



Summary of External Feedback from Phase 1 Consultations
Period: September to December, 2020

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION CONSULTATIONS

ADB hosted 5 two-hour sessions for civil society groups, nongovernment organizations, and the private sector to share their experiences and feedback on ADB operations in the FCAS and SIDS. Separate meetings were held for major networks in the Asia and Pacific, Myanmar, Afghanistan, the Pacific Islands, and the members of the NGO Forum on ADB. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, these consultations were held online through Zoom; thus, the data captured summarizes what was shared verbally. A total of 72 participants from 23 countries shared their experiences and expertise in the field.

The points of discussion included (i) working in FCAS and SIDS environments, (ii) improving delivery effectiveness, and (iii) strengthening partnerships with CSOs and private sector. Questions posted to the respondents centered around the critical causes and drivers of fragility and vulnerability, how organizations are addressing these, and what staff training is needed to adequately respond to these challenges. ADB also sought out inputs on opportunities and key areas to focus on for a more effective delivery of services. The final set of questions were on identifying mechanisms and linkages that would lead to stronger partnerships and tighter coordination among organizations. The lessons learned and shared during the consultations provided a valuable basis for the development of the Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations and Small Island Developing States Approach (FSA).

Summary of points raised by participants

Working in FCAS and SIDS environments

- Go local! Fragility assessments are critical.
- Collect contextualized and granular knowledge early.
- Understanding the local drivers of fragility and conflict: historical, political, cultural, etc.
- Consult and include all stakeholders: political/socio-economic groups, governance and institutional entities; citizens, gender, vulnerable groups including youth, aging populations, people with disabilities, ethnic and religion minorities.
- ADB could be structurally more transparent on the contracts in the FCAS countries, be more communicative about who is the final borrower, what will happen and what is the outcome.

Improving Delivery Effectiveness (ADB)

- Preparatory work must include improved analytics and community engagement.
- Local counterparts help navigate relationships, sensitive issues and community mistrust.
- Direct meaningful engagement with the communities (and not just through government) is critical to project performance.



- Communication strategies must address community perceptions.
- Improving the integration of gender and gender-based violence interventions is needed in all activities.
- Operationalize conflict sensitivity in project planning and implementation.
- Monitoring and the community's meaningful role.
- Including proper responses, not reprisals, is also important. The client should be able to respond properly to issues on the ground.

Strengthening Partnerships

- Engage consistently and directly with CSOs.
- Utilize a range of ADB-civil society platforms.
- Ensure consultation in ADB country programming and planning.
- Support CSO capacity building.
- Engage CSOs in fragility assessment and the community consultation processes.

Specific inputs given during the consultations:

ASIA AND PACIFIC - 25 September: 14 Participants from members of the ICVA (International Council of Voluntary Associations) network

- INGOs act as an advocacy body for complex issues in country. ICVA network can help in planning and decision-making processes.
- INGOs conduct risk and security assessments and stakeholder analysis prior to implementing projects, and they conduct community consultations periodically throughout projects.
- NGOs have access to communities/beneficiaries in a way that governments and donor organizations do not have, which is critical in FCAS.
- Projects do not move in a linear timeline in conflict areas. Better to invest time at the beginning to avoid delays during implementation.
- In conflict / contested areas, mistrust between government and community remains. CSOs play the role of a bridge between them.
- INGOs believe capacity development of communities is critical.
- INGOs address specific subjects in different frameworks. ADB can engage specific organizations for specific issues, and not just always as part of a broader conversation.
- ADB should help private sector understand its role in development.



MYANMAR - 25 September: 24 Participants from local and international NGOs based in Myanmar

- No one-size-fits-all approach: projects take more time to prepare, more time to implement, more time to analyze in FCAS.
- Understanding conflict dynamics is important, as specific projects may be perceived to be helping government, which could spark tensions in certain areas. Projects perceived to favor one side can exacerbate issues.
- Consider working with ethnic-based civil society groups. But ensure their safety in working on an ADB project as ethnicity is targeted.
- Encourage government to include more programs with civil society and private sector.
- Civil society is crucial for reaching contested areas. Stakeholder mapping and analysis can help identify key actors.
- Gender sensitivities: speak to women separately from men when consulting.
- Consider all vulnerable groups: children, aging populations and people with disabilities.
- Digital innovation in projects can help navigate geographically or logistically sensitive situations.
- Think critically about how projects and initiatives could help or hinder local communities and how they would be perceived at the ground level.

AFGHANISTAN - 28 September: 12 Participants from local and international NGOs operating in Afghanistan

- Create strict frameworks for all parties. Ensure all are aware of operating with safety procedures. Development partners can decide what to follow and when to pull out of an area.
- Staff needs training. The type of training staff needs depends on the type of project.
- Include all approaches and sectors in project design: top-down, bottom-up, outside-in.
- Include COVID-19 in frameworks moving forward. Use technology to reach project purpose more effectively.
- Maximize partnerships with people on the ground, work with different levels, understand from all perspectives.
- Empower local communities to help mitigate risk and culture barriers.
- The Citizen's Charter successful in urban places, not felt as much in rural areas.
- Implement projects in coordination with cluster groups, because data is there, gap analysis, planning documents and mechanisms are available.
- Planning with NGOs in smaller scale interventions, such as employing people for a construction project.

