ADB should update country gender assessment regularly and develop gender knowledge products jointly with development partners. The findings of these should be reflected in CPSs and related documents. It should increase GEN projects, which have a more direct impact on gender equality because they address critical gender challenges. At the project level, ADB should design projects based on strong gender diagnostics to reflect local conditions and lessons learned. ADB can also support gender-responsive institutional, legal, and regulatory reforms within the framework provided by TA projects and possibly policy-based loans or sector development programs. Capacity building for gender work among implementing and executing agencies should be continued, and stronger partnerships for gender must be forged between ADB and other funding agencies.

(iii) For the organizational requirements, ADB must strengthen the technical capacity of its staff to integrate gender into their work. It should ensure that there are sufficient staff resources. All ADB staff, not just gender specialists, should be equipped with skills and incentives to design, implement and monitor gender projects.

Comments by DEC Members

DEC members commended IED’s rigorous and fruitful analysis and supported IED’s recommendations. Several DEC members encouraged the Bank to share gender and development success stories and lessons learned with member countries and development partners more actively. Per DG, IED, they are planning to organize dissemination events together with other institutions and coordinating with management regarding the matter. The Evaluation Cooperation Group will also discuss gender in its meeting in December.

A DEC member suggested i) supporting the member countries for the development of women entrepreneurs, ii) quantifying the unpaid and domestic work of women and including it in the computation for GDP to reflect the real contribution of women in the economy, iii) having gender experts in the front office of every regional department, iv) using policy dialogue actively and strategically to encourage governments to invest more in gender-focused projects, v) more gender mainstreaming in energy and transport sector, vi) strategic use of policy-based loans and technical assistance along with policy dialogue, vii) knowing the country context with its
Chair's Summary: Development Effectiveness Committee

Constraints and programs in finding the best ways to achieve gender equity, and viii) stronger partnerships with development agencies such as UN Women.

DEC members also reiterated that Strategy 2030 offers an opportunity to reconfirm the importance of gender equality targets and to address the shortcomings highlighted in the evaluation to maximize ADB’s contribution to a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient Asia and the Pacific free of poverty.

Response from the Management

DG, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (SDCC) welcomed the evaluation and its recognition of ADB’s achievements in advancing gender development in ADB operations. She was pleased to share that, in 2016, 29% of projects in the energy sector were approved with gender mainstreaming as opposed to 11% in the 2005-2015 period. She confirmed that consultations on the new strategy are still ongoing and they are targeting to have the first draft by the end of 2017 and the final approval in 2018. In terms of resources, they have approached many different donors and private foundations to help accomplish cross regional learning, innovation and piloting. She further added that what’s crucial is marketing the gender directives and knowledge sharing. She expressed their continuing commitment to facilitate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) on gender equality and women’s empowerment by 2030.

Regarding question on the recently declining number of sovereign GEN projects, SDCC responded that this depends on many reasons including where ADB has more comparative advantage in policy dialogues and identifying the project but they will continue to assess the situation and explore the opportunities.

With regards to partnerships, DG, SDCC mentioned that they use financing partnership facilities across the water, urban energy and health sectors that facilitate project preparation of inclusive and sustainable projects. They use these facilities because they provide grant financing to enable the preparation and pilot testing of the integrated approaches. She also shared that a flagship publication on Gender and SDGs is close to being completed with UN Women which will examine new ways to accelerate the achievements of all the SDGs by focusing on gender.

In relation to the first recommendation on the overall new corporate strategy and the need to better capture the gender quality results, SDCC also shared that they have already piloted collecting sex-disaggregated beneficiary counting of five areas of gender equality results and aggregating this and then reporting each year. SDCC also expressed that they were willing to share more updates on their gender mainstreaming system and good practices in an informal opportunity as there have been new improvements lately.

Regarding the IED’s second recommendation at the organizational level, Director, Strategy, Policy and Review Department (SPD) shared that under the refined CPS business processes introduced in 2016 gender considerations are integrated into The Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Assessment. This assessment will identify the key binding constraints to inclusive and sustainable growth in a country. The main text of the CPS should also clearly indicate how gender considerations will be addressed. In addition to this, country teams may opt to undertake specific studies on gender throughout the CPS implementation period. Those should be included in the country knowledge plan. To better capture results at the CPS level, management is already working with IED to better measure performance holistically (this will include gender targets and results among others). This will also be revisited during preparation of the new corporate results framework following approval of the new corporate strategy. DG, SDCC also added that, as a
result of the President’s directive, they plan to strengthen gender inclusive infrastructure development work with the adoption of integrated cross-sector and thematic approaches.

DG, South Asia Department (SARD) agreed to the importance of gender mainstreaming for economic growth. In fact, there has been much progress in terms of setting gender targets and gender action plans. He added that SARD has mainstreamed gender in 40% of transport and energy sector projects, and expressed optimism that further work in this aspect can be achieved. He also said that ADB can do more and better regarding effective gender mainstreaming (EGM), not so much in terms of putting more resources, but more importantly in changing people’s mindset.

Others

OSEC updated on the recruitment of consultants for evaluating evaluator. DEC has selected team leader, Mr. Patrick Grasso, a former advisor for the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank. DEC will decide on the team member after considering inputs from Mr. Grasso to ensure good team work.
1. **Bridging gender gaps is a crucial step toward development.** Gender equality has important implications for growth, inclusiveness, and human development. Harnessing the human capital and economic contributions of women can help drive efforts to promote inclusive growth and development in Asia and the Pacific. Narrowing gender disparities benefits not only women but their children and the households they belong to.

2. **Gender equality figures prominently in the strategies of development agencies and international development agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).** The Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank, United Nations, and other development agencies have incorporated gender equality in their strategies and operations. In 2008, ADB adopted gender equity as one of five drivers of change under its Strategy 2020, its current long-term strategy.

3. **This evaluation examines ADB support for gender and development (GAD) during 2005–2015.** The Policy on Gender and Development, 1998 views gender as a crosscutting issue that influences all economic, social, and political processes. A gender-focused approach seeks to redress gender disparities by promoting strategic, broad-based, and multifaceted solutions to gender inequality. While the policy does not distinguish between gender inequity and inequality, this evaluation defines gender equality as women and men enjoying the same well-being and realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to and benefit from national, political, economic, social, and cultural development; and gender equity as the process to achieve this objective.

**A. ADB’s Gender and Development Framework**

4. **The GAD policy, 1998 uses gender mainstreaming as a key strategy to promote gender equity throughout ADB operations.** The GAD policy replaced the Policy on the Role of Women in Development, 1985. The latter supported targeted and segregated women-only projects, which were later found to further marginalize and isolate women from the mainstream of development. Chapter 2 discusses the key elements of the GAD policy.

5. **ADB codified a gender categorization system that assesses the extent to which projects integrate gender issues.** The four-category system includes:

(i) Projects with gender equity theme (GEN) or Category I projects that aim for outcomes directly addressing gender equality and/or women’s empowerment.

(ii) Effective gender mainstreaming (EGM) or Category II projects that do not have gender outcomes as their main objective, but have outputs designed to directly improve women’s access to social services, and/or economic and financial resources and opportunities, and/or basic rural and urban infrastructure, and/or enhancing voices and

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rights, which contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment. Specific gender
design features should be included in 50% or more of project outputs, and have at least
three gender design features (actions) and targets in most project outputs.

(iii) Projects with some gender elements (SGE) or Category III projects, likely to have some
gender benefits, but include little gender analysis and (as was decided around 2012) few
or no specific design features meeting the EGM criteria.

(iv) Projects with no gender elements (NGE) or Category IV projects that do not have any
gender design features.

6. GEN and EGM projects together constitute ADB’s gender-mainstreamed portfolio and
require gender action plans (GAPs). While the evaluation focused on gender-mainstreamed
projects, some attention was paid to SGE and NGE projects to better understand how ADB
considers gender impacts in its operations, and how it can improve the quantity and quality of
gender-mainstreamed interventions.

7. ADB has adopted three action plans since 2000 to support the GAD policy’s
implementation. These are the (i) Gender Action Plan, 2000–2003; (ii) Gender and Development
Plan of Action, 2008–2010; and (iii) Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Operational
Plan, 2013–2020.3 The operational plan adopts a twin approach to promoting gender equality
using gender mainstreaming and targeted investments in women and girls.

B. Objectives and Methodology of the Evaluation

8. This evaluation has three objectives:

(i) Assess the relevance of ADB’s strategic and operational priorities for GAD at the
corporate and country levels to gender challenges of its developing member countries
(DMCs), and the responsiveness of ADB operation to these challenges;

(ii) Examine results of ADB support for GAD at the project level and identify challenges to
and opportunities for gender mainstreaming across sectors including infrastructure; and

(iii) Assess ADB’s arrangements for delivering gender results efficiently.

9. The evaluation offers recommendations to help ADB improve the design, implementation,
and monitoring of its support for GAD, as well as inputs to Strategy 2030’s approach to gender
equality. It follows ADB’s previous gender evaluation in 2009–2010, covers more DMCs and
2020, which was not assessed in the previous gender evaluation.4

10. The evaluation assesses the relevance of the GAD policy, 1998; operational plan, 2013–
2020; and ADB’s gender categories to reduce persistent and emerging gender disparities in
countries across the region.

11. The report evaluates the responsiveness of ADB’s GAD support to gender strategies in
country partnership strategies (CPSSs), the sector and subsector pipeline projects of country
portfolios, government strategies, and capacity for promoting gender equality, and available
financing modalities.

12. In examining the results of ADB’s support for GAD during 2005–2015, the evaluation
discusses (i) the achievement of the corporate targets on gender mainstreaming and gender

4 The Independent Evaluation Department (IED) carried out the previous gender evaluation. For this evaluation, the
detailed evaluation questions are presented in the approach paper. See IED. 2016. Evaluation Approach Paper:
Thematic Evaluation Study on ADB’s Support to Gender and Development. Manila: ADB.
results, (ii) the attainment of gender targets included in CPS results frameworks for eight countries, and (iii) gender outcomes of projects across sectors. The eight countries are Bangladesh, Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea (PNG), and Timor-Leste. The evaluation also discusses challenges to integrating gender in the design, implementation, and monitoring of projects, as well as gender project design features.

13. The evaluation looks into ADB’s organizational arrangements to efficiently deliver gender results. It assesses the adequacy of ADB’s staffing, skills, resources, and partnerships for its gender work.

14. The evaluation used the GAD policy and operational plan, 2013–2020 to reconstruct ADB’s theory of change (ToC) for promoting gender equality (Figure 1). The ToC relies on the identification of five dimensions of gender equality: human development, economic empowerment, reduced time poverty, voice and decision-making, and reduced vulnerability to risks and shocks. The dimensions are derived from the operational plan, which grouped gender challenges according to these dimensions. These dimensions represent the five outcomes of interventions identified in the ToC, which in turn address the region’s persistent and emerging gender challenges, and sectors for ADB interventions. ADB has not identified which of these five dimensions need urgent support and in which of these dimensions it sees its most important role.

15. The evaluation uses the ToC and five dimensions to examine the relevance of the GAD policy and operational plan, and the responsiveness of ADB operations to the region’s persistent and emerging gender challenges. It also assesses the results of ADB projects based on these five dimensions to provide a holistic view of ADB’s performance in this area. The ToC identifies several assumptions that influence the relevance, responsiveness, results, and efficiency of the delivery of ADB’s GAD agenda. These assumptions must hold true for the gender equality outcome to be achieved.

16. Mapping causal pathways on how the outcome of gender equality can be achieved through ADB’s support, the ToC is relevant to determining what works and what does not in translating inputs to outputs to gender outcomes. The ToC’s results chain begins with inputs covering ADB’s strategic and operational priorities at the corporate, country, and project levels that employ a twin approach of gender mainstreaming and women-targeted interventions. It then moves to outputs for women’s access to and quality of economic opportunities, health, education, and infrastructure services, as well as legal and institutional frameworks for women’s rights and social protection systems benefitting women. These outputs lead to the outcome of gender equality; outputs can lead to improvements in one or more dimensions of gender equality. Gender equality can potentially contribute to the impacts of prosperity, inclusiveness, and resilience. Prosperity has implications for shared growth and the elimination of poverty. Inclusiveness refers to deepening inclusion so that all members of society can participate in and benefit from growth. Resilience covers the capacity of individuals to respond to shocks as well as the sustainability of growth in its impacts on the environment. These impacts, however, are not examined as their assessment would require a level of resources that this evaluation does not have.

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5 The GAD Policy, 1998 and the operational plan, 2013–2020 specify this twin approach of gender mainstreaming and targeted interventions.

6 These impacts are not identified in the operational plan, 2013–2020. They are based on the proposed framework for Strategy 2030, which is still preliminary and subject to revisions. See ADB. 2017. Framework for Strategy 2030. Unpublished.
17. The evaluation draws from the following sources: (i) review of ADB documents; (ii) analysis of ADB’s portfolio during 2005–2015; (iii) special assessments of ADB’s gender work in Bangladesh, Cambodia, the PRC, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, PNG, and Timor-Leste; (iv) beneficiary surveys and focus group discussions (FGDs) for selected projects; (v) gender perception survey of ADB staff; (vi) background studies and sector analyses; and (vii) key informant interviews with stakeholders.

18. The evaluation reviewed ADB documents to assess the evolution of ADB’s support for GAD and whether it has remained relevant to the gender challenges in Asia and the Pacific. ADB documents reviewed in this evaluation include the GAD policy and its three related action plans. Interviews on this were done with ADB staff and partner governments. The evaluation also examined 17 country gender assessments (CGAs) over 2005–2015; CPSs and country operations.
business plans (COBPs) in the eight countries visited; and country reports related to gender. This was done to assess how responsive ADB has been to the GAD policy in identifying and addressing gender issues in country strategies and programs.

19. The portfolio analysis was carried out to assess the composition of ADB’s gender portfolio at the corporate level in 2005–2015 by gender categories, sector, year, region and country, and financing modality to determine how gender mainstreaming had been achieved. Linked Document 1 describes the gender portfolio covered by this evaluation during the period. The evaluation follows up on the Independent Evaluation Department’s (IED) gender evaluation in 2009–2010, and examines whether there were any significant changes with the adoption of Strategy 2020 and gender equity as a driver of change. Analyses were carried out to assess the mainstreaming of gender in transport and energy, agriculture and natural resources (ANR), private sector development, and microfinance projects. These sectors were selected based on their shares in ADB’s portfolio and the distribution of their operations across the four gender categories.

20. The eight country portfolio assessments conducted a deeper analysis of ADB’s gender portfolios (Linked Document 1). They analyzed whether gender challenges had been correctly identified and addressed, and reviewed the responsiveness and results of ADB’s gender portfolios against the identified gender issues as well as the corporate strategy. The countries were selected based on the extent of their gender issues, distribution of ADB operations across the four gender categories, and geographical representation. The gender issues in the eight countries are representative of those found in Asia and the Pacific and ADB’s DMCs. The evaluation framework for the country portfolio assessments is in Linked Document 2. The country portfolio assessments are in Supplementary Linked Documents A–F. The following chapters discuss the findings and recommendations of the country portfolio assessments of gender-mainstreamed projects.

21. Beneficiary surveys and FGDs were carried out for selected projects in different countries to further assess the extent of women’s participation in and the gender results of projects. Chapter 4 discusses the list of projects and selection criteria.

22. National officers and international staff of ADB’s operations departments, as well as the Private Sector Operations Department (PSOD) and the Strategy and Policy Department (SPD), took part in the gender perception survey. This sought the insights of staff to assess the challenges and opportunities in the delivery of ADB’s GAD agenda. The questionnaire and results of the gender perception survey are in Supplementary Appendix A.

23. Background studies examined the gender policies, strategies, and operational plans of development partners to help assess how ADB’s GAD institutional framework has evolved. The studies also examined gender challenges in Asia and the Pacific against which the relevance and responsiveness of ADB’s GAD support were assessed.

24. The evaluation included interviews conducted during evaluation missions with executing and implementing agencies in DMCs selected for the portfolio assessments, ADB staff at Headquarters and resident missions, development partners, and nongovernment organizations (NGOs).

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8 Project documents reviewed include reports and recommendations of the President to the Board of Directors (RRPs), project completion reports (PCR), project validation reports (PVR), back-to-office reports, and aide memoires.

9 Linked Document 2 presents the evaluation framework for the country portfolio assessments, which identifies the outline, evaluation questions, areas to be reviewed, methodologies, and data sources for the assessments.

10 ADB’s operations departments include Central and West Asia Department, East Asia Department, Pacific Department, South Asia Department, and Southeast Asia Department.
C. Scope of the Evaluation

25. The evaluation focused on gender mainstreaming in project operations more than on stand-alone technical assistance (TA) operations and knowledge products on gender. It examined closed and ongoing loans, grants (including grants funded by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction [JFPR]), and TA projects linked to loans approved during 2005–2015. The evaluation examined ADB’s gender portfolio at the corporate and country levels over 2005–2015. Of ADB’s 1,121 projects during this period, 45% or 504, worth $38 billion, were gender-mainstreamed. Over the same period, 285 projects were classified as SGE and 332 as NGE, worth $76 billion—double the amount of the gender-mainstreamed projects (Table 1). By amount, one-third of projects during 2005–2015 were gender-mainstreamed. Projects without gender mainstreaming were over 60% larger on average than gender-mainstreamed projects. Of the total projects, 13% were GEN projects and 32% EGM projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Category</th>
<th>Number of Approved Projects</th>
<th>Total Approved Amount ($ million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equity Theme</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>8,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Gender Mainstreaming</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>29,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>504</strong></td>
<td><strong>38,119</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Gender Elements</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>32,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Gender Elements</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>42,991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>617</strong></td>
<td><strong>75,553</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Independent Evaluation Department portfolio database by the gender evaluation team.

26. Of the 504 gender-mainstreamed projects approved over 2005–2015, 442 were financed by Ordinary Capital Resources (OCR) or the Asian Development Fund (ADF), while 62 were JFPR projects. The 62 JFPR projects comprised 41 GEN projects and 21 EGM projects (Table 2). Grants funded by the JFPR were included in the evaluation given the important role of these grants in the design and implementation of gender activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender-Mainstreamed Projects</th>
<th>OCR / ADF</th>
<th>JFPR</th>
<th>Projects Completed and Self-Rated</th>
<th>OCR/ADF Projects with Gender Success Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equity Theme</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Gender Mainstreaming</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>442</strong></td>
<td><strong>62</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADF = Asian Development Fund, JFPR = Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, OCR = Ordinary Capital Resources.

Includes stand-alone supplementary loans and grants, and project design advances.

Source: Independent Evaluation Department portfolio database by the gender evaluation team.

27. Of the 504 GEN and EGM projects, 92 were completed and self-evaluated through project completion reports (PCRs). Of these, 72 were assigned a gender success rating by the gender unit of ADB’s Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (SDCC) in consultation with operations departments (Table 3)—henceforth called ADB rating. The 20 projects without gender ratings include (i) 1 supplementary grant and 14 JFPR grants, which the

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11 These TA projects, which include project preparatory TA projects, are not separately counted because they are attached to projects.

12 The original number of approved projects was 1,125. Four stand-alone project grants were not included as these did not have gender mainstreaming. This evaluation included JFPR grants and separately counted supplementary loans and project design advances during 2005–2015.

13 The 72 projects include projects with PCRs from 2009 and onwards.
SDCC does not assess under SPD’s counting of projects; and (ii) 5 projects that were categorized as SGE or NGE in SDCC’s database but were classified as GEN or EGM by operations departments. Linked Document 1 discusses these 20 projects and sampling considerations in detail. The evaluation reviewed all 72 projects to arrive at a gender success rate, although it acknowledges this is a limited sample to some extent. EGM projects in the sample were mostly approved in 2010–2015, relatively later than GEN projects. Document reviews, key informant interviews, and FGDs were also undertaken, providing a robust basis for assessing the results of in-country gender work.

28. The evaluation selected the eight countries for a deeper assessment of gender portfolios. The eight country gender portfolios accounted for about 43% of ADB’s total approved projects during 2005–2015 by number and 60% of the amount. The bulk of the gender-mainstreamed projects were EGM. India, the PRC, and Pakistan were the top three borrowers during 2005–2015; Indonesia and Bangladesh ranked 5th and 6th, respectively. By amount, nearly one-third of the eight countries’ portfolios were categorized as GEN or EGM. By number, about 30% each (of the aggregate country portfolio) were categorized as EGM and 11% were GEN projects (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Category</th>
<th>Number of Approved Projects</th>
<th>Total Financing ($ million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equity Theme</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Gender Mainstreaming</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>15,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>215</strong></td>
<td><strong>21,513</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Gender Elements</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>17,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Gender Elements</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>28,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Classified</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>286</strong></td>
<td><strong>45,618</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes Bangladesh, Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste.
Source: Independent Evaluation Department portfolio database by the gender evaluation team.

29. Of the 215 GEN and EGM projects approved during 2005–2015 in the eight countries—which include 15 JFPR projects—34 were completed and self-evaluated through PCRs. Of these self-evaluations, 33 were assigned gender success ratings by ADB (Table 4). The evaluation reviewed all 33 projects. In addition, the evaluation examined (i) all 41 GEN and EGM projects in the 8 countries approved before 2005 but implemented and closed with PCRs during 2005–2015, (ii) ongoing GEN and EGM projects in the 8 countries, (iii) TA projects and JFPR-funded grants, and (iv) projects classified as SGE and NGE in the 8 countries, which were deemed to have potential gender impacts. In the group of completed and reviewed projects, many of the GEN projects were approved during 2005–2010, while many EGM projects were approved after 2010.

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14 The lone project from the sample of 34 projects without a gender rating is a JFPR grant, the Immediate Support to Poor and Vulnerable Small and Landless Farmers Devastated by the October 2005 Earthquake in Pakistan.
Table 4. Number of Gender-Mainstreamed Projects in the Eight Country Portfolios, a
2005–2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender-Mainstreamed Projects</th>
<th>Projects Approved</th>
<th>Projects Completed and Self-Rated</th>
<th>OCR/ADF Projects with Gender Success Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equity Theme</td>
<td>OCR / ADF b</td>
<td>JFPR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>152</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADF = Asian Development Fund, JFPR = Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, OCR = Ordinary Capital Resources.

a Includes Bangladesh, Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste.
b Includes stand-alone supplementary loans and grants, and project design advances.

Source: Independent Evaluation Department portfolio database by the gender evaluation team.

30. The evaluation also assessed the TA projects approved during 2010–2015, though less intensively than loan projects. The evaluation looked at 1,397 approved stand-alone TA projects in this period, of which 289 were categorized as gender-mainstreamed: 7% as GEN and 14% as EGM (Table 5). In terms of approved amount, EGM TA projects accounted for 13% of the portfolio and GEN TA projects 7%. TA projects categorized as SGE and NGE accounted for over half of the total TA portfolio. However, more than a third of TA projects over the period were not classified under any of the four gender categories. This will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Table 5. Number and Amount of Stand-Alone Technical Assistance Projects by Gender Category, 2010–2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Category</th>
<th>Number of Approved Technical Assistance Projects</th>
<th>Total Approved Amount ($ million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equity Theme</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>55.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Gender Mainstreaming</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>105.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>289</strong></td>
<td><strong>161.14</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Gender Elements</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>287.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Gender Elements</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>69.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Classified</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>190.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,108</strong></td>
<td><strong>547.92</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Independent Evaluation Department portfolio database by the gender evaluation team.

31. Of the total stand-alone TA projects approved during 2010–2015, about one-third of the portfolio were in the eight countries. By approved amount, they represent 26% of total approved financing for TA projects during this period. The evaluation looked at these stand-alone TA projects because of the large number of TA projects in ADB’s portfolio and the study’s resource limitations.

