

OPERATIONS MANUAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

These policies and procedures were prepared for use by ADB staff and are not necessarily a complete treatment of the subject. This *Operations Manual* was prepared by the NGO and Civil Society Center of the Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department (CCSD) and issued by the Strategy, Policy, and Partnerships Department with the approval of the President and is subject to compliance review. Questions may be directed to the unit head, NGO and Civil Society Center of CCSD.

PROMOTION OF ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

A. Introduction

1. This *Operations Manual* (OM) section describes Asian Development Bank (ADB) policies associated with its engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs).¹ ADB's engagement with CSOs is consistent with the bank's role and functions as set out in Article 2(i) and (v) of the *Agreement Establishing the Asian Development Bank* (the Charter) (endnote i).

B. Definitions and Typologies

2. The term "civil society organization" refers generically to organizations (i) not based in a government, and (ii) not created to earn a profit (endnote ii). ADB defines CSOs as non-profit organizations independent from the government, which operate around common interests. They vary in size, interests, and function, and include nongovernment organizations (NGOs), youth groups, community-based organizations, independent academic and research institutes, professional associations, foundations, faith-based organizations, people's organizations and labor unions. CSOs represent interests of their members or others.

3. ADB categorizes CSO participation as comprising four main approaches: (i) information generation and sharing, (ii) consultation, (iii) collaboration, and (iv) partnership.² These approaches cover a continuum of relationships between decision makers and stakeholders, in which the level of each party's initiative and activity differs considerably. Each approach can be explored at varying depths.³

C. The Policy

4. ADB's long-term corporate strategy, Strategy 2030, outlines ADB's vision for a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and Pacific. Under Strategy 2030, ADB has committed to strengthening its engagement with CSOs (endnote iii).

5. ADB's engagement with CSOs is further based on two intersecting policies: (i) the 1995 policy on governance, which emphasizes the principle of civil society participation in the

¹ In 1998, ADB approved its policy on cooperation with NGOs, which remains in effect. Since the policy was adopted, the use of the term "nongovernment organization" has evolved considerably. Like ADB, most development partners now use the term "civil society organization," because it is considered more inclusive. In 2005, ADB renamed the NGO Center as the NGO and Civil Society Center. As such, the 2021 version of this OM section replaces NGO with CSO throughout.

² ADB. 2012. *Strengthening Participation for Development Results: An Asian Development Bank Guide to Participation*. Manila (pp.3).

³ More information is provided in ADB. 2021. *A Sourcebook for Engaging with Civil Society Organizations in Asian Development Bank Operations*. Manila.

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development process; and (ii) the 1998 Policy on Cooperation between Asian Development Bank and Nongovernment Organizations, which underscores an expanded program of cooperation with CSOs (endnotes ii and iv).

6. ADB pursues an expanded program of engagement with CSOs, where appropriate, in its member countries, in consultation with the government, with a view to strengthening the effectiveness, sustainability, and quality of the development services ADB provides. The objective of ADB's engagement with CSOs is to tap into their unique strengths, such as their local presence and specialized knowledge, in order to explore opportunities for increasing their involvement in ADB operations and to seek their inputs and advice on major ADB policies.⁴ ADB explores this engagement so that the development efforts ADB supports will more effectively address the issues and priorities reflected in ADB's development agenda (endnotes ii and iii).

D. Scope of the Policy

7. ADB seeks proactive, meaningful, and productive engagement with CSOs to explore opportunities for increasing their involvement in the design and implementation of ADB operations, where appropriate. Engagement with CSOs is a dynamic process that encourages constructive relationships involving ADB, governments, private sector clients and CSOs. The fundamental relationship between ADB and a government, as well as the sovereignty of governments, continues to be recognized. The ability of ADB to work with governments and execute its development mandate remains a priority (endnote ii).

8. Within the broad objective of expanding engagement with CSOs, ADB recognizes the diversity of such organizations. CSOs display significant differences from country to country, reflecting country-specific factors that affect their structure and composition and their roles in national development. Because of the diversity of CSOs, it would be inappropriate for ADB to use a single approach to cooperate with civil society. Therefore, ADB engagement with CSOs flexibly, through a range of relationships appropriate to different contexts, rather than through a single relationship, mechanism, or model (endnote ii).

Bases

- i ADB. 1966. *Agreement Establishing the Asian Development Bank*. Manila (Articles 2[i] and 2[v]).
- ii ADB. 1998. *Cooperation between the Asian Development Bank and Nongovernment Organizations*. Manila.
- iii ADB. 2018. *Strategy 2030: Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific*. Manila (R69-18, para. 108).
- iv ADB. 1995. *Governance: Sound Development Management*. Manila.
- vi ADB. 2018. *Access to Information Policy*. Manila.

⁴ ADB seeks the participation of its shareholders and other interested stakeholders during the development and review of safeguard, sector, and thematic policies and strategies; and other policies or strategies that will undergo public consultation.