

Streamlining Country Partnership Strategies

A QUICK GUIDE

Why adjust our existing country partnership strategy preparation practices?

Country partnership strategies (CPSs) are the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) primary platform for designing operations to deliver development results at the country level.

A review of the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of our existing CPS preparation procedures has found weaknesses in all three areas and the need to improve and streamline the CPS process. The review was conducted against the backdrop of mandates created by recent developments, including ADB's commitment to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and implementation of Strategy 2020.

The scope of the new CPS will be confined to providing the rationale for the selected focus of ADB operations by customizing ADB's broad mandates for country-specific circumstances.

What principles underpin these changes?

We aim to ensure that the business process changes are

- effective, efficient, and deliver substantial gains in quality, knowledge management, and resource savings;

- in line with best international practices for development assistance; and
- implemented quickly within the existing institutional framework.

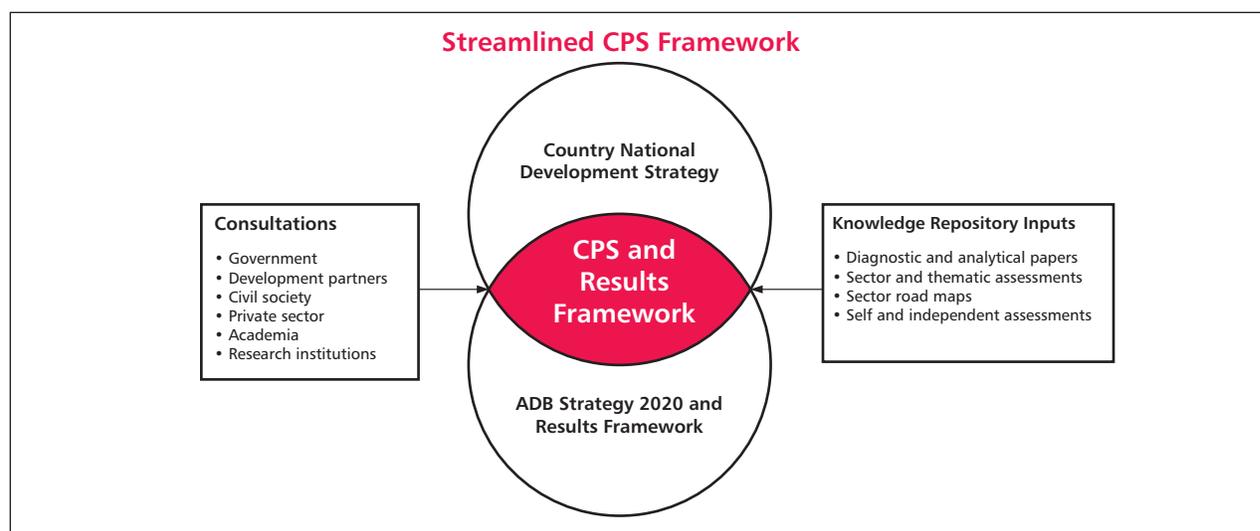
What problems were found in past CPS procedures?

Preparing a CPS as an encyclopedic, single-source document has made it repetitive and resource intensive, and, in the process, the management of knowledge has not been cost efficient or effective.

"Mission creep" has occurred where ADB policies and trends have been translated into formal and informal CPS requirements without sufficient regard for their relevance.

Quality assurance has not always functioned effectively, results management has become overly complex, and there have been challenges with the timely sequencing of CPS preparation and the country assistance program evaluation.

A case study of recently completed CPSs showed that it took 2 years to complete the required steps for preparation, well beyond the 39 to 45 weeks envisaged in the CPS guidelines.



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What changes have been made?

- 1. Better alignment with client needs.** The new CPS cycle will be better aligned to the client country's own strategic planning cycle to improve synergies and reduce transaction costs for the government and other stakeholders.
- 2. Key information in e-Knowledge repository, documentation simplified.** Detailed analysis supporting the CPS will be unbundled from the main CPS document and made available electronically through ADB's online knowledge depository, which will be updated regularly as an integral part of the continual dialogue and analytical work engaged in by country and sector teams. A single documentation platform will be used for CPS preparation, from inception to finalization. The main text of the CPS will average 10 pages, and not exceed 15 pages.
- 3. Management committee meeting.** To reflect the importance of the CPS as the key planning document between ADB and a developing member country, the final review will be undertaken by the Management Committee Meeting.
- 4. Peer review.** A peer review mechanism will replace the current interdepartmental review. Peer reviewers, identified when the country team is established, will comprise ADB staff and external experts. Internal peer reviews should include staff from the Economics and Research Department, Independent Evaluation Department, and Regional and Sustainable Development Department. The Office of Cofinancing Operations is to be consulted on financial partnerships.
- 5. CPS to be implemented through the country operations business plan.** The CPS will be implemented through the country operations business plan, which details 3-year rolling pipelines and the resources needed to support them. Operational pipelines will be unbundled from the main CPS document.
- 6. Country strategy final review.** The current CPS "completion" report will be replaced by a country strategy final review that will assess the validity of ADB's strategic focus and report on the strategy's progress using the results framework. The midterm review will be abolished.
- 7. Results framework strengthened.** Our new streamlined results framework will show how we intend to contribute to a country's development objectives in line with Strategy 2020 priorities. The framework will be reviewed and updated annually as part of country programming.

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- 8. Regional cooperation strategy processes simplified, streamlined.** The same adjustments to CPS business processes will be applied to the preparation of regional cooperation strategies, including establishment of a single documentation platform, unbundling of detailed analysis, and the peer review mechanism.

What impacts will the changes have?

The new CPS will present a crisper statement of each ADB–DMC strategic partnership, improve preparation to minimize costs, and make the process less time consuming.

It will ensure ADB's country operations reflect our core areas of specialization, align with government priorities, and complement the work of other development partners.

With a deliberate focus on better knowledge management through use of web-based document repositories, supporting analysis will be available to stakeholders on an inclusive, continuous, and updated basis. Users will be able to select from a wider range of supporting documentation, and customize the menu of material they want to review.

When do the changes take effect?

The streamlined processes will take effect in January 2010 upon revision of the relevant section of the Operations Manual.

There will be a transition period for CPSs currently under preparation.

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