HIGHLIGHTS OF ADB'S COOPERATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS 2019

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On the cover: Putting children at the heart of development. Children play and dance at the Zuôih commune, Nam Giang District, Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam. Cover design by Josef Ilumin.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BAOWE	Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs
CRF	Corporate Results Framework
CSAG	Civil Society Advisory Group
CPS	country partnership strategy
CSO	civil society organization
DMC	developing member country
GBV	gender-based violence
IDAHOT	International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia
LGBT+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and related communities
NGO	nongovernment organization
NGOC	NGO and Civil Society Center
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TA	technical assistance
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
YfA	Youth for Asia

I. INTRODUCTION

In July 2018, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved Strategy 2030. This new long-term corporate strategy sets the course for ADB's efforts to respond effectively to the changing needs of Asia and the Pacific.¹ It affirms ADB's commitment to working with civil society organizations (CSOs) in tapping their unique strengths, such as local presence and specialized knowledge, toward delivering development results. ADB's aspirations, as outlined in Strategy 2030, also align with major global commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement, and the G20 agenda on infrastructure development.

Strategy 2030 focuses on seven operational priorities, all of which have corresponding operational plans developed with inputs from key stakeholders including CSOs.² To implement Strategy 2030, ADB will explore opportunities to increase the involvement of CSOs in the design and implementation of ADB-supported projects, particularly on the use of grassroots participatory approaches to help poor and vulnerable groups.

In 2019, ADB actively engaged CSOs throughout the project cycle by tapping their local knowledge, innovation, and expertise. CSOs provided inputs to the preparation of country partnership strategies (CPSs) for Cambodia and Georgia. In Mongolia, ADB collaborated with the local CSO Ger Area Mapping Center and Tugeemel Khugjil to carry out a needs assessment and stakeholder consultations to improve understanding of the needs in transport services in the ger areas. Susu Mamas, a local CSO in Papua New Guinea, has been training village health volunteers to improve maternal and child health services as part of the Rural Primary Health Services Delivery Project. In the Philippines, the international nongovernment organizations (INGOs) BRAC and Innovations for Poverty Action are playing crucial roles in implementing and evaluating the success of the graduation approach to addressing poverty. The graduation approach enables beneficiaries to gain access to sustainable livelihoods and develop long-term resilience to shocks.

Recognizing the potential of young people to contribute to inclusive growth in Asia and the Pacific, ADB continues its work with the global youth-led nongovernment organization (NGO) network AIESEC as well as NGO Plan International and other youth groups under the Youth for Asia (YfA) initiative. YfA promotes youth involvement in the achievement of the SDGs and supports a unique youth-led team in ADB's project design, partnerships, and knowledge generation and sharing.

¹ ADB. 2018. *Strategy 2030: Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.

² ADB. 2018. *Strategy 2030: Operational Plans*. Manila.

CSOs also contributed to policy dialogues in 2019. More than 150 CSO representatives actively discussed draft operational plans to implement ADB's Strategy 2030 during the 52nd ADB Annual Meeting in Nadi, Fiji. ADB also received online comments and inputs into draft operational plans. CSOs organized panel discussions about ADB's Energy Policy, highlighting the importance of transitioning into renewable energy and the vulnerability of small island developing states in the Pacific to climate-induced displacement.

This report provides insights about ADB's cooperation with CSOs in 2019 and features lessons and success stories from throughout Asia and the Pacific. It highlights important civil society contributions that have enabled ADB-financed operations to deliver better development outcomes.

II. 2019 REPORT ON ADB'S COOPERATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

A. Projects Featuring Civil Society Cooperation

ADB considers a project to have civil society engagement if the project documents indicate intent to engage with citizens and CSOs in a formal way during project implementation. CSO participation may range from information sharing to formal partnerships. In 2019, 97 out of 108 projects in ADB's sovereign operations featured the participation of CSOs, including NGOs, in various roles and capacities. This number corresponds to 90% of total projects in 2019, lower compared to 98% in 2018, but still meets the annual target. ADB has met or exceeded the current annual target of 90% since 2011. The nature of ADB-financed projects also helps determine CSO participation. In 2019, for instance, many projects such as those involving treasury departments focusing on core budget management did not have opportunities for CSO engagement. Loans that, for example, focus on a broad fiscal or financial management improvement program may also have fewer natural links with civil society. Meanwhile, projects in the public financial management sector typically have high citizen and civil society engagement rates, as they often cover the use of public funds for expanding public service outreach to underserved segments and target beneficiaries.

During project preparation, ADB staff determine how CSOs may be engaged during both project design and implementation stages. A common example of CSO participation at the design stage is the exchange of information through activities such as focus group discussions, community meetings, and public consultations. CSOs may also be contracted to carry out specific components of a project, particularly those that require community involvement. During project implementation, CSOs may also be engaged to carry out specialized assignments, such as resettlement plans and gender and development action plans. They may also take part in project monitoring by tracking an aspect of project implementation and providing feedback to the implementing agency and ADB.

A regional comparison for 2019 projects shows that the East Asia portfolio achieved 100% CSO participation, followed by South Asia at 96% and the Pacific at 93% (Figure 1). Central West Asia (78%) and Southeast Asia (85%) have lower rates although both have larger numbers of public financial management projects (Figure 1). For ADB's overall portfolio, South Asia accounts for the largest regional proportion of projects with civil society engagement at 28% as compared to the Pacific at 14% (Figure 2). Results for 2019 show that when broken down by sector, the projects with the lowest CSO engagement rates were from the public management sector (64%, Figure 3). ADB's portfolio of projects with civil society engagement includes the highest percentage of transport projects (23%, Figure 4). ADB is aware that these rates are not trends and that rates of participation fluctuate between years and among regions, based on the content of that year's portfolio.

Figure 1: Percentage of Projects with Civil Society Engagement by Region, 2019

CWRD = Central and West Asia Department, EARD = East Asia Department, PARD = Pacific Department, SARD = South Asia Department, SERD = Southeast Asia Department.

Source: Asian Development Bank (Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Department; and NGO and Civil Society Center).

