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<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
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<td>BWI</td>
<td>Building and Wood Workers’ International</td>
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<td>CCAP</td>
<td>Climate Change Action Plan</td>
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<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>coronavirus disease</td>
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<td>CPS</td>
<td>country partnership strategy</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>civil society organization</td>
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<td>DMC</td>
<td>developing member country</td>
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<td>ECE</td>
<td>early childhood education</td>
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<td>ETM</td>
<td>Energy Transition Mechanism</td>
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<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>nongovernment organization</td>
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<td>NGOC</td>
<td>NGO and Civil Society Center</td>
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<td>OPD</td>
<td>organization of people with disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCR</td>
<td>project completion report</td>
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<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
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<td>RRP</td>
<td>report and recommendation of the President</td>
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<td>SARD</td>
<td>South Asia Department</td>
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<td>SERD</td>
<td>Southeast Asia Department</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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Mitigating risks of the pandemic. Civil society organizations conduct an awareness-raising activity about protection from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Cambodia. The campaign is part of a technical assistance from ADB.
Civil society organizations (CSOs) have historically been steadfast partners with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific. The importance of engaging with CSOs to overcome enormous global challenges has especially been emphasized as the region recovers from the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Despite severe health risks, community lockdowns, and numerous other challenges during the pandemic, CSOs continued to respond to the needs of the poor and marginalized groups. In 2023, ADB and CSOs worked together to act as a lifeboat to communities in need by providing them with food, connections to vital services, and opportunities for economic recovery. ADB’s partnership with civil society continued to be vital as the region sets its vision toward achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable future for all.

Strategy 2030 is ADB’s long-term corporate strategy to achieve this vision. Adopted in 2018, it articulates the bank’s desire to work more closely with CSOs by increasing their involvement in the design and implementation of ADB projects and policies (Box 1). The strategy is aligned with major global commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals and their financing framework, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on climate change, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

In exploring new opportunities to work with CSOs under Strategy 2030, ADB focuses on operations that use grassroots participatory approaches to target the poor and vulnerable groups, mobilize women and young people, and monitor project activities and outputs. In 2023, the regional technical assistance project, Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions, collaborated with 10 CSOs across the region to ensure that poor and marginalized communities affected by COVID-19 had access to vital services and resources. At the country level, CSOs in Cambodia, Georgia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), and Uzbekistan actively took part in consultation activities as part of the formulation of new country partnership strategies that will guide ADB operations in those countries over five years.

1 ADB uses the term “civil society organization” to refer generically to organizations (i) not based in government and (ii) not created to earn profit. ADB defines CSOs as nonprofit organizations independent from the government, which operate around common interests. See ADB. 2023. Promotion of Engagement with Civil Society Organizations. Operations Manual. OM E4. Manila.


3 ADB. Regional: Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions.
Box 1: ADB’s Commitment to Cooperation with Civil Society Organizations

Strategy 2030 of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) outlines its vision for a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific. Under this long-term corporate strategy, ADB has committed to strengthening its engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs) and exploring opportunities for increasing their involvement in the design and implementation of ADB projects, where appropriate. Engagement with CSOs is a dynamic process that encourages constructive relationships involving ADB, governments, private sector clients, and civil society.

ADB recognizes the diversity of CSOs. They 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 engages with CSOs flexibly through a range of relationships appropriate to different contexts rather than through a single relationship, mechanism, or model.

The Development Effectiveness Review is an annual report by the ADB Management to assess the bank’s progress in implementing Strategy 2030. In 2023, 73 sovereign projects were completed, of which 43 planned to engage CSOs meaningfully in the project design stage. Of the 43, 84% or 36 projects delivered meaningful CSO engagement as planned. Based on the review of the 36 projects, CSOs participated in various roles and capacities in ADB operations, such as involvement in consultation activities, implementation of specific project components, and as beneficiaries of the projects. A more comprehensive discussion of these indicators is presented in section 4 of this report.

Aside from promoting civil society involvement in ADB-supported projects, Strategy 2030 highlights the importance of seeking CSO input and advice on the review of its major policies. In 2023, ADB solicited insights from a wide range of stakeholders, including CSOs, during a comprehensive review and updating of its 2009 Safeguard Policy Statement. To ensure that consultations are inclusive, timely, comprehensive, and safe, ADB actively engaged CSOs, indigenous peoples, and communities directly affected by ADB-financed projects in reviewing and updating ADB’s Safeguard Policy Statement. CSO participation was also integral to the preparation of ADB’s Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), 2023–2030, which provides a framework for ADB to deliver on its climate change commitments in Asia and the Pacific. The plan underscores the need for ADB to deepen its collaboration with CSOs to ensure that its climate work is informed by a broad range of stakeholder voices, especially those of communities most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

As the institutional focal point for ADB’s engagement with CSOs, the NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC) continues to advance the bank’s aim to deepen meaningful engagement with CSOs by facilitating dialogue on important development issues. Together with key CSOs in the region, the NGOC organized the Civil Society Program in May 2023 as an integral part of the 56th ADB Annual Meeting in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The program served as a venue for dialogue and knowledge.

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Informing ADB’s climate work. Panelists at the session, Pathways to Inclusive Carbon Transition in Asia: Greening Agriculture and Local Climate Governance, provide an overview of inclusive carbon transition strategies in the region. The panel was part of the 56th ADB Annual Meeting’s Civil Society Program.

sharing about important development issues. During the year, the NGOC organized several capacity-building and knowledge-sharing opportunities for CSOs and ADB staff to explore (i) how CSOs can enhance ADB’s work and (ii) how CSOs can be more smoothly incorporated into the bank’s operations.

This report describes ADB’s progress in achieving deeper, more meaningful engagement with a wider range of CSOs in Asia and the Pacific. It highlights CSOs’ diverse roles, their invaluable contributions to ADB’s work, and lessons learned through cooperation among ADB, CSOs, and member governments.
CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN DELIVERING STRATEGY 2030

Civil society partnerships day in Bhutan. ADB recognizes the unique strengths of civil society organizations, such as their local presence and specialized knowledge in operationalizing Strategy 2030.
Strategy 2030 sets the course for ADB to respond effectively to the changing needs of Asia and the Pacific. Strategy 2030 aims to eliminate extreme poverty and secure ADB’s vision of a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable future for the region. The strategy focuses on seven operational priorities (Figure 1): (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.

In realizing these priorities, Strategy 2030 emphasizes CSOs’ unique strengths and specialized knowledge of local communities, especially poor and vulnerable groups, which make them valuable partners in the fight against poverty. In 2023, CSOs contributed meaningfully to achieving ADB’s operational priorities in the following ways.

A. Addressing Remaining Poverty and Reducing Inequalities

To reduce poverty and ensure that development is inclusive, ADB seeks to reduce inequalities in access to opportunities; facilitate the creation of quality jobs; expand support for education, health care, and social protection; and support small and medium-sized enterprises and inclusive businesses. An essential component in realizing these objectives is partnerships with relevant institutions, including CSOs, to generate knowledge, share good practices, and improve policy dialogue.6

Supporting community-led pandemic responses. As the global COVID-19 crisis unfolded in 2020, ADB—in collaboration with the governments of Japan, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and the Republic of Korea—launched the regional technical assistance project, Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions (footnote 3). The project worked with 10 CSOs in seven countries to support health care, social protection, and alternative livelihoods to vulnerable families and communities affected by the pandemic (Box 2). In 2023, CSOs continued to play a significant role in community-led COVID-19 response interventions.

(i) Helping migrant communities in border towns during the pandemic. In tourist hubs and border towns of Cambodia and Thailand, families were particularly hard hit during the pandemic. They struggled to survive amid travel restrictions and economic downturns. During the lockdown, one of the most urgent problems

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Figure 1: ADB Strategy 2030 Seven Operational Priorities

ADB’s Strategy 2030 sets out seven operational priorities for the achievement of a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific.

- **Addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequalities**
  This supports the Sustainable Development Goal agenda to tackle poverty and inequality and leave no one behind.

- **Accelerating progress in gender equality**
  Support for gender equality and women’s empowerment is also central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- **Tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability**
  Thirteen of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals are relevant to or will be impacted by actions on climate change, climate and disaster resilience, and the environment.

- **Making cities more livable**
  Cities in Asia and the Pacific have unprecedented opportunities to transform the well-being of their citizens and to catalyze economic development through increased urbanization by 2030.

- **Promoting rural development and food security**
  Although significant progress has been made in meeting food security, in Asia and the Pacific, hunger and malnutrition persist.

- **Strengthening governance and institutional capacity**
  Governance and institutional reforms are needed to sustain development momentum in the region and to ensure that the benefits of growth are equitably and widely shared.

- **Fostering regional cooperation and integration**
  Operations are expected to enhance connectivity and competitiveness, promote regional public goods, strengthen cooperation in the finance sector, and strengthen subregional initiatives.


