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Classification and Coding of Board Documents

This document is being disclosed to the public in accordance with ADB's Access to Information Policy.

Asian Development Bank

1. This Board paper describes the changes to the classification and coding systems for documents circulated to the Board of Directors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
2. In 2020, ADB started implementing the Board information system project as part of the Digital Agenda 2030 to replace the 20-year-old Board document management system.¹ The new platform will allow users to access Board documents anytime, anywhere, on any device. The updates to the classification and coding systems for Board documents are reflected in the [upgraded Board document management system](#).
3. Board documents have been classified following the classification system adopted by the Board of Directors on 8 September 1994.² While the Public Communications Policy superseded the 1994 paper, the Board documents classification system remained in place.³ Effective 1 January 2022, ADB aligned the classification names of Board documents with the classification names used internally to classify ADB information, while continuing to apply the policy and principles under the Board documents classification system.⁴
4. Further updates to the classification names and access levels in Appendix 1 ensure that ADB manages and discloses all its information and documents consistently and in line with ADB's Access to Information Policy.⁵ Each Board document will be clearly labeled with its classification and include a note that specifies its disclosure requirements.
5. The *Coding System for Board Documents*, which facilitates the identification and retrieval of Board documents, has been in place since 1982.⁶ Many of the codes are still used, but some are obsolete. Accordingly, the coding system has also been updated to reflect the current practice and improve consistency in Board document coding (Appendix 2).
6. The Secretary may issue further updates and guidance for the implementation of the classification and access levels and the coding system from time to time, as appropriate.

¹ ADB. 2018. *Digital Agenda 2030: Special Capital Expenditure Requirements for 2019–2023*. Manila (R124-18).

² ADB. 1994. *Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information*. Manila (R134-94).

³ ADB. 2005. *The Public Communications Policy of the Asian Development Bank*. Manila.

⁴ ADB. 2020. Information Classification. *Administrative Orders*. AO 4.17. Manila.

⁵ ADB. 2018. *Access to Information Policy*. Manila.

⁶ ADB. 1982. *Coding System for Board Documents*. Manila (IN83-82).

CLASSIFICATION AND ACCESS LEVELS

A. Scope

1. All documents circulated to the Board of Directors shall be classified as *public*, *internal*, *restricted*, or *confidential* by the originating department, considering their sensitivity and intended access level.¹

B. Classification

2. Board documents classified as *public* are released to the public at the time they are circulated to the Board and therefore have no restrictions on sharing. All Board documents will be classified as *public* unless the information contained therein falls within the exceptions to disclosure specified in the Access to Information Policy (AIP).²

3. Board documents that fall under the exceptions to public disclosure in the AIP will be classified as *internal*, *restricted*, or *confidential* based on a qualitative assessment of the potential impacts on the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and/or its stakeholders of compromising the document's confidentiality, integrity, and availability.

4. *Internal* Board documents contain information whose inappropriate disclosure may cause minor reputational, financial, or operational harm to ADB and/or its stakeholders.

5. *Restricted* Board documents contain information whose inappropriate disclosure may cause moderate reputational, financial, or operational harm to ADB and/or its stakeholders. Such documents may contain information that is deliberative, part of ADB's decision-making process, or privileged in nature.

6. *Confidential* Board documents contain information that is sufficiently sensitive in nature, whose inappropriate disclosure could result in a competitive disadvantage; affect current or future negotiations of projects or project terms; jeopardize ADB's relationship with a member, client, investee company, or other stakeholder; constitute a breach of ADB's disclosure requirements; or materially compromise the legitimate privacy interests of an ADB staff member, consultant, or other concerned persons. The inappropriate disclosure or modification of documents classified as *confidential* may cause major or severe reputational, financial, or operational harm to ADB and/or its stakeholders.

C. Reclassification

7. Board documents to be disclosed to the public upon circulation to the Board are classified as *public*. Board documents to be disclosed to the public after Board consideration are classified as *internal*, *restricted*, or *confidential* during the circulation period; after consideration by the Board, they are reclassified as *public* and disclosed to the public.

8. If part of the information contained in an *internal*, *restricted*, or *confidential* Board document falls within the exceptions to disclosure under the AIP, such information may be redacted, and the redacted version may be reclassified as *public* and disclosed to the public, as

¹ "Originating department or office" is the department or office responsible for drafting a Board document as well as its content.

² ADB. 2018. *Access to Information Policy*. Manila.

appropriate. The unredacted version will continue to be classified as *internal*, *restricted*, or *confidential*, as appropriate.

9. *Confidential*, *restricted*, or *internal* Board documents may be reclassified to a less restrictive classification by the head of the originating department or office, in consultation with the Information Access Unit in the Office of the Secretary, as needed.