Figure 2: Civil Society Engagement in ADB-Financed Projects by Region, 2019

Source: ADB (Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Department; and NGO and Civil Society Center).

Figure 3: ADB Projects with Civil Society Engagement by Sector, 2019

ANR = agriculture and natural resources, PSM = public sector management, WUS = water and other urban infrastructure and services.

Source: ADB (Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Department; and NGO and Civil Society Center).

Figure 4: Civil Society Engagement in ADB-Financed Projects by Sector, 2019

ANR = agriculture and natural resources, PSM = public sector management, WUS = water and other urban infrastructure and services.

Source: ADB (Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Department; and NGO and Civil Society Center).

B. Civil Society Depths of Participation

ADB's operations benefit from meaningful civil society participation, but the approach and depth of participation may vary. Factors include the nature of the project, the local civil society landscape, and the project's objectives. ADB defines participation as encompassing four approaches: (i) information generation and sharing, (ii) consultation, (iii) collaboration, and (iv) partnership.³ These cover a continuum of relationships and activities between ADB and stakeholders, including CSOs. ADB records the planned level of civil society participation in each of its investments in the project documents. Examples of CSO participation in each of the four approaches in 2019 include the following.

Information generation and sharing. This level of participation is the most common level of CSO engagement and is defined as information generated by ADB and shared with CSOs, and information independently generated by CSOs and shared with ADB. The 52nd ADB Annual meeting in Fiji included multiple examples.

CSOs meet ADB President during the Annual Meeting in Fiji. More than 130 CSO and NGO representatives from across Asia and the Pacific met with ADB President Takehiko Nakao for a one-hour open discussion during the 52nd Annual Meeting in Fiji.⁴ ADB President Nakao underscored the contribution of CSOs in development projects, particularly in targeting the poor and marginalized through grassroots participatory approaches. The yearly meeting covered issues related to climate change, safeguards in ADB projects, and implementing ADB's Strategy 2030. The meeting also highlighted topics on youth engagement, inclusion of intellectually disabled persons in ADB programs, and ADB support to CSOs.

“Through our new corporate strategy, we will continue to work with CSOs, tapping your unique strengths, local presence, and specialized knowledge in the design and implementation of projects. ADB recognizes the valuable contribution of CSOs in development programs by using grassroots participatory approaches to target poor and vulnerable groups.”
—Takehiko Nakao, President, ADB

³ ADB. 2012. *Strengthening Participation for Development Results: An Asian Development Bank Guide for Participation*. Manila.

⁴ ADB President Takehiko Nakao stepped down as President on 16 January 2020.

Sharing innovative strategies in development. ADB organized TED-style talks during the Civil Society Program of the 52nd Annual Meeting. Civil society leaders delivered short and compelling presentations on topics related to the role of CSOs in addressing important development concerns, such as resilience and adaptation to climate change, ending gender-based discrimination, and promoting accountable government institutions.

Oxfam's Sandra Uwantege Hart shared lessons in using blockchain technology to improve climate resilience in Pacific countries. She noted that delivering aid in the Pacific is costly due to its vast geographical spread, resulting in expensive commodity, logistics, and staff costs. Oxfam was able to reduce the cost and improve the efficiency of delivering aid in the Pacific by establishing an innovative and multipurpose cash transfer delivery platform using blockchain technology to improve disaster preparedness.

Michael Taurakoto of the NGO Wan Smolbag presented the use of community theater as an innovative way to raise awareness and encourage discussions on a range of important issues such as health, governance, and the environment in Vanuatu. Wan Smolbag produces theater performances coupled with structured workshops to discuss relevant development issues. It has produced films, radio shows, and printed materials while maintaining a health clinic and a youth center for the community it serves.

Partnership for Transparency Fund's Vinay Barghava's presentation discussed common myths such as CSOs lacking in accountability, governments and CSOs as adversaries, and civic space as unitary. It drew on several studies to present evidence and stories that dispel these myths and highlight the important role of civil society in promoting good governance.

Understanding the impact of ADB's Energy Policy. ADB and the NGO Forum on ADB co-organized a panel discussion about ADB's Energy Policy. The policy aims to help developing member countries (DMCs) "provide reliable, adequate, and affordable energy for inclusive growth in a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable way."⁵ Presenters highlighted the need for ADB programs to transition into renewable energy and promote energy efficiency consistent with the principles of the Paris Agreement. This information sharing event generated a valuable exchange of ideas, which is timely, as ADB is set to review its 2009 Energy Policy in the near future. The panel discussion featured speakers from the Center for Energy, Ecology and Development in the Philippines; Centre for Environmental Justice, Sri Lanka; the International Trade Union Confederation, Asia Pacific; and Oxfam.

Resilient approach to climate action. CSOs in the Pacific believe that climate change is the single most critical development challenge facing the region today. The Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations organized a panel discussion, which highlighted the vulnerable situation of developing small island countries to the sudden onset of disasters, resulting in climate-induced displacement. Civil society leaders from the Pacific shared innovative and resilient approaches in addressing climate change. The session explored opportunities by which ADB can engage CSOs in the Pacific more meaningfully in view of the ADB Strategy 2030 Operational Priority on tackling climate change and contributed to ADB's body of knowledge about climate change issues in the Pacific.

Stakeholder meeting on the country partnership strategy for the Philippines. In addition to the information sharing sessions during its Annual Meeting, ADB held a forum in Cebu City on 26 April 2019 on its CPS for the Philippines. The forum aimed to share and solicit information to ensure that ADB's growing portfolio is aligned with the country's development needs and priorities, especially in regions where development lags and income inequalities remain high. Outputs from the discussions guided ADB's program for the Philippines, particularly in the areas of infrastructure, local economic development, and investments in people.⁶

⁵ ADB. 2009. *Energy Policy*. Manila.

⁶ ADB. 2019. *ADB Meets with Stakeholders in Cebu to Discuss Support to the Philippines*. News release. 30 April.

Consulting with communities in tourism development. ADB, through its Philippines Country Office, held a stakeholder meeting on the Country Partnership Strategy for the Philippines. The meeting served as an opportunity to share and gather information on ADB's portfolio in the country.