32. Gender-mainstreamed TA projects accounted for about one-fourth of the total number of approved stand-alone TA operations in the eight countries during 2010–2015. By number, GEN TA projects comprised about 6% and EGM nearly 20% of the stand-alone TA projects. By amount, more than a quarter of the stand-alone TA projects were gender-mainstreamed, with GEN TA projects accounting for 6% and EGM TA projects 19% of the total stand-alone TA projects (Table 6). By type, capacity development TA projects (CDTAs) and project preparatory TA projects (PPTAs) account for most GEN TA projects, while EGM TA projects are mostly PPTA projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Category</th>
<th>Approved Technical Assistance Projects</th>
<th>Total Financing ($ million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equity Theme</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Gender Mainstreaming</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>50.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Gender Elements</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>39.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Gender Elements</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>69.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Classified</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>40.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>448</strong></td>
<td><strong>212.64</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes Bangladesh, Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste.
Source: Independent Evaluation Department portfolio database by the gender evaluation team.

33. **This evaluation is structured as follows:** Chapter 2 discusses concepts relating to gender equality, gender challenges in the regional context, and introduces ADB’s institutional framework on GAD. Chapter 3 evaluates the relevance of the GAD policy, 1998, action plan, 2008–2010, and operational plan, 2013–2020 and country programs, and the responsiveness of ADB’s operations to these. Chapter 4 assesses the results of ADB’s gender-mainstreamed projects and programs in 2005–2015 for each of the five dimensions of gender equality identified. Chapter 5 discusses ADB’s organizational arrangements to deliver its gender results more effectively and efficiently. Chapter 6 presents conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation offers recommendations on ADB’s corporate directions and operations at the country and project levels, and organizational arrangements to improve the design, implementation, and monitoring of its GAD support.
CHAPTER 2

Gender Equality: Concepts and Challenges

34. Gender equality is widely recognized as a prerequisite for development. This chapter distinguishes between gender equity, gender equality, and women’s empowerment, and provides an overview of ADB’s institutional framework for GAD. It also examines gender challenges in Asia and the Pacific based on gender equality in human development, economic empowerment, reduced time poverty, voice and decision-making, and reduced vulnerability to risks and shocks.

A. Gender Equality, Gender Equity, and Women’s Empowerment

35. The concepts of gender equality, gender equity, and women’s empowerment are often used interchangeably in the literature. While these concepts are interrelated, they nevertheless refer to different aspects of integrating and addressing gender issues in development policies, strategies, and programs. Identifying the differences between gender equity, gender equality, and women’s empowerment is essential for articulating gender strategies.

36. Gender equity refers to the process of ensuring fairness of treatment between women and men. To do this, strategies and measures must be in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages faced by women. Gender equity implies equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities between women and men in all spheres of life.15

37. Gender equality is the outcome to be achieved through gender equity. Gender equality means that women and men enjoy the same well-being, and realize their full human rights and potential to contribute to and benefit from national, political, economic, social, and cultural development. The concept of gender equality acknowledges that women and men may require different treatment to achieve similar results due to differences in life conditions or socio-cultural and economic circumstances. But providing men and women with the same opportunities will not necessarily yield gender equality.

38. Women’s empowerment is a means to achieve gender equality. This concept pertains to women’s sense of self-worth, and their right to determine choices, access opportunities and resources, and control their own lives. The concept also includes women’s ability to influence social change in creating a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.16 Women’s empowerment, when pursued in parallel with gender equity, can lead to gender equality.

B. Gender Constraints in Asia and the Pacific

39. Gender equality remains an unfinished agenda in Asia and the Pacific. Gender discrimination in formal and informal laws, attitudes, and practices that limit the access of women and girls to rights, justice, and empowerment opportunities cost the region more than $3 trillion in income losses.17 This section provides a snapshot of gender challenges in the region according to the five dimensions of gender equality presented in Chapter 1.

1. Gender Equality in Human Development

40. Human development encompasses the degree of gender parity in education and health. Lack of such parity inhibits women and men from reaching their full potential and leading productive lives. Access to education influences women’s ability to engage in income-generating activities. Mothers’ schooling has also been associated with the educational attainment and performance of children.

41. Gender parity in primary education has been achieved in many countries in Asia and the Pacific. Bolstered by the commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education for all children by 2015, many countries have increased net enrollment rates and reduced gender gaps in primary education. More girls than boys were enrolled in primary schools in Armenia, Bangladesh, Maldives, the Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, and Tonga in 2000–2013 (Linked Document 3). India and Pakistan lagged behind other countries in the region in the average net primary net enrollment rate among girls during this period.

42. Despite improved enrollment rates in primary education, attendance in secondary education remains low, with girls often leaving for economic and household reasons. The dropout rate to the last grade of secondary education was 7.4% for boys and 17.7% for girls in Fiji in 2012, 16.6% for boys and 16.8% for girls in Bhutan in 2013, and 36% for boys and 35.5% for girls in Cambodia in 2013.18 The opportunity cost of sending children to secondary school is higher than in primary school because secondary-school-age children can start working. Because distance to school tends to increase in secondary education, parents often discourage their children from attending secondary school—this is especially true for girls because of the risks to their reputation and marriage prospects in being unaccompanied at that age. Another impediment to increasing enrollment rates for girls in secondary education is the practice of keeping them out of school so they can help with housework and take care of younger siblings.

43. Improving school quality can have a greater impact on the education of girls than boys. In Bangladesh, increases in teacher quality and separate toilets for boys and girls increased girls’ enrollment. Merit-based grade promotion in Pakistan contributed to girls staying in schools.19 Removing gender stereotypes in teaching and learning materials in schools can improve school quality. In Bangladesh, some curriculum and learning materials portray males as “strong” and “involved in public spheres” and females as “dependents, active within the private sphere.” Education systems in many countries in Asia and the Pacific have also failed to create a safe learning environment to educate people on gender-based violence (GBV).20

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44. **Gender gaps in human development are influenced by women’s health.** Gender disadvantages in health can be observed in skewed sex ratios, largely caused by a preference for sons over daughters. An estimated 100 million women are “missing” due to sex-selective abortions, female infanticide, and inadequate healthcare and nutrition for girls and women.\(^{21}\)

45. **Gender disparity in health and population in Asia and the Pacific has narrowed, but challenges remain to further reduce this distortion.** The region achieved convergence between female and male life expectancy rates during 2000–2013. Despite this, some Asian countries have skewed sex ratios. In 18 of 34 Asian countries for which data are available, the ratio of the average growth rate of the population of females over that of males is less than 1 (Linked Document 3). Moreover, sexual and reproductive health rights in some countries remain limited because of inadequate public investment in this area.\(^{22}\)

46. **Improvements in maternal health care vary across countries.** Armenia, Azerbaijan, the PRC, Fiji, Georgia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Palau, the Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tuvalu have either 90% or more of births attended by skilled staff, based on the most recent survey data of these countries. In Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR), Nepal, and Timor-Leste, fewer than 30% of births are attended by skilled health staff. And fewer than 40% of pregnant women in Afghanistan, Lao PDR, and Nepal receive prenatal care (Linked Document 3).

2. **Gender Equality in Reduced Time Poverty**

47. **Time poverty refers to competing claims on an individual’s time that reduce his or her ability to make unrestrained choices in time allocation.** This leads to increased work intensity and trade-offs among various tasks.\(^{23}\)

48. **Women bear a disproportionate share of unpaid domestic work.** The unpaid time women allocate to house work and care work for elderly and children contributes to living standards and social well-being. Estimates of the payoff to public investments such as infrastructure do not usually consider the value of unpaid domestic work. Yet, considering this could influence how public programs are prioritized and designed to help reduce the burden of unpaid domestic and care work among women and consequently reduce their time poverty.\(^{24}\)

49. **Better access to quality infrastructure could reduce the time women spend on household tasks and increase time for study, paid work, or participating in social or political activities.** Increased mobility through roads has great potential to alter gender relations and the division of labor within a household by enabling women to attend school or participate in market activities. Because collecting firewood as a substitute for electricity usually falls on women, connecting households to electricity grids help women reduce the time they spend on unpaid domestic work. Water and sanitation services are also crucial to reducing women’s time poverty, because fetching potable water is usually delegated to women and girls. Women are often responsible for caring for family members with diseases caused by poor sanitation and for the elderly. Poor


sanitary facilities force women to go to the toilet away from their homes, compromising their safety.  

50. The share of paved roads in developing Asia increased from less than 50% in 1990 to nearly 60% of the total roads by mid-2000, helping reduce women’s time poverty. Some studies find that the burden of women’s unpaid domestic work has declined due to improved transport access, such as through better quality roads.

51. Improvements in roads and other transport infrastructure vary across countries in the region. Few roads are paved in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia, and PNG. On average, travelling to secondary schools in Timor-Leste takes 70 minutes each way in rural areas—almost double the 34 minutes estimated in urban areas—because of poor road conditions. Almost all roads are paved in Armenia and Kazakhstan (footnote 26).

52. Power generation has increased in Asia overall in the past 2 decades, which may have provided time savings to women. Electricity generation capacity in developing Asia more than doubled between 1990 and 2007, growing by 4.3% each year over that period (footnote 26). An evaluation of an ADB-supported rural electrification in Bhutan found that the project had a greater impact on women’s time poverty than men’s. The time spent collecting firewood decreased by 28 minutes per day for women compared with 22 minutes per day for men.

53. Access to water and sanitation services in Asia and the Pacific improved more in urban than in rural areas. As of 2015, just over three-fourths of the rural population in Central and West Asia and East Asia had access to improved water sources. By contrast, most urban populations in Asia and the Pacific had access to improved water sources in 2015. Urban–rural gaps exist in the provision of sanitation facilities. In East Asia and the Pacific, 64% of rural populations had access to improved sanitation facilities in 2015 compared with 87% of urban populations. In South Asia, it was 65% for urban populations compared with 35% for rural ones. This implies that women in rural areas face greater time constraints because they have poorer access to water and sanitation services than women in urban areas.

3. Gender Equality in Economic Empowerment

54. Economic empowerment covers potential systematic gender gaps in productivity, wages, and income poverty, as well as the high concentration of women in low-paying, low-productivity jobs. Despite progress in education and the labor force participation of women, the services sector remains female-dominated and manufacturing and production sector male-dominated in many countries. Gender disparities also exist in access to productive assets such as land and credit. Women farmers and women entrepreneurs have little access to key inputs and services,
and control over resources. They also have weaker land tenure, probably due to their lack of voice within the institutions that govern property rights.32

55. Gender stereotypes influence the specific fields of study and occupations women enter. Asserting a dislike for mathematics and science, deemed male pursuits, may be a means for girls to affirm their femininity (footnote 31). Conventional masculine traits—being ambitious and competitive, and the ability to command authority—are often required for managers. Gentleness and friendliness, stereotypically feminine traits, are supposed to be important in traditionally female occupations such as kindergarten teachers and nurses.33

56. Of the 32 countries in the region with available data, the share of female workers in the total labor force during 2000–2013 exceeded 40% in 19 countries, reaching more than 50% in Cambodia and Lao PDR (Table 7). However, the percentage was less than 30% in Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and Samoa. Half of the countries in the sample have seen accelerating growth rates in the share of women in the total labor force, reaching as high as 2.4% in the Maldives and 3.2% in Pakistan. The other half decelerated to as low as –1.3% in Armenia.

57. Gender wage gaps remain a notable concern in the region despite improvements in gender parity in the labor force and increased educational attainments in some Asian countries. Women’s earnings are about one-half to two-thirds of men’s for the same work in some countries in Asia. These wage gaps have narrowed slightly, but persist after controlling for education and age. In Pakistan, female teachers working in private schools in rural areas are paid 30% less than their male counterparts even after individual and school characteristics are considered.34

58. Occupational and educational segregation by gender partly accounts for gender wage gaps in Asia. In 2013, about 33% of Asia’s total workforce are women, but they accounted for 76% of all unpaid work (footnote 34). Males in East Asia and the Pacific dominate engineering and law, while females are concentrated in education, health, and business administration.

59. Gender differences in unemployment rates indicate greater constraints for women to remain in labor markets. Countries with a very high gender inequality index on unemployment rates during 2000–2013 included Afghanistan (1.87), Bhutan (1.54), Fiji (1.75), Kazakhstan (1.50), the Maldives (1.84), Pakistan (2.29), Sri Lanka (2.12) and Timor-Leste (1.59) (Linked Document 3). Competing priorities for women to pursue careers while attending to household and care duties, and the preference of employers to recruit males rather than females in formal employment in these countries, may account for these high gender inequality indexes.

60. Aging populations pose labor supply and care issues in many countries in Asia and the Pacific. The region’s aging populations have implications for the burden of caregiving for the elderly, which usually falls on women. In the PRC, for example, the elderly dependency rate increased by about 40% over 2000–2014. The increased demand for elder care in the PRC is likely to be met predominantly by women and reinforce the gender gap in unpaid work time, which is estimated at 2 hours and 24 minutes per day.35 Structural reforms encouraging women to join the labor force and to organize elder care differently will be needed. In urban centers where migration is high, day care facilities would help married women seek better jobs. Paid maternity leave, parental leave, and childcare support, coupled with changes in workplace cultures allowing

both mothers and fathers to work while attending to family responsibilities, will also be needed to offset the impacts of aging populations on the region’s labor markets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Female Labor Force (% of total labor force)</th>
<th>Growth Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>(0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>0.0^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>0.0^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>(0.0)^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>0.0^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>(0.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>(0.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>(1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China, People’s Republic</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>(0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>(0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>(0.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyz Republic</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>(0.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>(0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>0.0^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>0.0^b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>(0.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>(0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OECD average</strong></td>
<td><strong>43.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

( ) = negative, OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
^a Figure is less than or equal to -0.01.
^b Figure is less than 0.1.

Note: The countries are arranged in descending order of the share of female labor force.
Source: Independent Evaluation Department estimates based on World Development Indicators Database (accessed 16 September 2016).

4. **Gender Equality in Voice and Decision-Making**

Voice and decision-making covers women’s participation in decision-making, leadership positions, their bargaining power, freedom of movement and civic identity, and violence against women and girls. An analysis of demographic and health survey data for 58 countries, representing nearly 80% of the female population of developing countries, found that women living in wealthier households were more likely to exercise agency (an individual’s ability to make strategic choices and achieve their desired outcomes). Education, however, has greater impact than wealth on women’s agency. 36

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36 L. Hanmer, and J. Klugman. 2016. Exploring Women’s Agency and Empowerment in Developing Countries: Where do we stand? Feminist Economics. 22 (1).
62. **Asia and the Pacific trails behind other regions in women’s representation in national politics.** The share of women parliamentarians was 19.2% in Asia in 2016, compared with 41.1% in Nordic countries, 27.7% in Americas, 24.3% in Europe, 24.3% in sub-Saharan Africa, and 18.4% in Arab states.\(^{37}\)

63. **Although some countries in the region have legislated quotas for women’s political seats, this is no guarantee that women will rise to the highest elected position or exercise influence in decision-making.** Bangladesh and Pakistan have quotas for seats of women at municipal and city government levels. But the share of women heads in rural councils was only 0.17% in Bangladesh and 0.36% in Pakistan in 2010.\(^{38}\) Timor-Leste has one of the highest proportions of women parliamentarians in the world and the highest in Asia and the Pacific at 38% in 2012. But women’s share of decision-making roles at the highest levels of government—as ministers, vice ministers, and secretaries of state—was at 18% in 2012 (footnote 28).

64. **The limited voice and power of women is also evident in the prevalence of GBV in many countries in Asia and the Pacific despite legislation.** In Bangladesh, the PRC, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and PNG, between one-fourth and two-thirds of women reported violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. One in four women aged 15–49 in the Philippines, one in three women in Cambodia, and nearly two in five women in Pakistan said they had experienced some form of violence perpetrated by a current or former spouse.\(^{39}\) The perception that men should dominate decision-making in households and that domestic violence is an inevitable dimension of domestic relationships perpetuates GBV. Stigma and potential retribution, use of traditional forms of dispute resolution, and the limited resources of the police to respond to GBV cases hamper efforts to combat this form of violence. A lack of economic empowerment can also result in GBV. Limited educational attainment or financial empowerment accords women a lower status within the household, which can increase the risk of violence against them.

65. **Bangladesh has enacted legislation defining punishments for sexual offences and acid attacks, and criminalizing domestic violence.** Pakistan, too, was proactive in passing laws to combat GBV between 2000 and 2013. The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act was passed in 2010 and women’s ombudsperson offices have been established at the federal and provincial levels to oversee the law’s implementation. Pakistan recorded more than 7,000 reported cases of GBV each year between 2008 and 2012 including bonded labor, domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual violence, honor killings, and traditional harmful practices.\(^{40}\) In Bangladesh, reported cases of dowry-related violence increased from 2,981 in 2004 to 4,563 in 2012 (footnote 40).

5. **Gender Equality in Reduced Vulnerability to Risks and Shocks**

66. **Vulnerability to risks and shocks covers the impacts of disasters from natural hazards and climate change, fragile and conflict-affected situations, and economic shocks, all of which disproportionately affect women.** Women tend to have less capacity to cope with impacts of climate change than men and have less access to information and early warnings.\(^{41}\) Women are at greater risk of violence and sexual assault and exploitation during conflict-induced migration, when they often lack documentation to prove their entitlement to food, health services, and


\(^{40}\) See Supplementary Linked Documents A-F for the country portfolio assessments.

shelter—sometimes forcing them to exchange sex for survival.\textsuperscript{42} Because women in Asia and the Pacific are mostly engaged in informal and low-wage jobs in the informal sector, either as low- or semi-skilled workers, they tend to be hit hardest by economic crises.

67. \textbf{Women in Asia and the Pacific are more affected by climate change than men.}\textsuperscript{43} Women and men are affected differently by climate change. The feminization of agriculture was evident in Nepal, a country heavily dependent on agriculture, when there was no rain for 8 months during 2015. The severe drought due to climate change created an additional burden for Nepalese women. Some villages in Nepal have few or no working-age men because of migration to urban areas to look for work; thus, women have taken the lead role in agricultural activities.\textsuperscript{44}

68. \textbf{Women generally lack voice and knowledge of climate change mitigation and adaptation.} Women comprise only 20\%–25\% of the workforce in modern renewable energy.\textsuperscript{45} Only 12\% of staff were women in 881 environmental sector ministries from 193 countries in 2015.\textsuperscript{46} Failure to include women in climate change mitigation and adaptation at local and national levels exacerbates gender inequalities and undermines the effectiveness of climate change responses.

69. \textbf{In some countries in the region, women play important roles in peace building and conflict resolution.} Women in PNG, for example, made significant contributions to conflict resolution and peacemaking during the civil war in Bougainville and its aftermath. But only 6 of the 106 representatives in the Bougainville’s People’s Congress, formed in 1999, were women and no budgetary support was provided for women’s specific priorities during the peace process.\textsuperscript{47} In addition, GBV increased during the post-conflict period.\textsuperscript{48}

70. \textbf{Economic shocks triggered by migrant labor and post-employment conditions affect women.} Economic crises negatively affect migrant workers, and a very high percentage of them are women (up to 80\% in parts of South Asia and Southeast Asia). Economic crises cause remittance flows to fall sharply, lowering household incomes and threatening livelihoods.\textsuperscript{49} In the PRC and other countries, women’s vulnerability to economic shocks is particularly apparent in post-employment. Discrimination in the retirement ages of men (at 60) and women (at 50) in the PRC increases the vulnerability of formally employed women to early retirement. The PRC recently raised women’s retirement age to 60 for executives and professionals such as doctors, professors, and lawyers. Because women tend to live longer, they have more post-employment years to finance, leaving their retirement life more vulnerable to shocks. With the disparities in wages, it is very likely that women will have lower pension benefits (footnote 40).

71. \textbf{The vulnerability of women to risks and shocks calls for strong social protection and safety nets systems with a strong gender perspective.} In Indonesia, the government has put in place social protection programs since the Asian crisis 1997–1998. These programs, however, were not designed with gender analysis of poverty in mind. India has developed various social

\begin{itemize}
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protection programs that have benefited women workers. In 2015–2016, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme provided more than 13 billion person-days of work. Of these, 7.7 billion person-days were taken up by women (footnote 7). Some states provide pensions for widows. Although there is scope for improving efficiency, the number of India’s social protection programs responding to the needs of women and other vulnerable groups have significantly increased over the years.

C. ADB’s Institutional Framework for Gender and Development

72. Gender equality has been recognized as priority for development in ADB’s long-term strategic frameworks over the years. ADB’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, 1999 identified equality as one of its four cross-cutting priorities.50 Gender was reinstated as a thematic priority of ADB operations, based on the findings of the 2004 review of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.51 In 2008, gender equity was adopted as a driver of change of Strategy 2020, ADB’s current long-term strategic framework. A midterm review of Strategy 2020 in 2014 found that the integration of gender into country programs and overall results frameworks requires more work, emphasizing that targeted public policies and priority investments in women and girls are needed.52

73. As with other development agencies, ADB shifted the focus of its gender agenda from women in development (WID) to GAD in the 1990s. The shift was much more than a name change, as it ushered in GAD as the focus of ADB’s gender strategic and operational priorities.

74. The WID approach essentially focused on efficiency, viewing women as an instrument to accomplish development goals. ADB first adopted its Policy on the Role of Women in Development in 1985, which targeted women in its operations through projects in social infrastructure, agriculture, rural development, and small-scale industries. In 1992, ADB adopted the WID policy as one of its five strategic development objectives, with a number of projects designed to improve women’s status.

75. ADB shifted to the GAD policy after it became clear that the WID policy approach was out-of-date since it did not explicitly identify the mainstreaming of gender in projects. The GAD policy focused on the idea that men and women do not perform isolated economic functions, but rather support and complement each other’s activities as members of households and communities. While the WID policy focused on projects targeting women as beneficiaries to address gender inequity, the GAD policy, 1998 acknowledged the relative situation of men and women in their daily activities and the cultural and social meaning of gender differences.

76. The primary goal of the GAD policy, 1998 was to promote gender equity by adopting gender mainstreaming as its key strategy. The key elements of this policy include:

(i) Gender sensitivity: to observe how ADB operations affect women and men, and take into account women’s needs and perspectives in planning its operations.
(ii) Gender analysis: to assess systematically the impact of a project on men and women, and on the economic and social relationship between them.
(iii) Gender planning: to formulate specific strategies that aim to bring about equal opportunities for men and women.
(iv) Gender mainstreaming: to consider gender issues in all aspects of ADB operations, accompanied by efforts to encourage women’s participation in the decision-making process in development activities.

50 ADB. 2014. ADB’s Support for Inclusive Growth. Manila.
77. **To operationalize the GAD policy, ADB adopted three GAD action plans.** The Gender Action Plan, 2000–2003 identified gender activities by ADB operations departments, and included the first iteration of the institution’s gender project categorization system. It focused on projects that have GAD as a thematic priority and paid attention to the role of the then Social Development Division as the designated GAD focal point for ADB, and the mobilization of external resources—notably from TA and grant assistance from JFPR—to establish gender expertise in operations departments and resident missions. After the first GAD action plan, there was no action plan for 5 years.

78. **The Gender Action Plan, 2008–2010 identified measures to strengthen the implementation of gender-responsive design features of projects.** Drawing on the findings of an implementation review of the GAD policy in 2006, the plan sought to increase the level and diversity of gender mainstreaming in projects across sectors, regions, and sources of funding. It noted that it was important to continue supporting innovative approaches to gender mainstreaming in nontraditional sectors, as progress had been more evident in gender mainstreaming in ANR, education, health, and water supply and sanitation.