D. External Access Levels

10. Unless otherwise authorized under the AIP, Board documents classified as *internal*, *restricted*, or *confidential* may not be disclosed to external parties or shared with the public or the press.³

11. In line with the Board Code of Conduct, Directors and Alternate Directors may share *internal*, *restricted*, or *confidential* Board documents with their sending authorities (ADB members that elected them) and other members of their constituencies, as appropriate and when necessary to fulfill their duties. Access to and use of such Board documents by sending authorities or other members of the constituencies shall be in accordance with the classification of Board documents in this paper and applicable policies of ADB regarding disclosure of information.

E. Internal Access Levels

12. Unless access is otherwise allowed or restricted under relevant ADB policy and rules,⁴ the following access levels will apply to Board papers classified as *public*, *internal*, *restricted*, or *confidential*.⁵

Table A1: Access Levels for Board Papers

Access	Public	Internal	Restricted	Confidential
Directors and Alternate Directors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
President	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vice-Presidents	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Heads and deputies of departments and offices	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
ADB staff responsible for originating the Board paper	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Specific named ADB staff or other personnel reasonably deemed to have a need to know as determined by the originator of the Board paper	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Selected ADB staff, business groups (such as departments, offices, divisions, teams, or sector and thematic groups) or other personnel reasonably deemed to have a need to know as determined by the originator of the Board paper	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Other ADB personnel	Yes	Yes	No	No

ADB = Asian Development Bank.

Source: ADB (Office of the Secretary).

³ “External party” means an individual, group, or entity outside ADB that provides information to ADB or receives information from ADB in the course of official ADB business. External parties may include, but are not limited to, multilateral development banks, international finance institutions, member country governments and/or counterparts, bilateral aid agencies, clients, advisors, vendors, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernment organizations, and other business partners. External party does not refer to the press or public.

⁴ For example, more restrictive access may apply to Board papers coded as EX, reports of the Ethics Committee, or other documents whose access should be restricted to protect rights or legitimate interests of ADB, its stakeholders, or other persons.

⁵ Board papers are documents circulated to the Board through the [Board document management system](#).

CODING SYSTEM FOR BOARD DOCUMENTS

1. Documents circulated to the Board of Directors are codified for reference purposes as follows:

Document Category Code	Definition
A	Agenda
DM	Draft minutes
IN	Papers circulated to the Board for information
M	Minutes
R	Papers containing the President's recommendations for Board approval
SecM	Papers that are not codified under any other document category code, including papers circulated to the Board for discussion or endorsement, reports of Board committees, or other records of Board proceedings.
SR	Staff records of discussions at Board meetings
WP	Working paper (for discussion by the Board without requiring any specific decision)

Among these Board documents, those categorized IN, R, SecM, or WP are referred to as Board papers. Board papers are documents circulated to the Board through the [Board document management system](#).

2. Document category codes are followed by a series number and the year of issue (e.g., document series number R18-22 represents R paper number 18 for the year 2022).

3. The prefix EX before the document series number (e.g., EX/R5-22) marks Board papers circulated only to the persons allowed to attend an executive session of the Board pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of the Board of Directors, unless confidentiality requires circulation to be further restricted. EX papers may be approved by the no-objection procedure.

4. Changes to Board papers already circulated to the Board are introduced by a corrigendum,¹ addendum,² revision,³ or notice.⁴ Corrigenda, addenda, revisions, and notices bear

¹ A corrigendum is issued to correct errors or address ambiguities in a circulated Board paper. It should not be used to introduce information not included in a circulated Board paper that could reasonably be considered to be relevant to the Board's decision-making on a particular recommendation (i.e., new critical information) and/or to make substantive changes.

² An addendum is issued to provide additional information that is not critical to the Board's decision-making but will improve the quality of the Board paper.

³ A revision updates and replaces a circulated Board paper in its entirety. It is issued to introduce new critical information (footnote 1) or substantive changes, i.e., significant changes that result in a deviation from the content of the circulated or approved Board paper.

⁴ A notice is issued for changes in the circumstances around a circulated Board paper (e.g., scheduling or withdrawal) without changes to the content of the Board paper.

the same document series number as the primary document and a unified sequence number (e.g., R18-22, R18-22/1, R18-22/2).

5. All documents bear the date of issuance under the document series number, e.g.:

R18-22	or	R18-22/1	or	R18-22/2
5 May 2022		Corrigendum		Revision
		18 May 2022		29 May 2022

6. The documents of Board committees are separately coded and numbered.

7. This coding system supersedes the *Coding System for Board Documents* issued in 1982.⁵

⁵ ADB. 1982. *Coding System for Board Documents*. Manila (IN83-82).