Consultation. On a continuum of activities, a more engaging approach to CSO participation is consultation. It entails asking for stakeholder input through two-way interaction using various methodologies such as face-to-face public forums, focus group discussions, and online comments through the web. Consultation is part of an inclusive policy, program, or project decision-making process. Some of the consultations that took place in 2019 are the following.

- a. CSO participation in Georgia's country partnership strategy.** ADB conducted a consultation for the Georgia CPS on 27 February 2019. At the meeting, CSOs provided feedback and inputs to Georgia's country programming. Contributions tackled the strategic framework for ADB's partnership for the country's economic development. Specifically, discussions explored issues such as domestic and international economic corridor development, sustainable development, maximization of domestic value addition, and increasing productivity to address the skills gap in the Georgian labor market. Fifteen CSO representatives participated in the consultation.

Increasing CSO involvement. Civil society organization (CSO) representatives provided inputs during the consultation for the Country Partnership Strategy for Georgia.

b. CSO input in project design. In Mongolia, CSOs provided inputs to the proposed Support for Inclusive Education Project, which aims to improve access to and quality of mainstream education for children with disabilities.⁷ The project aims to enhance the quality of inclusive education, strengthen inclusive education support resources, and increase community engagement. Local CSOs with expertise in the education of children with disabilities participated in project needs assessment and design meetings. As a result of the consultations, NGOs, CSOs, and disabled persons' organizations will support project implementation, particularly in relation to design and delivery of teacher training programs, culturally and gender-sensitive community outreach and parent support activities, and supply of assistive devices and adaptive technologies for children with disabilities.

“ADB will explore opportunities for increasing CSO involvement in the design and implementation of projects supported by ADB. Particular focus will be on operations that use grassroots participatory approaches to target poor and vulnerable groups, mobilize women and young people, and monitor project activities and outputs.”
—Strategy 2030

⁷ ADB. 2019. *Mongolia: Support for Inclusive Education*. Initial Poverty and Social Analysis Report. ADB Project 52103-001. Mongolia.

In April 2019, ADB consulted CSOs, including the Tarayana Foundation and the Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs (BAOWE) in Thimphu, Bhutan, on the situation of micro-entrepreneurs and the possible features of potential TA from ADB. This focus group discussion as well as consultations with the Royal Government of Bhutan resulted in a concept paper for proposed TA on improving market linkages for cottage and small industries.

The preparations for the Anhui Huangshan Xin'an River Ecological Protection and Green Development Project in the People's Republic of China included extensive consultations with the Nature Conservancy.⁸ These consultations led to the creation of a platform for collaboration between the Huangshan Municipal Government and the Nature Conservancy to address agricultural nonpoint source pollution in the Xin'an River Basin, which will leverage the fund for complementary support to further enhance the green incentive fund mechanism implementation. All knowledge created under the project will be shared with other municipalities and developing member countries through training and workshops.

Civil society groups, including umbrella bodies and chambers of commerce, participated in country programming missions in ADB's Pacific Subregional Office in Fiji in 2019. For example, in preparations for the Nadi Flood Alleviation project, members of the District Council of Social Services (a network of the Fiji Council of Social Services, the main umbrella body for NGOs in Fiji) participated in consultations and awareness workshops. Community groups representing the interests of women (Femlink, Soqosoqo Vakamarama), youth, the elderly, the disabled, and village development committee members participated in project awareness and perceived-impact sessions. Local leaders, representing villages in Nadi and along the river floodplains, attended the leaders' awareness workshop. The project will involve a combination of structural and nonstructural measures to achieve, in a cost-effective manner, a level of flood hazard protection for Nadi and the lower Nadi River floodplain that is desired and accepted by stakeholders. As major flood events have consistently and severely interrupted economic activity, the government has continually emphasized the strategic economic importance of protecting Nadi from increasingly regular flood events.

c. Strengthening CSO engagement in Myanmar. ADB has been strengthening its relationships with national and international NGOs in Myanmar through regular dialogues. In recent years, ADB has reconnected with the Local Resource Center, a network of over 1,000 local NGOs, many of whom have been involved in ADB-financed programs and projects. To formalize its commitment to deepening civil society engagement, ADB has led a series of civil society consultations across Myanmar to seek inputs for developing a meaningful civil society engagement plan.

⁸ Government of Mongolia. 2018. *Ulaanbaatar Declaration. International Conference on the Sustainable Development Goals: Gender and Development*. Ulaanbaatar.

Collaboration. This level of participation takes place when ADB works with stakeholders, including CSOs, and is a more interactive approach to CSO participation. However, stakeholders have limited control over decision making and resources. Collaboration in the ADB portfolio in 2019 included the following examples.

Strengthening the coffee sector to create jobs in Timor-Leste. ADB has supported a comprehensive plan to develop Timor-Leste's coffee sector in collaboration with civil society. Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries Joaquim Jose Gusmao Reis Martins launched the plan on 28 May 2019 in Dili, saying: "This is Timor-Leste's first-ever national coffee sector plan and will help us create jobs and lift coffee producers out of poverty."⁹

The Coffee Quality Institute and the Timor Coffee Association actively contributed in preparing the plan, which targets a doubling of coffee production and a 270% increase in coffee export earnings by 2030. The plan followed extensive consultations with government agencies, coffee farmers, processors and exporters, and NGOs. The Timor Coffee Association, a nonprofit trade association, will work closely with the Ministry of Agriculture to coordinate implementation. Coffee is Timor-Leste's most historic and important crop and has been the country's largest non-oil export for the past 150 years. It is grown by around one-third of households in the country, and 20% of households rely on the crop for cash income.¹⁰

Consultations for change. Civil society organizations in Myanmar actively participate in consultations, where they can air concerns and contribute to project design.

⁹ ADB. 2019. *National Coffee Sector Development Plan Supported by ADB, Timor-Leste Launched*. News release. 28 May..

¹⁰ ADB. 2019. *National Coffee Sector Development Plan Supported by ADB, Timor-Leste Launched*. News release. 28 May.