Box 2: Keeping Communities Afloat during the Pandemic

In March 2020, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic spread rapidly, causing a public health crisis and global economic shutdown. Governments and social systems were overwhelmed, unable to reach the remote corners where assistance was needed. It was in this critical moment that the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Japan, the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, and civil society organizations (CSOs) joined forces to swiftly develop and deliver a technical assistance called Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions— together becoming a lifeboat for communities that needed help the most.

The technical assistance forged collaborations with 10 CSOs in Armenia, Cambodia, the Cook Islands, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Thailand, forming a resilient crew to reach local communities impacted by COVID-19. From 2021 to 2023, the project kept communities afloat amid successive waves of lockdowns. By tapping into the power of civil society, communities, and partnerships, ADB and CSOs helped to sail through the storm toward a brighter horizon for Asia and the Pacific—a future that is prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable for all.

Protecting the children. Mith Samlanh worked with a network of 1,100 community-based volunteers called ChildSafe Agents to provide immediate support to families and communities affected by the pandemic.

“We are grateful for the CSOs that always support us and for ADB for helping us and our village survive this pandemic.”

Lerng Chanlim
Resident of Poipet, Cambodia

was the lack of food. ADB collaborated with CSOs such as Mith Samlanh (“Friends” in Khmer) and its partners, Friends International and Peuan, to implement activities that addressed the immediate needs of communities and families in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, the Cambodia–Thailand border area of Poipet–Aranyaprathet, and urban Bangkok. The program included providing emergency support, responding to hotline calls, conducting information campaigns during the height of COVID-19, and assisting in job placement programs.

(ii) Community-based ChildSafe Agents. In addition, Mith Samlanh mobilized a network of 1,100 community-based volunteers called ChildSafe Agents to migrant children, youth, and families in Cambodia and Thailand.7 ChildSafe Agents are community members who have been equipped to identify potentially dangerous or abusive situations that might harm children and youth. They recognized risks such as domestic violence, sex work, and drug abuse among communities and worked on mitigating them.

7 ADB. 2023. Supporting Cambodia and Thailand’s Pandemic-Affected Areas. Video. 10 August.
Livelihood support for migrant workers who lost their jobs. Migrant populations engaged in fisheries and seafood processing have likewise settled in the provinces of Samut Sakhon, Chonburi, and Rayong in Thailand. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they found themselves facing not only health risks but also economic and social challenges. ADB partnered with a local CSO, Raks Thai Foundation, which helped establish social protection systems and economic support for jobless migrant workers in 10 communities in these provinces. From April 2022 to March 2023, a total of 2,757 migrant workers received support through in-kind assistance and participated in a campaign on COVID-19 awareness and trainings on life skills and livelihood. The Raks Thai Foundation promotes strong communities by building the capacity of the poor and disadvantaged groups to actively participate in development activities to improve their well-being.

Mobilizing community health workers for pandemic response. In the Philippines, Synergeia Foundation mobilized and trained residents to become community health workers who led efforts in health-related information campaigns and awareness raising in 216 barangays or villages in the towns of Marawi, Tamparan, and Omar in the Bangsamoro region of Mindanao. Community health workers helped promote vaccination and facilitated access to primary health care offered through public services and telehealth consultations. Women, children, and indigenous people groups benefited from this initiative. Some 1,000 Tagbanua families from Calamianes in Palawan Province received food packs that tided them over during periods of strict lockdowns. In addition, more than 4,800 people, mostly

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9 The Tagbanwa people are the more dominant of the ethnic groups found in Palawan, Philippines (see Government of the Philippines, National Commission on Culture and the Arts. Peoples of the Philippines: Tagbanwa).
from Ati\textsuperscript{10} communities living in remote areas in Western Visayas, benefited from free telehealth consultations, making it possible for poor families to access much-needed health care during the pandemic.

(v) Expanding economic opportunities during the pandemic. In Armenia, a CSO called Armavir Development Center conducted a series of training programs to support start-up businesses and strengthen existing small and medium-sized enterprises affected by the pandemic. A total of 23 existing small and medium-sized enterprises participated in training on skills in sewing, starting a nail salon business, setting up food trucks, and others. They subsequently received limited capital support and mentoring. In addition, around 100 beneficiaries participated in targeted internships with established businesses to improve their capacity to gain employment in the formal sector. The project also provided basic equipment support to 63 organizations, including kindergartens and music schools, to promote health and proper hygiene in workplaces and study areas.

(vi) Creating employment opportunities. ADB worked with 303 poor and vulnerable households in Mongolia to develop alternative livelihood skills such as vegetable planting, beekeeping, biofertilizer, bakery production, sewing, dairy production, and food storage. Comprising mostly women participants, the training helped increase people’s resilience to external shocks. Alongside these interventions, ADB generated employment for over 218 unemployed community members and addressed the basic needs of 2,989 people, mostly women. In addition, ADB engaged local CSOs to distribute hygiene packages to 2,000 women and girls and provide portable hand sinks to 1,750 households in the ger districts of Ulaanbaatar. ADB and its partners also built stronger communities through family development programs in which over 2,000 households participated.

\textsuperscript{10} The Ati people is an ethnic group found in Panay Island, Philippines (see Ethnic Groups of the Philippines. Ati).
Restoring livelihoods and learning in the Philippines. In the Philippines, an armed conflict in 2017 left Marawi City in ruins. The humanitarian costs of the armed conflict are high, as it resulted in an estimated 369,196 internally displaced persons. A few years after the conflict, around 100,000 school-aged children were either not yet back at school or at risk of dropping out because of long travel to their schools and the unaffordable cost of schooling. ADB is helping the Philippine government to rebuild the city located in the southern Philippine region of Mindanao. ADB’s Restoring Livelihoods and Learning in Marawi Project aims to rebuild sustainable and gender-inclusive livelihoods, provide employment, and reestablish access to quality education in Marawi City.\textsuperscript{11}

Save the Children Philippines is a valuable partner in ensuring the effectiveness of the project. The CSO helped oversee activities identified for funding under the grants facility. These activities included providing short-term employment support in the form of cash-for-work assistance, developing individual and small group-based livelihood opportunities, restoring quality education, providing capacity development for teachers, and mainstreaming peace education, among others. The project successfully built a climate-smart school building with gender-inclusive and culturally sensitive features. The CSO helped ensure that community projects for short-term employment and livelihoods respected local culture. In addition, the project supported livelihood activities based on the indigenous people Maranaos’ traditional skills and trade, such as weaving and handicrafts.

Enforcing labor laws and occupational health and safety standards in Bangladesh. In March 2023, ADB worked with Building and Wood Workers’ International (BWI)—a global federation of trade unions in the building, building materials, wood, forestry, and allied industries—to conduct a joint safeguards review in Bangladesh. The review reinforced ADB’s commitment to ensuring that labor laws and occupational health and safety standards are observed in ADB-supported projects. Through site visits and consultations with borrowers and contractors, international representatives from BWI, together with a Bangladeshi trade union representative, assessed the implementation of labor laws and health and safety requirements at two ADB-supported projects: the Rupsha 800-Megawatt Combined Cycle Power Plant Project, and the Dhaka and Western Zone Transmission Grid Expansion Project.

BWI representatives then shared their observations and proposed corrective actions with ADB and executing agencies to help improve labor conditions in these projects. ADB and BWI also organized a hybrid training workshop about local labor laws and occupational health and safety standards for 21 representatives of agencies implementing ADB-supported projects in Bangladesh’s energy sector. At the Rupsha project, a local trade union representative was placed to ensure that construction workers’ concerns were addressed.

Delivery of care and support services to vulnerable older people and their families in aging Asia. In Indonesia, ADB is piloting the development of five village-level community care hubs in Bali and Yogyakarta provinces to mobilize and coordinate health and social care services for older people in need of care. Following an assessment of the community’s assets and resources, the community care hub staff identified key resources to provide a wide range of social, health, and economic support required to improve the well-being of at-risk older individuals. The community care hub’s case managers coordinate services and inputs from community-level health and social cadres, public and private health service providers, local businesses, and local government. In 2023, on average each month, 205 vulnerable older people received regular support, and a further 1,700 older people engaged in a range of active aging activities organized by the community care hubs. In Viet Nam, in 2023, ADB initiated a pilot working with HelpAge International-Viet Nam, the Viet Nam Association

\textsuperscript{11} The project is part of the loans and grants package called Emergency Assistance for Reconstruction and Recovery of Marawi.
of the Elderly, community-based Intergenerational Self-Help Clubs, the local government, and the Ministry of Health to develop an integrated system of care and support for the most vulnerable older people in 12 communities in Hoa Binh and Thanh Hoa provinces.

B. Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality

Gender equality and women’s empowerment are crucial to the region’s aspiration for inclusive and sustainable development. To accelerate progress in gender equality, ADB has pledged to include gender-inclusive projects in at least 75% of its sovereign and nonsovereign operations by 2030. In 2023, ADB collaborated with CSOs to promote gender equality in several projects in Asia and the Pacific. The projects focus on women’s economic empowerment, gender equality in human development, gender equality in decision-making and leadership, reduced time poverty of women, and women’s resilience to external shocks.

Establishing self-help groups for maternal and child health in Tajikistan. ADB’s Maternal and Child Health Integrated Care Project aims to improve maternal and childhood health and well-being in Tajikistan. In 2023, three local CSOs—Iroda, Dilhoi Kushoda, and Gender and Development—conducted behavior change sessions to enhance the health-seeking behavior of rural families in Fayzobod, Rasht, and Shamsiddin Shohin. They also led activities to improve the communication skills of local health workers to help them work with communities more effectively. Fayzobod, Rasht, and Shamsiddin Shohin are rural districts in Tajikistan that were selected based

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12 ADB. Gender Equality and Development.
14 ADB. Tajikistan: Maternal and Child Health Integrated Care Project.
on indicators depicting the continuum of care for maternal and child health, and socioeconomic factors. In addition, Iroda and Dilhoi Kushoda helped establish community self-help groups of pregnant women, mothers, children, and mothers-in-law in all project districts to discuss topics such as healthy nutrition during pregnancy, prenatal visits, danger signs during pregnancy, and postpartum depression.

Eliminating gender-based violence in Mongolia. Gender-based violence is a serious and potentially life-threatening problem in many parts of Asia and the Pacific. ADB’s Combating Domestic Violence Against Women and Children Project addresses this concern in Mongolia by strengthening the quality of and access to services to combat domestic violence. In 2023, a small-scale grants program under the project supported grassroots community initiatives in Ulaanbaatar and several rural areas. Local CSOs increased public awareness of gender-based violence and created a safe, child-friendly environment, especially in underserved areas. Child-friendly spaces provide children with protected environments where they can participate in organized activities, even during emergency situations. Through the project, CSOs and local governments organized training sessions to raise awareness about gender-based violence and offered legal and psychosocial counseling and referral services to survivors of domestic violence. Two CSOs—Lantuun Dokhio and the National Center Against Violence—provided critical aid in improving emergency services for survivors of domestic violence, supplied children’s shelters with first-aid kits, and offered training programs. The activities are aimed at creating community-based support groups to address gender-based violence in their localities.

Consultations with civil society organizations on gender equality and social inclusion. ADB’s Strategy 2030 reinforces the bank’s commitment to ensuring gender equality and social inclusion in its operations. Consultation with CSOs has been an important component of project gender equality and social inclusion action plan preparation in Nepal. Specifically, the Urban Resilience and Livability Improvement Project and the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Highway Enhancement Project carried out participatory consultation activities with women and disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities; people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics; older men and women; and children from different identities. In the Urban Water Supply and Sanitation (Sector) Project, the role of water users’ groups has been critical in project implementation, which includes carrying out gender equality and social inclusion activities. ADB also engaged with water user sanitation committees throughout the project cycle, with active participation of women and disadvantaged groups in decision-making, leadership, and project-related activities.

In some cases, ADB engages CSOs as consultants during project design, especially in the preparation of gender assessment and in the design of gender elements of proposed projects. In addition, ADB cooperates with CSOs in the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of project gender action plans. In India, the Rajasthan Urban Sector Development Program engaged CSOs to help implement grassroot activities, including community mobilization and monitoring, as well as data collection activities. Also, in India, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) are involved in community consultations and awareness generation activities under the Assam Power Sector Investment Program - Tranche 3.

15 ADB. Mongolia: Combating Domestic Violence Against Women and Children.
17 ADB. Nepal: Urban Water Supply and Sanitation (Sector) Project.
18 ADB. India: Rajasthan Urban Sector Development Program.
19 ADB. India: Assam Power Sector Investment Program - Tranche 3.
C. Tackling Climate Change, Building Climate and Disaster Resilience, and Enhancing Environmental Sustainability

ADB is scaling up its support to tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability throughout its operations. A critical component of this effort is building strong partnerships with CSOs, think tanks, and academia. ADB recognizes the need to deepen its collaboration with CSOs to ensure that its climate work is informed by a broad range of stakeholder voices, especially those of communities most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. While CSOs have been actively involved in disaster response and recovery activities, they also play an important complementary role in planning for effective disaster risk management at national and subnational levels.

ADB held the United Nations (UN) 2023 Water Conference Side Event involving NGOs and committed the Yellow River Ecological Corridor Program to the UN Water Agenda. The UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event on Resilient Rivers to Healthy Coasts for People and the Planet: An Integrated River Basin Management Approach was organized by NGOs on 23 March 2023 in the Natural Hub in New York City. ADB worked with The Nature Conservancy, the General Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower Planning and Design of China, the Yellow River Institute of Hydraulic Research of the Yellow River Conservancy Commission, and the Secretariat of the China Council International Cooperation on Environment and Development, and invited the PRC’s Ministry of Water Resources, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the Government of the Netherlands. As a background, ADB is supporting the Yellow River Ecological Corridor Program, which adopts an innovative ecosystem management approach for water resources management by considering a river basin as an ecological corridor.20

Strengthening the resilience of poor and vulnerable communities. In partnership with the International Institute for Environment and Development and the Huairou Commission, ADB’s Community Resilience Partnership Program is strengthening the resilience of poor and vulnerable populations to the impacts of climate change. In addition to mobilizing large-scale public investments for improved community climate adaptation measures, an important aim of the program is to build the capacity of national and local institutions and CSOs, especially community-based organizations and women’s groups, to plan and implement such measures.21 In November 2023, ADB organized a workshop with women’s organizations to discuss their needs and explore establishing a women–focused funding mechanism to help poor women secure financial resources and technical support for community-led climate adaptation activities. The needs raised by participants included training, assistance in developing funding applications, translation of relevant information documents into the local language, capacity building for managing climate funds, and training on technologies to help in the design and implementation of adaptation projects.22 Under the program, ADB also expects to provide adaptation grants to CSOs and community-based organizations to support local adaptation measures23

Integrating social protection into disaster risk management. In 2021, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) released its Guidelines on Disaster Responsive Social Protection to Increase Resilience to provide a benchmark understanding of disaster-responsive social protection. In partnership with the ASEAN Secretariat and the international development agency Cufa, ADB engaged 10 CSOs to help integrate social protection into disaster risk management

20 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Yellow River Ecological Corridor Program.
programs in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Through the technical assistance project, Strengthening Cooperation on Disaster Risk Management within the ASEAN, ADB supported the implementation of community-based approaches to social protection. The project recognizes that community participation in social protection and disaster risk management means better and more resilient programs, reaching the most vulnerable groups. The project has also provided assistance to older people in the Lao PDR who were affected by flooding in August 2023. In addition, community-based disaster risk management approaches have been integrated into training manuals that were used in the Philippines. Notably, the project has supported the creation of the Southeast Asian Network on Disaster Responsive Social Protection, which serves as a platform for knowledge exchange and best practices to enhance resilience.

D. Making Cities More Livable

ADB seeks to build livable cities that are green, competitive, resilient, and inclusive. Meaningful participation of CSOs in projects that promote urban health and mobility, gender equality, and environmental sustainability helps ensure that urban planning is inclusive and participatory and approaches to service provision are citizen-centric.

Engaging civil society organizations in participatory development planning in Georgia. The Government of Georgia aims to strike a balance between regional and community development aspirations and cultural and natural landscape conservation goals. The ADB-supported North–South Corridor (Kvesheti–Kobi) Road Project aims to upgrade the country’s national highway network along key economic corridors. Under this project, the government engaged the NGO Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus to prepare a comprehensive community needs assessment. The study is an important input in preparing the ADB-supported Khada Valley Development Plan. It is the first plan of its kind in Georgia to include an inclusive and participatory approach and seek to preserve nature-based and cultural heritage values.

Providing inclusive water supply in Tete Settlement, Papua New Guinea. In 2023, Touching the Untouchables, a national CSO in Papua New Guinea, worked with ADB to increase access to safe water and improve residents’ health in Tete Settlement, a small town of about 8,000 people near the capital city, Port Moresby. Tete Settlement has only one source of safe water, a water standpipe that operates intermittently and is often surrounded by long queues of women and girls waiting two hours or more to collect water. Most community members are forced to rely on contaminated ground and swamp water for washing and personal hygiene. With support from the Water Supply Scheme for Tete Settlement technical assistance project, Touching the Untouchables organized hygiene awareness activities using an inclusive approach to reach out to people living with special needs. The CSO also carried out community-based strategies to improve the health, hygiene, and sanitation of community members.