79. The action plan, 2008–2010 also proposed a better geographical balance in ADB’s gender-mainstreamed projects and a reduction of the gap between GAD themes and effective gender mainstreaming financed through ADF and OCR. The plan underscored the importance of ADB’s policy dialogue and support for DMCs to encourage gender-responsive policy reforms and a policy environment favorable to promoting gender equality.

80. The action plan, 2008–2010 sought to standardize the monitoring and reporting of project GAPs across ADB’s operations departments. It emphasized the importance of collecting and using gender-specific information and sex-disaggregated data, incorporating gender indicators with targets in design and monitoring frameworks (DMFs), and enforcing stricter compliance with gender-related loan assurances. This action plan was extended until 2012.

81. **The operational plan, 2013–2020 stresses that along with gender mainstreaming, targeted interventions are “required to accelerate better gender equality outcomes.”** It envisages direct investments in women and girls to narrow gender disparities in: (i) girls’ secondary education and completion; (ii) vocational and technical skills training for female youth; (iii) access to productive assets, labor-saving technology, employment, and income-earning opportunities; (iv) business development services for women entrepreneurs; (v) financial services and access to credit; (vi) policy and legal reforms to tackle GBV and trafficking; and (vii) enabling women to have a voice in decision-making in formal and informal institutions.

82. **The adoption of the GAD policy, 1998 was complemented by ADB’s project gender categorization system.** ADB’s four gender categories for projects were established in 2010 and revised in 2012 to clarify the criteria and requirements of each category. The most recent revisions were in the Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming Categories of ADB Projects, 2012. Before these revisions, three project gender categories were used (Table 8). Since 2012, GEN projects are those with outcomes directly addressing gender equality and/or women’s empowerment, while EGM projects are those with outputs designed to directly improve gender equality and/or women’s empowerment. Clarification of the criteria for the third category resulted in the change of the category’s name from “some gender benefits” to “some gender elements”. This was done to indicate that projects in this category have few or no specific gender design features; they however, may or may not have major gender benefits due to the nature of the project. A fourth
category, NGE, was later added for projects that do not include gender design features, and that are independent of their potential gender benefits given the project’s nature.

**Table 8. Evolution of ADB’s Project Gender Categories**

|-----------------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| I               | • Women in development as a strategic development objective  
• Gender and development as thematic objective | • Gender and development theme (2004) | • Gender equity theme |
| II              | • Effective gender mainstreaming | • Effective gender mainstreaming | • Effective gender mainstreaming |
| III             | • Some gender benefits | • Some gender benefits | • Some gender elements |
| IV              | • Not yet formulated | • Not yet formulated | • No gender elements |

ADB = Asian Development Bank.

* These years are approximate as there appears to be no definitive cut-off between these two periods; reference documents showed the same information in the appendices.


83. Gender categories of projects and programs are determined through a consultative process between operations departments and the SDCC gender unit. Based on the initial poverty and social analysis conducted during the project concept stage, operations departments determine the gender issues relevant to a project as well as a project’s potential to promote gender equality or have adverse impacts on women and girls. The category is refined during project design and processing, confirmed at the Management and staff review meeting, and finalized before Board of Directors’ approval of the project. The gender category assigned by operations departments is reviewed and verified by the SDCC from the concept stage until finalization.

84. GEN and EGM projects have largely the same set of requirements. They require a GAP with gender-inclusive design features and clear indicators, a discussion of the project’s gender benefits in the report and recommendation of the President (RRP), gender or social analyses conducted during project preparation, a gender-related policy trigger or milestone, and gender targets and performance and monitoring indicators (footnote 2). ADB’s 2012 gender mainstreaming guidelines require that GEN projects include explicit gender equality and/or women’s empowerment outcome(s) and/or gender-specific performance outcome indicators and activities in the project DMF. EGM projects are required to include at least three gender design features and targets in most project outputs and/or components. SGE and NGE projects are neither required to include gender analysis in the RRP nor a report on gender.

85. GAPs, which identify activities and targets for women’s participation and benefits, were introduced in 2000 as mid-course corrections for projects under implementation. GAPs are not separate project documents, but mirror DMFs. The SDCC recommends that GAPs be formulated by operations departments jointly with executing and implementing agencies to increase project stakeholders’ ownership of them. Operations departments are also encouraged to provide ongoing mentoring and formal gender training to executing and implementing agencies during project implementation, according to the toolkit on the formulation of GAPs. The operational plan, 2013–2020 aims to have 80% of GEN and EGM projects reporting on GAP implementation status at project midterm review, both in the mission aide-memoire and the back-to-office report,
by 2016. Against this goal, ADB recorded a 3-year average of 81% for 2013–2015. The monitoring section of project administrative manual requires a description of how often executing agencies need to include GAP monitoring table in their regular progress reports to ADB. Some operations departments use a color-coding system to determine the quality of GAP implementation performance. GAP results are also reported as part of the PCR. SDCC’s gender technical group and operations departments assess GAPs and agree on an ADB gender success rating for gender-mainstreamed projects. The gender success rate of completed projects is reported in an annual gender mainstreaming performance report, which is distributed within ADB but only in a summary form outside ADB.

86. **Corporate targets are set for gender mainstreaming and the delivery of intended results of completed projects.** ADB’s corporate targets for gender mainstreaming were established in 2008 as part of ADB’s results framework. ADB’s current corporate targets for gender mainstreaming are 45% of all ADB operations and 55% of projects financed by the ADF by 2016. ADB’s previous gender targets specified that 40% of all ADB sovereign projects and 50% of ADF-financed projects should be gender-mainstreamed by 2012. ADB in 2013 also set a target for 2016 that 70% of completed sovereign operations should deliver the intended gender equality results, as identified in the operational plan, 2013–2020.

**D. Summary**

(i) Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men; gender equality is an outcome to be achieved through gender equity.

(ii) Gender equality can be observed in five dimensions: human development, reduced time poverty, economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and reduced vulnerability to risks and shocks. Progress has been made in the five dimensions in Asia and the Pacific. But gaps remain in all these dimensions.

(iii) Asia and the Pacific has made most progress in promoting gender equality in human development. The challenge now is to translate increased access to education into improvements in the quality of education.

(iv) The region made progress in improving infrastructure to help reduce time poverty among women, but disparities between rural and urban areas remain.

(v) The region faces challenges in fostering gender equality in economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and vulnerabilities to risks and shocks. Successfully addressing these can lead to transformative gender results.

(vi) ADB has put in place an institutional framework on GAD that guides its efforts to address the region’s gender challenges. This framework—which corresponds to the corporate-level inputs specified in the ToC—consists of the GAD policy, 1998 and its three action plans, the four gender mainstreaming categories, and corporate targets on gender mainstreaming and gender results.

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CHAPTER 3

Relevance and Responsiveness of ADB Support for Gender and Development

87. This chapter assesses how relevant the GAD policy, 1998, gender action plan, 2008–2010, and operational plan, 2013–2020 are to the region’s gender issues. It also looks at how relevant the four gender categories are to ADB’s portfolio. It further examines the extent to which ADB’s country programs and operations are responsive to gender issues in DMCs as shown in the composition of country portfolios, government gender policies and strategies, and financing modalities.

A. Relevance of ADB’s Operational Gender Priorities to Gender Challenges and Results


88. After the GAD policy, 1998, ADB has gradually adopted the terminology of the internationally agreed objective of gender equality and women’s empowerment. The SDGs and gender strategies of development partners like the World Bank identify gender equality and women’s empowerment as their goals. Different from ADB’s GAD policy, which seeks to achieve gender equity, ADB uses the terminology of gender equality and women’s empowerment in its operational plan, 2013–2020, project documents, and other reports. As gender equality is an outcome, this terminology emphasizes the attainment of gender outcomes and results. Hence, using the term gender equality gives greater clarity to the objective of ADB’s GAD agenda.

89. The GAD policy tended to treat gender mainstreaming as an end in itself rather than a means to achieve gender equality. The policy discusses in detail the definition of and rationale for gender mainstreaming. It identifies gender mainstreaming as the key strategy to achieve gender equity. But it does not clearly articulate what gender equity is or what aspects of well-being need to be made more equal for men and women. The policy could have elaborated on whether it sought to promote equality in rights, economic opportunities or well-being of men and women. Doing so would have provided sharper guidance on what results ADB’s gender-mainstreamed interventions should seek to achieve. It could also have helped increase the commitment of government partners at the national and subnational levels to pursue gender equality, because the concept of gender mainstreaming could be vague and difficult to operationalize in some DMCs.

90. The GAD policy’s focus on gender mainstreaming may not be enough to optimize gender equality results from ADB operations. Although the policy’s approach to gender mainstreaming
covers policies, planning routines, and programs and projects, it does not attempt to modify societal structures. Moreover, gender mainstreaming reflects the political, economic, and social conditions of the 1990s and is thus considered an outdated concept in some literature. An undifferentiated gender mainstreaming approach alone may not be enough to address emerging gender challenges particularly in economic empowerment and voice and decision-making. The operational plan, 2013–2020 not only reiterates the need for women-targeted interventions, but also specifies areas where targeted interventions are necessary—that is, helping women access economic opportunities and productive assets and participate in decision-making in formal and informal institutions, as well as policy and legal reforms to tackle GBV.

91. **Given the evaluation’s focus on gender results rather than on the process of gender mainstreaming, the remaining key elements of the GAD policy, 1998—gender sensitivity, gender analysis, gender planning, and agenda setting—are still crucial.** Gender sensitivity remains a vital aspect of ADB’s GAD policy given the women-specific challenges in the five dimensions of gender equality. The adherence to this element of the GAD policy is also evident in women’s participation during project consultation and design (as discussed in Chapter 4). Similarly, the GAD policy’s elements of agenda setting and gender planning are still necessary because gender challenges vary across and within countries.

92. Gender analysis remains important, but difficulties have been encountered in responding to this element of the GAD policy. Proper gender diagnostics are not always conducted during project design to examine social and economic barriers to gender equality in the specific project context. Moreover, the gender-differentiated impacts of projects are not usually examined because of a paucity of sex-disaggregated data. These issues are discussed in Chapter 4.

93. **For priority sectors, the GAD policy, 1998 understates interventions to narrow gender gaps in economic empowerment and voice and decision-making, but the operational plan, 2013–2020 addresses this.** The GAD policy recommends that ADB increase the number of projects with GAD either as a primary or secondary objective in health, education, agriculture, natural resource management, employment and income generation, and financial services (microfinance). The policy identifies strategies for health, education, and agriculture projects to facilitate the inclusion of women and to address gender disparities. Given these sector priorities, the GAD policy in principle is more relevant to narrowing gender gaps in human development, an area where Asia and the Pacific has made good progress unlike the dimensions of economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and vulnerabilities to risks and shocks, which pose challenges to gender equality.

94. The GAD policy mentions integrating gender concerns into employment and income generation, and infrastructure. But it does not provide specific measures to incorporate gender in these areas. Similarly, the GAD policy views GBV as a health issue. But it does not identify support for policy and institutional reforms specific to this area, which is crucial to improving women’s voice and decision-making in the region. The policy is also silent on the need for robust social protection systems to help reduce women’s vulnerability to risks and shocks.

95. **Because the GAD policy is designed to present a broad set of principles, the action plan, 2008–2010 and operational plan, 2013–2020 provide a better gauge of the relevance of ADB’s**

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55 These strategies include the provision of scholarships for girls; reserving school places for girls; establishing single-sex classrooms; training female teachers; reducing or subsidizing the direct and indirect costs of girls’ education to encourage their participation; promoting community-based health services; training female health personnel and female community health providers; campaigns, counselling, and advisory services to address female-focused violence; campaigns to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS among women; improving women’s access to land; training female agricultural extension workers; supporting labor-saving technologies; and enhancing women’s access to savings and credit services.
strategic directions to the region’s persistent and emerging gender challenges. The call for greater sector diversity in gender mainstreaming by the action plan, 2008–2010 proved crucial in ensuring that ADB’s GAD agenda stay relevant to DMCs’ gender challenges. The action plan acknowledged that gender mainstreaming had seen some improvements in law, economic management, finance, industry and trade, transport, and communications projects—sectors where increasingly important gender gaps in economic empowerment and voice and decision-making lie. The evaluation found that the strategic priorities of the operational plan, 2013–2020 are relevant to the gender challenges. The operational plan appropriately calls for women-targeted interventions in skills training, access to productive assets, and combating GBV and other forms of abuse, which advance gender equality in economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and human development. With support for these dimensions of gender equality, the operational plan is appropriately aligned with the stand-alone targets of the SDGs on gender, particularly on GBV, equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life, and equal rights to economic resources.

96. To reduce gender gaps in human development, the operational plan identifies investments in education but not in health. The plan’s focus is on improving girls’ participation in and completion of secondary education, which would help curtail dropout rates among girls and thereby help address the gender gap in basic education. In contrast to the GAD policy, 1998, the plan does not identify targeted health measures among women despite the need to improve access to and the quality of maternal health services in some countries. The reduced focus on health could be because health is not one of Strategy 2020’s core areas. A renewed emphasis on health in the midterm review of Strategy 2020 in 2014 underscores the importance of gender mainstreaming in health projects because these interventions directly affect gender gaps in human development and indirectly influence gender equality in economic empowerment and reduced time poverty (footnote 52).

97. The infrastructure targets in the operational plan are not specified through a gender lens, presumably due to the lack of sex-disaggregated data. These targets include new household connections for electricity, kilometers of urban rail and bus-based mass transit systems built, and households with new or improved water supply and sanitation. Although it may be difficult to identify the number of females who will be reached by these infrastructure interventions, the operational plan could have indicated that women’s time savings or the frequency of their trips to schools, health facilities, and markets should be monitored in some projects. However, the assumption that these output-based targets would automatically lead to intermediate outcomes of time savings, and to medium- or long-term goals of women’s empowerment and gender equality, may not hold. If infrastructure projects are well-planned and designed to address these gender constraints, their benefits for women can be maximized.

98. The action plan, 2008–2010 rightly emphasizes the importance of policy dialogue with governments in the delivery of ADB’s GAD agenda. While government ministries are usually engaged in policy dialogue on gender issues during the formulation of CPSs and project-specific GAPS, the action plan noted that ADB had engaged few DMCs in such dialogue. This was largely because (i) gender issues were rarely included in high-level dialogue with key ministries and (ii) ADB made few attempts to involve national gender focal agencies in discussions with ministries of finance and planning.

99. Because the operational plan was adopted only in 2013, the women-targeted interventions just discussed comprise only a small share of ADB’s gender-mainstreamed projects. This is largely because of ADB’s increasingly sporadic support for GEN projects. GEN projects usually support targeted and direct investments in women and girls. Moreover, women-targeted interventions are often in human development and economic empowerment, but not in voice and decision-making, particularly in reducing GBV.
100. Over 2014–2015, 129 loans and grants, classified as GEN and EGM, were approved. Of these, only three were women-targeted interventions: the Third Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project in Nepal, which targets female-headed households; the Equity Investment and Loan RBL Bank Supporting Financial Inclusion Project in India, which targets women farmers or women-led enterprises; and the Health Sector Governance Program in Lao PDR, which aims to improve health service delivery particularly for women and children.

101. The evaluation also reviewed some additional gender-related projects in ADB’s project records for 2013–2016. It found three grants that targeted women and girls. The Access to Green Finance Project in Tajikistan, an ADF grant, targets women borrowers and aims to increase smart green energy solutions most helpful to women such as energy-efficient cooking stoves, heating units, and solar water heaters. The Economic Empowerment of the Poor and Women in the East–West Economic Corridors Project in Myanmar targets women-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Women’s Entrepreneurship Development Project in the Kyrgyz Republic, another grant, targets low-income women microentrepreneurs in rural areas and small towns.

2. Relevance of Gender Categories to ADB’s Portfolio

102. ADB has achieved its corporate targets on gender mainstreaming in line with the GAD policy’s focus on this. The number of gender-mainstreamed projects has increased noticeably since 2009. The 3-year moving average of these projects rose by nearly 80% from 2009 to 2015. The adoption of gender equity as a driver of change under Strategy 2020 and corporate targets for gender mainstreaming contributed to this increase by encouraging more efforts to integrate gender issues into ADB’s operations.

103. ADB exceeded its previous corporate targets for gender mainstreaming of 40% of all sovereign projects and 50% of ADF-financed projects by 2012. During 2012–2014, 55% of all sovereign and 58% of ADF-financed operations were categorized as gender-mainstreamed.

104. The early achievement of ADB’s corporate targets on gender mainstreaming in projects by 2016 has been realized. The targets specify that 45% of all public sector operations and 55% of ADF projects should be gender-mainstreamed by 2016. For 2013–2015, the average proportion of the gender-mainstreamed projects reached 54% of all ADB sovereign operations and 57% of the entire ADF-financed portfolio (footnote 58). Over 2014–2016, the corresponding figures were 50% for all sovereign operations and 56% for the ADF subcategory. ADB, however, saw a 7-percentage-points decline in the share of gender-mainstreamed projects between 2015 and 2016. This year-to-year decline was mainly because of lower contributions of transport, water and other urban infrastructure and services (WUS), and other infrastructure to gender mainstreaming in 2016 than in previous years. The increases in the share of gender-mainstreamed projects in education and finance were not enough to compensate for the drop in the infrastructure sectors. The decline in gender mainstreaming in infrastructure in 2015–2016 could be a concern if ADB aims to continue—or even expand—its support for gender equality in Strategy 2030.

105. The corporate targets for gender mainstreaming have been instrumental in growing the proportion of gender-mainstreamed projects in the portfolio. Setting corporate targets has been

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56 This is based on the 2014 and 2015 performance summaries of the operational plan.
important not only for demonstrating commitment but also for mobilizing people and resources toward gender interventions.

106. **ADB’s performance in exceeding its quantitative targets for gender mainstreaming was driven by a notable rise in EGM projects, while the share of GEN projects contracted.** The significant increase in EGM projects may be due to the greater ease of adding gender-design features in projects than of designing projects with gender equality or targeting women as their main objective. GEN projects potentially offer more impactful solutions to narrow gender gaps and advance women’s welfare because they support gender equality at the outcome level. The decline in GEN projects could be due to the difficulty of reflecting gender equality in the outcome statement of project DMFs, particularly for interventions that do not have a strong gender focus or those that do not target women.

107. **By number of ADB’s total sovereign projects, the share of EGM projects more than doubled after 2009, peaking at 52% in 2013.** The share of GEN projects peaked at 21% in 2005 and noticeably declined after 2010, averaging about 8% from 2011 to 2015 (Figure 2). A similar trend is observed when JFPR grants are excluded, with EGM projects sharply rising after 2009 and GEN projects decreasing after 2010 (Linked Document 1).

![Figure 2. Number of Sovereign Projects by Gender Category, 2005–2015](image)

**EGM = effective gender mainstreaming, GEN = gender equity theme, GM: 3-year MA = Gender-mainstreamed 3-year moving average (GEN+EGM).**

Source: Independent Evaluation Department based on portfolio database by the gender evaluation team.

108. **In terms of approved amount, the average share of EGM projects to ADB’s total portfolio for sovereign projects almost tripled from 11% in 2005–2008 to 32% in 2009–2015.** The average share of EGM projects in ADB’s total portfolio peaked at 47% in 2014 after reaching a trough of 9% in 2006–2007.

109. **The average share of GEN projects by approved amount decreased from 8% in 2005–2008 to 7% in 2009–2015—peaking at 13% in 2007 and dipping to a low of 3% in 2012.** This was despite the call in the GAD policy and operational plan for ADB to support women-targeted interventions, which are usually GEN-classified projects.

110. **The distribution of GEN and EGM projects across sectors highlights the unevenness of the increase in ADB’s gender-mainstreamed portfolio over 2005–2015.** While ADB’s gender

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60 The share of GEN projects in the South Asia Department (SARD) was 10% in 2013, 16% in 2014 and 18% in 2015, which is above the 8% average across ADB. The share of GEN projects in SARD reduced significantly to 7% in 2016.
mainstreaming approach calls for gender to be integrated across its operations and the action plan, 2008–2020 suggests greater sector diversity in gender mainstreaming, ADB’s gender-mainstreamed portfolio in 2005–2015 was largely concentrated in ANR, health, education, and WUS—these four sectors accounted for 23% of ADB’s portfolio in the period. Transport and energy in turn comprised 53% of ADB’s total portfolio over the same period.

111. By amount, nearly all health and education projects in 2005–2015 were considered gender-mainstreamed, while about two-thirds of ANR projects incorporated gender interventions (Table 9). About three-fourths of project amounts in WUS were also gender-mainstreamed over this period. The sector priorities of these projects are mainly aligned with gender equality in human development and time poverty to some extent, through improved water and sanitation services. By contrast, gender mainstreaming was carried out in 26% of transport projects, 20% of public sector management (PSM) projects, 19% of finance projects, and 11% of energy projects by amount during 2005–2015. Nevertheless, there have been improvements in gender mainstreaming over 2013–2015 in transport (51%), PSM (32%), energy (23%), and finance (40%) (footnote 58).

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<tr>
<th>Sector (number of operations)</th>
<th>Percentage of Approved Projects (Amount)</th>
<th>Percentage of Approved Projects (Number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy (165)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport (283)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector Management (123)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and Other Urban Infrastructure and Services (147)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Natural Resources (146)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance (84)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (79)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health (50)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (44)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Sovereign (1,121)  
EGM = effective gender mainstreaming. GEN = gender equity theme.  
a Includes information and communication technology, industry and trade, and multisector.
Source: Independent Evaluation Department estimates based on portfolio database by the gender evaluation team.

112. ADB does not have gender mainstreaming targets for its TA projects. It does not have clear guidelines for the gender classification of TA projects and is mainly concerned with GEN TA projects that are stand-alone or attached to loans. Moreover, overlaps of gender categories between PPTA projects and loan projects make it difficult to count gender-mainstreamed TA projects. ANR, education, health, and water projects accounted for most gender-mainstreamed TA projects in 2010–2015; this is similar to the composition of ADB’s gender-mainstreamed loan and grant portfolio for the public sector. Among the activities financed by gender-mainstreamed TA projects were the gender analysis of employment opportunities, women’s participation in decision-making, capacity development and training, and the collection of sex-disaggregated data. Rather than setting targets for gender mainstreaming in TA projects, it is more important to ensure reliable financing for this modality given its vital role in the delivery of GAD agenda.

113. The integration of the gender categories in private sector operations (PSO) project documents was systematized in 2011. PSO in rural education, telecommunications, and agribusiness supported gender-inclusive business models. By amount of the 108 PSO approved projects during 2011–2015, 12% were classified as gender mainstreaming—5% GEN and 7%

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61 PSOD indicates there are internal targets on gender for PSO, but they are not published.
EGM (Table 10). Gender was integrated in the design of 31% of PSO in finance by amount in the same period. By number, ANR, education, and finance accounted for a large share of gender-mainstreamed PSO over 2011–2015. Several energy and transport PSO included measures and livelihood development programs targeting women as part of their social plans, but none of these met the criteria to be classified as GEN or EGM.

### Table 10. Private Sector Operations by Sector and Gender Category, 2011–2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector (number of operations)</th>
<th>Percentage of Number of Approved Projects</th>
<th>Percentage of Amount of Approved Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>EGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy (44)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport (3)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and other urban infrastructure and services (11)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and natural resources (9)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance (33)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Health (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (6)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Private Sector Operations (108)</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EGM = effective gender mainstreaming, GEN = gender equity theme.

*a* Includes information and communication technology, industry and trade, and multisector.

Source: Independent Evaluation Department estimates based on portfolio database by the gender evaluation team.