Implementing gender equality programs. ADB is supporting CSOs to implement gender equality programs at the national, sector, and local levels in Mongolia through the TA Moving Gender Equality Forward through Civil Society Engagement approved on 19 July 2019.¹¹ The project expands ADB's collaboration with CSOs nationwide through focused training programs and innovative, pro-poor, socially inclusive, and gender-responsive learning-by-doing approaches.¹² CSO consultation meetings for the project design involved leaders of gender-focused CSO networks. CSO participation is embedded in the project design as the project aims to build the capacity of local CSOs in 21 provinces and provide small grants to CSOs for monitoring local gender programs. It is envisaged that larger CSOs will be tapped to help build the capacity of provincial CSOs.

In May 2019, a wrapping-up workshop was held for the TA project Decentralized Coordination and Partnerships for Gender Equality Results, which was set to be completed in October 2019. The workshop was organized by the National Commission on Women and Children, which was the implementing agency for project Outputs 1 and 2, and supported by READ Bhutan, which served as the implementing nongovernment organization, together with Tarayana Foundation and BAOWE, for Output 3. Self-help groups that were assisted by READ Bhutan, Tarayana Foundation, and BAOWE comprised the majority of the participants.

Working with communities for tourism development in the Philippines. ADB is supporting the Government of the Philippines to promote a sustainable environment initiative for El Nido and Coron, two fast-growing tourism destinations known for their pristine natural beauty and diverse marine life.¹³ ADB will offer solutions and financing to address the immediate need for vital urban infrastructure and services, such as solid waste management, drainage and sanitation, and clean drinking water. The project will build the capacity of local stakeholders to protect and conserve healthy oceans and rehabilitate key biodiversity-based tourism sites. To ensure that tourism benefits local communities, ADB will also explore innovative funding to local business enterprises and community-based groups for skills and product development.

Partnerships. Under a partnership, CSOs directly participate in the decision-making process and have control over project resources. ADB uses this method through both formal and informal partnership agreements.

Working together for healthy oceans. Asia and the Pacific are at the epicenter of a major crisis in marine plastic pollution, which is threatening the productivity of the region's marine economies. ADB launched the Action Plan for Healthy Oceans and Sustainable Blue Economies at its Annual Meeting in May 2019.¹⁴ The Action Plan for Healthy Oceans and Sustainable Blue Economies will expand financing and TAs

¹¹ ADB. Mongolia: Moving Gender Equality Forward through Civil Society Engagement.

¹² ADB. 2019. *ADB to Support the Enforcement of Mongolia's Gender Equality Law through Engagement with CSOs*. News release. 19 July.

¹³ ADB. 2019. *ADB to Support Department of Tourism in Sustainable Development of Palawan's El Nido and Coron*. News release. 23 October.

¹⁴ ADB. 2019. *ADB Launches \$5 Billion Healthy Oceans Action Plan*. News release. 2 May.

for ocean health and marine economy projects up to \$5 billion from 2019 to 2024, including cofinancing from partners. As part of the action plan, ADB is working closely with its longstanding partner World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to develop a blue investment framework to guide sustainable and impactful investments. It will focus on four areas: (i) creating inclusive livelihoods and business opportunities in sustainable tourism and fisheries; (ii) protecting and restoring coastal and marine ecosystems and key rivers; (iii) reducing land-based sources of marine pollution, including plastics, wastewater, and agricultural runoff; and (iv) improving sustainability in ports and coastal infrastructure developments.

Something's brewing in Timor-Leste. ADB is supporting Timor-Leste to develop the country's coffee industry through collaboration with civil society.

Expanding youth space in development. ADB recognizes the potential of young people to contribute to inclusive growth in Asia and the Pacific. ADB is working with youth-led network AIESEC and the international NGO Plan International to promote youth involvement in the achievement of the SDGs through the YfA initiative. YfA enables youth engagement in ADB projects, not just through knowledge generation and sharing, but also by embedding youth engagement in project design and partnerships in the region.¹⁵

In February 2019, ADB and Plan International UK launched a joint research project and the report *What's the Evidence? Youth Engagement and the Sustainable Development Goals*. The report provides information about youth's contribution to achieving the SDGs.¹⁶ It also shares important insights that support the design and implementation of youth programs across the region.

¹⁵ O. Chapman and M. Uncanin. 2019. Genuine Youth Engagement at a Bank? Did I Hear You Correctly? Plan International. 13 June. https://plan-international.org/eu/Asian_Development_Bank.

¹⁶ ADB and Plan International. 2019. *What's the Evidence? Youth Engagement and the Sustainable Development Goals*. Manila.

ADB and Plan International UK coorganized the 7th Asian Youth Forum held in August 2019 at the ADB headquarters in Manila, Philippines. The forum brought together over 300 youth representatives of CSOs, educational institutions, and regional bodies from 28 countries. Plan International UK Chief Executive Officer Anne-Birgitte Albrectsen, who was the keynote speaker of the forum, underscored the importance of empowering young people, especially young women, as key development partners.

ADB and AIESEC collaborated on two knowledge sharing events on the use of the design and monitoring framework. More than 135 youth leaders from 13 ADB members participated in two key conferences in 2019: the Asia Pacific Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, in March and the AIESEC International Congress held in Hyderabad, India, in July. These events helped enhance AIESEC's programming and better align with the SDGs in its operations in Asia and the Pacific.

Protecting life below water. ADB has started working with civil society organizations and nongovernment organizations in rolling out the Action Plan for Healthy Oceans and Sustainable Blue Economies.

C. Engaging Civil Society in Policy Review

ADB recognizes the importance of stakeholder participation in the development and review of policy and strategy papers. The following examples demonstrate how citizens and civil society participated in policy development, review, and country programming.

Involving CSOs in ADB's new long-term corporate strategy. More than 150 CSO representatives attended the discussions on draft operational plans to guide the implementation of ADB's Strategy 2030. The consultation took place on 1 May 2019 as part of the Civil Society Program of the 52nd Annual Meeting in Nadi, Fiji. The new corporate strategy aims to sustain efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and expand its vision of a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific.