26 ADB. 2019. Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan to Georgia for the North–South Corridor (Kvesheti–Kobi) Road Project. Manila.
Changing behavior in Mongolia’s public transport. ADB’s Improving Transport Services in Ger Areas Project in Mongolia aims to improve the accessibility, safety, security, and quality of transport services along the Chingeltei corridor in the northern areas of Ulaanbaatar, the capital city. As part of the project, the Mongolian CSO called Beautiful Hearts is promoting behavioral change among transport users as a strategy to avoid incidents of sexual harassment. In 2023, Beautiful Hearts led a public awareness campaign using posters and video materials to raise awareness of appropriate behavior in public transport. The campaign helped empower girls to seek help if they feel that their personal space and boundaries have been crossed. Beautiful Hearts is also implementing an education and awareness campaign among school administrators, faculty, students, and their guardians to prevent sexual harassment and violence at bus stops.

E. Promoting Rural Development and Food Security

To advance rural development and food security, ADB helps its developing member countries (DMCs) boost farm and nonfarm incomes, improve irrigation efficiency, and ensure the sustainable use of land and water resources. CSOs play an important role in this effort by implementing community-based participatory processes.

Accessing more water for farms. In Indonesia, adequate water does not reach many farming communities to ensure profitable harvests. Together with ASEAN, ADB is supporting the Integrated Participatory Development and Management of Irrigation Program to improve irrigation operations, strengthen institutional capacity for sustainable irrigation, and develop irrigation infrastructure. The primary beneficiaries of the program are agriculture households, landowners, and agriculture workers, including farmer groups and water user associations. In 2023, ADB collaborated with the

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27 ADB. Mongolia: Improving Transport Services in Ger Areas.
28 ADB. Indonesia: Integrated Participatory Development and Management of Irrigation Program.
water user association GP3A Tengker, which advocates strengthening the local agriculture system and mainstreaming gender equality in the community. Through this project, ADB is helping improve irrigation services and harmonize efforts to improve rural incomes, ensuring food security for the country.

F. Strengthening Governance and Institutional Capacity

Good governance and strong institutional capacity are the backbone of a country’s development. ADB helps DMCs improve their governance by strengthening the capacity of public institutions to undertake policy reforms and creating an enabling environment for sustainable growth. CSOs and citizen networks are a critical part of this process, as they help ensure accountability, transparency, and inclusivity in public institutions.

Investing in early education in Xi’an Municipality, People’s Republic of China. As the PRC transitions from a middle-income to a high-income innovation economy, investing in the human capital of its future labor force is key. The first step in lifelong learning is early childhood education (ECE). Evidence confirms that participation in ECE is associated with additional years of schooling, a key indicator of human capital.29

Located in Shaanxi Province, the rapidly growing megacity of Xi’an is facing a major shortage of affordable kindergarten places. Despite notable progress in developing ECE since 2010, an estimated 45.5% of Xi’an’s kindergarten-aged children (3–5 years old) were unable to access

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29 ADB. China, People’s Republic of: Shaanxi Xi’an Preschool Education Development Program.
affordable kindergarten education in 2019. One of the lessons in the PRC’s education sector is the importance of innovations through play-based pedagogical approaches, professional learning communities of teachers, and parenting education for caregivers.

Through the Shaanxi Xi’an Preschool Education Development Program, ADB has been working with the Xi’an Municipal Government since 2021 to introduce results-based project management to the ECE system by focusing on education quality and innovations. The project helped establish professional learning groups of teachers at the grassroots level to improve ECE. Going forward, the teachers’ groups will conduct capacity-building programs for teachers to enhance ECE knowledge and skills to recognize and respond to gender-differential learning needs of girls and boys by using gender-aware learning tools and approaches.

**Promoting government–civil society organization cooperation in Bhutan.** ADB launched its first Civil Society Partnerships Day in Bhutan in November 2023. Under the theme of “TriUnity: Forging Pathways of Collaboration for Sustainable Progress,” nearly 100 government, civil society, and development partner representatives discussed Bhutan’s 13th Five-Year Plan, which lays the country’s development priorities, and ADB’s forthcoming country partnership strategy (CPS) for Bhutan, 2024–2028. The discussions were complemented by a CSO, Partnerships Marketplace, where CSOs shared ideas for projects to further Bhutan’s development. Participants also visited sites of community-based programs implemented by CSOs. The initiative was part of the project, Mainstreaming Citizen-Led Mechanisms for Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Development Results, which aims to strengthen engagement with citizens and CSOs toward achieving effective development outcomes.30

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Facilitating government–civil society organization partnerships to educate Georgian youth about the environment. In partnership with the CSO called Keep Georgia Tidy and Georgia’s Ministry of Education and Science, ADB launched the Eco-Friendly Mobile School in Georgia in December 2023. The school offers education programs to raise awareness of environmental issues, including climate change, biodiversity, waste and litter, energy and energy resources, water, and water resources. In workshops in West Georgia, more than 30 students learned about climate change and related hazards, stages of natural disaster risk management, and the causes and outcomes of climate change. The initiative is scheduled to be completed in early 2024 and is supported by ADB’s technical assistance project, Mainstreaming Citizen-Led Mechanisms for Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Development Results (footnote 30), which provides tools and knowledge to strengthen citizens’ voices in development programs in selected members.

G. Fostering Regional Cooperation and Integration

ADB continues to enhance connectivity, encourage regional cooperation concerning integration, and improve the competitiveness of DMCs in Asia and the Pacific. Multilateral, regional, and subregional trade and economic partnerships may generate more job opportunities and market expansions for the DMCs. In addition, regional cooperation helps mitigate cross-border risks such as climate change, pollution, energy and water insecurity, and the spread of communicable and infectious diseases. With their vast networks and alliances, CSOs are crucial partners in regional initiatives and help tap boundless opportunities for the DMCs. Additionally, CSOs provide feedback to governments and other stakeholders on whether regional development initiatives meet people’s needs and expectations.
Encouraging participation of civil society organizations in Nepal’s highway enhancement.
The South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation program seeks to promote regional prosperity, improve economic opportunities, and improve the quality of life for the people of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka by improving intraregional trade and cooperation. Under the program, about 95 kilometers of the Kakarbhitta–Laukahi Road along Nepal’s East–West Highway is being upgraded to expand Nepal’s trade with rapidly growing Bangladesh. In preparing the project, ADB held participatory consultations with key stakeholders and beneficiaries, including women and children, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, poor household members, and other marginalized and vulnerable groups. The project intends to engage local women’s groups, youth clubs, federations of people with disabilities, and other CSOs for consultations and awareness raising about road safety, HIV/AIDS prevention, and the prevention of human trafficking, particularly during project implementation (footnote 32).

31 Effective 1 February 2021, ADB placed a temporary hold on sovereign project disbursements and new contracts in Myanmar.  
PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN POLICY REVIEW, COUNTRY PROGRAMMING, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS

Doing better safeguards. A wide range of civil society organizations took part in the review and update of the Safeguard Policy Statement. The review included in-country consultations with local civil society actors and meetings with people affected by selected ADB-supported projects.
ADB promotes dialogue and collaboration among diverse partners and stakeholders, including CSOs, to maximize its development impacts. Engagement with CSOs is particularly important during policy development and reviews. Their expertise in poverty reduction and their field presence enable them to express the perspectives of the poor and marginalized groups through consultative and participatory approaches.

**Doing good by doing better with safeguards.** ADB’s 2009 Safeguard Policy Statement aims to protect the environment and people from projects’ potential adverse impacts. The policy sets out three safeguard objectives: (i) to avoid adverse impacts of projects on the environment and affected people, where possible; (ii) to minimize, mitigate, and/or compensate for adverse project impacts on the environment and affected people when avoidance is not possible; and (iii) to help borrowers and clients strengthen their safeguard systems and develop capacity to manage environmental and social risks.

From November 2021 to March 2023, as part of a comprehensive process to review and update the Safeguard Policy Statement, ADB organized 145 consultation events with stakeholders from member governments, CSOs, project-affected peoples, international organizations, private sector clients, and peer multilateral finance institutions. These included 10 in-country consultations with local civil society actors in DMCs, along with on-the-ground discussions with people affected by nine ADB-supported projects across ADB’s five regional operations departments.

A wide range of CSOs took part in the discussions. Of the total 3,620 stakeholders consulted during the review, 1,448 or 40% of participants represented international CSOs, regional coalitions, and national and local civil society groups working in development and policy advocacy. The CSO participants from 56 ADB member economies included representatives of environmental and human rights groups, gender advocacy groups, indigenous peoples’ organizations, labor groups, and trade unions.

The CSO representatives enriched the discussions with in-depth comments on the policy draft. They described the challenges they faced and the good practices they observed involving project safeguards, including issues related to stakeholder engagement, information disclosure, grievance redress mechanisms, indigenous peoples, labor, environmental health and safety, climate, finance intermediaries, and gender.