114. Gender-mainstreamed PSO were largely aimed at improving human development and access to finance among women. Economic empowerment through training components (mostly livelihood) was included in project design. In rural education, PSO focused on training and employing women to teach and run community learning centers. PSO in telecommunications developed mobile applications for women and created a network of women distributors and sales agents. The agribusiness projects sought to employ contract workers in rural areas, half of them women. PSO in rural education, telecommunications, and agribusiness were company-driven to ensure ownership and sustainability. Many of these elements were part of energy PSO, classified as SGE, and could therefore be considered entry points for ADB to mainstream gender in energy PSO. There is scope to incorporate various gender actions in energy PSO such as livelihood and skills training for women as part of corporate responsibility programs. ADB also used a few TA projects to finance capacity building activities on gender in some PSO projects.

115. Most of the gender-mainstreamed PSO projects are in the financial sector. Finance PSO classified as gender-mainstreamed supported new approaches to lending to women entrepreneurs. These included creating dedicated business units in banks targeting women self-help groups, developing digital finance technology platforms to support new products, financial literacy programs, and using exclusive business correspondents to service new clients. ADB’s PSOD also runs the Microfinance Risk Participation and Guarantee Program. The program provided loans to 1.4 million people, of whom 90% were women, and facilitated and offered $268 million in funding.

116. **ADB’s project gender classification system has helped ensure quality-at-entry of interventions.** The classification system identifies specific requirements for gender analysis and monitoring that guide ADB staff and executing and implementing agencies in designing gender activities. Classifying which projects count as gender mainstreaming also raises awareness on gender issues and the means to integrate gender in projects across sectors.

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62 The Financial Inclusion for Micro and Small Enterprise Growth in Georgia Project processed three transactions for the Credo Microfinance Organization, FINCA Bank Georgia, and TBC Bank.
117. Even so, ADB’s ex-ante classification of gender-related projects on its own will not lead to the achievement of gender outcomes. A project’s success does not only rest on quality-at-entry—this is only the first step. Success factors of gender-related projects also include proper gender diagnostics, women’s participation during various stages of projects, regular midterm review of gender activities in GAPs to allow for midcourse corrections and adjustments, and monitoring and reporting of gender results.

118. Efforts do not always follow through the implementation and monitoring phase to track and assess gender results. This evaluation recognizes that ADB has instituted detailed systems to monitor the implementation of GAPs. Although monitoring report formats are set out in project administration manuals, executing agencies are expected to submit quarterly GAP implementation reports to ADB. Operations departments annually document the progress of GAPs by listing the activities implemented against the intended gender outputs and using color coding. Under the SDCC’s leadership, annual progress is discussed within and across departments, and actions are taken accordingly. Nevertheless, the quality of reporting by executing agencies can be improved and ADB’s supervision can be intensified by including more gender specialist consultants. The implementation of the monitoring and reporting of gender results in all operations departments could be strengthened.

119. The reporting of project gender results across ADB can be done better by detailing the progress made in the five dimensions of gender equality in the operational plan, 2013–2020. The operational plan’s results framework has no baseline targets for gender equality results in human development, economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, reducing vulnerabilities against shocks and risks, and inclusive infrastructure. It does not measure time poverty reduction among women. The indicators generally focus on the number of female recipients of ADB support rather than gender outcomes, and data constraints may hamper the monitoring of these indicators. For instance, under human development, the indicator used was the number of women and girls receiving skills training instead of achievements in female school attendance or performance. ADB currently summarizes the gender results of its operations in one institution-wide indicator in its Development Effectiveness Review. In 2016, it issued a two-page document with some information on its performance on gender mainstreaming and results (footnote 58).

3. Relevance of Project Gender Action Plans to ADB Operations

120. GAPs are crucial tools for gender mainstreaming, but they can be improved. One drawback observed was that GAPs were not always tailored to circumstances specific to project and sector conditions, and to the needs and demands of women in DMCs. The GAPs examined by this evaluation usually included a set of indicators for women’s participation across sectors and subsectors in the following areas:

(i) Jobs and income. Creating employment and income opportunities for women during and after project implementation. Contractors are encouraged to hire women, especially for labor-based works during the construction of infrastructure outputs.

(ii) Representation and participation. Ensuring women’s representation and participation during consultations and decision-making processes, as well as in membership or leadership positions in decision-making bodies at the community, subnational, or national levels.

(iii) Capacity building. Providing training for women with capacity-building opportunities and ensuring women’s participation in training programs such as livelihood training.

63 The Nepal resident mission piloted efforts to aggregate project-specific results at country-level along the five dimensions of the operational plan and produced a report on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in ADB Operations in Nepal (2011–2015), which will soon be published.
(iv) **Sex-disaggregated data.** Collecting sex-disaggregated data on outcome and output gender mainstreaming indicators such as access to basic services for project monitoring and documentation.

121. The indicators used within these four areas were often uniform across ADB projects, with little diversification in accordance with project- and sector-specific circumstances. While standard indicators are useful for aggregation, a generic and perfunctory approach to GAP indicators and targets may reflect (i) few incentives for staff to consider broader gender objectives and results of ADB projects, and (ii) a lack of quality gender analysis to ensure that local-, project-, and sector-specific conditions are properly considered.

122. **A generic set of GAP indicators with limited specification of sector-, project-, or community-specific circumstances may lead to unrealistic and unattainable indicators.** The Tonle Sap Sustainable Livelihoods Project in Cambodia, for instance, aimed to have trained women representatives making up at least half of all commune planning and budgeting committee members. Not all communes, however, have such a committee, and a female member is not always present where these committees are set up. In the Pursat province, out of 52 planning and budgeting committee members in communes, only 4 are women.\(^{64}\)

123. GAP indicators on women's participation—in terms of labor provided or involvement in consultative processes—were difficult to achieve in Timor-Leste. Here, cultural factors that prescribe gender roles strongly influence the way of life. That all the examined GAPs in Timor-Leste call for high levels of women's involvement in ADB projects indicates a limited analysis of circumstances specific to the project, country, or sector levels. For example, gender-inclusive labor force targets during the construction of large infrastructure operations were deemed unrealistic—as was the case in the Road Network Development Sector Project and Road Network Upgrading Project. But meetings only for women and women’s involvement in performance-based maintenance contracts have helped overcome cultural barriers to women’s participation in ADB projects.

124. **The need to process projects quickly and the time required for making a high-quality GAP pose concerns for the design, implementation, and monitoring of these plans.** ADB staff, including gender specialists, indicated there was limited time available for undertaking detailed analyses of project-specific gender challenges to develop truly customized action plans during project preparation. The GAPs and their targets are prepared as part of project preparation work and PPTA—hence, adequate resources during PPTAs are needed to ensure that baseline data and reference information are available, and GAP targets and activities are aligned with critical gender challenges on the ground. The formulation of GAPs is often subsumed in the presentation of sex-disaggregated data on various socio-economic aspects in the project-affected communities or in a project's social development action plan.

125. **Gender or social development specialists are not always recruited to oversee the design, dissemination, implementation, and monitoring of GAPs.** Involving gender specialists as early as possible in the project cycle helps ensure that gender-mainstreamed projects are properly designed. The Nutrition Improvement through Community Empowerment Project in Indonesia failed to deliver its planned gender equality results primarily because it did not assign a gender technical expert to support project monitoring. The gender and ethnic minority covenants of the Greater Mekong Subregion Regional Communicable Disease Project in Cambodia were not complied with because of the limited availability of sex-disaggregated indicators, late engagement of consultants, and women and ethnic minorities not specifically targeted in controlling the outbreak of communicable diseases.

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\(^{64}\) IED’s validation rated the project *less than successful* overall, but ADB gave a gender rating of *successful* for this project.
126. Project management units in government executing and implementing agencies often have weak capacity to design, implement, and monitor gender-mainstreamed projects. Their limited participation in the design of GAPs is aggravated by often weak capacity to monitor gender activities and gather sex-disaggregated data for monitoring. Consequently, national and local government bodies implementing ADB projects often have limited ownership of GAPs.

127. Given the challenges in implementing and monitoring GAPs discussed above, ADB has taken steps to address these issues. It has produced gender equality results case studies that discuss gender-inclusive design features and implementation arrangements that contributed to the achievement of gender targets. ADB’s Central and West Asia Department (CWRD), South Asia Department, and Southeast Asia Department (SERD) maintain a database of information on GAP implementation, monitoring, and reporting for all ongoing GEN and EGM projects. Over 2008–2012, ADB conducted 71 in-country training events for government executing and implementing agencies, NGOs, and national GAD focal agencies (footnote 3). ADB, for instance, conducted gender capacity building workshops for staff across various departments or divisions of government executing and implementing agencies in PNG.

B. Comparing ADB’s Gender Priorities with Other Development Agencies

128. The gender policies and operational plans of development agencies—including ADB’s—put greater emphasis on human development, women’s economic empowerment, and voice and decision-making to promote gender equality. ADB’s operational plan, 2013–2020 encourages targeted activities on women’s access to economic opportunities, participation in the decision-making processes of formal and informal institutions, and policy and legal reforms to combat GBV, in addition to time-saving infrastructure. Similarly, the World Bank’s gender strategy for 2016–2023 seeks to improve human endowments, remove constraints on providing more and better jobs, eliminate barriers to women’s ownership and control of assets, enhance women’s voice and agency, and engage men and boys in these efforts.

129. The African Development Bank’s (AfDB) gender strategy, 2014–2018 also centers on women’s legal status and property rights, economic empowerment, and knowledge management and capacity building. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development’s gender strategy for 2016–2020 emphasizes women’s economic empowerment through increased access to finance and business support for women-led businesses, employment and business opportunities for women, and services, given the changing nature of participation of men and women in economies.

130. ADB’s measures to address gender issues in projects at entry are regarded as good practice among multilateral development banks (MDBs) (footnote 58), In 2008, ADB was the first MDB to adopt a corporate results framework that included targets for gender mainstreaming. The gender categories are a flagship effort by ADB in identifying what counts as gender mainstreaming. The gender categories and corporate targets for gender mainstreaming show
ADB’s institutional commitment to ensure the design at entry of gender interventions and monitor their performance in promoting gender equality. Sector gender checklists help ADB staff and government partners address gender issues in the design of projects across sectors.

131. **The criteria of other development partners on what constitutes gender mainstreaming have not been as clear as ADB’s criteria.** The World Bank’s criteria for assessing gender integration in projects were only broadly described until 2011, when a three-dimensional ex-ante system was introduced to track gender integration at the project level. The system, however, did not clearly demarcate which projects counted as gender-mainstreamed interventions. The World Bank is currently improving its project-level tracking system. But unlike ADB, it still does not have a system for reviewing gender results at project or program closing.⁷⁰

132. **The monitoring of ADB’s gender mainstreaming agenda at the country level needs improving.** While gender targets are clearly set at the corporate level and a detailed GAP implementation monitoring and at-completion assessment is in place, the lack of gender indicators and baselines compromises CPS results frameworks. This is discussed in Chapter 4.

133. **Other development partners are working on improving their monitoring of gender results.** World Bank’s gender strategy, 2016–2023 seeks to place a stronger emphasis on outcomes and results. The strategy aims to use sex-disaggregated data, enrich the World Bank’s evidence base, establish more robust gender monitoring systems, and leverage partnerships with key United Nations agencies and the private sector for effective outcomes. The AfDB’s action plan for its 2014–2018 gender strategy also outlines actions to institutionalize gender by creating a cadre of gender focal points, building gender-mainstreaming capacity, and integrating gender into normal business processes. The MDB Working Group on Gender has been an important vehicle for peer-to-peer learning across MDB gender teams to enhance gender strategies.

134. Overall, ADB is at the forefront of MDBs in ensuring quality-at-entry of gender projects, and having executing agencies regularly monitor these projects. The challenge for ADB is to strengthen the monitoring and reporting of aggregate gender results at the country level.

C. **Responsiveness to Country Needs**

1. **Country Gender Diagnostics**

135. **Since 2010, ADB has required gender issues to be systematically addressed in the main text, sector road maps, and results frameworks of CPSs.** Based on the GAD requirements of the Operational Manual on Gender and Development, 2010, gender planning in DMCs should include the formulation or updating of CGAs and an appropriate gender strategy.⁷¹ The gender strategy should specify how ADB intends to promote and implement its overall GAD objectives in DMCs, and discuss how ADB assistance will address gender equality and women’s empowerment issues. While CGAs are produced and updated, gender strategies in CPSs are not always explicitly identified and gender analyses not comprehensively discussed. CPSs also tend to focus on gender mainstreaming within lending operations.

136. **Gender strategies in CPSs are often drawn from CGAs, which comprehensively examined gender challenges in DMCs.** They analyze institutional and legal frameworks, and the socio-cultural norms and stereotypes that result in discrimination against women, their inability to make decisions, and lack of confidence. They are often jointly formulated with development

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partners. While CGAs are updated, the frequency of updates is not specified in the operations manual.

137. **The CGAs apply evidence-based assessments of gender issues, using quantitative and qualitative information to substantiate the analysis of country-specific gender gaps.** The evidence is drawn from in-country and external gender-focused studies, national surveys, and gender surveys and statistics supported by development partners. CGAs also use information disseminated during conferences and workshops; various reports on the implementation progress of the Beijing Declaration adopted in 1995; and consultations with government officials, project staff, NGOs, academia, women’s organizations, and project beneficiaries. ADB’s country programs and project documents are also used in formulating CGAs. 

138. **The CGAs completed during 2005–2015 examined gender issues aligned with the five dimensions of gender equality outlined in the ToC.** These CGAs examined economic empowerment issues affecting women including the overrepresentation of female workers in informal sectors and women’s limited access to productive assets. Human development issues examined by CGAs included gender gaps in technical and vocational education and training and poor health among women, including those in reproductive age. CGAs’ analysis of time poverty often deals with the time spent by women on unpaid work. The low representation of women in government positions and GBV mainly comprise the CGAs’ assessment on voice and decision-making. In examining women’s vulnerability to risks and shocks, the CGAs usually discuss the impacts on women of climate change and loss of livelihood because of retirement or the death of their husbands.

139. **The CGAs examined adopted a forward-looking approach by assessing emerging gender challenges.** This provides crucial guidance to ADB in identifying the strategic directions of its future support for GAD. For example, the CGAs for Armenia and Pakistan explored government policies that could affect women’s voice and decision-making. Armenia’s CGA examined the need to pursue the early achievement of the 20% electoral quota for women. For Pakistan, the CGA tackled women’s participation in public office and planning processes, and the difficulties women encounter with the computerization of the national identification cards.

140. The CGAs for Bangladesh, India, Lao PDR, PNG, and Tajikistan discussed the emerging gender challenges associated with climate change, which aggravates existing gender challenges particularly GBV and the burden of unpaid domestic work.

141. **The CGAs offered recommendations on how to integrate gender into projects across sectors.** They recommended that ADB ensure the participation women in project conceptualization, design, implementation, and monitoring, especially in infrastructure projects. Gender issues must be incorporated into loan covenants and monitored—this is particularly important for policy-based loans (PBLs). ADB can encourage contractors to create employment opportunities for women during project implementation and after the completion of infrastructure projects on WUS, roads and energy, as recommended by the CGAs.

142. **The CGAs suggested measures to strengthen the capacities of ADB staff and government officials in carrying out gender mainstreaming and formulating GAPs.** These included improving the capacity of executing and implementing agencies in conducting gender analysis and policy planning and coordination, as well as developing a sustainable statistical system for generating sex-disaggregated data to monitor gender indicators. They also recommended that ADB bolster the capacity of its staff and clearly delineate responsibilities for gender analysis and monitoring.

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72 These are based on sources of information cited in the main text or indicated in footnotes in CGAs.
Some CGAs recommended that resources for these tasks be provided to ADB’s operations departments, particularly resident missions.

143. Another common recommendation of the CGAs reviewed was to ensure the systematic integration of gender analysis in the main text of CPSs. As observed in the CPSs examined in this evaluation, key gender challenges and recommended measures to integrate gender in ADB country operations are not always reflected in the gender strategies of CPSs. This may be exacerbated by the new CPS guidelines, which subsume the gender analysis under an overall inclusive growth assessment. In previous years, the space for substantive gender analysis has been considerably reduced in the streamlined CPS templates and sector assessments.

144. The gender strategies of CPSs in the eight countries placed more emphasis on the process of gender mainstreaming than on prioritizing the types of gender and development results to be achieved. While CGAs offer extensive analysis of gender issues, CPSs have not focused on gender equality or women’s empowerment as independent objectives, but on integrating gender considerations into the portfolio. This is evident in the articulation of gender strategies in CPSs formulated between 2005 and 2015 in which the discussion seemed to shift from the role of gender in development to enhancing gender mainstreaming, particularly EGM projects. This may have been because of ADB’s efforts to meet the corporate targets on gender mainstreaming in line with ADB’s GAD policy. The downside of this is the tendency to dilute the discussion of gender issues in CPSs and how the proposed sector and subsector pipeline projects address specific gender challenges in a country context in favor of a procedural approach to integrating gender in country programs.

145. The CPS, 2004–2006 for the PRC, for example, viewed gender as one of the key elements in social dimensions of poverty. Similarly, the CPS, 2008–2010 discussed gender as part of the development context in the PRC. The subsequent two CPSs for the PRC, by contrast, focused more on gender mainstreaming than on the implications of gender equality as a development objective. The CPS, 2011–2015 sought to identify ways to mainstream gender and include gender targets in project DMFs. The CPS, 2016–2020 adopted the previous strategy’s focus on gender mainstreaming and monitoring of GAPs.

146. CPSs for India during 2005–2015 also shifted focus from gender as a development objective to gender mainstreaming. The country strategy and program (CSP), 2003–2006 for India discussed gender under the inclusive development pillar. It recognized the gender dimension of social and economic processes and public policies. By contrast, the CPSs, 2009–2012 and 2013–2017 focused on mainstreaming gender in ADB’s portfolio. The CPS, 2009–2012 noted that gender equity has been mainstreamed into sector road maps and recognized that even better-off states have gender issues. The CPS, 2013–2017 emphasizes gender analysis, monitoring, and strengthening the capacity of implementing agencies with a focus on monitoring impacts of ADB projects.

147. A similar shift toward greater gender mainstreaming was apparent in the more recent CPSs for PNG during 2005–2015. The CSP, 2006–2010 extensively discussed gender issues in the attached gender assessment and strategy, and integrated gender-related recommendations into the road maps for public financial management, private sector development, transport, and health. By contrast, the CPS, 2010–2015 concentrated on gender mainstreaming in all general intervention projects. Infrastructure, finance, energy, and health projects included sector-specific gender analysis and incorporated gender-specific target indicators within the results frameworks. Support for women’s access to basic social services and infrastructure, credit, and informal and formal institutions was discussed in the linked documents. The CPS, 2016–2020 maintained support for access to infrastructure and social services, and provided targets for gender mainstreaming in energy, health, transport, and WUS.
2. Gender Integration in Country Portfolios

148. Gender-mainstreamed portfolios of the eight countries examined in the evaluation have expanded over the last decade as CPSs’ gender strategies increasingly focused on gender mainstreaming. This indicates that a great effort has been made to implement gender mainstreaming in recent operations. In the PRC, 40% of the 122 projects approved during 2005–2015 were categorized as GEN or EGM. Nearly three-fourths of GEN and EGM projects were approved only from 2012 to 2015. In 2012, all approved projects in the PRC’s portfolio were categorized as gender mainstreaming. Similarly, 35% of the 117 projects in India during 2007–2015 were categorized as GEN and EGM. The share of gender-mainstreamed projects in India’s total country portfolio rose from 18% during 2007–2010 to 49% during 2011–2015.

149. Despite this increase in gender-mainstreamed projects, gender equality as an objective has not played a major role in determining the composition of the eight country portfolios. Identifying and agreeing with governments on projects in sectors and subsectors where gender gaps can be narrowed or women empowered remains a big challenge for ADB.

150. Across the five dimensions of gender equality, the eight country portfolios were more responsive to reducing gender gaps in human development and time poverty than in the other dimensions. This was because gender-mainstreamed projects were largely concentrated in ANR, education, health, and WUS. This is consistent with the gender mainstreaming trends observed at the corporate level.

151. To promote gender equality in human development, nearly all education and health projects during 2005–2015 in the eight country portfolios were gender-mainstreamed. This finding is not surprising since education and health projects offer opportunities for sex-disaggregated activities and results. All such projects in India during the evaluation period were gender-mainstreamed. In the Cambodia portfolio, five of six education projects and two of three health interventions during the period were gender-mainstreamed.

152. Integrating gender in education and health projects is responsive to gender gaps in human development in the eight country portfolios. These countries face persistent gender disparities in access to and completion of secondary education and high maternal mortality ratios. The portfolios address these gender gaps in human development.

153. In line with addressing gender equality in reduced time poverty, most WUS interventions in the eight country portfolios were gender-mainstreamed. All WUS projects in Cambodia and India, and more than one-third of WUS projects in the PRC were gender-mainstreamed during the evaluation period. Gender-mainstreamed WUS investments can reduce the time women allocate to unpaid domestic work because fetching potable water is usually a task taken on by women. With reduced time poverty, women can pursue income-generating or other productive activities. The CPs examined aptly responded to gender gaps in time savings through the incorporation of gender targets in WUS investments.

154. Rural water projects normally require the involvement of user groups for planning and maintenance, while urban water projects focus on connecting households to the mains for a certain fee. Rural water supply projects are often managed and maintained by communities—hence, GAPs for these projects stressed the need to involve women in community groups as well as to target women’s employment for construction and maintenance. Connection fees for poor families, which are likely to include a disproportionate number of households headed by women, were subsidized, as was usually specified in GAPs for urban water projects.
155. To foster gender equality in economic empowerment, the eight country portfolios placed more emphasis on livelihood training and infrastructure interventions in ANR and transport, than on systematically addressing institutional issues to combat gender-based wage gaps and discrimination in labor markets. ADB’s infrastructure investments in these countries, particularly in roads and irrigation infrastructure, were aligned with the need to narrow gender gaps in economic empowerment because these helped to increase women’s access to social services and markets. Addressing policy and institutional barriers to women’s entry to labor markets and ensuring equal pay for equal work for men and women provide lasting and sustainable impacts on gender equality in economic empowerment. ADB does not directly support many of such interventions—though it collaborates with agencies such as the International Labor Organization in addressing gender-based discrimination in labor markets, mainly through knowledge products.

156. Activities targeting gender innovation in ANR are appropriate since many women are engaged in agricultural work. ADB’s ANR projects are focused more on irrigation infrastructure than on agriculture-value chains and extension services, and labor-saving technologies in cultivation and agri-processing, which would provide more direct benefits to smallholder women farmers by addressing women farmer’s limited access to farm energy, mechanization, and basic agricultural and agri-processing tools. Innovative financing solutions to encourage greater use of new labor-saving technologies by women farmers would also contribute to innovative ANR interventions benefitting women.

157. ADB’s support to combat GBV was limited. Along with the commitment of governments, a stronger emphasis on this area could have significantly advanced gender equality in voice and decision-making. Over 2005–2015, country portfolios for Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, PNG, and Timor-Leste—where GBV is prevalent—did not include policy and institutional support targeting GBV or complementing information campaigns to educate both men and women about this gender challenge. As GBV is a complex issue, ADB’s partnership with development agencies such as UN Women is imperative for tackling this challenge.