The discussion began with an overview of each of the following operational priorities: (i) addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequalities; (ii) accelerating progress in gender equality; (iii) tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability; (iv) making cities more livable; (v) promoting rural development and food security; (vi) strengthening governance and institutional capacity; and (vii) fostering regional cooperation and integration. Breakout sessions on operational priorities followed the presentations. Chiefs of relevant thematic and sector groups facilitated these breakout sessions, where CSOs had the opportunity to seek clarification and share suggestions on the draft operational plans for the seven operational priority areas. The drafts were posted online for several weeks to accommodate stakeholder comments before their approval on 7 October 2019.

ADB's new corporate results framework. CSOs were also involved in the preparation of ADB's Corporate Results Framework (CRF) 2019–2024.¹⁷ The CRF is a set of indicators and targets that provide the basis for reporting on ADB's operational and organizational performance. Its purpose is to facilitate learning and performance improvement by providing the basis for transparently reporting on ADB's contributions to development results.

ADB gathered feedback and comments on the four levels of indicators in the draft CRF through an online survey and webinar consultations in June 2019. ADB then organized two webinar sessions to complement the online survey. Five CSOs participated in the webinar sessions and provided their respective suggestions and insights. Points raised included (i) concerns about indicators regarding child labor, abuse, and violence in rural areas; (ii) inclusion of indicators that are aligned with the commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; and (iii) indicators to measure the actual implementation of citizen engagement and CSO participation. The ADB Board approved the CRF 2019–2024 in September 2019.

¹⁷ ADB. 2019. *ADB Corporate Results Framework, 2019–2024: Policy Paper*. Manila.

Setting up civil society advisory groups. CSOs have been instrumental in helping ensure the quality, responsiveness, and inclusiveness of ADB's policies, projects, and programs.

In Indonesia, ADB set up a Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG), which first convened on 18 June 2019, to help advance ADB's engagement with CSOs and strengthen the effectiveness of its operations. The CSAG intends to meet three to four times a year to discuss and provide perspectives on potential concerns related to ADB-supported projects in Indonesia. On 21 November, the CSAG convened to discuss ADB's assessment of Indonesia's development constraints, emerging government priorities, and implications for ADB's strategic priorities in the next CPS.

In Mongolia, ADB established a Civil Society Advisory Committee. The committee will help ADB formalize the engagement of the civil society community, particularly in identifying key challenges and priority issues. The Civil Society Advisory Committee will also be involved in the formulation of the next CPS and in the implementation of the Country Operations Business Plan.

Never too young to get involved. ADB encourages youth involvement in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

D. Engaging Civil Society Organizations to Leverage Resources and Knowledge Solutions

ADB recognizes that CSOs are sources of knowledge and innovation, given their grassroots experience and expertise in participatory development approaches. Engaging with CSOs through dialogue and learning events helps leverage additional resources and share knowledge and expertise. Here are some events where CSO knowledge contributed.

ADB Civil Society Talanoa. Inspired by the Pacific concept of *talanoa*, which refers to a conversation, storytelling, and sharing of ideas, the Civil Society Program of the 52nd ADB Annual Meeting served as a networking space where CSOs across Asia and the Pacific shared knowledge and exchanged insights on key development issues. An event called the ADB Civil Society Talanoa featured panel discussions, exhibits, informal learning sessions, and cultural performances.

The ADB Civil Society Talanoa provided CSOs and other development partners an opportunity to share lessons, network, and promote collaboration. ADB Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development Bambang Susantono opened the event on 2 May 2019 and encouraged CSO participants to engage and share important lessons in development.

“I am pleased to be part of this *talanoa*, where civil society organizations and NGOs in many parts of Asia and the Pacific come together with other ADB stakeholders to share lessons and good practices, as well as potential solutions to address the challenges facing the region.”

—*Bambang Susantono, Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, ADB*

Space for storytelling and sharing of ideas. The Civil Society Talanoa at the 52nd ADB Annual Meeting served as a venue to connect with various stakeholders, including civil society organizations and nongovernment organizations.

Destination Equal: Opportunities and Challenges for Young Women in the Pacific. On 3 May 2019, Plan International UK led a panel discussion in the ADB Annual Meeting in Fiji. The panel “Destination Equal: Opportunities and Challenges for Young Women in the Pacific” examined barriers brought about by gender inequality and discrimination, which prevents girls in the Pacific from acquiring skills to secure decent work and break out of poverty. Speakers highlighted how investing in girls’ economic empowerment and enabling them to lead, decide, and thrive can transform lives, communities, and eventually entire countries. Panelists explored practical solutions to bring women’s empowerment to greater levels. During the discussion, ADB reconfirmed its support for inclusiveness and gender equality. ADB is supporting projects that aim to empower young women—the Pacific population being young—which include capacity-building programs and enhancing women’s entrepreneurship, among others.

Protecting oceans through knowledge exchange. In July 2019, ADB hosted bilateral meetings on ocean health and blue financing with WWF, which included a green bag for ADB staff on Achieving a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Asia-Pacific Region. David McCauley, WWF Global Lead, Public Sector Partnerships, WWF International; Gilly Llewelyn, Deputy Practice Leader, Oceans, WWF International; Louise Heaps, Head of Blue Economy, WWF UK; and Joel Palma, President and Chief Executive Officer, WWF Philippines, presented WWF’s approach to ocean health issues and challenges, as well as opportunities around the blue economy and blue finance.

In August 2019, ADB organized the knowledge sharing event “Resilient Atoll Nations in Productive Oceans” that brought together atoll government delegations from

Destination equal. During the 52nd Annual Meeting, civil society organizations had the chance to share their insights on how to bring women’s empowerment to a greater level.

Kiribati, Maldives, the Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu to discuss strategies for climate adaptation and resilience.¹⁸ WWF's Global Oceans Practice Leader, John Tanzer, participated as an expert speaker and shared recommendations on the blue economy for the atoll nations.