Over 17 months of consultations, CSOs consistently gave high satisfaction ratings to the consultation process, responsiveness, documentation, and disclosure of feedback. Insights from the consultations helped ADB formulate the Environmental and Social Framework published in September 2023. The proposed framework tightens environmental and social objectives and requirements to promote sustainable development, elaborates 10 environmental and social standards, and emphasizes the
principle of nondiscrimination, especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.33 A new phase of stakeholder consultations to discuss public comments on the draft Environmental and Social Framework began in November 2023. The revised policy paper is expected to be approved in 2024.

**Ensuring civil society organization participation in the development of the Climate Change Action Plan.** ADB is committed to strategic interventions and initiatives to ensure high-quality climate outcomes. ADB’s Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), 2023–2030, approved in October 2023 and launched at the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) in December 2023, operationalizes this commitment.34 The plan was developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including key CSOs in Asia and the Pacific, which participated in several rounds of discussions of the draft versions in December 2022 and in January, August, and September 2023. The CCAP underscores the need for ADB to enhance its cooperation with CSOs to ensure that its climate actions are shaped by diverse stakeholder perspectives, particularly from communities most susceptible to the detrimental impacts of climate change.

To reach this goal, ADB will seek to partner with CSOs to help affected workers and communities mitigate climate change impacts and increase opportunities. ADB, in particular, will engage with women’s rights organizations to ensure that women and girls participate meaningfully in climate action. Expanded opportunities for knowledge exchange and capacity building will help CSOs monitor local climate investments, including by using innovative, community-led methodologies that boost transparency and good governance.

**Working together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.** The battle against climate change will be won or lost in Asia and the Pacific. More than 50% of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions come from the region, which still relies heavily on coal and other fossil fuels as energy sources. ADB launched the Energy Transition Mechanism (ETM) in 2021 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region by retiring or repurposing fossil fuel power plants and replacing them with clean energy alternatives.35 Just transition is a core part of the ETM program, addressing the impacts of fossil fuel retirement on people, workers, communities, and businesses. A wide range of CSOs, labor unions, and other stakeholders participated in discussions, engagements, and consultations on ETM and related energy transition initiatives at the regional and national levels. The CSOs are invited to provide input and suggestions on broadening the engagement with key stakeholders. ADB has enabled multiple avenues of communication for civil society to respond to and address queries related to ETM.

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35 ADB. Energy Transition Mechanism.
Voicing the needs of the people in the preparation of country partnership strategies. ADB’s CPSs with DMC governments serve as the primary documents guiding ADB operations at the country level. The renewal of ADB’s CPSs with Cambodia, Georgia, the Lao PDR, and Uzbekistan in 2023 was enriched by the participation of CSOs.

In Georgia, CSOs provided explicit recommendations on addressing key challenges and opportunities in public sector management, education, climate action, and the environment. These recommendations included identifying specific topics where CSOs could partner with ADB to contribute their expertise. Additionally, they suggested effective approaches for consulting with and engaging nongovernmental stakeholders to increase inclusive project designs and inform safeguards approaches, which ADB could consider for future application. Participating organizations included the Education Coalition, Elkana, Women in Business, Green Alternative, and Safari Union.

While renewing its CPS in Uzbekistan, ADB conducted in-person and virtual focus group discussions with about 100 representatives of more than 30 CSOs across the country. The organizations stressed the need for ADB interventions in human capital development, transitioning to a green economy, and developing private sector and competitiveness. Participants also urged the development of a systematic approach to CSO engagement in the design, implementation, and evaluation of ADB-supported projects, including more regular project team visits to project sites and greater emphasis on inclusive project implementation.

In 2023, key CSOs in Cambodia also actively participated in consultations leading to the preparation of the CPS for Cambodia, 2024–2028, which aims to (i) foster economic diversification, (ii) promote human capital development, and (iii) accelerate climate resilience. Beyond consultations, CSOs suggested exploring areas of engagement in these CPS pillars, particularly in pillar (iii), and especially on agriculture and rural development interventions for smallholder farmers.

In the Lao PDR, the consultation with CSOs centered on the importance of the following pillars as a framework for formulating the CPS: (i) climate-smart investments, (ii) equitable access to services, and (iii) governance for development results. During the discussion, CSOs emphasized their role in strengthening climate resilience and helping ensure food security in the country. Participants also shared recommendations on approaches to enhance ADB’s engagement with CSOs.

In Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Cambodia, and Georgia, ADB consulted CSOs in the preparation of the countries’ Governance Assessments. A Governance Assessment is a key document in the CPS process.

Inputs of civil society organizations in the preparation of the Energy Sector’s Guidance Notes. In 2023, ADB’s Energy Sector Group published guidance notes on its approach for large hydropower plants, waste-to-energy projects, and natural gas operations. The institutional documents serve to guide ADB staff in implementing energy projects in accordance with ADB’s Energy Policy of 2021. ADB consulted with CSOs in February and March 2023 in the preparation of the guidance note for large hydropower plants, which was approved in June 2023 and published subsequently. ADB likewise conducted public consultations, including with CSOs, from August to October 2022 on the waste-to-energy and natural gas guidance notes, which were approved in April 2023 and disclosed thereafter.

Civil society organizations participate in the various stages of ADB’s project cycle. Each year, ADB reports its performance on civil society engagement as part of ADB’s Annual Development Effectiveness Review.
ADB reports its performance on CSO engagement in ADB’s Annual Development Effectiveness Review. Each year, the NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC) tracks CSO participation in ADB–supported sovereign projects using an indicator system that aims to thoroughly capture meaningful CSO participation (Box 3). It is achieved by reviewing project planning documents of all sovereign projects completed in a given year and determining whether these projects have been planned to engage CSOs meaningfully during project implementation. In 2023, the NGOC thoroughly assessed project approval documents: the report and recommendation of the President (RRP), together with the Summary Poverty Reduction and Social Strategy and other linked documents. The review covered 73 projects that closed in 2023 to determine if there were elements of planned meaningful CSO engagement.37

The indicator rests on four approaches to participation: (i) information generation and sharing, (ii) consultation, (iii) collaboration, and (iv) partnership, as outlined in the table on p. 26. Projects that are categorized as having planned meaningful CSO engagement are those that demonstrate any of the following types of participation, as reflected in the project documents:38

(i) Information generation and sharing: high;
(ii) Consultation: high;
(iii) Collaboration: low, medium, or high; and
(iv) Partnership: low, medium, or high.39

The tracking system then monitors the actual delivery of planned meaningful engagement based on a review of the project completion report (PCR) circulated upon project closure. If the PCR indicates that the planned, meaningful CSO engagement took place, then the project is counted as having delivered meaningful CSO engagement. It is, therefore, counted as having fulfilled the CSO engagement requirement for ADB’s corporate results framework indicator.

37 This includes projects published in the ADB Board Document System from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023, excluding 11 projects reported in the 2022 CSO engagement indicator, with a project completion report cover date of 2022.
39 Ratings for participatory approaches used in the old Summary Poverty Reduction and Social Strategy (SPRSS) templates (information sharing, consultation, collaboration, and empowerment) are recalculated in the format of the current SPRSS template (information generation and sharing, consultation, collaboration, and partnership) by the NGOC for the purpose of analysis. Re-ratings are based on planned CSO engagement recorded in the project RRP, SPRSS, and other documents linked to the RRP.
Box 3: ADB’s Definition of Civil Society Organization

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

ADB categorizes CSO participation as comprising four main approaches: (i) information generation and sharing, (ii) consultation, (iii) collaboration, and (iv) partnership. 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.

A Different Approaches and Depths of Civil Society Organization Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Project Processing</th>
<th>Project Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Generation and Sharing</td>
<td>Information is generated by ADB/recipient/client and shared with CSOs; independently generated by CSOs and shared with ADB/recipient/client; or jointly produced.</td>
<td>Low: ADB/recipient/client shares information with CSOs</td>
<td>Low: ADB/recipient/client shares information with CSOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Depth: Low, Medium, High)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium: Opportunities for CSOs to share information with ADB/recipient/client</td>
<td>Medium: Opportunities for CSOs to share information with ADB/recipient/client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High: Joint generation and sharing of information to meet shared objectives (e.g., improved understanding)</td>
<td>High: Joint generation and sharing of information to meet shared objectives (e.g., improved understanding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>CSO input is requested and considered as part of an inclusive policy, program, or project decision-making process.</td>
<td>Low: Online and/or written consultation only</td>
<td>Low: Online and/or written consultation only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Depth: Low, Medium, High)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium: Opportunities for two-way, face-to-face exchanges (e.g., workshop, focus group)</td>
<td>Medium: Opportunities for two-way, face-to-face exchanges (e.g., workshop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High: Views of CSOs incorporated into design (e.g., use participatory methods)</td>
<td>High: Regular feedback from CSOs integrated during implementation (e.g., use participatory methods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>CSOs and ADB/recipient/client work jointly, but CSOs have limited control over decision-making and resources.</td>
<td>Low: Inputs from specific CSOs sought in project design</td>
<td>Low: CSO input in monitoring and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Depth: Low, Medium, High)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium: Significant CSO representation on project design body</td>
<td>Medium: Stakeholder organization (e.g., CSO) implementation of a project component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High: CSO influence on project design body and agreement of role for CSOs in project implementation</td>
<td>High: Significant CSO representation on project implementation body and participation in implementation activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>CSOs participate in decision-making process and/or exert control over resources through a formal or informal agreement to work together toward common objectives.</td>
<td>Low: Agree a CSO will partner in ADB-funded project</td>
<td>Low: CSO routinely provides inputs and is recognized as a partner in ADB-funded project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Depth: Low, Medium, High)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium: MOU or partnership agreed, or CSOs take some degree of direct responsibility</td>
<td>Medium: MOU or partnership agreement implemented, or CSOs take some degree of direct responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High: MOU or partnership agreement negotiated, including cofinancing and management; or CSOs assume high level of ownership or responsibility</td>
<td>High: MOU or partnership agreement implemented, including financing and management; or CSOs assume high level of ownership or responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADB = Asian Development Bank, CSO = civil society organization, MOU = memorandum of understanding.