158. The mobilization of women was ADB’s main way of reducing gender gaps in vulnerability to risks and shocks in the eight countries. ADB did not provide much support for social protection and safety nets, or for removing regulatory barriers to women’s access to finance. In the India portfolio, for instance, several projects helped establish or strengthen self-help groups, which improve women’s resilience to risks. It is, however, difficult to measure the meaningful participation of women in these groups. The ADB-supported Tsunami Emergency Assistance Project assisted 41,149 existing self-help groups and 20,265 new self-help groups formed in two states by providing revolving credit and economic assistance for upgrading livelihood activities and/or establishing microenterprises. Over 90% of the beneficiaries of project livelihoods initiatives in Kerala and 60% in Tamil Nadu were reported to be women.73

159. ADB is committed to expanding its support for social protection systems and safety nets, which can help reduce women’s vulnerability to risks and shocks. In the PRC, ADB supported TA projects on pension reform that recommended eliminating gender differences in the retirement age by fixing it at 60 for men and women, as well as providing urban and rural pensions, social services, and elderly care. In Bangladesh, ADB’s budget support during the 2008 food crisis aimed to strengthen social security, particularly for women. ADB has supported the expansion of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) in Pakistan that provides cash transfers to women and is designed to affect women’s empowerment and well-being directly.

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3. Gender and Infrastructure

160. **Untapped opportunities exist for ADB to invest in several subsectors of infrastructure to add value to ADB’s GAD agenda.** Infrastructure accounts for a large share of the country portfolios assessed. While gender mainstreaming is now common in WUS projects, it is much rarer in transport and energy.

161. About four-fifths of India’s portfolio in 2005–2015 consisted of infrastructure projects, mainly in transport and energy. However, the bulk of these projects were classified as SGE or NGE. ANR, health, education, industry and trade, and WUS projects have accounted for most of ADB’s gender-mainstreamed portfolio in India since 2005 (footnote 40).

162. ADB allotted more than two-fifths of its portfolio in Bangladesh in 2005–2015 to infrastructure. However, less than one-tenth of energy projects and less than one-third of transport projects were gender-mainstreamed, while all education, health, and WUS projects were gender-mainstreamed (footnote 40). Another example is ADB’s portfolio in Pakistan during the period. About 55% of the portfolio was composed of transport and energy interventions, but no energy projects were gender-mainstreamed and just one-fourth of transport projects was classified as GEN or EGM. PSM, ANR, and WUS projects accounted for most of Pakistan’s gender-mainstreamed interventions during 2005–2015 (footnote 40).

163. In Timor-Leste, no energy project in 2005–2015 had sufficient designs to qualify for the GEN and EGM categorization. This is despite the importance of energy projects in reducing time poverty among women in the country. Almost 40% of the population is at least 30 minutes away from the nearest water source, and women spend around 3 hours a day collecting water (footnote 40). Gender-inclusive designs could have been added to projects to reinforce the positive effects of these projects on GAD.

164. **Although it is difficult to come up with meaningful GAPs for some types of infrastructure projects, there are various entry points for ADB to reinforce the gender results of such projects.** ADB can apply gender-responsive design features in transport, energy, and water infrastructure. Since 2009, the share of infrastructure projects classified as EGM has increased by amount—even though the share of GEN infrastructure projects was small (Figure 3). This may be attributed to the integration of project outputs that cover labor quotas for women and the participation of women in consultations and community groups, which would classify infrastructure projects as EGM—whereas it would be more difficult to identify and monitor sex-disaggregated outcomes under GEN-classified infrastructure projects. Nonetheless, the employment generated in ADB projects particularly during the construction of infrastructure outputs is often temporary and low-skilled, and cannot be deemed to support women’s economic empowerment. In some cases, governments could be asked to employ female engineers in the operation of infrastructure.

165. **ADB has been more successful in mainstreaming gender in WUS than in transport and energy.** This may be because the benefits to women of water infrastructure are more direct since women are mainly responsible for fetching water. In 2007, 43% of ADB’s WUS projects were classified as GEN compared with 5% of transport projects. No energy projects were classified as GEN. By 2012, the corresponding share of GEN and EGM projects was still relatively low for energy at 19%, but had increased to 40% for transport projects and 88% for water projects (footnote 58). Over 2013–2015, the percentage for energy projects increased marginally to 23%, but for transport it was 51%.
In energy, it is difficult but sometimes possible to build significant gender features into conventional generation, transmission and distribution projects. Targets can be set for women’s employment in the construction of energy generation, transmission or distribution projects, though much of the work is mechanized. Table 11 identifies possible gender features in energy projects and their effects.

Considerably more gender measures are possible for rural electrification projects, since these change living and working conditions for households. Gender features such as subsidies for the connection fees of impoverished households or energy efficiency campaigns involving women’s groups can help maximize the inherent gender impacts of these projects. Rural electrification can reduce the time women spend on collecting firewood and extend their waking hours, and remove the need for cooking in a smoky environment. The Renewable Energy Development and Network Expansion and Rehabilitation for Remote Communes Sector Project in Viet Nam, which extends rural electrification to remote mountainous areas, is a good example of this type of intervention. The project targets households headed by women and offers subsidized connections to the grid, and supports awareness campaigns on energy efficiency involving women’s groups.74

Table 11. Possible Mechanisms for Improving Gender Impacts of Energy Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Mechanisms</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved cooking through electrification</td>
<td>Replacement of wood and charcoal in cooking—women’s health benefits plus time savings in collecting fuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural electrification—household connections</td>
<td>Subsidies for the poor where the connection fee is unaffordable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovated transmission and distribution lines</td>
<td>Improved reliability which frees up women’s time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large energy projects—dams</td>
<td>Programs to encourage spin-off activity by women entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large energy projects—construction</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS awareness programs to protect communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy sector reform</td>
<td>Tariff increases mean differential pricing is needed to protect poor households, including households headed by women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Women’s employment in project construction and operation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Independent Evaluation Department.

74 The project also aims to recruit an NGO to deliver HIV/AIDS training and ensure that women’s rights are protected during resettlement by registering reallocated land in both the husband’s and wife’s names. See ADB. 2009. Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan and Technical Assistance Grant to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Renewable Energy Development and Network Expansion and Rehabilitation for Remote Communes Sector Project. Manila.
168. Renewable energy projects can integrate gender measures through livelihood training for women, and training women on the use, installation, and maintenance of renewable energy sources such as off-grid solar sources of energy. The Supporting Electricity Supply and Reliability Improvement Project in Sri Lanka is a case in point. The project intends to provide power to small-island communities from innovative hybrid mini-grids involving wind, solar, and efficient diesel generation. Its GAP includes livelihood training for entrepreneurs targeting women; awareness training on the use of electricity, with 50% of trainees to be women; and training on the use and maintenance of renewable energy systems. The Power System Efficiency Improvement Project in Bangladesh is an EGM project with a GAP that includes targets for women employed in construction, technical training for women in the installation and operation of off-grid solar energy sources, skills training for women in energy-related microenterprises, and a target of 25% increase in the number of female-headed households that have been newly connected to the grid.

169. **Most transport projects offer benefits to women by providing them with better access to markets and employment.** But significant economic gains from transport projects will not necessarily accrue to women without targeting interventions.

170. Rural roads offer more potential for direct gender impacts through time and travel cost savings. These projects also provide women with jobs in construction and maintenance and encourage their involvement in community groups. The Rural Roads Improvement Project in Cambodia is an example of an EGM-classified transport project with targets for women’s employment in construction and maintenance, and their participation in community groups.

171. Urban road, rail, and port projects can include multiple gender-responsive design features. Such features cover well-lit roads, women-only carriages and resting and waiting areas, establishing market areas along roads for businesses run by women, and targets for women’s employment in activities beyond manual work in construction or maintenance of facilities. Women can be employed in ticketing, operations work (as drivers or guards), and maintenance and administration. The Ho Chi Minh City Mass Rapid Transport Line 2 Investment Program included employment targets for women in construction and station jobs, reserved spaces for waiting and women-only carriages, well-lit station areas, and reserved shop spaces for female-run businesses. A similar approach was applied in the Urban Sustainable Transport Project in Lao PDR that aims to improve bus services and road access to central areas of Vientiane.

172. National highways offer less scope for including gender design elements and need mitigating measures for negative effects on women. Highway construction is often heavily mechanized and involves formal construction teams, limiting the scope for employment of local women. In addition, an influx of male construction workers to an area can increase the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission and human trafficking. Separate awareness programs for construction workers and local women could minimize these risks—as implemented in some ADB projects. Table 12 summarizes the possible gender impacts of different types of transport project.

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### Table 12. Possible Mechanisms for Improving Gender Impacts of Transport Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Mechanisms</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural road improvements</td>
<td>Time savings for women in family and work-related activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater access to markets, schools, and health clinics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment on road construction and maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road safety measures: speed bumps and bicycle lanes</td>
<td>Improved pedestrian and cyclist safety (women are represented disproportionately in non-motorized travel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban mass transit projects: women only carriages</td>
<td>Time savings for women combined with measures to encourage travel through improved security and better carriage design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National highways: livelihood and skill support</td>
<td>Support for women’s participation in economic activities associated with the highway, such as roadside stalls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rail, bus, and metro services: time of day pricing</td>
<td>Incentive to travel off-peak to accommodate the range of trips women undertake for family and work responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges: pedestrian and cycle access</td>
<td>Improved access for women (who are represented disproportionately in non-motorized travel)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Independent Evaluation Department.

### D. Responsiveness to Government Priorities

173. ADB’s institutional framework for GAD is generally consistent with the principles of the gender-related policies of governments in the region. ADB’s GAD policy, 1998 and operational plan, 2013–2020, and government policies all provide a general blue print for ADB’s support for GAD—their overlaps are expected.

174. Gender is generally viewed as a cross-cutting theme in operations by both ADB and governments. For example, Timor-Leste’s Strategic Development Plan, 2011–2030 notes that gender mainstreaming will be promoted across government policies, programs, processes, and budgets. Gender-responsive policies and laws will be passed at national and subnational levels. Indonesia’s Medium-Term Development Plan, 2010–2014 identified gender mainstreaming as a strategy to reduce gender inequalities between women and men, enhance the benefits women receive from development, and improve women’s participation in decision-making in development processes.

175. ADB’s support for GAD is largely well-attuned to relevant government programs. In India, ADB’s support for equal wages for labor through its loan covenants is consistent with the Equal Remuneration Act. The requirement of ADB gender-mainstreamed projects that at least one-third of laborers in rural areas be women is aligned with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. In Kerala, more than 90% of the workers are women. ADB’s support for livelihoods and self-help groups for poor women was in line with the government’s National Rural Livelihoods Mission launched in 2011 to strengthen the approach to supporting rural self-employment.

176. ADB often helped improve governments’ awareness of gender issues and capacity in implementing policies and programs for gender equality. The understanding of gender issues and the capacity to carry out gender work tend to be limited at lower levels of government.

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78 This scheme promotes the right to 180 days of unskilled manual labor a year on public works for any rural household members who want such work at the stipulated minimum wage rate. See P. Dutta et al. 2014. Right to Work? Assessing India’s Employment Guarantee Scheme in Bihar. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Gender focal points in different ministries and subnational governments often lack resources, technical experience, or commitment to promote gender equality.

177. Cambodia’s Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MOWA), for instance, operates under financial and human resource constraints and limited willingness of senior politicians to address the gender agenda. Subnational governments in Indonesia generally have little understanding of the concepts of gender, gender mainstreaming, and gender-responsive planning and budgeting. In the PRC, many government officials and researchers take the view that there are no longer major gender issues to be addressed, as women in rural areas have led or increased their participation in farm work and other livelihood activities.

178. ADB’s TA projects sought to strengthen the capacity for gender mainstreaming ministries and highlight the urgency of gender issues. The Ministry of Women and Child Development and other sector ministries in Bangladesh and the MOWA in Cambodia have benefited from a TA project aimed at improving their capacity for gender work (footnote 40). To underscore emerging gender issues in the PRC, ADB supported TA projects to help address gender gaps in pension systems.

E. Responsiveness of ADB’s Financing Modalities to Gender Gaps

179. Levels of gender mainstreaming were higher in investment loans than in PBLs over 2005–2015 (Figures 4 and 5). Investment projects provide infrastructure, health, and education services, which directly impact women’s time poverty and human development. They also usually include components on livelihood training for women and support for setting up women’s groups, which could help economically empower and improve voice and decision-making. Moreover, investment projects usually have outputs that can have separate targets for female and male beneficiaries.

180. PBLs play a unique role in pursuing policy and institutional reforms that can contribute to gender outcomes. Of the PBLs approved during 2005–2015, 10% accounted for GEN projects, while for project loans the corresponding figure was 7% (Figure 5). PBLs could be an effective modality for addressing legal, institutional and policy issues relating to gender disparities particularly in ensuring government commitment and capacity to sustain the gains made in ADB-supported gender-mainstreamed interventions. They can also support efforts to address gender issues faced by middle-income countries such as pension and elderly care reforms, and wage and productivity gaps. Integrating gender-related policy triggers and milestones in PBLs require informed policy dialogue with governments to determine where ADB loans can add the greatest value in achieving gender mainstreaming priorities.

181. ADB has largely used PBLs to enhance gender mainstreaming measures and gender-responsive budgeting processes at various levels of government. In Indonesia, the Second Local Government Finance and Governance Program–Subprogram 2—an ongoing PBL classified as EGM—intends to improve capacity development for gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting, public financial management, and accountability. This output is in line with the Ministry of Finance’s Decree 2010, which mandates regional governments to implement gender-responsive budgeting, gender budget statements and gender mainstreaming measures as outputs for the government’s 2011 and 2012 work plan. A new gender-specific policy trigger was also designed for Subprogram 2, and a number of milestones have been incorporated that include gender aspects of the fiscal decentralization reform agenda.80

182. ADB’s Bangladesh portfolio also illustrates how PBLs can be used to support gender-responsive budgeting. The Public Expenditure Support Facility Program and Countercyclical Support Facility Program helped to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Finance to mainstream and monitor gender into the work of different ministries and processes. Through the program, the government has since 2009–2010 presented to the national parliament a gender budget report each year that explains the policies and strategies for advancing women’s activities of various ministries or divisions that have implications for women development. In 2009–2010, gender budget reports were prepared for 4 ministries, and these increased to about 40 ministries or divisions in 2015–2016.

183. ADB has incorporated gender measures and indicators in multitranche financing facilities (MFFs). ADB has initiated efforts to address perceived limitations in incorporating gender issues in MFFs by attaching GAPs to help women seize opportunities from expanded and improved infrastructure facilities.81 The gender classification is applied to each tranche of MFFs. In the Himachal Pradesh Clean Energy Development Investment Program in India, the first three tranches were NGE, but the fourth tranche, approved in 2012, was categorized as SGE, meaning some gender design elements were added.82 The Madhya Pradesh Energy Efficiency Improvement Investment Program, Tranches 1 and 2, were categorized as EGM.83

184. Some opportunities on gender mainstreaming in program loans are still being missed. In Bangladesh, the Secondary Education Sector Development Program—classified as EGM—did not contain a single gender-related condition, but the program had a GAP. Similarly, Tranches 1–6 of the Madhya Pradesh Power Sector Investment Program in India were considered inclusive, but had no gender mainstreaming elements and were classified as NGE. These program loans could have included gender-related loan covenants to pursue long-lasting reforms to narrow gender gaps in secondary education or ensure power connections among households headed by women.

81 MFFs comprise a series of loans such as investment loans or results-based lending structured into an overall program. They are not a separate lending modality.
82 The Himachal Pradesh Clean Energy Development Investment Program, Tranche 4 approved in 2012 is implementing community development programs such as a self-employment scheme, a merit scholarship scheme, and empowering women through involvement in community-based organization. These are part of resettlement activities. See Resettlement Plan for Shongtong Karchham Sub-Project (Tranche IV).
185. In Cambodia, ADB missed an opportunity to mainstream gender work and indicators in the Fourth Financial Sector Program. It had one gender indicator with a target in the DMF—60% of new borrowers should be women. However, there was no reference to gender and the project was classified as SGE. This was despite the role of women as significant borrowers of microfinance and their difficulty in accessing credit from the formal financial sector.\(^{84}\)

186. Results-based lending (RBL) has only recently been introduced in some countries, and its effectiveness in gender mainstreaming has yet to be tested. This rests on governments’ adoption of appropriate and attainable disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs), which can be identified through proper gender analysis and collection of baseline data. ADB’s experience in this area highlights the difficulty of agreeing with partner governments on gender-related DLIs. Identifying gender-responsive DLIs in education, health, and agriculture is straightforward since these indicators have a direct link to sex-disaggregated outcomes for beneficiaries in these sectors. For instance, under the Third Primary Education Development Project in Bangladesh, the government implementing agency found the DLIs to be relevant and achievable.

187. ADB also uses sector development programs—a combination of projects and PPTA—to deliver its GAD agenda. PPTA supporting gender reforms may not be feasible if the implementation capacity is weak. There is scope for combining policy reform and project lending to support the integration of gender in finance, public service management, education, and other sectors. As the impact of a project component and its gender outcomes depends on the overall policy environment, the sector development program appears to be an effective modality.

188. The Decentralized Public Service and Financial Management Program in Cambodia showcases gender mainstreaming in the sector development program. Classified as EGM, the program loan aims to strengthen the capacity of the local-level administration to deliver public services, while the project loan is to fund local projects under the Sub National Investment Fund. The Upper Secondary Education Development Program in Cambodia also uses the sector development program modality.\(^{85}\) The program component is to help reform the system and design a new curriculum. The project loan covers activities as upgrading schools, constructing houses for teachers, providing textbooks, capacity building, and data management.

189. TA projects, particularly PPTA projects, were useful in integrating gender in projects, but financing support for this modality is waning. Governments find ADB’s TA projects valuable for gender initiatives because they provide resources for research, capacity building, and knowledge sharing which governments often do not have their own discretionary funding for. PPTA projects are crucial for strengthening the availability of baseline information for potential GAP indicators and targets. During 2004–2013, TA approvals rose from $192 million to about $300 million a year, before increasing again to more than $434 million in 2013. However, the median size of TA projects has remained fairly constant at $600,000–$650,000—indicating a decrease in real terms because consulting costs have risen. The share of PPTA projects in TA operations declined to 17% in 2009–2013 from 22% in 2005–2008. With the average cost remaining constant, PPTA projects have therefore declined in real terms. This means that resources are spread across many tasks, such as gender analysis and GAP preparation, due diligence, and safeguard assessments, with the same resources despite increases in loan sizes and consultant costs.\(^{86}\) This poses a concern for ADB’s GAD agenda.


\(^{85}\) ADB. 2016. Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan to Cambodia for Upper Education Sector Development Program. Manila.

F. Summary

(i) ADB’s GAD policy, 1998 focuses more on the process of gender mainstreaming than on prioritizing the gender results ADB aims to achieve.

(ii) The priorities of the GAD policy, 1998 have become less relevant to the region’s evolving gender concerns. But the priorities of the operational plan, 2013–2020 are relevant, particularly those in economic empowerment and voice and decision-making.

(iii) ADB’s approach to the ex-ante gender classification of projects is crucial for the quality-at-entry of gender-mainstreamed interventions. A sound approach to reporting gender results at the aggregate level is also necessary.

(iv) While ADB has achieved its corporate target on gender mainstreaming, gains have been limited in GEN projects. This indicates that targeted interventions, as specified in the ToC, are not being maximized in ADB operations to achieve gender outcomes.

(v) Challenges relating to the design, implementation, and monitoring of GAPs hamper the success of gender mainstreaming in ADB operations. Going back to the ToC, these challenges highlight the impediments to translating gender-related outputs into gender equality outcome and monitoring gender results.

(vi) ADB country operations have generally been more responsive to promoting gender equality in human development and time poverty than in economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and resilience to shocks.

(vii) Integrating gender work into country portfolios will benefit from developing projects in sectors and subsectors that most meaningfully narrow gender gaps.

(viii) Gender mainstreaming has generally been more prevalent in ANR, education, health, and WUS. ADB has increased the share of infrastructure projects that are gender-mainstreamed since 2009, but the share is still limited, and usually concerned with building rural roads and rural electrification. Infrastructure had lower contributions to gender mainstreaming in 2015–2016, which was one reason for a 7-percentage-points decline in ADB’s gender-mainstreamed projects between 2015 and 2016.

(ix) ADB’s institutional framework for GAD is generally responsive to gender-related policies of governments. ADB is also helping improve governments’ capacity in designing and implementing gender interventions.

(x) Sector development programs and TA projects could be effective modalities in delivering the GAD agenda.
CHAPTER 4

Results of ADB Support for Gender and Development

190. This chapter evaluates the results of ADB’s gender-mainstreamed interventions at the corporate, country, and project levels. It also discusses the challenges and opportunities for gender mainstreaming in projects in different sectors, and highlights successful and unsuccessful approaches to gender mainstreaming in projects.

A. Gender Results at the Corporate Level

191. This section reviews the 72 completed and self-evaluated GEN and EGM projects with ADB’s gender success ratings during 2005–2015. Of the 504 gender-mainstreamed projects over the period, 92 were completed and self-evaluated. Of these 92, 72 were assigned gender ratings by ADB through a consultative process between the SDCC and operations departments. The 20 GEN and EGM projects that do not have gender ratings are mostly JFPR projects, which ADB does not rate (Linked Document 1).

192. The ADB gender success criteria are useful and easy to apply across ADB’s operations, and highlight the importance of good quality GAP indicators. Using data provided in PCRs, the SDCC assigns an initial gender rating of completed projects (i.e. successful or not successful), which is shared and agreed with operations departments. The gender ratings that have been agreed by the SDCC and operations departments are reported in ADB’s Development Effectiveness Review under the indicator on completed sovereign operations delivering intended gender equality results. They are based on three criteria:

(i) Reported results using sex-disaggregated data.
(ii) Reported partly successful achievement of activities included in GAPs (measured as at least 70% of GAP activities have been implemented and completed) and targets (measured as at least 75% of gender targets have been achieved).
(iii) Justifications on why gender equality results have been achieved if an overall rating in the PCR is partly successful or not successful.

193. These three-point criteria are simple and provide clear benchmarks. Both GAP targets and a project’s overall gender equality results need to be achieved for a project to be assigned a successful gender rating. Although the two-scale rating does not allow for any nuancing, it minimizes discretion and subjectivity, and ensures consistency even if different people are assigning the rating. Because the gender rating is largely based on attaining GAP activities and indicators, project GAPs must be tailored to women’s needs and interests, socio-cultural norms.

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87 ADB’s gender success rating is different from the overall project success rating. See ADB. 2015. Clarifications on the Gender Equality Results Indicator (Level 2). Memorandum of the Office of the Managing Director General. Manila.
in project communities, and conditions on the ground. This will ensure that gender benefits provided by ADB projects are meaningful and transformative.\textsuperscript{88}

194. **ADB’s self-assessed gender success rate for gender-mainstreamed projects approved in 2005–2015 was 65%.**\textsuperscript{89} Of the 92 completed and rated gender-mainstreamed projects in this period, ADB rated 72 projects based on the intended gender equality results. GEN projects had a higher gender success rate (68%) than EGM projects (63%) (Table 13).

| Table 13. Self-Assessed Gender Success Rates of Gender-Mainstreamed Projects, 2005–2015 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Gender Success Rate (%)         | Gender Equity Theme | Effective Gender Mainstreaming | All Projects |
| Gender-Mainstreamed Projects Rated | 68               | 63               | 65             |
| Successful (number)             | 25               | 22               | 47             |
| Gender-Mainstreamed Projects Rated (number) | 37               | 35               | 72             |

Source: Asian Development Bank Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department.

195. **This evaluation validated ADB’s self-assessed gender ratings for the 72 projects.** It undertook document reviews, key informant interviews, and FGDs to validate the results of these projects and arrive at its own gender success rate.