Cross-learning through tripartite training in the Pacific. ADB hosted a training event to enhance the knowledge and skills of selected government officials, CSO representatives, and ADB staff to strengthen the participation of CSOs in the Pacific. Held on 11–15 November 2019 in Sydney, Australia, the training brought together participants from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Participants from governments and CSOs gained a deeper understanding of ADB operations, including existing windows for CSO cooperation in country programming, projects, and policy development. The training included detailed discussions about ADB's improved business processes for contracting CSOs.

The program recognized the uniqueness of the Pacific as well as the fragility of small island countries. The tripartite format facilitated cross-learning from among government, CSO, and ADB participants and provided a venue for key stakeholders to continue to engage and build relations. Key CSO networks in the Pacific participated in the knowledge event, such as the Cook Islands Civil Society Organisations, the Fiji Council of Social Services, and the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations, as well as the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations that represents 23 Pacific island countries.

Building the capacity of CSO anchors. The NGO and Civil Society Center conducted skills development programs to targeted ADB staff who regularly engage with civil society organizations (CSOs).

¹⁸ ADB. 2019. *Resilient Atoll Nations in Productive Oceans*. 27–29 August. Maldives.

Building CSO capacity to engage. ADB also held training events in Mongolia and in Viet Nam to improve the knowledge and skills of CSOs to cooperate with ADB. In Mongolia, 31 CSO representatives joined a learning event on 4 October 2019 that utilized a variety of adult learning techniques to enhance participation and interaction. Participants gained understanding about good examples of civil society engagement as well as the entry points for working with ADB. In Viet Nam, ADB organized a training event with CSOs in December 2019 to build CSO capacity for safeguards monitoring.

The NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC) also conducted skills development programs in 2019 for targeted ADB staff who regularly engage with CSOs. One program was the annual staff training event held on 3–5 September 2019. The annual staff training held in 2020 convened 33 participants from ADB's regional departments as well as the Department of Communications and the Private Sector Operations Department. The training served as a venue for participants to share their departmental action plans on how to effectively engage with CSOs in the coming year.

Learning together in the Pacific. ADB, through its NGO and Civil Society Center, held a tripartite training for government officials, civil society organization (CSO) representatives, and ADB staff. This is to help boost the participation of CSOs in the Pacific.

Promoting diversity, inclusion, and equality of LGBT+. ADB marked the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOT) on 16 and 17 May 2019. IDAHOT promotes inclusion and recognizes efforts to overcome the exclusion, discrimination, and violence that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and related communities (LGBT+) continue to experience in many parts of the world, including in Asia and the Pacific. A panel discussion commemorating IDAHOT convened ADB experts and representatives from sexual orientation and gender identity-focused CSOs to discuss promoting the inclusion of LGBT+ persons in ADB operations and the development of the region. Presenters included civil society leaders from APCOM, an LGBT+ health and rights organization in Asia and the Pacific, and Babaylanes, a student and youth LGBT+ organization in the Philippines.

The inclusion of vulnerable groups in societies, including LGBT+ people, is critical to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable region, as envisioned in ADB's Strategy 2030. "ADB supports LGBT+ inclusion within and outside its organization. We are committed to a diverse and inclusive workforce where everyone is treated with respect regardless of gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, and thinking style. We recognize that the promotion and strengthening of diversity, inclusion, and equality at ADB is critical to our effectiveness as an organization," ADB President Nakao said.¹⁹

"We recognize that the promotion and strengthening of diversity, inclusion, and equality at ADB is critical to our effectiveness as an organization."
—Takehiko Nakao, President, ADB

E. Highlights of Civil Society Cooperation in ADB Regions

This section features examples of significant CSO participation in the five regions where ADB operates: Central and West Asia, East Asia, the Pacific, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

1. Central and West Asia

Strengthening universal accessibility for social inclusion in Georgia.

ADB previously conducted a consultation meeting with CSOs working towards improving the accessibility of social inclusion for people with disabilities in Georgia.²⁰ The meeting aimed at sharing the Inclusive Urban Area Guidelines developed by experts from the NGO Accessible Tourism Center PARSA, with the active cooperation of the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure and the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. The guidelines, which were based on universal design and accessibility standards, are aimed at ensuring the accessibility of facilities and services and introducing universal facilities and environments that will contribute to full inclusion of children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and women in all aspects of social life.

Promoting road safety, connectivity, and sustainable tourism in Georgia.

In August 2019, ADB approved the North–South Corridor (Kvesheti–Kobi) Road Project, which is expected to enhance road safety and boost Georgia's position as a regional trade and tourism hub.²¹ ADB is working closely with local communities, CSOs, and other stakeholders to ensure that environmental and social impacts are mitigated and

¹⁹ ADB. 2019. *ADB Marks International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia*. News release. 17 May.

²⁰ ADB. 2016. *Georgia: Livable Urban Areas: Integrated Urban Plans for Balanced Regional Development*. Manila.

²¹ ADB. 2019. *Georgia: North–South Corridor (Kvesheti–Kobi) Road Project*.

minimized. CSOs regularly meet with ADB to discuss alternatives to ensure ‘no harm’ on communities, biodiversity, and cultural heritage.

Exploring possibilities for greater CSO cooperation in Uzbekistan. Following reforms including the government’s push for CSO engagement in social development, ADB commissioned a report on the CSO landscape in Uzbekistan. It provided a better understanding of the sectors and geographical areas where ADB can increase civil society participation in its portfolio. ADB then approved TA funds to support three projects with civil society engagement to help leverage project results.

2. East Asia

Project on improving transport services in ger areas in Mongolia. Local CSOs Ger Area Mapping Centre and Tugeemel Khugjil conducted a needs assessment and broad-based stakeholder consultations for the transport project in *ger* areas in Mongolia.²² From April to May 2019, CSOs organized consultations in communities selected for project implementation. More than 90 representatives from local communities, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, women, and youth participated in the consultations. They shared their insights on the appropriate use of public transport and proposed activities to improve services.