Notes:
1. These generic definitions can be adapted to specific types of projects and programs (e.g., rural water supply) and for priority operational themes (e.g., gender or individual projects).
2. Depths of CSO engagement are presented in blue, with the lightest shade indicating low participation and the darkest shade indicating high participation. Any segments highlighted in yellow indicate planned, meaningful CSO engagement.
3. This includes community participation in procurement, CSOs providing consulting services, and CSOs providing nonconsulting services.

Meaningful civil society organization engagement in 2023. From the total of 73 sovereign projects completed in 2023, 43 projects (59%) included planned meaningful CSO engagement, based on the review of project approval documents (RRP and its linked documents). Of the 43 projects, 36 or 84% delivered meaningful CSO engagement, as planned. This represents a slight decrease from 2022 where 85% of projects completed for the year delivered on their meaningful CSO engagement plans. The 36 projects are categorized as having delivered meaningful CSO engagement because elements of meaningful CSO involvement were present in the planning documents and these were also carried out during actual implementation. However, when considering those that planned and delivered meaningful CSO engagement in comparison to the total number of completed sovereign projects for the year, just under half, or 36 projects (49%) of the total of 73, planned and delivered meaningful CSO engagement.

Of the 73 projects completed in 2023, 30 (41%) did not plan for meaningful CSO engagement. This is a significant improvement from the 2022 figure, where 52 projects (49%) that were completed for that year did not plan for meaningful CSO engagement. Figure 2 illustrates a summary of these statistics.

Planned civil society organization engagement by ADB’s regional departments. ADB’s South Asia Department (SARD) registered the highest number of completed projects in 2023 with planned meaningful CSO engagement.40 A total of 17 (40%) projects of the 43 completed projects in 2023 were from SARD. The Southeast Asia Department (SERD) followed closely with 15 projects (35%) planning meaningful CSO engagement.41 Figure 3 illustrates these data.

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40 SARD covers operations in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.
41 SERD covers operations in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam.
SARD also delivered the highest proportion of projects with planned meaningful CSO engagement—i.e., 65% (or 17 projects) of 26 SARD projects detailed meaningful CSO engagement in project design. Of these 17 projects, 15 (88%) delivered meaningful CSO engagement, as planned. SERD also had 65% of projects (15 of 23 projects) with planned meaningful CSO engagement. A total of 11 (73%) of the 15 SERD projects implemented their meaningful CSO plans. The Pacific Department had four (50%) of eight projects that submitted PCRs in 2023 with planned meaningful CSO engagement. Of the four projects, three (75%) delivered their planned activities with CSOs.\textsuperscript{42} The East Asia Department had planned meaningful CSO engagement in four (50%) of its eight projects completed in 2023.\textsuperscript{43} In the Central and West Asia Department, three (38%) of eight projects featured planned meaningful CSO engagement.\textsuperscript{44} Both the East Asia Department and the Central and West Asia Department implemented all (100%) their meaningful CSO engagement as planned (Figure 4).

**Meaningful civil society organization engagement according to sector.** Among the sectors, transport had the highest number of projects (10 projects) with planned meaningful CSO engagement. Of these 10 projects, 7 (70%) delivered as planned. Notably, agriculture (eight projects) and education (seven projects) had all their completed projects deliver meaningful CSO engagement as planned.

In relatively small sample sizes, 100% of sovereign projects with a PCR in 2023 under COVID-19 (multisector), finance, health, public sector management, and the water sectors delivered on their planned meaningful CSO engagement. ADB recognizes that projects in some sectors, such as agriculture, education, urban, and water, may be predisposed to stakeholder engagement

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\textsuperscript{42} The Pacific Department covers operations in the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

\textsuperscript{43} The East Asia Department covers operations in the People’s Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; the Republic of Korea; Mongolia; and Taipei, China.

\textsuperscript{44} The Central and West Asia Department covers operations in Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. ADB placed on hold its regular assistance in Afghanistan effective 15 August 2021.
opportunities, including meaningful CSO engagement, with projects in these sectors typically working with farmers groups, teachers’ associations, student groups, and water user groups, as relevant. Other sectors, such as finance and public sector management, may not prepare many projects that are inclined toward higher levels of CSO engagement. Additionally, planning for CSO engagement may be influenced by the most common modalities used in a particular sector (for example, project-based versus programmatic and policy-based lending). Finance and public sector management tend toward using programmatic approaches and policy-based lending, which may offer less opportunities for meaningful CSO engagement. Figure 5 presents these data.

Civil society organization engagement according to the four approaches to participation.
CSOs participate in ADB projects through four approaches: information generation and sharing, consultation, collaboration, and partnership. For projects with planned meaningful CSO engagement, CSOs are engaged through one or a combination of these approaches (as presented in the table on p. 26).

Among the 43 completed projects in 2023 with planned meaningful CSO engagement, 36 projects (84%) delivered both information generation and sharing and consultation, as planned. There were 40 projects that had planned collaboration, and 34 of these (85%) delivered this approach. Partnership represents the highest form of CSO engagement, which is at times more complex and requires a significant commitment from all parties to the partnership. In 2023, 14 projects planned to work with CSOs through partnership, and 13 (93%) of these delivered on these partnership engagement plans. Figure 6 illustrates these data.
Figure 5: Meaningful Civil Society Organization Engagement in 2023 Based on the Project Completion Reports, by Sector

ANR = agriculture and natural resources, COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, CSO = civil society organization, PCR = project completion report, PSM = public sector management.


Figure 6: Civil Society Organization Engagement Approaches in 43 Project Completion Reports with Planned Meaningful Civil Society Organization Engagement

IGS = information generation and sharing, PCR = project completion report.

Contribution of civil society organizations in ADB-financed projects. Figure 7 describes the roles performed by CSOs in the 36 completed projects in 2023 that delivered on their planned meaningful CSO engagement. The key roles undertaken by CSOs are outlined below:

(i) 92% (33 of 36 projects) consulted CSOs during implementation;
(ii) 67% (24 of 36 projects) tapped CSOs to implement specific project components;
(iii) 58% (21 of 36 projects) engaged with CSOs as project beneficiaries;
(iv) 36% (13 of 36 projects) involved CSOs in monitoring, mostly through grievance redress mechanisms;
(v) 31% (11 of 36 projects) helped establish or reestablish grassroots CSOs; and
(vi) 28% (10 of 36 projects) engaged CSOs in raising awareness.

Boxes 4 to 7 are examples of ADB-supported projects completed in 2023 that effectively delivered planned meaningful CSO engagement.

The Appendix discusses the other aspects of civil society engagement tracking, such as modality of CSO engagement, level of engagement approaches, and roles performed by CSOs engaged per sector.

![Figure 7: Roles Performed by Civil Society Organizations in 36 Project Completion Reports That Delivered Meaningful Civil Society Organization Engagement as Planned](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Description</th>
<th>Number of PCRs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSOs are consulted during implementation</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs implement project components</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs are beneficiaries</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs monitor project deliverables</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAP-CSOs mobilize participation by women</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs are established by project</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs raise awareness</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs are trainers</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs play direct roles in GAPs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs play direct roles in resettlement</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resettlement-CSOs implement RP activities</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO members present in GRC</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resettlement-CSOs monitor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resettlement-CSOs facilitate consultation</td>
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<td>CSOs represented in the project steering committee</td>
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<td>GAP-CSOs implement GAP activities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs evaluate project deliverables</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAP-CSOs facilitate consultation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CSO = civil society organization, GAP = gender action plan, GRC = grievance redress committee, PCR = project completion report, RP = resettlement plan.