196. **The evaluation estimated that the gender success rates for GEN and EGM projects were 65% and 66%, respectively, an improvement from the 51% success rate reported in the previous gender evaluation in 2010.**\textsuperscript{90} The participation of women in community-based interventions, the mobilization of women into various groups, and the recruitment of NGOs to carry out gender components were common to gender projects with a *successful* gender rating. Attaching grants or TA projects to loans to implement gender activities and make sex-disaggregated data available were also found to contribute to the achievement of gender results. These factors helped ensure that women’s needs and priorities are incorporated into projects, and that women participate in various stages of the projects. Projects with a *not successful* gender rating faced challenges relating to the limited engagement of gender specialists, design issues, and unavailability of sex-disaggregated data. This evaluation did not support the gender success ratings for two projects. It did not concur with the *successful* gender rating for the Earthquake-Displaced People Livelihood Restoration Program in Pakistan, and the *not successful* gender rating for the North Karnataka Urban Sector Investment Program, Tranche 1 in India.\textsuperscript{91}

197. **The evaluation found a strong correlation between the gender success rating and the overall project success rating in the sample of 72 projects.** Gender-mainstreamed projects are considered to have more rigorous design analysis. This finding reinforces the literature that design is a critical success factor of development projects.\textsuperscript{92}

198. **GEN and EGM projects in 2005–2015, which account for one-third of completed projects, have self-reported and unvalidated overall project success rates of 79% and 80%, respectively. Projects classified as SGE (88%) and NGE (84%), accounting for two-thirds of the portfolio, have**

\textsuperscript{88} The SDCC started assigning gender ratings in 2009. From 2009 to 2012, it assessed PCR gender results with a very loose, non-uniform, and flexible methodology. It only started using the three criteria in 2013.

\textsuperscript{89} The projects examined do not include JFPR grants.

\textsuperscript{90} Fifty-one percent of 55 projects approved between 1998 and 2003 in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, and PNG were rated *successful* or higher in GAD performance.

\textsuperscript{91} The Earthquake-Displaced People Livelihood Restoration Program in Pakistan is discussed in Supplementary Linked Document E and the North Karnataka Urban Sector Investment Program, Tranche 1 is discussed in the India CAPE, 2007–2015.

higher success rates (Table 14). Of the more than 1,100 projects approved in 2005–2015, 283 were completed and rated. Of these, 184 were validated by the IED. If only projects with validated ratings are considered, the overall project success rate is 72% in 2005–2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 14. Self-Assessed Overall Project Success Rates by Gender Category, 2005–2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equity Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success Rate (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful Projects (number)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects Rated (number)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Independent Evaluation Department (IED) estimates based on portfolio database by the gender evaluation team. The base is project completion reports, not validated by IED.

199. The evaluation estimates the correlation coefficient between the overall project success rating and gender success rating at 0.83. If gender-mainstreamed projects are successful overall, it is also highly likely that they are successful at delivering their intended gender equality results. The evaluation found that 61% of gender-mainstreamed projects rated as gender-successful also had successful overall project ratings (Figure 6). By contrast, if gender-mainstreamed projects were unsuccessful overall, the gender rating was also likely to be unsuccessful. About 21% of gender-mainstreamed projects rated as gender-unsuccessful also had unsuccessful overall project rating. However, if a gender-mainstreamed project had an overall project success rating, it does not necessarily follow that it was successful in delivering its intended gender equality results.

200. The gender success rate increased considerably from 62% for gender-mainstreamed projects approved during 2005–2008 to 74% during 2009–2015. This increase may have been influenced by greater efforts to deliver intended gender results following the adoption of the

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93 ADB projects are rated successful or unsuccessful based on four criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Success rating refers to projects rated highly successful and successful.
corporate target for the gender results of completed projects. ADB reports that it achieved the target of 70% of completed sovereign operations delivering the intended gender equality results based on their GAPs in 2015. ADB’s 3-year average rate of completed operations delivering the intended gender equality results increased from 49% in 2012, to 55% in 2013, 60% in 2014, and 70% in 2015—the year in which the 70% target was achieved for the first time (footnote 58). The figure increased to 74% in 2016 (footnote 59). The target was achieved because of two factors: actual achievements, and improved reporting of sex-disaggregated project benefits and gender equality results in PCRs.

201. The evaluation’s estimated probit model indicated that achieving gender results did not necessarily depend on the project classification based on gender categories. After controlling for other factors that affect the probability of overall project success, the regression exercise showed that there was no significant difference in the performance of projects across gender categories (Linked Document 4). Successful delivery of gender outcomes hinges on proper project designs that integrate women’s needs and demands, and encourages women’s participation in projects.

202. The self-evaluated success rate of stand-alone TA operations classified as GEN was higher than for those categorized as EGM in 2010–2015. GEN TA projects (11 projects) and to some extent EGM TA projects (13 projects) helped improve capacity, and generate knowledge and innovation relating to gender equality (Table 15). ADB does not rate the success of gender components of TA projects. Hence, the overall success of GEN and EGM TA projects depends on factors other than the delivery of the gender components. About 27% of the stand-alone TA projects by amount over 2010–2015 were not classified under any of the four gender categories.

Table 15. Overall Success Ratings of Stand-Alone Technical Assistance Projects by Gender Category, 2010–2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Equity Category</th>
<th>Number of Technical Assistance Projects Rated</th>
<th>Success Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equity Theme</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Gender Mainstreaming</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Gender Elements</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Gender Elements</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Classified</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>271</strong></td>
<td><strong>88</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (i) Technical assistance (TA) ratings are as of December 2015; these are self-assessed. (ii) There were 1,397 stand-alone TA projects approved during 2010–2015. Of these, 635 TA projects were closed or completed with 271 TA projects rated.

Source: Independent Evaluation Department (IED) estimates based on the ADB portfolio database constructed by the gender evaluation team. Success rates are based on self-assessments by operations departments, which are not validated by IED.

203. TA projects were used to provide targeted livelihood training to women, bolster government capacity for gender, and integrate gender components into infrastructure projects. In the country portfolio assessments, gender-mainstreamed TA projects in 2010–2015 were all rated successful (Table 16). TA projects have played catalytic roles in delivering gender results, which justifies the provision of reliable financing for TA projects promoting gender equality.

204. Livelihood training for women was effectively provided through TA projects in the eight countries examined. The Study on Building an Ecological Security System for the National Core Grain Growing Area of Henan Province included women in decision-making, training, and capacity building relating to core grain cropping and agroforestry. Similarly, the Gujarat Solar Vocational Training and Livelihood Project in India trained 136 rural women in mobile phone repairing, energy conservation, kitchen gardening, and building smokeless stoves. This pilot training was demand-driven and allowed women to choose the type of training that best suited them. In Cambodia, the Women’s Development Centres Project in Siem Reap and Kampong...
Chhnangin trained rural women in 76 producer groups with 889 members. This yielded some success in diversifying income away from rice to vegetables production and handicrafts.  

Table 16. Overall Success Ratings of Stand-Alone Technical Assistance Projects in the Eight Countries by Gender Category, 2010–2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Category</th>
<th>Number of Technical Assistance Rated</th>
<th>Success Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equity Theme</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Gender Mainstreaming</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Gender Elements</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Gender Elements</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Classified</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
<td><strong>97</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (i) Technical assistance (TA) ratings are as of December 2015; these are self-assessed. (ii) Of the 448 TA projects approved in the eight country portfolios, 237 were closed and only 78 have ratings. 
Source: Independent Evaluation Department estimates of TA projects’ overall success ratings based on portfolio database constructed by the gender evaluation team.

205. TA projects have also helped improve government capacity in the eight countries to implement gender activities, as discussed earlier. The TA on Enhancing Capacities of Executing and Implementing Agencies to Achieve Gender Equality in India is one example. This TA strengthened the capacity of staff in ADB and government executing and implementing agencies to implement ADB’s GAD policy better.

206. TA projects in the eight countries were also instrumental in integrating gender into ADB’s infrastructure investments. The TA associated with the Second Rural Roads Improvement Project in Cambodia, for example, was used to employ Care International, an NGO, and a social marketing firm to explain the opportunities for construction work to rural women. A total of 49,505 person days of employment were generated for women from the first phase of this project. When opportunities are explained to women, they demonstrate willingness to do manual work.

B. Gender Results at the Country Level

207. Gender indicators were included in CPS results frameworks of the eight countries examined, although there were often few or no targets set. Prior to ADB’s operations manual, 2010 and the Corporate Results Framework, 2008–2012, gender indicators and targets were not required to be included in CPSs. For example, there were no gender targets in the results framework of the Indonesia CPS, 2006–2009—although sector road map results matrixes identified gender opportunities in ANR, education, and WUS. Gender targets in education and WUS were included in the results framework of the Indonesia CPS, 2012–2014. The Indonesia COBP results frameworks for 2009–2011, 2010–2012 and 2011–2013 did not identify gender targets.

208. Few gender indicators were included in the results frameworks of CPSs for PNG and Timor-Leste. The CPS, 2011–2015 for PNG included one sex-disaggregated indicator of increasing the percentage of pregnant women receiving antenatal care at least once from 61% to 66% over the CPS period. The CSP, 2006–2008 for Timor-Leste also included one gender indicator, but it

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96 The gender targets are (i) the number of polytechnic graduates in five priority sectors (i.e., ANR, education, energy, finance, transport, and water supply and sanitation) entering the workforce to increase by 5% by 2015 to 13,600 with at least 15% of these workforces to be female; and (ii) 30% of staff trained in development, implementation, and operation of wastewater works are to be women.
had no specific target beyond increasing access to credit for women and youth. The results framework of the CPS, 2011–2015 for Timor-Leste included two gender-focused indicators with targets in finance and transport. The CSP, 2005–2009 for Cambodia had no specific gender targets in its result framework, although the CPS, 2014–2018 has gender indicators for ANR, education, and finance.

209. Bangladesh’s CPS, 2006–2010 contained several gender-related indicators, but only those on secondary enrollment and maternal mortality specified targets. While its results framework included GBV, it did not include a target. In addition to gender targets in secondary education and maternal mortality, other indicators covered reducing the risk of violence against women and trafficking of women and children; increasing access to urban primary health care; and increasing the provision of credit to the poor, specifically for women. The succeeding CPS, 2011–2015 restricted its gender indicators to sex-disaggregated targets on education and health, and aggregate targets on WUS. The dropout rate indicator, which was cited in the education sector results framework, was not included in the CPS results framework.

210. Most gender indicators and targets in the CPS results frameworks for the eight countries reviewed were output- rather than outcome-based. Achieving the gender targets identified in CPSSs have the potential to reduce gender disparities in human development, time poverty, economic empowerment, vulnerability to risks and disasters, or voice and decision-making—though there is no guarantee of this. For instance, reaching a specific number of women holding microfinance accounts does not automatically ensure that women can engage in businesses or other income-generating activities. Similarly, attaining the intended share of women trained in road or water-facility maintenance does not guarantee time savings for them. These targets are more useful for monitoring ADB’s performance than for measuring progress toward the gender equality outcome. Moreover, the selection of gender targets included in the CPS results framework may not always correspond with the most urgent gender issues that a country faces.

211. ADB did not have a clear arrangement for monitoring the achievement of gender indicators and targets in the CPS results frameworks. Just like other development indicators, the monitoring and reporting of gender targets in a CPS results framework is seldom carried out because of a lack of clear arrangements for assessing such national-level gender results. Moreover, the structure of the CPSSs’ results frameworks does not allow for aggregating the outcomes of ADB projects. CPS final reviews are intended to assess the performance of ADB’s country programs including the progress toward gender targets. However, these reviews do not always report on such progress of realizing gender targets. For instance, the final review of the CPS, 2012–2014 for Indonesia reported positively on progress towards gender mainstreaming targets for projects in ANR, education, and WUS, citing the gender-related results of individual projects. But it provided no empirical evidence to indicate progress toward the targets on the share of female polytechnic graduates entering the workforce and female staff trained in wastewater works identified in the CPS results framework. Similarly, the final review of Timor-Leste CPS, 2011–2015 asserted that there had been some progress toward gender-related targets in transport—particularly in community participation, training, and construction work—but these were not supported by empirical evidence. Although the final review of the CPS, 2011–2015 for Bangladesh found that 60% of projects approved during the CPS period were gender-mainstreamed, it did not provide details on the extent to which these gender interventions were implemented.

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97 The gender targets were (i) at least a 50% increase in the number of women with active savings accounts in micro and small financial institutions by 2015 from a baseline of 20,100 in 2010; and (ii) a minimum of 800 rural poor and vulnerable people (at least 30% of them women) to receive training on and participate in community-based road rehabilitation and maintenance by 2015.
212. **Gender indicators in the CPS results frameworks of the eight countries were often derived from national targets (as required by the 2010 CPS results framework guidelines), and hence identifying the contribution of ADB support to such targets is difficult.** ADB support can have an impact on gender equality because projects are implemented on a provincial- or district-scale, while programs often support the nationwide policy reforms of governments. However, it is difficult to identify ADB’s contribution to progress in national-level gender indicators accurately because efforts by governments and other development partners or changing social norms can influence the achievement of targets for these gender indicators.

C. **Gender Results at the Project Level within Country Contexts**

213. This section examines the results of ADB’s gender-mainstreamed projects based on the five dimensions of gender equality. ADB’s contribution to each dimension is presented to determine which dimensions ADB has added value to. The evaluation looked closely at the 33 GEN and EGM projects completed, self-evaluated, and given gender ratings by ADB in the eight countries during 2005–2015. During the period, 34 GEN and EGM projects were completed and self-evaluated through PCRs in the eight countries, of which 33 were assigned gender ratings by ADB—the other being a JFPR project.

214. To strengthen the analysis of the gender results of ADB’s operations, the evaluation also reviewed (i) all 41 GEN and EGM projects in the 8 countries approved before 2005 but closed with PCRs during the review period, (ii) some ongoing GEN and EGM projects in the 8 countries, (iii) TA projects and JFPR-funded grants, and (iv) approximately 45% of 223 projects classified as SGE and NGE in the 8 countries to assess whether they had any gender results (Table 17). This section highlights the key findings from the assessments of the eight country portfolios and four sector studies. The detailed findings are discussed in the Supplementary Linked Documents A–F. By and large, it confirms the positive results the extra attention for gender work can have in many projects.

<p>| Table 17. Number of Gender-Mainstreamed Projects Examined in Eight Countries, 2005–2015 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>---------------------------------------------</th>
<th>-----------------</th>
<th>------------------</th>
<th>--------------------------</th>
<th>------------------</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>215</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
<td><strong>181</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADB = Asian Development Bank, EGM = effective gender mainstreaming, GEN = gender equity theme.

These additional GEN and EGM projects include those approved before 2005 but closed with PCRs during 2005–2015. Source: Independent Evaluation Department estimates based on portfolio database by the gender evaluation team.

215. For this evaluation, FGDs and beneficiary surveys were carried out for the (i) GEN-classified Second Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project in Bangladesh, (ii) EGM-categorized Metropolitan Health and Sanitation Project in Indonesia, (iii) EGM-classified Rural Road Improvement Project in Cambodia, and (iv) SGE-categorized Rural Roads Sector II Investment Program in India. These projects are good examples of how ADB can improve the way

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510. The evaluation acknowledges that it would be difficult to precisely quantify and assess a project’s impact on various sociocultural and economic dimensions of gender equality. Moreover, the five dimensions of gender equality are interrelated—so impacting one dimension can have an effect on others.
it integrates gender into infrastructure in some respects. They also highlight the differences in gender challenges and opportunities in (i) urban and rural settings, (ii) various infrastructure subsectors, and (iii) gender-mainstreamed and non-gender-mainstreamed projects. The major findings of the FGDs and beneficiary surveys for these projects are discussed in this section.101

1. Contribution to Gender Equality in Human Development

216. The evaluation found that ADB-supported projects in education, health, transport, and WUS in the eight countries helped reduce gender gaps in human development by increasing women’s access to education and health services. A large portion of ADB’s gender-mainstreamed portfolio in 2005–2015 was allocated to the social sectors and WUS. In Indonesia, all completed and rated gender-mainstreamed projects examined in the country portfolio were in ANR, education, health, and WUS. Half of the completed and rated GEN and EGM projects in Bangladesh and Pakistan assessed by this evaluation were also in these four sectors.

217. ADB’s interventions have supported increases in enrollment, particularly for girls, as well as improvements in the quality of education and school management, and helped reduce gender disparities in student gross enrollment, dropout, and pass rates. The Enhancing Education Quality Project in Cambodia and the Secondary Education Sector Development Program in Bangladesh are examples of such interventions. On health, ADB projects like the Second Urban Primary Health Care Project in Bangladesh and the Health Sector Support Project in Cambodia have helped enhance access to maternal and child healthcare services.

218. The evaluation’s beneficiary survey showed that the Metropolitan Health and Sanitation Project in Indonesia improved the overall health conditions of household members including women due to better sanitation and water quality. The Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project in Bangladesh improved domestic sanitary facilities in about 20,000 households and provided better access to community toilets.102

219. Several ADB-supported transport projects and transport components of multisector projects reviewed in the eight countries were instrumental in expanding women’s access to education and health facilities. The evaluation’s FGDs for the Second Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project in Bangladesh found that new schools were built in one of the project sites after road construction, thereby helping expand educational opportunities among children including girls. The prevalence of skin and foot diseases caused partly by muddy and wet roads during the rainy season has decreased after the project road was constructed.

220. The Rural Roads Sector II Investment Program in India, although classified as SGE, also offers a good example. More than 90% of male and female respondents of the beneficiary survey indicated that access to education and health facilities improved because of the project. Ambulances can now reach the project villages after road construction. Additional gender analysis and gender-responsive design features required in gender-mainstreamed projects through GAPs could have helped ensure that the project took into account how women intend to use rural roads to address their needs and priorities.

101 The methodologies and detailed findings of the FGDs and beneficiary surveys, questionnaires for the beneficiary surveys, projects’ objectives and components, and GAPs are presented in Supplementary Appendix B. The beneficiary survey for the Rural Roads Sector II Investment Program in India was carried out as part of the India CAPE, 2007–2015. The survey questionnaire is available in the India CAPE.

2. Contribution to Gender Equality in Reduced Time Poverty

221. **ADB’s infrastructure projects in the eight country portfolios, mainly in transport and WUS, helped reduce time poverty among women.** The beneficiary survey for the Rural Road Improvement Project in Cambodia showed that the proportion of women using motorbikes to go to markets increased from 32% before the project to 67% after its completion and from 62% to 83% for men. These changes in mode of transport reduced travel time to markets from an average of 36 minutes to 13 minutes for women, and from 29 minutes to 9 minutes for men. Similarly, the Rural Roads Sector II Investment Program in India has cut the time spent by women to go to market from 56 minutes to 25 minutes in the examined project sites. The beneficiary survey also found time savings for women in reaching nearby shops and work places. Capturing the gender impacts of transport projects highlights the importance of both quantitative and qualitative impact evaluation.

222. Some of ADB’s efforts to mainstream gender in transport have missed the mark. In Pakistan, ADB aimed to develop gender-sensitive roadside facilities and gender-responsive resettlement and land acquisition plans, and encourage women’s employment and capacity building. However, ADB’s capacity building of the National Highway Authority had been limited to gender sensitivity in safeguard implementation. The authority was under the impression that ADB’s sole requirement on gender mainstreaming in transport was compliance with ADB’s safeguard policy rather than meeting the requirements set for GEN and EGM projects to ensure women’s access to safe and reliable transport services (footnote 40).

223. The WUS projects examined also helped reduce women’s time poverty. Since the responsibility of fetching water for the family usually falls on women, better access to water services reduced the burden of unpaid domestic work on women. The Urban Water Supply and Environmental Improvement Project in India improved the quality and reliability of water supply. About 80% of households in the project areas were provided with clean water supply.

224. The ongoing Khulna Water Supply Project in Bangladesh aims to reduce the average time to fetch water per day in households headed by women from 110 minutes in 2009 to 20 minutes by 2020. The ongoing Second Chittagong Hill Tracts Rural Project in Bangladesh seeks to cut the average time women spend to fetch water from 1.5 hours to 30 minutes.

225. **ADB has yet to fully use energy projects in reducing the burden of unpaid domestic and care work and promoting time savings for targeting women in the eight country portfolios.** ADB support for clean cooking fuels, fuel-efficient stoves, and other measures targeting women’s access to energy remains limited. In some projects, ADB supported rural electrification, but this did not include gender-inclusive designs or analyses. In PNG and Timor-Leste, for instance, ADB did not support clean cooking fuels, although these are critical to reducing women’s time poverty because most rural households in these two countries use firewood for cooking. As discussed earlier, the task of collecting firewood is usually left to women, which adds to their unpaid domestic duties and hence time poverty.

226. ADB helped install separate feeders for agricultural use and rural households in India’s Madhya Pradesh state. This could expand economic opportunities as well as improve welfare of households in general. Poor women also stand to benefit from such energy projects.

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104 No timeframe is specified for this indicator. See ADB. 2011. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan to Bangladesh for Second Chittagong Hill Tracts Rural*. Manila.

105 The World Bank Global Monitoring Report, 2015 reported that rural electrification in India had caused major changes in consumption and earnings patterns resulting from increases in employment opportunities for both men and women. It also enabled girls to allocate more time to school attendance.
3. Contribution to Gender Equality in Economic Empowerment

227. The evaluation found that ADB’s contribution to women’s economic empowerment was mainly achieved through rural transport, skills development, and ANR projects in the eight country portfolios examined. While these projects have helped provide employment or entrepreneurial opportunities to women, ADB has yet to strengthen its legal and regulatory support addressing barriers to women’s entry to labor markets.

228. The rural roads reviewed had largely increased access to markets and workplaces, helping to augment women’s incomes by making it easier for them to transport inputs and produce. The Rural Road Improvement Project in Cambodia helped increase the production and sales of agricultural products through time savings resulting from better roads for the transport of seeds, fertilizers, insecticide, and other farm inputs, and agricultural produce. In the beneficiary survey, almost three-fourths of male and female respondents said sales from produce rose because of road improvements. Similarly, 64% of men and 56% of female respondents reported an overall improvement in agriculture production after road construction.

229. Improved access to the workplace and market and increased economic activity were also observed in project towns in Bangladesh. About 54% of female and 56% of male beneficiary survey respondents in Bangladesh said that it was easier to access to the workplace after road construction under the Second Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project in Bangladesh. Nearly two-thirds of male and female respondents said their access to markets had improved. In the town of Cox’s Bazar, a new market was established after the road construction and most of the buyers at the market are women. It emerged during the FGDs that sales of homemade puffed rice and garments and tailoring products can now be transported easily from homes because of the project. Many survey respondents attributed an increase in their income to the project. The project’s use of street lights helped reduce theft, mugging, and drug use. The street lights provided a more secure environment for young women commuting to work at night.

230. More than 80% of the beneficiary survey respondents in the Rural Roads Sector II Investment Program in India said the project made it easier for them to get to work or go to markets. The entrepreneurs’ network and employment opportunities improved because of the paved roads and better transport services. This reduced waiting and travel time. Beneficiaries of the program reported a rise in incomes following the project—although more male (86%) than female (69%) respondents reported increases.

231. ADB’s skills development interventions help women learn skills relevant to the labor market and enhance their entrepreneurial capacity. Skills development components for women were included in 31 of 219 sovereign projects classified as private sector development in 2005–2015. Less than one-third of these 31 sovereign projects supported general technical and vocational training programs, where greater participation of women in decision-making was a main feature such as through the inclusion of representatives from women’s associations in skills development councils. The remaining 70% of skills development components of the private sector development projects targeted women entrepreneurs and farmers. ADB worked with institutions that provide business support services in skills components of ANR and micro small and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) projects. Skills development activities under MSME projects focused on livelihood skills that would enable women to engage in commercial activities close to their homes, and business skills such as financial literacy.