The CSOs introduced participatory tools and human-centered design approaches in identifying the needs and priorities of local communities. A multistakeholder consultation workshop also brought together the local government, citizens’ assembly representatives, a private bus company, the academe, and CSOs for the analysis of problems and potential solutions.

Mitigating the risk of illegal wildlife trade in the People’s Republic of China. ADB is supporting road upgrades to improve access to markets and services for remote villages in Yunnan, one of the least developed provinces in the People’s Republic of China. The project is improving thousands of kilometers of roads and highways with an important strategic location, particularly in Pu’er, a mountainous area south of the province.²³

The Wildlife Society has carried out a special wildlife trafficking due-diligence study, which identified how increased wildlife trafficking could impact the project. For instance, cross-border wildlife trafficking could increase the occurrence of vector-borne diseases. Thus, strengthening health inspection and disease control at border crossings should be considered. The study recommended institutional strengthening of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora enforcement for border control staff. This has raised awareness and improved coordination between government agencies at the prefecture and county levels and neighboring countries to control wildlife trafficking.

²² ADB. 2019. *Mongolia: Improving Transport Services in Ger Areas*.

²³ ADB. 2019. *China, People’s Republic of: Yunnan Pu’er Regional Integrated Road Network Development Project*.

3. The Pacific

Improving sanitation and public hygiene in Kiribati. ADB is helping improve the quality and accessibility of public health in South Tarawa, Kiribati, through the South Tarawa Sanitation Improvement Sector Project.²⁴ The project aims to improve sanitation infrastructure, sewerage infrastructure maintenance capacity, and public hygiene. It also seeks to reduce waterborne diseases including diarrhea in babies, which has resulted in Kiribati having one of the highest infant mortality rates in the Pacific.

A comprehensive community awareness program is being implemented to improve understanding of the close links among health, hygiene, water use, and sanitation practices. Individual community mobilizers helped in implementing awareness-raising activities at the community level. Through the project's community engagement component, mother health committees have also been established to help coordinate and monitor progress and participation in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities. The project also saw the emergence of WASH-focused community-based organizations. Youth groups have also been involved in delivering messages to children on water conservation and power safety through dance and drama.

Jaffa Community Health Post in Papua New Guinea. Inaugurated on 14 February 2019 in Kainantu, Papua New Guinea, the Jaffa Community Health Post supports the

Improving sanitation and public hygiene in Kiribati. ADB is implementing a project on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in South Tarawa, Kiribati. To further sustain the water sanitation infrastructure, the project has involved community-based and youth organizations during project implementation.

²⁴ ADB. *Kiribati: South Tarawa Sanitation Improvement Sector Project*.

improved delivery of essential health services to the Kainantu community, especially among women and children. The Jaffa Community Health Post is the 22nd health post to be built under the ADB-supported Rural Primary Health Services Delivery Project.²⁵ Kainantu is a village in the Eastern Highlands with approximately 10,000 people who previously had to travel for 2 hours to reach the nearest hospital. Susu Mamas is a local CSO that has been training village health volunteers in the Eastern Highlands to address the demand for maternal and child health services. In a nearby district, men's engagement has also improved by supporting their women partners' reproductive and sexual health.

Bettina Wanzin is a mother of three children, but only two are still living. Along with other mothers in her community, Wanzin said they are happy to have a safe place to give birth through the new health post. "We have all known too many mothers who have died during childbirth, and we are grateful for this new health center," she noted. Before the health post was established, women in labor were carried by foot in a sheet on a 2-hour trek to the hospital.²⁶

Accessible health services for all. ADB has been helping with partners, including civil society organizations, in strengthening health services in Papua New Guinea.

²⁵ ADB. *Papua New Guinea: Rural Primary Health Services Delivery Project*.

²⁶ ADB. 2019. *ADB, Partners Help Boost Health Services in Kainantu, PNG*. News release. 14 February.

4. South Asia

Reporting gender-based crime and domestic violence in Nepal. The gender-based violence (GBV) control network in Nepal helps women feel more comfortable reporting gender-based crime and domestic violence. With support from ADB, the police established the GBV network in 20 districts across the country in cooperation with CSOs. The police in these districts have been trained to deal with gender-related crimes.

In the past, women would hesitate to reach out to the police. But through the GBV network, women have learned to trust the authorities. The positive change happened because the police reached out to the communities they served. “The networks in each district run community awareness campaigns and preventative strategies to reduce violence and abuse, encourage reporting of cases to improve access to justice, and encourage confidence in the legal system,” said Kiran Rana, a police superintendent in the Women and Children Service Directorate.²⁷

Upholding justice for women. The police established the gender-based violence (GBV) network in 20 districts across Nepal in coordination with CSOs and with support from ADB.

“The networks in each district run community awareness campaigns and [teach] preventative strategies to reduce violence and abuse, encourage reporting of cases to improve access to justice, and encourage confidence in the legal system.”
—Kiran Rana, Police Superintendent, Women and Children Service Directorate, Nepal

²⁷ ADB. 2019. *Policy and Community Partnership in Nepal Tackling Violence Against Women*. Case study. 18 March.

Providing energy-based livelihood training in Bangladesh, with a focus on women. Meeting the needs for reliable and affordable electricity is a challenge for Bangladesh as the country transitions to middle-income status by 2021. ADB rolled out the Bangladesh Power System Enhancement and Efficiency Improvement Project to address this challenge.²⁸ Apart from addressing infrastructure constraints and improving the country's transmission and distribution networks, the project aims to support productive energy use in rural areas, enhanced safety for customers, improvements in rural distribution management, and interventions to support women employees in the power sector.

ADB partnered with the international development organization Practical Action to provide energy and livelihood opportunities in rural Bangladesh. This collaboration helped develop an energy-based livelihoods program focusing on women's microenterprises. There has also been an increased awareness on the safe and efficient use of energy through these training programs. By sharing its expertise, Practical Action has been instrumental in improving the rural electricity cooperative for women and lifeline customers.

Empowering women in Sri Lanka. The Demonstrating Innovative Approaches for Private Sector and Women's Empowerment in Technical Vocational Education and Training Project in Sri Lanka is financed through ADB's Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction.²⁹ This project, which is piggybacked on the Skills Sector Enhancement Program, aims to (i) strengthen private sector engagement in tertiary and vocational education and training; (ii) enhance entrepreneurship development training for self-employment with a focus on women; (iii) provide women-targeted incentives, mentoring, and on-the-job training to attract women into nontraditional job areas; and (iv) demonstrate gender-inclusive recruitment and working environment practices demonstrated in the private sector. ADB engaged the international NGO Plan International Australia to implement the project in four provinces in Sri Lanka. Plan International Australia provided technical guidance and supervision during project implementation. The project demonstrates the benefits of working through partners.

5. Southeast Asia

Blending social programs to address poverty. In the Philippines, ADB partnered with the Department of Labor and Employment, BRAC, and Innovations for Poverty Action in rolling out the graduation approach in Negros Occidental Province. This approach focused on building the resilience of the poorest households in Negros Occidental starting with households in the municipalities of Enrique B. Magalona, Murcia, Silay City, Talisay, and Victoria.³⁰

Under the graduation approach, interventions are sequenced and time bound. This approach also combines social protection, financial inclusion, introduction of production assets, and coaching. To be considered a graduate, beneficiaries need to

²⁸ ADB. 2019. *Bangladesh: Bangladesh Power System Enhancement and Efficiency Improvement Project*.

²⁹ ADB. 2019. *Sri Lanka: Skills Sector Enhancement Program - Additional Financing*.

³⁰ ADB. 2019. *Piloting the Graduation Approach for Poverty Reduction in the Philippines*. Video. 11 September.

meet a set of social and economic criteria that translate to sustainable livelihoods and long-term resilience to shocks.

BRAC was engaged to deliver three variations of the graduation approach from July 2018 to December 2019, each with 600 conditional cash transfer families randomly assigned to receive group-based or individual assets and coaching. Innovations for Poverty Action, meanwhile, provided support in research design and randomized controlled trial impact evaluation. The program helped strengthen local civil society by helping establish and sustain local associations and giving beneficiaries access to asset transfer, training, and coaching. It also encouraged them to form and maintain group-based enterprises.

A holistic approach to address extreme poverty. ADB is working with the Philippines' Department of Labor and Employment, BRAC, and Innovations for Poverty Action in piloting a graduation approach, a time-bound, sequenced intervention designed to overcome multiple barriers that prevent the extreme poor from breaking out of poverty.

Consultations for the country partnership strategy in Cambodia. ADB's CPS 2019–2023 aims to support Cambodia's efforts to become competitive and ensure inclusive development for the long term through stronger institutions that promote strategic investments, including in human capital, natural resources, infrastructure and technology. From 8 to 11 January 2019, ADB consulted a wide range of stakeholders, which included CSOs, university students, and project beneficiaries in the provinces of Battambang, Kratie, and Svay Rieng.

Another consultation took place on 5 February 2019 in Phnom Penh, in which CSO representatives participated. They actively joined discussions and tackled suggestions on how the government, CSOs, and the private sector could collaborate to strengthen service delivery; proposed interventions most needed to improve local economies; and priorities of the youth for development in Cambodia.

III. NEXT STEPS

ADB recognizes the need to align CSO engagement with the seven operational priorities outlined in Strategy 2030 and the operational plans intended to contribute to the bank's vision to achieve prosperity, inclusion, resilience, and sustainability. ADB will continue to seek CSO inputs and advice on the review of major policies. CSOs will also remain involved throughout the various phases of the project cycle and help provide a platform where voices of the poor and vulnerable can be heard.

Furthermore, ADB will pursue its priority of making cities more livable while creating an enabling environment for civil society to contribute in addressing rapid urban growth. Increased civil society engagement with local governments will help facilitate better governance and social inclusion.

In promoting rural development and food security, ADB will work with development partners to contribute in efforts to support DMCs. These will range from upstream partnerships with development and research communities in view of the international and policy context, the academe, and applied research institutions to downstream project partnerships with cofinanciers and local entities, including CSOs.

To strengthen governance and institutional capacity, ADB will promote accountability mechanisms and citizen-oriented design in DMCs. ADB will promote collaborative approaches at the grassroots level through partner CSOs and continue to support the establishment and convening of civil society advisory groups, where appropriate, including the preparation of country partnership strategies.

ADB will continue to implement the TA project Deepening Civil Society Engagement for Development Effectiveness, which aims to improve CSO participation in ADB operations.³¹ The TA, through its subprojects, will help provide comparative results of the graduation approach on the different adaptations of the model. In India, the same fund will support elements of the graduation approach implementation in an urban slum resettlement project. At the end of 2020, the project will support a learning event on the graduation approach, which will consolidate and share lessons across a range of ADB member countries and situations.

Through the same TA, ADB will also support projects in Uzbekistan, where political reforms have created new opportunities for CSOs. The CSOs will be tapped to contribute to the success of these efforts, particularly in raising awareness, providing technical training, and leading outreach campaigns. ADB will finance new knowledge products and events that build on the experiences of the project and which provide country-specific guidance in working with civil society. ADB will work closely with CSOs to find innovative solutions that address development challenges of DMCs.

³¹ ADB. 2017. *Regional: Deepening Civil Society Engagement for Development Effectiveness*. Manila.

In 2020, ADB is revising the way civil society engagement is measured. Instead of looking at projects with planned civil society engagement at any level, ADB is beginning to count the projects where planned, meaningful civil society engagement has effectively taken place at a substantive level.

Highlights of ADB's Cooperation with Civil Society Organizations 2019

In 2019, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) actively engaged civil society organizations (CSOs) by tapping their local knowledge, innovation, and expertise—in line with its Strategy 2030. CSOs collaborated with ADB and various development partners in the preparation of country partnership strategies, project consultations, and other development initiatives. This report underscores how civil society engagement and cooperation adds value to ADB-supported projects and initiatives. In implementing Strategy 2030, ADB is committed to increasing the involvement of CSOs in the design and implementation of projects, particularly in the use of grassroots participatory approaches to help poor and vulnerable groups.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

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