Box 4: Helping Poor Households Overcome Food Crisis in Mongolia

The Food and Nutrition Social Welfare Program and Project helped protect poor households and vulnerable individuals in Mongolia from the drastic effects of the global food and fuel crisis in 2008. When food prices spiked in May 2008, inflation in Mongolia reached 33%, the highest rate of all Asian economies. The country was importing almost 80% of its food. Approved in 2008, the project also helped improve targeting mechanisms and strengthen systems, capacities, and strategies for effective social welfare service delivery in the country.

Through the community grant program, the Asian Development Bank worked with women-led civil society organizations to conduct training activities in vegetable growing and the effective use of materials such as seeds and agricultural tools. As a result, poor households acquired technical skills in vegetable growing and were able to harvest vegetables that exceeded their household needs. The program also formed the households into cooperatives for vegetable growing, which has become an effective model for community-based social welfare programs.

Upon its completion in 2023, the Food and Nutrition Social Welfare Program and Project had helped address poverty and inequality, and accelerated progress in gender equality. Poor households benefited from improved health services, education services, and social protection through social insurance.

Box 5: Empowering Women in Agriculture in Uzbekistan

Agriculture is an important sector in Uzbekistan and a key source of income in rural areas where many people reside. As a branch of agriculture dealing with garden crops (generally fruits, vegetables, and ornamental plants), the horticulture sector faced many challenges, as evidenced by low productivity. Approved in 2016, the Asian Development Bank-supported Horticulture Value Chain Development Project helped increase the production and improve the marketing of horticultural products in Uzbekistan. By increasing financing in the horticulture sector, the project aimed to contribute to the country’s inclusive economic growth and rural employment.

The project helped establish the Association of Women in Agribusiness, a nongovernment organization that helps empower women in the agriculture sector, protect their rights, and introduce modern agriculture technologies. Around 40% of the association’s members were rural female leaders of community-based local organizations or were female heads of households. The project also successfully organized women’s groups to promote new farms and agribusiness enterprises. Upon project completion in 2023, the women were able to establish their own farms or agribusinesses, which produced tomatoes, apples, grapes, and legumes, among others.
Box 6: Enhancing Community Resilience through Participatory Approaches

Flooding is a major economic destabilizing factor in Assam as it is in alluvial plains and adjacent to the low, hilly terrain of the Brahmaputra River in India. The river has widened significantly since the Great Assam Earthquake in 1950. As a response, the Asian Development Bank supported the Government of India through the Assam Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Investment Program. Approved in 2010, the project has helped improve people’s livelihoods in the area through comprehensive flood and riverbank erosion management measures.

The project engaged community-based civil society organizations (CSOs) to support plans for resettlement using participatory approaches in carrying out community-based flood risk management action plans and livelihoods training. Two local CSOs, Scorpion and Socio-Educational Welfare Association, initiated a number of social service activities, which included mobilizing volunteers to produce facemasks, animal husbandry training for project-affected people, and providing free medical health check-ups for flood-affected communities. Through the active involvement of CSOs, the project aided in the preparation of Hazard and Risk Profiles and Village Disaster Management plans for 32 villages in the Palasbari–Gumi and Dibrugarh subprojects. Importantly, involvement of nongovernment organizations also led to the increased participation of women in disaster management committees.

Mitigating flood risks. Many families continue to live and work along the Assam River, India. The Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Investment Program, funded by the Asian Development Bank, has given the villagers confidence to live and work in the area.

Box 7: Establishing Farmer Water User Communities to Improve Agriculture

The Uplands Irrigation and Water Resources Management Sector Project was approved in 2015 to increase agriculture production by rehabilitating, modernizing, and climate-proofing irrigation systems in Kampong Thom and Battambang provinces in Cambodia. The project was designed in response to the need to improve the availability and efficient management of water, given its prime importance in promoting agriculture productivity and diversification in agriculture production and the rural economy. Upon completion in 2023, water and agriculture productivity were enhanced in the project areas, as shown by the average increase in annual crop production.

The project organized Farmer Water User Communities (FWUCs) in the project areas, which were involved in the design, implementation, and operation and maintenance of the subprojects. The FWUC members participated in training on the operation and management of canals, climate variability and change, and water management. The FWUCs are important allies in helping to ensure the sustainability of project investments.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NGO AND CIVIL SOCIETY CENTER’S ACTIVITIES IN 2023
The NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC) is the institutional focal point and primary coordinator of ADB’s interactions with CSOs. In 2023, the NGOC continued to provide valuable technical support to deepen CSO engagement at various stages of the project cycle. It also facilitated CSO involvement in the review of the Safeguard Policy Statement and the preparation of the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), 2023–2030. It also organized capacity building for ADB staff to engage more effectively with CSOs.

**Participation of civil society organization at the 56th Annual Meeting of ADB’s Board of Governors.** ADB’s annual meetings provide guidance on ADB administrative, finance, and operational direction. They also offer opportunities for member governments to interact with ADB staff and management, CSOs, international organizations, academe, and the private sector. They are premier fora for the discussion of economic and social development issues in Asia and the Pacific. At the 56th ADB Annual Meeting in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in May 2023, ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa held a meeting with CSO representatives. President Asakawa invited CSOs to dialogue constructively with ADB and welcomed ideas and solutions from CSOs on meeting ADB’s climate ambition and rebounding from the COVID-19 pandemic. He expressed appreciation for the extensive participation of CSOs in the ongoing Safeguard Policy Statement review.

During the 56th Annual Meeting, the NGOC also organized a program on civil society in cooperation with key CSOs in the region. The program included discussions of important development concerns, such as communities’ desire for a just transition to a low-carbon economy, civic engagement and multistakeholder partnerships to further the Sustainable Development Goals, transparency and accountability in equitable climate finance, and other matters. Altogether, 113 CSO representatives from 23 economies participated in the 2023 Annual Meeting.

**Tapping civil society organization expertise for ADB projects.** CSOs make valuable contributions to ADB-supported projects, including knowledge of local conditions and the ability to reach remote and marginalized communities. However, their involvement can be impeded by complex procurement processes and other requirements that are difficult for some organizations to meet. To enable CSOs to access contracting opportunities, ADB organized a Virtual Business Opportunities Seminar with CSOs on 23 February 2023. Tailored to the specific needs of CSOs, the seminar discussed the process for CSOs to access and bid on opportunities, and offered lessons learned from CSOs who have worked with ADB in the past.

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45 ADB. Annual Meetings of the Board of Governors.
46 ADB. 2023. Meeting between Civil Society Organizations and ADB Senior Management. Civil Society Program for CSO Participants. 56th ADB Annual Meeting. Incheon. 5 May.
47 ADB. Incheon 2023: Schedule of Events.
**HIGHLIGHTS OF ADB’S ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS 2023**

**Peer learning on meaningful civil society organization engagement.** The NGOC organized a series of webinars throughout 2023 on CSOs’ involvement in ADB operations. “CSO Conversations: A Peer-Learning Exchange Series on Meaningful CSO Engagement” featured case stories about ADB-supported initiatives told from the perspectives of ADB project teams and the CSOs they worked with. The first webinar in April featured a Mongolian women’s organization, the National Center Against Violence, that worked with ADB on combating gender-based violence by providing psychosocial services for survivors and capacity building for service providers. The second webinar in June examined ADB’s support to private sector clients and governments to improve environmental management and invest in inclusive conservation and restoration in collaboration with CSOs. Another session featured CSOs’ work in scaling up nature-based solutions and climate-resilient agriculture initiatives in Cambodia. The CSO Conversations series reached 215 ADB staff and consultants, with 97% of session evaluation respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the topics were relevant to their work.

**Enhancing ADB staff capacity to engage with civil society organizations.** To build staff capacity to cooperate with CSOs effectively, the NGOC organized several training programs for ADB staff, including CSO anchors and project officers in 2023:

1. **Deep Dive into Civil Society Organization Engagement in South Asia.** The program, “Strengthening Civil Society Engagement in ADB Operations: 2023 Regional Training for South Asia Regional Department,” offered an intensive assessment of ADB’s engagement with CSOs in South Asia. The event, which took place in February 2023 at the ADB headquarters in Manila, featured the launch of the publication, *Working Together for Development Results: Lessons from ADB and Civil Society Organization Engagement in South Asia,* that showcases lessons learned and good practices from ADB-CSO cooperation in SARD operations from 2015 to 2021.48 The report recommends the following five main actions for SARD: (i) investment in early CSO engagement; (ii) enhancement of CSO knowledge on ADB and government procurement and contracting processes; (iii) an increase in CSO roles in monitoring and evaluation; (iv) encouragement of regular interaction between CSOs, ADB, and governments outside of the project cycle; and (v) an increase in the engagement of CSOs in upstream policy dialogue.

2. **Improving Knowledge and Skills in Civil Society Organization Engagement.** The NGOC organized a hybrid training session, “Lessons from ADB and Civil Society Engagement,” for CSO anchors and staff on 14–16 November 2023. The training addressed such timely topics as CSOs’ concerns about ADB policies and projects and CSO participation in ADB’s Energy Transition Mechanism (ETM). Twenty workshop participants meeting in person in Denpasar City, Indonesia visited the ADB-supported Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program–Coral Triangle Initiative in Nusa Penida, Bali, Indonesia, where they observed cooperation on reef rehabilitation and mangrove reforestation by ADB project team members; representatives of the implementing agency, the Indonesia Climate Change Fund; staff from the implementing CSO, the Coral Triangle Center; and groups of seaweed and mangrove rehabilitation farmers.

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(iii) **Getting to Know Your Civil Society Organizations.** To increase awareness of civil society among ADB staff, the NGOC organized a monthly series of brown-bag discussions in 2023. ADB staff heard about CSO partners from the Asia Foundation, International Council of Voluntary Agencies, International Land Coalition, Plan International, and WWF. The monthly series highlighted activities of CSO partners across multiple fields, including agriculture development, climate change, and gender equality. In addition, the Open Government Partnership spoke about the participation of CSOs in promoting transparent, participatory, inclusive, and accountable governance.

**Protecting the rights of people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expressions, and sex characteristics.** On the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia on 17 May 2023, ADB, in collaboration with other multilateral development banks, hosted a webinar on “Together Always: United in Diversity,” attended by more than 200 participants from around the world. The webinar highlighted ADB’s strategic initiatives to promote the inclusion in its operations of people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and sex characteristics. Presenters from CSOs included representatives of the Non-Discrimination and Equality Coalition in Armenia, Micro Rainbow International Foundation Cambodia, and Tbilisi Pride in Georgia.
Integrating people’s voices. Nongovernment organization representatives consult with a family at a community in Fiji. Consultations with marginalized and affected groups, including women and children, are vital to effective development projects.
The effects of climate change have been increasingly felt in Asia and the Pacific, as evidenced by unprecedented floods, extreme droughts, and devastating storms. These have been experienced in recent years even as the region strives to decrease emissions from fossil fuels and develop renewable energy sources. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created a shock due to its massive impact on the global population. The crises have exposed the glaring inequality, where the poorest and marginalized communities bear many of the costs.

On the positive side, the crises have highlighted people’s enormous capacity to innovate and forge partnerships to address global challenges. The challenges have also emphasized the benefits of working with CSOs as valuable partners in achieving an inclusive and resilient post-pandemic recovery. There are also signs of hope that the region is changing course toward more progressive climate action. Under the Paris Agreement, all economies in the region have committed to decarbonize, and the largest emitters have more recently pledged to reach net zero emissions.

Asia and the Pacific are at the center of the climate change challenge in terms of its impact on the lives of its people and the regional potential to combat climate change. Against this backdrop, ADB launched its CCAP, 2023–2030 during the COP28 in Dubai in December 2023. The plan lays out strategies on how ADB can achieve its climate targets and ensure Paris Agreement Alignment. To ensure that climate action is collectively informed by a range of stakeholder voices, the CCAP emphasizes the need for ADB to deepen its engagement with CSOs. In the coming years, ADB is expected to collaborate with CSOs to help affected workers and communities mitigate impacts. The CCAP will further expand opportunities for knowledge exchange and capacity building to help CSOs monitor local climate investments. In particular, women’s rights organizations will play an important role to ensure meaningful participation of women and girls in climate action. In addition, education systems that offer climate action through education and “greening” the curricula, as well as building emergency response capacity, would be critical in equipping future generations.

ADB is also committed to promoting just transition by creating a low-carbon and climate-resilient future with new economic and social development opportunities, such as adaptable education systems and green workforce development, that leave no one behind. Just transition recognizes that the transition to net zero must be people-centric and just. Consultation with affected groups, including civil society, women, workers’ associations, trade unions, and marginalized learner populations, including those with disabilities and learners furthest behind, is vital in working toward a just transition.

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In the coming years, ADB will continue to strengthen CSO engagement, with focus on the poor, vulnerable, marginalized, and excluded groups across Asia and the Pacific. Through the technical assistance titled Mainstreaming Citizen-Led Mechanisms for Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Development Results, ADB will promote community-led mechanisms in its operations by equipping DMCs with appropriate tools and knowledge to better integrate the people’s voices in policies and projects (footnote 30).

ADB will continue to engage CSOs to strengthen its approach to disability-inclusive development. It has produced a database of key CSOs and organizations of people with disabilities (OPDs) in the region and a national-level OPD assessment tool to support the engagement of national OPDs in stakeholder consultations for activities, including country programming and project preparation. In addition, ADB continues to engage with the Disability Inclusion Reference Group, composed of representatives from OPDs and international organizations working on disability inclusion.

In view of the rapidly changing development landscape, ADB recognized the need to improve organizational effectiveness to maximize its development impact. Starting in 2023, ADB has been transitioning to a new operating model aiming to recalibrate the organization toward achieving Strategy 2030.

Amidst these changes, ADB faces a key challenge and opportunity to sustain and deepen engagement with CSOs by building on the gains of previous years and exploring innovative strategies to further improve cooperation. ADB recognizes the role of CSOs in amplifying the voices of the poor and vulnerable groups who bear the burden of climate change. It will continue to actively tap into the unique expertise, skills, and knowledge of CSOs as it continues the fight to eradicate poverty, accelerate inclusive socioeconomic development, and address the climate emergency. In the coming years, effective CSO engagement is expected to promote inclusive participation and support a wide range of advocacy efforts to promote green and resilient economies as the only path toward inclusive and sustainable development.
Figure A.1 shows that loans are the modality with the highest number of sovereign projects with planned meaningful CSO engagement (23 of 40 projects or 58%), followed by grants and loans (eight out of nine projects or 89%). Four modalities equally have the highest delivery rate of planned meaningful CSO engagement, at 100%. These modalities are grant; grant, loan, and technical assistance; loan and technical assistance; and multitranche financing facility and loan. Loans followed with an 87% delivery rate of meaningful CSO engagement plans, with 20 of 23 projects delivering on their meaningful CSO engagement plans.

Figure A.1: Meaningful Civil Society Organization Engagement in 2023 Project Completion Reports, by Modality

CSO = civil society organization, MFF = multitranche financing facility, PCR = project completion report, TA = technical assistance.

In 2023, 100% of the 36 projects that delivered planned meaningful CSO engagement utilized information generation and sharing and consultation approaches; 94% (34 of the 36 projects) also implemented some form of collaboration with CSOs. Of these, 20 projects planned collaboration at a medium level (meaning that CSOs were implementing a project component or components) and six projects delivered collaboration at a high level (meaning that CSOs were involved in project oversight through representation on the project implementation body, plus involvement in project activity delivery). Of the 36 projects, 36% (13) employed the partnership participatory approach. Of these, 10 projects achieved a low level of partnership with CSOs, two achieved medium level, and one achieved high level. Figure A.2 presents these data.

Figure A.3 reflects on the role of CSOs, by sector, in the 36 sovereign projects that delivered meaningful CSO engagement as planned. As shown in Figure A.3, almost all the projects (33 of 36) consulted with CSOs in project implementation. In 2023, 24 projects engaged CSOs in the implementation of project components, and the top sectors where this occurred were agriculture (seven projects) and transport (five projects). Twenty-one projects had CSOs as beneficiaries. CSOs also played direct roles in implementation of gender action plan activities in eight projects, particularly mobilizing participation of women. Seven projects involved CSOs in resettlement, and this occurred in the agriculture, transport, and water sectors. Lastly, 11 projects established or helped establish CSOs.

**Figure A.2: Level of Engagement Approaches in 36 Project Completion Reports That Delivered Meaningful Civil Society Organization Engagement as Planned**

IGS = information generation and sharing, PCR = project completion report.

Note: The level of engagement is presented as either low (L), medium (M), or high (H).

### Figure A.3: Roles Performed by Civil Society Organizations in 36 Project Completion Reports That Delivered Meaningful Civil Society Organization Engagement as Planned, by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Description</th>
<th>Number of PCRs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSOs are beneficiaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSOs are consulted during implementation</td>
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<td>Resettlement-CSOs implement RP activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSOs play direct roles in GAP</td>
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<td>GAP-CSOs facilitate consultation</td>
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<td>GAP-CSOs mobilize participation by women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSOs are established by project</td>
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</table>

**ANR = agriculture and natural resources, COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, CSO = civil society organization, GAP = gender action plan, GRC = grievance redress committee, PCR = project completion report, PSM = public sector management, RP = resettlement plan.**

**Source:** Asian Development Bank.
Highlights of ADB’s Engagement with Civil Society Organizations 2023

ADB’s long-term Strategy 2030 outlines its commitment to strengthening its engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs) in the design and implementation of ADB projects, where appropriate. In 2023, 43 out of 73 completed sovereign projects supported by ADB included planned meaningful CSO engagement. This report highlights ADB’s cooperation with CSOs in delivering better development results through engagement in consultation activities, implementation of specific project components, knowledge sharing, and policy review.

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.