232. A few ANR projects reviewed in the sample were found to have helped women access better irrigation systems or employment opportunities by improving agricultural production. Support for labor-saving technologies was either not a part of or was not made explicit in these
projects. Of the 23 completed, gender-mainstreamed ANR projects that had PCRs during 2005–2015, 13 focused on the provision of irrigation, rural water supply and sanitation services, rural roads, and other rural infrastructure. Apart from constructing irrigation or water infrastructure, ANR projects also supported women’s participation in irrigation management and water users associations. Six of the 23 projects supported livelihood or technical training on farm activities for women. Some ANR projects also provided credit to women farmers. No project indicated support for or targeted labor-saving technologies for women, as discussed in Chapter 3.

233. The evaluation found that the National Rural Support Programme—an NGO contracted to implement the Sindh Coastal Community Development Project’s social mobilization and small-scale infrastructure schemes in Pakistan—had adopted the project’s gender targeting helping female extension workers to reach remote coastal communities. The NGO scaled up this targeting approach in its programs in other districts and used its own resources to continue supporting the beneficiaries of the ADB-supported project.

234. In the Sustainable Aquaculture Development for Food Security and Poverty Reduction Project in Indonesia, 25% of project beneficiaries were women. They reported that the project addressed their immediate economic needs, enhanced their status in the community, increased their self-confidence, and empowered them to express their views on how to operate or manage their aquaculture production. Involvement in the GAP implementation at the subnational level allowed the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, the project’s executing agency, to have some hands-on experience in implementing gender-mainstreamed interventions with local governments.

235. The Shanxi Integrated Agricultural Development Project, the only GEN project in the PRC’s portfolio in 2005–2015, achieved the following: (i) female employment in agro-enterprises and other agriculture-related work increased by 55%–75%; (ii) 40% of women were trained in fruit planting, agriculture management, and other technical training; (iii) 65% of women participated in animal farming, resulting in significant income increases; and (iv) women were designated as leaders or representatives in village cooperatives. These achievements were largely due to an attached grant from the Gender and Development Cooperation Fund (GDCF).

236. The evaluation’s visit to the Xin’an animal breeding cooperative—supported by the Shanxi Integrated Agricultural Development Project—found that women’s income had increased by CNY2,500 a month after attending training on better techniques in birthing mother pigs and taking care of their offspring. In the Yuncheng municipality, women beneficiaries acquired new production techniques and expanded their options in sources of livelihood such as planting, and pig and poultry raising. Women beneficiaries in the Nongluyuan Planting and Breeding Corporation also realized gains from the project. Production of dates and vegetables, and other crops planted in greenhouses had increased. Women were also trained in hog-raising and birthing of mother pigs. The planting and hog-raising activities increased annual incomes from CNY20,000 to CNY50,000 among women, allowing them to build concrete houses and send their children to schools in the city.

237. Targets on women’s participation in training were sometimes missed due to an inadequate appreciation of local and cultural contexts. In the Participatory Irrigation Sector Project in Indonesia, for example, the attendance of women farmers in irrigation management training was lower than planned due to conflicts with meeting schedules and their daily activities, and their unwillingness to take part in training if they were not members of a water users’ association.106

238. Much remains to be desired in ADB’s efforts to address institutional constraints on women’s participation in the labor force. During 2005–2015, 22% of private sector development-classified projects in PSM were gender-mainstreamed. These projects are crucial in advancing legal and regulatory reforms supporting women’s entry to labor markets. ADB’s private sector development operations provided limited support to address issues such as gender-based discrimination in labor markets and the work environment, including lack of care services for children, as well as gender wage gaps. However, private sector development projects focused on increasing business activities by women entrepreneurs through addressing excessive regulations and lack of access to finance.

4. Contribution to Gender Equality in Voice and Decision-making

239. The evaluation found that in the cases examined, ADB’s main contribution to improving women’s voice and decision-making was confined to women’s participation in project design, implementation and monitoring, and their membership in community groups in the eight country portfolios reviewed. Women’s participation in project activities and membership in community groups are typical features in ADB’s gender-mainstreamed projects. Women are provided with seat(s) in project-related decision-making committees, and given opportunities to training in livelihood activities and other technical areas.

240. The participation of women in project- and community-based groups is usually promoted in urban development or water supply and sanitation projects. For instance, the North Karnataka Urban Sector Investment Program in India supported the formation of self-help groups composed only of women. Of the 575 self-help groups trained under the program, 215 acquired a total loan of Rs13 million from commercial banks.107

241. As well as consultations during project design, women take on roles in the project implementation and maintenance phases in some ADB-supported projects. For instance, in the Second Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project in Bangladesh, the beneficiary survey found that over 80% of female respondents were consulted on project design features before and during implementation compared with 57% of men. Since many of the project beneficiaries are not accustomed to formal meetings, community meetings were the most effective method of consultation.

242. Nepal’s Rural Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Sector Development Program helped enact the Elections to the 2007 Members of Constituent Assembly Act, and amend the 1993 Civil Service Act with provisions for increased representation of women and disadvantaged groups in state institutions. In Nepal’s first constituent assembly from 2008 to 2012, one-third of the members were women. The share of female employees in the civil service rose to 15% in 2012 from 11% in 2008.

243. A few ADB projects helped ensure women’s representation in governance and community groups. The Second Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project in Bangladesh supported women’s representation in town-level coordination committees and ward-level coordination committees. The project also required pourashavas (municipalities) to develop, implement, and monitor its GAP. About 44% of women project beneficiaries reported having greater roles in decision-making within the community because of their contributions to the design and implementation of the project’s infrastructure output. In addition, women beneficiaries were able to better express and articulate their demands through their participation in the project. Many female respondents also considered that the mobilization of women into

community groups had increased due to the project. Through project meetings, women developed networks with other women and community members.

244. The evaluation also found an example where ADB supported government guidelines and regulations that helped encourage women’s participation in the decision-making of local governments. The Sustainable Capacity Building for Decentralization Project in Indonesia helped regional governments issue regulations or guidelines on gender mainstreaming. The Kuningan district passed a Regency Regulation (Peraturan Bupati) 24/2011, which states that government personnel, regardless of gender, have an equal right to express their opinion in decision-making, improve their welfare, and pursue career development. Yogyakarta province released guidelines on gender-responsive budgeting and evaluating gender mainstreaming.108

245. ADB has helped improve the legal status of women, crucial for strengthening their legal rights over land and other assets. The Commune Council Development Project in Cambodia introduced a computer-based civil registration system for births, deaths, and marriage. About 89% of Cambodia’s population was provided with birth certificates under the project, half of whom were women. The civil registration system enabled citizens including women to gain their legal rights as Cambodians; enhance their legal right over property and land; and access to jobs, education and other services. ADB’s Social Protection Development Project in Pakistan, which supports BISP, also contributed to women’s access to the computerized national identity card. By providing women with this card and delivering cash payments to a female household member, the project enhances women’s voice and decision-making by giving them the authority to make financial decisions, increasing their mobility, and enabling them to engage with formal institutions.

246. Although ADB often supported women’s participation in projects and community groups, it did not provide legal and institutional support to systematically address GBV in the eight country portfolios. Here, government commitment is just as necessary to tackle this form of violence. The Access to Justice Program in Pakistan, which was approved in 2001 and addressed GBV, is a case in point.109 The program contributed to the near doubling of the number of women judges in different courts between 2001 and 2007. Greater awareness of women’s rights was incorporated into police training programs. But the extent of the program’s results in decreasing the incidence of GBV is not clear.110

247. A review of other country portfolios showed that only a few projects tackled GBV, indicating considerable scope for ADB to contribute to improving women’s voice and decision-making in this area. In Nepal, the TA project on Establishing Women and Children Service Centers intends to assist women and children survivors of GBV and abuse in 20 rural districts. As of 2016, the project had trained more than 600 police personnel on gender-responsive investigations and counselling for GBV victims.111 The Governance in Justice Sector Reform Program in the Philippines trained the police in handling gender-based violent crimes.112

248. Two TA projects helped formulate and pass gender equality laws in Viet Nam and Mongolia (footnote 112). A TA project helped improve advocacy for and implementation of the gender equality law in the Maldives. A regional TA on Integrating Human Trafficking and Safe

109 The program is not strictly covered in the evaluation period, 2005–2015.
111 ADB. Project Data Sheet: Establishing Women and Children Service Centers in Nepal. Manila.
Migration Concerns for Women and Children into Regional Cooperation shed light on human trafficking issues and advanced policy dialogue in this area.113

5. Contribution to Gender Equality in Reduced Vulnerability to Risks and Shocks

249. To help reduce women’s vulnerability to shocks, ADB’s microfinance loans during 2005–2015 tended to serve more as safety nets than tools for income-generating opportunities. ADB largely focused on the provision of microfinance loans in DMCs. But support for legal and regulatory reforms promoting women’s entrepreneurship was found to be limited in the eight country portfolios reviewed.

250. Of the 15 GEN-classified microfinance initiatives during 2005–2015, 4 were supported by PBLs.114 The policy matrixes of three of these four PBLs did not incorporate gender equality outcomes, nor did they tackle underlying legal and regulatory reforms to encourage women’s participation in MSMEs. The two largest GEN programs in the microfinance portfolio—the $152-million Khadi Reform and Development Program loan in India and the $150-million Microfinance Development Program loan in the Philippines—did not have any specific gender outcome statements or sex-disaggregated indicators and targets. It is difficult to gauge the gender results of microfinance initiatives because most of the 45 gender-mainstreamed microfinance projects across DMCs during 2005–2015 did not clearly distinguish between outcomes and outputs.

251. ADB tended to work on the supply-side provision of finance such as microfinance loans without much consideration on how to sustain the demand particularly among women. While ADB has largely focused on providing gender-responsive finance, equal attention needs to be given to service outreach and marketing, business capacity and women’s enterprises, gender-inclusive value chains development, and the institutional capacity development of governments and civil society organizations. If these complementary issues are not adequately addressed, women’s demand for microfinance cannot be sustained.

252. For instance, the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Development Project in Bangladesh provided a credit line of $76 million to SMEs with about 15% allocated to women-led SMEs. However, the target was not achieved because of limited analysis of the demand for loans by women-led SMEs.115 Nonetheless, some TA projects have helped address legal and regulatory barriers to women’s entrepreneurship. Legal reforms in the Solomon Islands supported by the ADB-funded Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative helped establish flexible business structures allowing women to run their businesses without unwanted interference from men.116

253. ADB made a limited contribution to strengthening social protection and safety nets systems, which are crucial for reducing women’s vulnerability to risks and shocks in the eight countries examined. ADB does not seem to have provided much support for social protection and safety nets, with just a few projects in this area. In the country portfolios examined, a case in point was the Social Protection Development Project in Pakistan that supports BISP, which is the Pakistan government’s social safety net program. BISP has provided important benefits to women, but ADB’s participation in joint supervisions missions and impact evaluation among the other development partners was limited. The World Bank and UK Department for International Development have adopted a common set of DLI s, undertaken joint supervisions missions, and collaborated on monitoring and evaluation. ADB did not also make enough use of independent

114 These are the Women’s Entrepreneurship Support Sector Development Program in Armenia, Khadi Reform and Development Program in India, Rural Finance Sector Development Program in Lao PDR, and Microfinance Development Program in the Philippines.
feedback on results from a third-party monitoring agency. Its TA project for the Waseela-e-Sehat health insurance scheme remains unused because the government has cancelled this component of BISP. BISP’s Waseela-e-Rozgar component, which sought to offer credit for women’s livelihoods with support from ADB, has also been cancelled by the government.

254. The evaluation’s FGDs also showed that ADB appears to have had no role in the design of the new BISP Poverty Scorecard Survey, which is the basis for identifying beneficiary female-headed households. Proper design and implementation of this survey is important in addressing exclusion and inclusion errors, which are prevalent in the ADB-supported BISP, a point that was brought to light in the FGDs.¹¹⁷

255. To help women cope with climate change impacts, ADB has recently stepped up the inclusion of gender-responsive design elements in projects that help mitigate impacts of climate change on women in some of the country portfolios examined. In PNG, the Building Resilience to Climate Change Project is tackling the links between gender and climate change. The project identified gender-differentiated impacts and coping mechanisms to address climate change at the community level. In Cambodia, the Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Development Planning TA project seeks to develop gender-inclusive monitoring and evaluation systems and to integrate gender into the climate change actions plans of key Cambodian ministries. The project also supports gender awareness training on climate change adaptation and develops gender-responsive pilot projects.

D. Summary

(i) The gender success rate of the 72 completed and self-evaluated GEN and EGM projects with gender ratings by ADB during 2005–2015 was 65%. The evaluation overall validated these results.

(ii) The correlation between the overall project success rating and gender success rating is strong. Gender-mainstreamed projects tend to have more rigorous design analysis than non-gender-mainstreamed interventions.

(iii) ADB and the governments of the eight countries examined did not have clear arrangements to monitor the attainment of gender indicators in CPS results frameworks.

(iv) ADB interventions in the eight countries generally contributed to narrowing gender gaps in human development by improving women’s access to education and health services, and reducing their time poverty through time savings in travel and fetching of potable water.

(v) In the same sample, ADB projects have made limited contributions to promoting women’s economic empowerment by addressing institutional constraints on female labor force participation. Much remains to be done in this area.

(vi) Similarly, to improve women’s voice and decision-making, a review of the sample projects indicated ADB’s efforts to ensure women’s participation in projects or their membership in community groups are commendable. By contrast, there were only a few projects targeting GBV despite the urgency of this issue.

(vii) The review of the sample projects found that initiatives to reduce women’s vulnerability to risks and shocks were coursed mainly through microfinance, rather than by strengthening social protection and safety nets.

¹¹⁷ The evaluation conducted six FGDs each in Bagh district (Azad Jammu and Kashmir) and Mansehra district (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Fifty-one FGD participants were from Bagh and 64 from Mansehra districts. All participants were receiving unconditional cash transfers from BISP.
CHAPTER 5

Delivering Gender Results

256. Implementing ADB’s GAD agenda requires adequate institutional arrangements and resources. This chapter examines ADB’s institutional arrangements, staffing and skills, workplace gender equality, resources for gender mainstreaming, and partnerships, all of which are crucial to help ADB implement its gender-mainstreamed projects efficiently.

A. Institutional Arrangements for Implementing ADB’s GAD Agenda

257. In 2008, ADB became the first MDB to adopt a corporate-wide results framework, which includes targets for gender-mainstreamed operations. Through its four gender categories, ADB distinguishes its gender-mainstreamed operations. Similarly, it has laid out the criteria to determine gender success ratings of individual projects. Assessing GAPs and gender results is more difficult because of limited availability of sex-disaggregated data. Generating sex-disaggregated data is a problem frequently encountered by MDBs including ADB. The lack of such data also affects efforts to assess progress toward the stand-alone targets on gender in the SDGs.118

258. Quality assurance of GAPs and monitoring gender results is the responsibility of operations departments, with the SDCC providing guidance on assigning gender categories and gender success ratings. Operations departments assign gender categories to projects and formulate their GAPs. Hence, they have ownership of these gender projects and are in a better position to gather sex-disaggregated data for the monitoring and assessment of gender results. The SDCC has limited staffing and resources, and so cannot be expected to monitor the implementation of GAPs and gender results of each project in the field.

259. While the SDCC spearheads the reporting of ADB’s performance in gender mainstreaming and achieving gender results, it relies on data provided in PCRs to do so and on agreement with operations departments on ratings. The SDCC reviews all documents and advises operations departments on the gender category at approval and gender success rating at completion. Using inputs from operations and other departments, the SDCC is tasked with preparing annual progress reports on GAD for ADB Management, as required by the operational plan. The annual progress reports are publicly available on ADB’s website. The revision of the operational plan’s results framework has been extended until ADB’s forthcoming Strategy 2030 is in place. A midterm review of the operational plan is scheduled following the publication of this evaluation.

260. ADB’s gender equity thematic group, created in 2015, provides enhanced knowledge support for increased attention to gender issues in projects. The thematic group conducts training and seminars on cross-sectoral approaches to gender mainstreaming in projects and gender issues in DMCs, and promotes partnerships with development agencies on gender work. Prior to the thematic group, ADB had established the gender and social development community

of practice for several years, which was later changed to gender equity. This community of practice had promoted learning and knowledge exchange in ADB on gender issues.

B. Staffing and Skills for Gender Mainstreaming and Monitoring

261. **ADB has generally increased the number of gender specialists in Headquarters during 2005–2015 (Table 18).** The increase was notable after 2010 because of ADB’s decision to increase its administrative budget. Designing, implementing, and monitoring the integration of gender in ADB’s portfolio are better undertaken by gender specialists than by sector or social development specialists, who are responsible for other tasks in addition to their gender work. The number of gender specialists must be responsive to the needs and size of the gender portfolio of each operations department. The East Asia Department (EARD) does not have a gender specialist. Instead, social development specialists are present in each division of EARD acting as gender focal points and working closely with executing and implementing agencies (footnote 40). Social development specialists cannot focus on gender work full time and may not have the gender expertise required. ADB’s resources are often limited for gender consultants during PPTA. As a result, safeguards or rural development specialists do the work of gender officers. Consultants conducting a poverty or social and gender analysis are usually contracted for much shorter periods.

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ADB = Asian Development Bank, CWRD = Central and West Asia Department, EARD = East Asia Department, PARD = Pacific Department, SARD = South Asia Department, SDCC = Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department, SERD = Southeast Asia Department.

Note: The figures in parentheses indicate the total number of gender-mainstreamed projects in each operations department during 2005–2015.

Source: Asian Development Bank Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department.

262. **The evaluation of the eight country portfolios found that staffing and skills gaps are notable in resident missions, impeding efforts to integrate gender in operations and to monitor results.** In most resident missions, either a national staff gender specialist or a long-term gender consultant is responsible for overseeing the gender integration and monitoring of gender results in the entire country portfolios, providing technical support for GAP implementation, and helping build the capacity of executing and implementing agencies for gender work.120

263. ADB’s Indonesia resident mission did not employ a national staff GAD specialist during 2005–2015, and has not had a long-term gender consultant since 2014. This has limited the provision of technical support to the resident mission staff in the design, implementation, and oversight and monitoring of GAPs, as well as the achievement of gender targets at the country level. Gender specialists in SERD and SDCC supported the monitoring and reviewing of

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119 A gender specialist position was provided to EARD in 2016.
120 See Supplementary Appendix C on the number of gender officers in resident missions.
Indonesia’s gender-mainstreamed portfolio in the evaluation period. However, the resident mission will need more in-depth support as it expands its gender-mainstreamed portfolio using newer programming modalities such as RBLs and MFFs, and the existing modalities of PBLs and project investments including PSO.

264. The PRC resident mission does not employ a national staff or a long-term consultant gender specialist. Instead, a social safeguards specialist is responsible for monitoring the status of GAP implementation for projects delegated to the resident mission. Given the size of the PRC’s portfolio, overseeing the integration of gender in all projects and the implementation of GAPs may be too much work for a single social safeguards specialist, on top of the position’s safeguard responsibilities.

265. Apart from aiming to increase the number of gender specialists, ADB is also working to improve the capacity of its staff to integrate gender in operations. The operational plan aims to expand staff training on gender mainstreaming. Sector-specific training modules and CPS briefings through both online and classroom modules are being conducted. Training for staff in ADB Headquarters and resident missions on GAP implementation, sex-disaggregated data collection, and monitoring and reporting of gender results are being conducted. The effectiveness of such training hinges on Management and staff commitment to the GAD agenda. In 2016, ADB experienced the transfer of a few technical gender specialists to pursue alternative career paths within the organization.

266. The gender perception survey revealed that ADB staff consider building the technical capacity of country and sector staff on gender as the primary area of support they need to integrate gender into their work. About 37% of the surveyed staff provided this response (Table 19). Statistical test reveals that across ADB departments, there is a highly significant difference of views on strengthening technical capacity to address gender issues. Nearly half of the respondents from SERD and more than two-fifths of the respondents from EARD indicated that ADB should prioritize strengthening staff capacity for gender work—compared with slightly over one-fifth of respondents from both PSOD and SPD.

267. About one-third of surveyed staff also said that additional resources and time; and training would help them improve efforts to integrate gender in their work. As PSOD only started applying the 4 gender categories in 2011, 32% of its staff said a clearer mandate would help improve their gender work. About 8% of the surveyed ADB staff suggested other forms of support such as the sharing of good and innovative practices on gender mainstreaming, sufficient TA resources to ensure proper gender mainstreaming, more practical approaches to gender mainstreaming, and less emphasis on guidelines and checklists. Nonetheless, for these areas of support to be effective, Management and staff commitment to the GAD agenda and regard for the importance of gender equality in development are pivotal.

268. Nearly three-fourths of ADB staff who took the gender perception survey said they would be willing to attend gender training. A half-day workshop on sector and project-specific issues was preferred by about 18% of ADB staff respondents willing to attend gender training, and just-in-time training or gender clinics on specific topics and operational needs were preferred by nearly 17% of these respondents (Supplementary Appendix A). Some of the surveyed ADB staff suggested other forms of training, including practical or on-site training on gender integration in projects, and training or workshops on good practices for gender mainstreaming across countries and sectors.

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121 This thematic evaluation conducted a perception survey among ADB project officers and staff with the objective of informing the evaluation’s findings and recommendations.
269. **ADB has conducted numerous training for its staff on gender.** In 2008–2012, 561 ADB staff were trained in 16 seminars on GAD covering project gender category requirements and sector-specific entry points for gender integration. ADB also conducts gender training for its resident mission staff. For instance, the India resident mission has conducted gender training and refresher sessions for its staff, including infrastructure specialists.

### Table 19. ADB Staff Perceptions of Support to Improve their Work on Gender Issues (% of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>CWRD</th>
<th>EARD</th>
<th>PARD</th>
<th>PSOD</th>
<th>SARD</th>
<th>SERD</th>
<th>SPD</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build Technical Capacity of Country and Sector Staff to Integrate Gender into their Work*</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Resources and Time</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Tools for Mainstreaming Gender in Projects</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deployment of Staff to Focus on Gender</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>21.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clearer Mandate</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>20.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stronger Management Leadership and Advocacy</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incentives, Key Performance Indicators, Spot-awards (or equivalent), Criteria for Promotion or Advancement</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others*</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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*ADB = Asian Development Bank, CWRD = Central and West Asia Department, EARD = East Asia Department, PARD = Pacific Department, PSOD = Private Sector Operations Department, SARD = South Asia Department, SERD = Southeast Asia Department, SPD = Strategy and Policy Department.  
*Significant difference across departments at 1% level. 
*Others include sharing of good and innovative practices on gender mainstreaming, sufficient technical assistance resources to ensure proper gender mainstreaming, and more practical approaches to gender mainstreaming and less emphasis on guidelines and checklists.

Note: The response rate of the survey was 64%, with 629 staff providing responses to the survey. The survey was administered over 3 weeks in August 2016.  
Source: Independent Evaluation Department estimates based on the gender perception survey carried out by the gender evaluation team.

270. **ADB has formulated various tools to integrate gender in project design.** The GAPs offer a case in point. Notwithstanding the challenges related to designing and implementing GAPs, nearly two-thirds of ADB staff who took the gender perception survey generally agreed that gender results or outcomes in projects are better achieved with GAPs (Figure 7). About 73% of surveyed staff from the CWRD agreed that gender results or outcomes in projects are better achieved with GAPs—so did about two-thirds of EARD (65%) and SERD (67%) respondent staff. In PSOD, 55% of respondents noted that gender results or outcomes in projects were better achieved with GAPs, but 40% neither knew nor gave an answer to this issue.