PACIFIC ISLANDS - 5 October: 9 Participants from Pacific-based NGOs

- The disconnect between policymakers and people manifests itself in that:
 - Interaction among actors is very poor
 - A lack of communication and understanding on policies persists
 - Mistrust with government continues. Corruption and colonial heritage drivers of fragility fuel this.

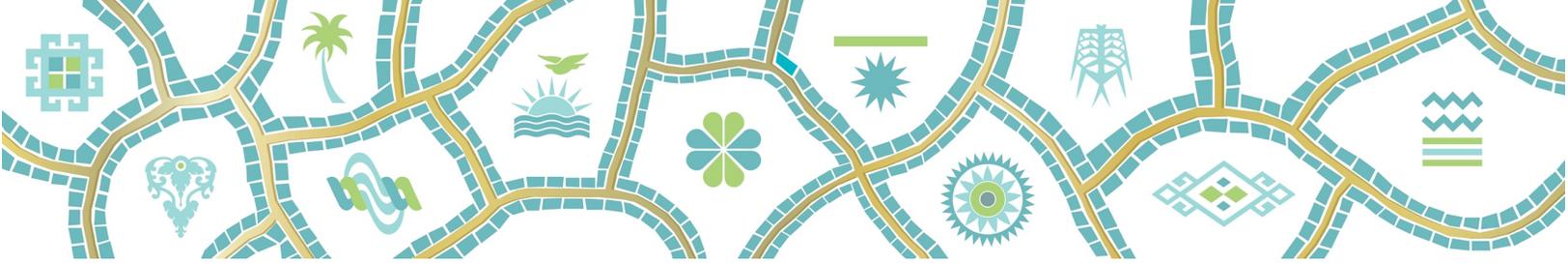


- Clear communication channels are critical; CSOs/NGOs can disseminate information.
- People do not understand the effects of climate change and the need to relocate.
- Services must be available to women, children, people with disabilities – high risk, vulnerable people.

- Most projects tackle climate change effects, but gender and support to other vulnerable groups is undermined.
- Land titles, laws of how to operate are big issues in the Pacific.
- Communicate community resilience in a way that speaks to the cultural roots of the Pacific.
- Integrate communities into the project design. They do not understand the safeguards of ADB projects, so ADB must work closely with a community before a project begins.
- ADB works with governments; civil society and communities are often disregarded in the conversation.
- How can civil society have access to ADB's funds? Or other funds?

NGO FORUM ON ADB - 4 November: 13 Participants from international and national NGOs who are members of the NGO Forum on ADB

- Conflict does not arise from the project itself, but the project officers should know the history and background of the site and surrounding areas prior to entering the country with a project.
- There are powerful tools that can be used for due diligence that will not harm the community in the process.
- Consider also using leverage points and mitigation measures that are in the contract.
- Including proper responses, not reprisals, is also important. The client should be able to respond properly to issues on the ground.
- ADB could be structurally more transparent on the contracts in the FCAS countries, be more communicative about who is the final borrower, what will happen and what is the outcome.
- Countries in conflict should already be on the radar, be prepared for challenges on the ground and be more mindful about misappropriation of funds during crisis or a pandemic.
- Human rights should be core in every FCAS country, should develop specific policies and protocols on human rights defenders to prevent retaliation risks. ADB will also need to respond in a timely manner on any retaliation issues.
- Project-level human rights due diligence is also essential, as with country-level assessments.
- ADB should leave the door open for civil society so that the bank is not operating blindly on the ground.



BILATERAL DONORS CONSULTATIONS

ADB consulted with various bilateral organizations on their current plans and experiences in working in the FCAS and SIDS. Organizations that participated in this first round of consultations include the Canada Global Affairs office, the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Nordic Development Fund (NDF), SDC Switzerland, and the United Kingdom

Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (UK FCDO). Each organizations shared their own learnings and experiences in rolling out strategies for operating in fragile states.

Summary of points discussed

- Traditional development models do not work effectively in unique states with unique vulnerabilities.
- Capacity development is a priority in smaller states and conflict-affected countries that are rebuilding their governments. Capacity supplementation is sometimes necessary.
- Adaptive programming is one of the ways to address the issues and challenges in these countries.
- Multi-disciplinary teams with a range of expertise and perspectives would help to tackle the range of issues and challenges on the ground.
- There are many analysis tools and assessments that could help project design, training staff how to use them is also key.
- Monitoring of the proper use of these tools is also important in gauging its effectiveness.
- A culture change is necessary for the organization to institutionalize a differentiated approach.
- Sharing knowledge with partners will help to build the proper frameworks for international organizations to use.
- Assessments made by different issue departments within an organization would help to evaluate the project design before it is approved and raise all pertinent issues.
- Regular follow up with the government is important to monitor, but also regular follow up with the communities is important to check if the local government is doing their part. Interventions will try to build on the trust between recipients and local government for inclusion and cohesiveness.
- Monitoring and reporting in these countries need to be more flexible to focus on the outcomes.
- Each country has its own specificity, and having a specific and differentiated approach that connects to a long-term broader strategy would help make the interventions more effective for the country recipient.