271. **ADB staff consider the four gender categories and the gender tip sheets, toolkits and checklists, and self-learning modules to be useful in integrating gender in their work.** Overall, about 79% of respondents believed the gender categorization system was useful. However, only 50% of the staff found the rest of the gender tools useful. It should be noted that overall about 34% of staff respondents were not aware of the existence of the tips sheets, toolkits and checklists, and self-learning modules (Supplementary Appendix A).
272. **Workplace gender equality in ADB is an area of concern.** Women are overrepresented in operational functions, but underrepresented in all management positions (Box 1).

### Box 1. Workplace Gender Equality at Asian Development Bank

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has made progress in but has a long way to go in ensuring workplace gender equality. It faces challenges in promoting a more gender-balanced workforce and representation across different career levels. Some staff also perceive that gender pay gap is an issue in ADB.

Based on the Economic Dividends for Gender Equality Certification using 2015 data, the percentage of women in ADB’s management positions (i.e., international staff level 4 and above) and its top management positions (vice presidents, heads of departments/offices, managing director general, and special senior adviser) at 32% is below the peer group average of multilateral development banks such as the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank at 43%. The share of women in ADB’s junior management posts (i.e., international staff levels 4-6) at 33% is significantly below the peer group average of 52%. About 43% of female respondents among international staff deem they do not have fair opportunities to be promoted and 31% consider themselves to be paid fairly for the work they do relative to other staff.

ADB Management announced in November 2016 its revised targets for women’s representation among international staff. ADB aims to have women comprise 40% of its international staff by 2022 from 34% in 2016. ADB also plans to appraise its promotion cycles to consider annual promotion exercises and continue leadership training for all managerial levels especially among women international staff. It also intends to conduct a study to determine whether any unexplained gender gap exists.


### C. Resources for Gender and Development

273. **TA projects and grants play a crucial role in funding pilot innovations and policy research for gender equality and in promoting quality gender mainstreaming.** TA projects and grants are critical to ensuring that gender analyses are conducted and gender-inclusive design features are incorporated in projects.
274. **TA projects improve the capacity of government executing and implementing agencies for gender mainstreaming, and help to engage governments in policy reforms relating to gender equality.** The regional TA project on Promoting Evidence-Based Policy Making for Gender Equity in the Pacific is an example of this. This regional CDTA helped strengthen the capacity of women’s ministries and sector gender focal points to promote evidence-based, gender-inclusive policy development in Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste. Specifically, it provided training on the use of gender statistics, produced a regional booklet on key gender indicators, and supported in-depth gender assessments in these four countries.

275. **ADB also supported TA projects that provided useful inputs to the PRC government in relevant policy deliberations.** The Rural Pension Reform TA project in the PRC, for example, recommended the elimination of differences between genders in the retirement age by fixing it at 60 for men and women. The more recent TA on Rural Pension Reform and Development also helped establish the rural pension scheme under State Council Decision No. 8 of 2009 to alleviate poverty among rural elderly citizens. This pension scheme has important gender dimensions since elderly women are often left in rural areas as men and younger populations migrate to cities to look for jobs. Some 460 million people are benefiting from the scheme.

276. **Despite the critical role of TA projects in promoting gender equality, ADB funding for TA projects has declined in real terms.** Financing for TA projects, particularly PPTA projects, has decreased in real terms since the size of TA projects have remained constant even as loan sizes and consultants’ costs have increased. Moreover, ADB does not provide its own resources for gender innovation as the SDCC does not receive a corporate TA allocation. The SDCC has no TA resources for ADB-wide gender activities. Operations departments have mobilized TA and grant resources for pilot work on gender.

277. **Grants from donors help ensure that the benefits of projects, particularly infrastructure investments, are extended to women.** ADB investment projects in PNG have been accompanied by grants usually from JFPR, for instance, to implement gender activities. The Lae Port Development Project included a JFPR grant that supported gender-inclusive sensitization and training, especially for HIV/AIDS. Similarly, the Town Electrification Investment Program was accompanied by a JFPR grant, which helped develop community capacity among men and women to engage in productive uses of electricity.

278. A JFPR grant associated with the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise Development Project in India supported the capacity building of poor women engaged in micro and small enterprises. The grant aimed to help low-income female microentrepreneurs in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh to access financial resources, services, and market opportunities. Through the grant, some 1,384 low-income women entrepreneurs—exceeding the target of 1,200 women trainees—were trained in financial literacy, leadership, communication, business development services, and enterprise financing.

279. **Constant lack of replenishment of the GDCF is a concern.** The fund’s savings are expected to last only until 2018 and prospects for its replenishment beyond 2018 are uncertain. The $12 million GDCF provides catalytic support for innovative interventions to address persistent and

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123 CWRD, SARD, and SERD have benefited from regional TA projects by hiring gender consultants to support the portfolio and conduct specific pilot work on gender. In South Asia, JFPR has funded Improving Women’s Access to Clean and Renewable Energy in South Asia, Improving Community-Based Rural Water Supply and Sanitation in Post-Conflict Areas of Jaffna and Kilinochchi in India, and the Decentralized Coordination and Partnerships for Gender Equality Results TA project in Bhutan.

124 ADB. 2010. *Proposed Grant Assistance to India for Supporting Microentrepreneurship for Women’s Empowerment.* Manila. The grant is classified under the industry and trade sector.
emerging gender challenges in Asia and the Pacific. These include prevalent GBV, gender gaps in wages and labor productivity, and social security systems that equally benefit men and women. The fund receives contributions from the governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, and Norway. It has supported the implementation of gender activities in more than 100 loan projects since its inception in 2003.

280. **GDCF grants have been successfully implemented in some DMCs.** A TA project with successful results is the Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, which strengthened ADB and DMCs’ capacity in integrating gender in ADB operations. The TA project supported drafting, consultation, publication, translation, and/or dissemination of 13 CGAs in Azerbaijan, Cambodia, the PRC, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. It also supported the implementation of about 30 workshops and forums, and 10 policy and legal studies and technical support on women’s leadership, gender equality laws, land administration, awareness materials and media development, and gender-responsive budgeting in government line ministries and gender agencies. In the PRC, infrastructure projects like the Xinjiang Municipal Infrastructure and Environmental Improvement Project and the Xinjiang Urban Transport and Environmental Improvement Project were classified as non-gender-mainstreamed, but were supported by GDCF grants to maximize the benefits of these infrastructure projects accruing to women.

281. **Cofinanced gender-mainstreamed loans, grants, and TA projects with development partners and the private sector have shown innovative gender results in the eight country portfolios examined.** Exploring other sources for GDCF replenishment, TA projects and grants, and cofinancing will be one important way to meet the operational plan’s call for pilot and innovative work in direct investments in women and girls.

282. **The COBP, 2016–2018 for Bangladesh, for instance, introduced gender work in energy through a CDTA for Enabling Poor Women's Benefits from Enhanced Access to Energy in Hatiya Island.** This is financed by the Government of Korea e-Asia Partnership and Knowledge Fund. ADB also supports the sharing of good practices in incorporating gender issues in energy through the Sustainable Energy Solutions’ Initiative in South Asia, which helps design gender equality and social inclusion action plans for energy projects. ADB’s partnerships with private foundations and innovative private enterprises that work to improve women’s welfare have also demonstrated innovative approaches to promoting gender equality. Hippocampus Learning Centers in India, a venture capital company backed by a $2 million equity investment by ADB, is an example of such a partnership with the private sector. The centers pioneered a new model for improving learning outcomes among children aged 3–12 in rural India.

283. **Apart from financial resources, ADB also benefits from the sharing of technical expertise on gender issues with the civil society and gender experts.** Nearly all ADB projects approved in 2012 that had a thematic classification of gender equity had some degree of civil society participation. Engaging NGOs was one of the common factors of projects that had a successful gender rating during 2005–2015. To overcome the challenges to monitoring GAPs, ADB sometimes contracts NGOs to evaluate the implementation of GAPs. The NGO Care International

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125 Since the GDCF’s establishment in 2003, resources have been allocated to four regional TA projects, four stand-alone country specific TA projects, and six grant project components.
129 The initiative is a knowledge platform led by ADB’s SARD. The department also conducted knowledge events on promoting socially inclusive practices in energy projects.
was recruited to help implement and monitor the GAP for the Second Rural Roads Improvement Project in Cambodia. Likewise, in the PRC, the state-sponsored All-China Women's Federation was involved in the implementation of the gender aspects of more than half (53%) of the country's GEN and EGM projects in 2005–2015. The federation provided guidance on promoting gender equality and monitoring the representation of women in the gender-mainstreamed projects.

284. ADB has conducted outreach meetings for NGOs to learn more about country-specific gender priorities as well as to improve the capacity of NGOs for gender mainstreaming. The Azerbaijan resident mission held an outreach meeting for civil service organizations in 2011, resulting in a proposal for a pilot intervention within the Azerbaijan Road Project to help women's entrepreneurship in project areas. The Cambodia resident mission hosted a roundtable among NGOs to discuss gender mainstreaming in 2011.

285. **ADB participates in gender thematic or technical groups among donors in various countries.** ADB takes part in the Technical Working Group on Gender in Cambodia. Similarly, staff at the PRC resident mission regularly attend meetings of the United Nations Thematic Group on Gender, which consists of experts on gender-related issues in the United Nations system operating in the country.

286. ADB has also established the External Forum on Gender and Development in 2001 as a mechanism to promote and facilitate dialogue between ADB and external groups on gender equality and women's empowerment issues. Consisting of 10 to 15 experts on GAD and women's rights from different member countries, the forum enables ADB to cater to country-specific needs in its operations in DMCs. Members of the forum have contributed to country gender diagnostics for Bangladesh and Pakistan; provided advice on how gender equality results can be enhanced in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, and the Philippines; contributed to ADB studies on gender, trade and green growth in several South Asian countries; and provided inputs to the operational plan, 2013–2020 and Strategy 2030.131

**D. Summary**

(i) ADB has been a pioneer among MDBs in ensuring quality-at-entry of gender projects by establishing targets on gender mainstreaming and gender results.

(ii) Operations departments and the SDCC work together to ensure the quality assurance of GAPs and the monitoring of gender targets.

(iii) ADB has increased the number of gender specialists at Headquarters and resident missions, and conducted gender training for staff. Workplace gender equality is a concern among ADB staff, with female staff overrepresented in operational functions, but underrepresented in all management positions.

(iv) Surveyed ADB staff identified building the technical capacity of country and sector staff on gender as the primary area of support ADB staff needs to advance their work in gender integration. Innovative and time-efficient measures to engage staff in gender training are needed. Staff commitment to the GAD agenda is also needed to ensure the successful implementation of this agenda.

(v) Declining TA funds in real terms and GDCF savings that are projected to last only until 2018 pose concerns to ADB’s GAD agenda as these resources support pilot innovations and knowledge solutions on gender equality.

(vi) Adequate staffing and skills, resources, and monitoring systems are all crucial in ensuring that ADB delivers its GAD agenda efficiently.

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CHAPTER 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Conclusions

287. **ADB’s GAD policy, 1998 has effectively promoted gender mainstreaming in its operations, while the operational plan, 2013–2020 has identified strategic priorities relevant in fostering gender equality in DMCs.** Nevertheless, the policy focuses on gender mainstreaming rather than the gender results it aims to achieve. The operational plan’s strategic priorities provide sufficient emphasis on the region’s urgent gender challenges in economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and resilience to risks and shocks. The plan begins to make the necessary adjustments, although no prioritization of work on the various types of gender outcomes for ADB is provided.

288. **ADB surpassed its corporate target on gender mainstreaming during 2012–2016.** It surpassed its 2012 targets for gender mainstreaming, and the revised targets for 2016 have already been achieved, as have the performance targets for the gender portfolio. Gender mainstreaming has increased across sectors, but it has significantly dropped in infrastructure over 2015–2016. Meeting these targets proved crucial for helping mobilize staff and resources toward gender work, and for improving the success of ADB’s work in gender.

289. While there are more EGM projects than before, GEN projects are increasingly few and far between, particularly OCR- and ADF-funded GEN projects. Three years since its adoption, the operational plan’s focus on direct investments in women and girls, which are usually supported through GEN projects, has yet to result in a significant number of women-targeted interventions. The increase in the number of gender-mainstreamed projects since 2009 has been driven by the rise in the number of EGM projects, many of which used TA projects and grants to implement gender activities. While this highlights the important roles of TA projects and grants in ADB’s GAD agenda, gender-inclusive design features also need to be incorporated into projects. Insufficient support for GEN projects indicates missed opportunities for ADB to launch innovative and transformative gender interventions. Gender-mainstreamed projects have been concentrated in ANR, education, health, and WUS. Gender-mainstreaming in transport and energy also increased during 2013–2015, but significantly dropped over 2015–2016.

290. **GAPs have proved useful for promoting ADB’s gender agenda in many operations.** GAPs played a crucial role in identifying gender activities and indicators to help maximize the gender results of ADB projects, and for getting executing agencies to pay attention to gender work. ADB staff generally agreed that gender results of projects are better achieved with GAPs. The evaluation found that the potential usefulness of GAPs was not always realized because of difficulties in tailoring gender activities and indicators to project-, sector-, and country-specific needs. GAP indicators were often in the same categories across sectors, and indicators tended to be uniform within each category—they cover quotas in women’s share in jobs (mostly civil works)
and their representation in project consultations and community organizations, capacity building support such as livelihood training for women, and collecting sex-disaggregated data.

291. **ADB’s country operations are generally more responsive to gender gaps in human development and time poverty than to disparities in economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and resilience to shocks in the eight country portfolios.** Although there was an increase in gender-mainstreamed projects during 2005–2015, gender interventions were most prevalent in ANR, education, health, and WUS—as they were at the corporate level. There are opportunities to include more gender-responsive designs in sectors and subsectors that can meaningfully reduce gender disparities.

292. **ADB was responsive to the gender priorities of governments and the need to improve the gender capacity of executing and implementing agencies in the eight countries.** CPS gender strategies were generally aligned with government policies and programs on gender. To increase awareness of gender issues and the capacity for gender mainstreaming, ADB has provided capacity-building support for executing and implementing agencies, as well as for local governments and line ministries.

293. **The gender success rate of the 72 completed and self-evaluated, and validated GEN and EGM projects with ADB’s gender ratings during 2005–2015 was 65%.** This modest result—although an improvement over those approved during 1998–2003—shows the continuing challenges in this field. Women’s participation in community-based interventions, mobilization of women into groups, and the recruitment of NGOs to carry out gender components are common factors of projects with a successful gender rating. The use of grants or TA projects linked to loans to implement gender components and the availability of sex-disaggregated data were also found effective. By contrast, the limited engagement of project gender specialists, lack of sex-disaggregated data, and design issues contributed to a not successful gender rating.

294. **The gender results of ADB projects in the eight country portfolios during 2005–2015 pursued outcomes more in human development and time poverty than in economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and resilience to shocks.** This is because gender-mainstreamed projects were skewed toward ANR, education, health, and WUS projects during the period. ADB has yet to maximize its institutional and policy support to address gender-based discrimination in labor markets and GBV, and integrate gender perspectives into social protection systems. Equally important, governments’ commitment is vital in tackling these issues. In cases where ADB does not see entry points for these reforms, it can encourage policy dialogue or work with other development partners to increase DMCs’ awareness of and commitment to closing gender gaps in economic empowerment, voice and decision-making, and resilience to risks and shocks.

### B. Recommendations

295. **Given the persistent and emerging gender challenges in Asia and the Pacific, ADB should continue to tailor its support for GAD to country- and project-specific needs, and ensure the effective delivery of its gender-mainstreamed interventions.** This evaluation offers the following recommendations for ADB’s policy directions, operations management, and organizational requirements to help improve the design, implementation, and monitoring of ADB’s priorities on gender.

1. **Policy Directions**

296. **Specify the types of gender results to be supported in Strategy 2030, with the achievement of gender results reported more systematically by type.** Gender equality as a driver
of change should be included in Strategy 2030. In developing the strategy’s gender focus, ADB could avail of more opportunities and transformative solutions if gender equality is seen contributing to—rather than competing with—efforts to deliver development outcomes. By doing this, ADB would encourage a more conscious effort by staff to deliver gender results from operations. ADB’s GAD agenda could be linked to the gender targets and indicators of the SDGs, particularly those for the unpaid work of caring for children and the elderly, productive assets, institutional and legal reforms, and reproductive health and rights. This would align ADB’s efforts with the international agenda on GAD and address the region’s pressing gender issues. These are economic empowerment and voice and decision-making including gender wage gaps, barriers to women’s entry to labor markets given the increased burden for caregiving because of the region’s aging population, and the prevalence of GBV.

297. ADB’s GAD policy discusses gender mainstreaming in detail, but it does not specify the gender results to be achieved through ADB’s gender-mainstreamed operations. Strategy 2030 and the revised operational plan could therefore discuss the specific gender outcomes that ADB’s GAD agenda aims to support such as equal economic opportunities for men and women. By spelling out what gender results need to be attained, ADB’s GAD agenda would be easier to translate into concrete projects and programs and it would be more easily understood by partner governments. Although ADB has adopted a gender classification system, it needs to come to a clear understanding with its operations departments on a more systematic method of assessing and reporting gender results at project completion in the five dimensions of gender equality.

2. Operations Management

a. Country Level

298. Conduct regular updates of CGAs and develop gender knowledge products through concerted efforts among development partners, and ensure that the findings of both are reflected in the strategies and results frameworks of CPSs and related documents. ADB can lead this effort to ensure that persistent and emerging gender disparities are adequately reflected. Collaborative efforts by development partners to produce and update CGAs will provide more leverage to encourage governments to place gender equality high on their development agendas. ADB should allocate core funding to finance regular updates of CGAs and operationally relevant gender knowledge products for DMCs. It is important for ADB to ensure that the major findings of CGAs are reflected in the main text of CPSs, particularly as the new CPS guidelines subsume gender analysis in the inclusive growth assessment. ADB should also identify gender targets and indicators in CPS results frameworks that are outcome- rather than output-based, and monitor these indicators.

299. Increase the number of GEN projects in ADB’s portfolio. ADB should augment its support for GEN projects, which have a more direct impact on gender equality as they focus on areas where gender challenges are critical; provide transformative gender solutions; and address the needs of women. Greater support to combat GBV, strengthen gender-responsive social protection systems, and address institutional barriers to women’s entry to labor markets is needed to tackle persistent gender challenges in voice and decision-making, vulnerabilities to risks and shocks, and economic empowerment.
b. **Project Level**

300. Design projects that use gender diagnostics, build on lessons learned across regions, and rigorously monitor results.

(i) **Strong gender diagnostics in projects are necessary to identify GAP indicators and activities tailored to circumstances on the ground.** Community-driven development approaches are effective in encouraging the participation of women and their contribution to project design and implementation. Periodic assessments of GAPs by project teams, particularly during implementation, are vital for determining the progress and potential need for corrective measures to achieve intended gender outputs and outcomes. Outputs should be clearly linked to the desired outcome for gender equality, with time-bound, clear, and specific indicators for the outputs to provide guidance to implementing and executing agencies. Lessons from the monitoring of gender results across ADB should be drawn upon.

(ii) **Gender design elements need to be better integrated in infrastructure projects to improve the impact of ADB’s GAD support, though ADB has made progress in this area.** Infrastructure projects benefit women and men differently because of variations in their needs, priorities, and how they use infrastructure. ADB has identified various entry points for incorporating gender design features in transport, energy, and water projects. It can, however, scale up gender mainstreaming by increasing the pipeline in some subsectors that lend themselves better for gender mainstreaming, and thereby maximize the potential gender outcomes of its operations. ADB also needs to identify better indicators in GAPs to monitor the gender impacts of infrastructure projects, particularly on the time women spend on unpaid care work. More meaningful outcome indicators such as estimates of time savings per trip for women, improved frequency of trips to health clinics, improvements in family health, income change for female workers and entrepreneurs, and changes in cooking practices, can be included in GAPs.

(iii) **ADB’s support for skills development interventions targeting women and addressing institutional constraints to their labor force participation needs to be scaled up across sectors in the portfolio.** This is particularly important for middle-income countries striving to move to a higher income status while ensuring inclusion, and for ADB to achieve its inclusive economic growth agenda. The training provided should equip women with critical thinking skills. To ensure the transition of women from school to labor markets, ADB’s skills projects need to consider the types of courses and work women demand in the context of their responsibilities for unpaid domestic work. ADB should also continue to strengthen the link between training institutes and enterprises, and provide legislative support to remove gender discrimination in employment. For the latter, partnerships with other agencies are equally crucial. To address institutional constraints to women’s participation in formal labor markets, ADB could channel more of its private sector development operations into addressing gender-based discrimination in labor markets and the workplace, as well as gender wage gaps and productivity. It can encourage the provision of care services for children in offices, support laws penalizing or preventing employers from firing pregnant women, promote paid maternity and paternity leave, and identify tax deductions applicable to women.

(iv) **Opportunities to increase ADB support for improving women’s voice and decision-making, and reducing their vulnerability to risks and shocks, should be utilized to the full extent.** Modalities to support gender-responsive institutional, legal, and regulatory reforms should be promoted within the framework provided by TA projects and possibly PBLs or sector development programs, in collaboration with development partners with
experience in this area. These modalities can help in combating GBV; improving women’s property rights, including land rights; and addressing gender gaps in social security systems, such as unequal pension benefits for men and women.

(v) **ADB should continue supporting capacity building in implementing and executing agencies in gender, especially at the subnational level.** Many of these agencies have limited capacity to deliver and monitor the implementation of gender initiatives. This is particularly true for agencies at the subnational level in countries with a decentralized system. TA projects should be used to build the capacity of line ministries and subnational governments in designing, implementing, and monitoring gender initiatives. ADB can also engage the staff of line ministries and subnational governments in formulating GAPs because these officials have a good grasp of local situations and help strengthen national systems for gender mainstreaming.

(vi) **ADB must forge stronger partnerships with other funding agencies to support and deliver its GAD agenda.** Financing support is necessary to develop innovative pilots and knowledge solutions on gender equality, and to promote evidence-based advocacy that helps change mindsets on gender equality. Partnerships with multilateral and bilateral development agencies, the private sector, and civil society will fill the gaps in financing, and enhance alignment in programming for gender equality. ADB should ensure reliable funding for TA projects, and continue its efforts to seek funding for the GDCF, which supports knowledge sharing, lateral learning and cross-fertilization within and outside ADB, and pilot projects.

### 3. Organizational Requirements

301. **Strengthen the technical capacity of ADB staff to integrate gender work into projects.** To manage its increasing gender-mainstreamed portfolio, ADB must ensure that there are sufficient staff resources, and that staff are equipped with the skills and incentives to design, implement, and monitor gender interventions. As the gender perception survey showed, the priority area of support for ADB staff is to improve their technical capacity to integrate gender into their work. ADB must also clarify the responsibilities of all its staff at Headquarters and resident missions for gender mainstreaming in projects and country and sector work—and not just for gender specialists. These responsibilities should be regularly monitored to track the GAD policy’s implementation. Budgetary incentives can be provided to operations departments for the design, monitoring, and implementation of gender-mainstreamed projects.
APPENDIX: LIST OF LINKED DOCUMENTS

1. Gender Portfolio
   https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/1-Gender-Portfolio.pdf

2. Evaluation Framework for the Country Portfolio Assessments

3. Methodological Note on Measuring Gender Equality

4. Results and Variables Used for the Probit Model

SUPPLEMENTARY LINKED DOCUMENTS (COUNTRY PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENTS)

A. Bangladesh

B. Cambodia

C. People’s Republic of China

D. Indonesia

E. Pakistan

F. Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste