Institutionalizing Gender Equality: The Experience of the Bangladesh Resident Mission

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has helped advance gender equality and development over the past 10 years across Asia and the Pacific. It is increasingly recognized that adding gender specialists to the staff of selected resident missions (including in Bangladesh) results in more projects tackling gender issues and strengthens the capacity of executing agency staff to bridge gender disparities. The report shows how gender has been integrated successfully into some aspects of Bangladesh policies, strategies, and programming. It also shows what challenges remain. The report aims to identify the success factors that ADB might replicate or strengthen elsewhere.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB's vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries substantially reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region's many successes, it remains home to two thirds of the world's poor: 1.8 billion people who live on less than $2 a day, with 903 million struggling on less than $1.25 a day. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.
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Since the first review of the gender and development (GAD) policy in 2002, there has been growing recognition that having gender specialists in the resident missions of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), including the Bangladesh Resident Mission (BRM), is instrumental in expanding ADB’s portfolio of loans, addressing gender issues, and strengthening the gender capacity of executing agency staff. After the second policy review was released in late 2006, it was agreed that a more focused assessment of internal and external factors contributing to an effective institutionalization of GAD issues within the Bangladesh country policy, strategies, and programs would be useful to strengthen ADB’s approach to gender mainstreaming in other developing member countries. This report analyzes the most critical factors which have contributed to the successful incorporation of GAD issues and approaches in ADB operations in Bangladesh, as identified by ADB staff and other stakeholders.

The authors wish to acknowledge their appreciation for the assistance provided by staff, consultants, and project team members working on the Bangladesh country team and, especially, at BRM. Thanks are also due to the BRM staff, particularly to the former and current Bangladesh Country Directors Hua Du and Paul Heytens and their teams for their encouragement and support. The report was prepared by Helen T. Thomas, GAD consultant, in collaboration with Ferdousi Sultana, social development and gender officer of BRM, and under the supervision of Francesco Tornieri, social development specialist at the Poverty Reduction, Gender and Social Development Division of the Regional Sustainable and Development Department of ADB.
Abbreviations

ADB – Asian Development Bank
BRM – Bangladesh Resident Mission
GAD – gender and development
GAP – gender action plan
LCG WAGE – Local Consultative Sub-Group on Women’s Advancement and Gender Equality
LGED – Local Government Engineering Department
NGO – nongovernment organization
RGA – rapid gender assessment
RSDD – Regional and Sustainable Development Department
SARD – South Asia Department
WID – women in development

NOTE

In this report, "$" refers to US dollars.
During the past 10 years, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has contributed to achievements associated with gender and development (GAD) across Asia and the Pacific. As noted in the first review of its GAD policy in 2002, progress linked to GAD had been uneven in the region, and more consistent efforts were required for full integration of gender concerns in all aspects of ADB operations. Since this 2002 review, there has been growing recognition that having gender specialists in selected resident missions, including the Bangladesh Resident Mission (BRM), was instrumental in expanding ADB’s portfolio of loans, addressing gender issues, and strengthening the gender capacity of executing agency staff. After the second policy review was released in late 2006, it was agreed that a more focused assessment of internal and external factors contributing to an effective institutionalization of GAD issues within the Bangladesh country policy, strategies, and programs would be useful to strengthen ADB’s approach to gender mainstreaming in other developing member countries.

Evidence of the positive trend toward effective gender mainstreaming in the ADB loan portfolio was noted in the 2006 policy review. The review noted, “… by 2004 more than a third of ADB loans either had a gender theme or effectively mainstreamed gender concerns.” This number represents an increase from 15% in 1998. As of December 2007, 50% of loans/grants for Bangladesh have significant gender mainstreaming (i.e., under gender categories I and II), higher than the yearly average of 32% of all ADB loans/grants approved from 1998 to 2007. If projects assigned under gender category III are included, 74% of loans/grants for Bangladesh address gender concerns, compared with the 57% yearly average across ADB.

This report analyzes the factors contributing to the higher-than-average proportion of gender-sensitive loan operations at BRM. Adoption of a gender mainstreaming approach, as required under ADB’s GAD policy, can be influenced by many factors, and this report consolidates the most critical factors as identified by ADB staff and other stakeholders. Progress has also been made with some partners in Bangladesh on institutionalizing factors that support gender mainstreaming, and a case study of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) is presented, which highlights these factors. This report’s underlying objective is to identify which factors might be replicated or strengthened within ADB based on the context, experience, and lessons from Bangladesh.

The consultant traveled to ADB headquarters to interview staff (or former staff) from the Regional and Sustainable Development Department (RSDD) and South Asia Department.

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3 ADB assigns certain categories to projects, with the aim of promoting the systematic integration of gender considerations and for monitoring purposes. Category I (gender and development theme) is based on ADB’s project classification system. Categories II and III were developed by the Poverty Reduction, Gender, and Social Development Division to monitor ADB’s portfolio from a gender perspective.
4 Projects assigned under category I or II under Poverty Reduction, Gender, and Social Development Division guidelines are considered “gender-responsive” loans: ADB, *Implementation Review of the Policy on Gender and Development*, p. 13.
5 Grants included in the count are those funded by Asian Development Fund IX, Pakistan Earthquake Fund, and Asian Tsunami Fund.
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(SARD), who are either still working on operations in Bangladesh or were previously posted to BRM. The consultant then traveled to Bangladesh for interviews with ADB staff (including the social development and gender officer); executing agencies; and other relevant stakeholders, including representatives from development partners and civil society. A review of relevant documents was also conducted.

Rapid gender assessments (RGAs) of 12 loans in four countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, and Pakistan) were undertaken in 2004 as part of the 2006 policy review. The RGAs assessed whether the introduction of project-specific gender action plans (GAPs) and gender strategies improved project implementation, outreach, and results for women when compared with men. The findings of the Bangladesh RGA were also used as part of the analysis for this report.

Gender Mainstreaming: The Process

Many years of research and experience have confirmed the importance of gender equality, not only as a fundamental human right but also as essential to poverty reduction and improved living standards, sustainable inclusive economic growth, and effective and accountable governance. Recognizing that gender equality is intrinsic to achieving national poverty reduction, economic growth, and social development goals, virtually all countries in Asia and the Pacific, including Bangladesh, have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and adopted the Beijing Platform for Action at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. The Millennium Development Goals—endorsed by ADB—also acknowledge, under Goal 3, that women’s empowerment is required to overcome gender-based gaps in progress toward other goals.

Under the Beijing Platform for Action, all governments commit to adopting gender mainstreaming across all policy and program functions, requiring gender equality to become the goal for gender mainstreaming. It also requires that processes be put in place to inform how gender-sensitive policies and programs link to positive change in women’s lives and to achievement of national development goals (e.g., women’s political and economic empowerment and respect for women’s basic rights such as access to health care and freedom from violence). Gender mainstreaming is thus a process contributing to the goal of gender equality.

One way to understand gender mainstreaming as an institutional strategy is to distinguish three different targets or areas for action. An agency such as ADB can strive to promote changes in

(i) the partner country (its institutions, laws, government policies, and programs—all with the eventual goal of supporting equality between women and men);
(ii) development cooperation programs/operations (with developing member countries); and
(iii) the agency itself (its procedures and structures).

Thus, the task of gender mainstreaming has both technical and organizational dimensions, as well as a need to understand and ultimately to change political, economic, and sociocultural aspects of the context in which development is taking place. The following sections explore factors that have contributed to strengthened gender mainstreaming with respect to all three of these targets.

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6 See full list of people met in Appendix 4.
Gender Mainstreaming in Bangladesh

Changes in Social Attitudes and Political Commitment

During the past two decades, Bangladesh has witnessed social and economic changes, creating more opportunities for ADB to support gender mainstreaming. Among generations, social attitudes have changed regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men, with effects on social and economic relations both within the family and the community. Millions of women have rapidly moved into the industrial manufacturing sector—the ready-made garment industry—and are contributing cash to their families for the first time. Large microfinance institutions have been organizing groups and lending small amounts of money to millions of rural women, increasing their productivity, and demonstrating their ability to contribute to economic and community life. ADB has supported stand-alone microfinance projects as well as components in other sector loans. During this same period, more women have been taking positions of responsibility in public life, including two female prime ministers.

More detailed analysis of the clear disparities in human development indicators between men and women has also changed government development policies and programs. The links between the limited enrollment of girls in school and other poor social indicators prompted the government, from the early 1990s, to take on public campaigns to overcome social attitudes toward girls’ education and increase their enrollment in school. ADB, for example, has supported female stipend programs in secondary education sector loans that have discouraged adolescent girls from dropping out of school. The government has also invested in curtailing high maternal mortality ratios and encouraging families’ expenditures toward the health of mothers and female children. Moreover, ADB has incorporated support for maternal and child health into health sector operations over the past 20 years. These combined efforts have brought some success in improving educational achievements and health indicators of women and girls.

Seats have been reserved for women in Parliament since independence, increasing from 15 to 30 seats in the 1980s. Yet arguably the most significant changes in political decision making affecting ordinary women were instigated by the government in the 1998 local elections. Under a 1997 ordinance amendment, one third of the seats were reserved for the direct election of women in the lower tiers of government (at the district and union levels). Apart from the reserved seats, women can also contest for any of the general seats. Although many elected women still face criticism of this new public role, attitudes are changing, and it is increasingly accepted that women have a place in public decision making. ADB has supported training elected women from local levels of government as well as revisions to ordinances to clarify their roles as elected officials.

In addition, there is a strong and highly motivated women’s movement in Bangladesh that has perhaps made the most significant contribution to ensuring that gender mainstreaming remains a government concern. Women-led nongovernment organizations have been pushing for change in women’s societal roles through research, advocacy, and taking direct action where possible—while having to overcome resistance that has often resorted to physical threats and violence. This has added momentum for development partners to push the government to address critical gender issues.

Government Policies and Structures for Gender Mainstreaming

Since independence, a structure within the government to address women’s needs has evolved, through the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (established in 1978) and corresponding representation through the Department of Women at district and lower levels of government. Gender mainstreaming requires an analysis of policies and programs
to assess effects on women and men. For the ministry to oversee this process of policy and program gender analysis, it needed officially sanctioned contact points within line ministries. Hence, women-in-development (WID) focal points in line ministries were established in 1990 to coordinate gender activities across all government functions. District- and subdistrict-level WID coordination committees were also set up to communicate gender needs from the community upward to policy makers.

Following its commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, the government carried out extensive consultations with representatives of the women’s movement and civil society organizations, and conducted a strategic needs assessment to gender mainstream 12 sector line ministries. Based on these findings, the National Policy for Advancement of Women was approved in 1997, followed by the National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women. These commitments have created a structure through which gender mainstreaming can be carried out. At the same time, gender equality as an objective was integrated into main policy frameworks for the government, including the Fifth Five Year Plan (1997–2002) and subsequent national poverty reduction strategies. ADB has sought to endorse these policies through dialogue in preparation of the country strategy and program (now the country partnership strategy). The government’s gender policy commitments have also been used to rationalize the incorporation of gender components in loans.

**Gender Mainstreaming Capacity Development**

During the past 25 years, the development of gender mainstreaming tools and the preparation of position papers on key gender issues have also led to greater awareness of the need to incorporate gender concerns into the mainstream of government policies and programs. More data are available that have, in turn, increased knowledge of the underlying constraints women face. For ADB, gender components in project preparatory technical assistance have contributed to this knowledge base.

Over time, the role of WID focal points has been better understood within line ministries. If this structure is to facilitate gender mainstreaming, WID focal points require support and skills within each ministry to carry out gender analysis and monitor related activities. With support from development partners, including ADB, capacity building and training for gender mainstreaming has taken place within many executing agencies from a range of ministries. Many challenges remain, however, before this structure works effectively. A few line ministries have assumed leadership in building support among their staff for gender mainstreaming. Among them is LGED, which is part of the prominent Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives. LGED is an important ADB partner, and this report includes a case study reviewing the factors that have contributed to its support for gender mainstreaming.

**Wider Support for Gender Mainstreaming**

International development partners have also contributed to consolidating support for gender mainstreaming among government and civil society organizations. In the early 1990s, this support was provided on an ad hoc basis and tended to be characterized by broad statements of support with limited concrete experience of what may work. Greater effort in recent years has been made to harmonize the support from development partners and to exchange lessons and good practices with governments. A forum for such exchanges was created under the Local Consultative Sub-Group on Women’s Advancement and Gender Equality (LCG WAGE). The focus of these exchanges has been to enhance policy advocacy on women’s rights and facilitate gender mainstreaming in development cooperation. LCG WAGE facilitates coordination and collaboration among line ministries and development partners.

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9 Revised terms of reference for LCG WAGE are under consideration. The social development and gender officer provided inputs to the terms of reference in Appendix 3.
among its members, and maintains a common database of current WID and gender-related activities, thus enhancing development cooperation efforts. ADB is perceived as a knowledge producer among LCG WAGE members,\(^\text{10}\) drawing from its experience of working with a broad range of line ministries.

**Conclusion**

Wider social changes taking place in Bangladesh have provided momentum toward efforts by the women’s movement to ensure government policies and program mainstream gender concerns. Some argue that changes within some branches of government have been too slow to address emerging gender issues, such as trafficking of women and children; and there has been resistance (sometimes violent) to women having more influence in political decision making. Nonetheless, an institutional structure is in place within ADB partner executing agencies for gender mainstreaming, supported by policy statements and financial and human resources. Many of these resources are still provided by international development partners, but some examples of commitment of government funds and personnel are emerging.

**ADB Operations in Bangladesh**

Under its 1998 GAD policy, ADB adopted gender mainstreaming as a key strategy to promote gender equity within its policies, strategies, and programs. The policy places an emphasis on actions in several areas:

(i) conducting upstream work, including economic and sector studies, country strategy and programs, and policy dialogue;
(ii) increasing the number of loans that directly address gender disparities and integrate gender concerns into ADB’s loan portfolio;
(iii) assisting developing member countries in building capacity for more gender-responsive policy making and implementing commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action; and
(iv) addressing emerging issues for women in the region.

This section focuses on the extent to which ADB operations in Bangladesh have adopted a gender mainstreaming approach, as reflected in its overall country strategy and program,\(^\text{11}\) but particularly by increasing the number of loans that directly address gender disparities and integrate gender concerns.

ADB’s policy provides the basic rationale for gender mainstreaming within its operations in Bangladesh, as well as links to poverty reduction and inclusive economic growth. Technical inputs for upstream gender analysis work conducted by BRM were complemented by support from RSDD and SARD\(^\text{12}\) at ADB headquarters. Based on this analysis, a gender strategy has been an integral part of the country strategy and program, with a country gender assessment first conducted in 2001 and revised in 2004. This has provided background analysis to strengthen the overall country strategy and program and prepare a gender strategy.\(^\text{13}\)

In recent years, Bangladesh’s country strategy and programs have placed a priority

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\(^{10}\) Per interviews with gender and development focal points from the World Bank and bilateral members of LCG WAGE during the fieldwork for this report.


\(^{12}\) ADB has five regional departments, one dedicated to each of Asia and the Pacific’s five regions. RSDD operates as an internal support link and knowledge center within ADB, focusing on facilitating cross-fertilization of ideas and experiences among regional departments; and capturing, consolidating, storing, and disseminating knowledge obtained through regional operations and by following international developments.

\(^{13}\) A developing member country’s gender strategy specifies how ADB intends to address the gender issues highlighted in the country gender assessment and how the overall gender objectives will be achieved through ADB’s program of assistance. The gender strategy indicates the sectors and subsectors for which gender initiatives are required, the operational approaches, and the actions to achieve strategic GAD outcomes. See ADB. 2006. *Operations Manual. OM C2/OP: Operational Procedures*. Manila, para. 6.
on infrastructure sector loans, and some subsectors have shown potential to have direct contact with communities and cover several types of infrastructure developments (e.g., water and sanitation, secondary and rural roads, flood protection, and slum clearance). Projects that have direct contact with beneficiary communities offer more opportunities to demonstrate why and how women can benefit. The proportion of gender-sensitive loans within these sectors has increased over recent years. Large-scale infrastructure developments in areas such as energy generation provide fewer opportunities for gender mainstreaming, unless components include energy distribution. This lack is reflected in Bangladesh, in which these types of loans cannot yet be categorized as gender-sensitive.

ADB’s Gender, Social Development and Civil Society Division assigns certain categories to projects with the aim of promoting the systematic integration of gender considerations and for monitoring purposes. Category I is based on ADB’s project classification system, which includes GAD as a theme. A project can select a GAD thematic classification if the initial poverty and social assessment indicates that the project has potential to correct gender disparities or significantly mainstream gender concerns, or is likely to have substantial gender impact, a detailed gender assessment needs to be undertaken during project design to prepare a project-specific gender plan. A project can be assigned up to three themes.

Currently, Bangladesh has 13 projects with a GAD thematic classification in sectors that include social development (education, health) and infrastructure.14 Several GAD theme-classified loans are from the infrastructure sector, including the Urban Government and Infrastructure Improvement Sector Project, the Southwest Area Integrated Water Resources Planning and Management Project, and the Second Rural Infrastructure Improvement Project.15 Appendix 1 lists the loans and Asian Development Fund IX grants approved for Bangladesh from 1998 to 2007 with assigned gender categories.

Projects are included under category II when (i) the social analysis conducted during project preparation includes careful consideration of gender issues, (ii) the project includes several design features to facilitate women’s participation in activities supported by the project and/or women’s access to project/program benefits, and (iii) these design features are supported by appropriate loan covenants. Most projects under this category do not address gender disparities as directly as those classified with a GAD theme. Eleven projects are classified as category II in Bangladesh, including infrastructure sector, small and medium-sized enterprise sector development, secondary education sector development, agribusiness development, and crop diversification projects.

A project included under category III is considered to have the potential to provide some gender benefits if it has either of the following features: (i) consideration of gender issues in the social analysis carried out during project preparation, at least to identify women’s concerns in project areas and likely benefits/effects of the project for them; or (ii) minor design elements or small project components that benefit women (e.g., a small grant fund). These projects generally fall under two types: (i) those that have potential but limited gender analysis, and few or no specific design features to optimize benefits for women; and (ii) those that are unlikely to provide direct and substantial benefits to women (e.g., road or railway projects), but in which effort was made during project preparation to identify possible positive and negative impacts on women and to provide

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14 Despite the high proportion of infrastructure sector loans, the subsectors covered—such as urban development, water and sanitation, secondary and rural roads, flood protection, and slum clearance—offer potential for direct contact with communities and cover several types of infrastructure developments. Projects with direct contact with beneficiary communities offer more opportunities to demonstrate why and how women can benefit.

some indirect benefits or mitigating features in the project design or resettlement plan. Nine projects in Bangladesh are classified as category III; they include infrastructure sector (road maintenance and improvement), clean fuel, and improvement of capital market and insurance sector governance projects.

Only nine projects from the power and railway subsectors are not classified under any of the gender categories. However, these loans are much larger, and although they represent only 24% of the number of projects, they cover 35% of total loan amounts.

To summarize, of the total number of loans/grants for Bangladesh approved from 1998 to 2007:

- 24% have a GAD theme (category I),
- 26% have effective gender mainstreaming (category II),
- 24% have some gender benefits (category III), and only
- 26% have no gender elements.

Compared with the entire ADB portfolio of loans and grants approved during this period, Bangladesh has a higher proportion of projects that either have a gender theme or are considered to be effectively mainstreaming gender issues. For ADB as a whole, 32% of approved projects from 1998 to 2007 are classified as having significant gender mainstreaming (i.e., categories I and II). For Bangladesh, 50% of projects fall under these categories. Section II considers specific factors that have contributed to these gender mainstreaming achievements in more detail.

Institutional Structures for Gender Mainstreaming within ADB

The proposed actions for gender mainstreaming set out in ADB’s GAD policy require institutional changes, which include the acquisition of gender-related skills at ADB headquarters and resident missions to provide technical inputs for all operations. Mechanisms, such as the classifications for loan projects discussed previously, were also put in place to promote systematic integration of gender considerations in all operations and the subsequent monitoring of progress against objectives.

A targeted approach was adopted for the provision of technical support through the placement of long-term national gender consultants in six resident missions under a regional technical assistance grant. These consultant positions in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Viet Nam were later converted into national officer positions. At the same time, the number of social development officers at ADB headquarters with gender responsibilities was increased in regional divisions, including SARD, supported by RSDD gender specialists. Based on the structured cycle of policy/strategy and program/project activities, the roles and responsibilities of these positions at resident missions were designed to complement inputs from dedicated gender staff at ADB headquarters.

At BRM, the social development and gender officer has sought to address all four suggested areas for action emphasized in the GAD policy. She has worked on upstream analysis for the country strategy and program as well as gender mainstreaming to increase the proportion of gender-sensitive loans. As project fact-finding and processing missions from ADB headquarters begin analytical work at BRM, the social development and gender officer provides field-based gender analysis and lessons while maintaining a flow of information regarding suggested actions and design features, with headquarters staff facilitating the monitoring of gender components as projects complete the processing and approval stages. This process has contributed to increasing the proportion of gender-sensitive loans (under categories I and II) within BRM’s portfolio to above average across ADB as a whole.

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16 ADB. 1999. Regional Technical Assistance for Enhancing Gender and Development Capacity in Developing Member Countries. Manila (RETA-5835).
17 A more detailed discussion of design features is included in section II.
Once under implementation and delegated to the resident mission, as is mostly the case in Bangladesh, the social development and gender officer remains in close contact with project implementation officers and assists in monitoring the implementation of GAPs and other gender-related project components. RSDD staff members maintain overall monitoring responsibility and assess trends in gender-sensitive project achievements.

Limited technical capacity for gender mainstreaming within executing agencies was identified early on as a constraint to full implementation of gender components. Approaches to developing capacity have been tested by BRM in many sectors and now form a regular part of the process of developing GAPs and implementing related components. In most cases, this also requires allocating a specific budget for gender consultants and carrying out required studies to understand the context within which these components are to be implemented.

Through strategic use of technical assistance funds during project preparation stages and as complementary components of other loans, some emerging issues for women in Bangladesh have also been addressed. For example, in 2003–2004, through a component of the project preparatory technical assistance for the Social Protection for Disadvantaged Women and Children Project, support was provided to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to develop the National Anti-Trafficking Strategic Plan for Action, published in 2005. This initiative brought together several national stakeholders and other development partners, and reinforced ADB’s commitment to this priority gender issue.

Factors Contributing to Gender Mainstreaming Progress in Bangladesh

Several studies have noted that there are technical and organizational dimensions to gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming requires not only an understanding of factors that might constrain equal participation and benefits for women and men but also organizational structures to facilitate timely implementation of specific components to address these constraints. Organizational characteristics that have proved to be successful include those that foster awareness and support for taking on new—and sometimes risky—approaches to work that incorporate gender dimensions, good and timely flow of information regarding progress on gender to encourage innovative thinking, and some form of incentive or value placed on achieving gender mainstreaming objectives.19

At the Bangladesh Resident Mission (BRM), as in other resident missions, technical understanding of how to promote gender equity has increased, and institutional structures to facilitate gender mainstreaming have been put in place within the government and ADB. The question remains, however, about what specific factors have contributed to the higher-than-average proportion of gender-sensitive loans in Bangladesh. The following section considers factors identified by ADB staff and key stakeholders as important to BRM’s progress.

Loan Processing

ADB’s Operations Manual states that “gender considerations constitute an essential element of loan and technical assistance operations.” During project design, the required initial poverty and social assessment provides a basic analysis of the “potential to correct gender disparities or significantly mainstream gender concerns, or [if the project] is likely to have substantial gender impact.”20 The requirement of a detailed gender assessment if any of these characteristics exists provides considerable impetus to identify entry points and start a dialogue with project partners. It also provides structure to the gender technical inputs during the early stages of loan processing.

In practice, a project design team might not be open to incorporating a gender action plan (GAP) from the fact-finding stages. This makes it more difficult for the social development and gender officer to provide relevant and effective gender elements for all project components and participate in early discussions with the executing agency and relevant ministries to demonstrate why gender elements are important. Although support from social development specialists of the South Asia Department (SARD) and gender specialists of the Regional and Sustainable Development

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19 Adapted from Assessment for Gender Management System developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat (cited in Kabeer op. cit.) and Performance Assessment Framework for gender mainstreaming for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (CIDA. 2005. CIDA’s Framework for Assessing Gender Equality Results. Gatineau, Quebec).
20 A more detailed list of criteria is in Appendix 2.
Department (RSDD) sometimes proved vital for the BRM social development and gender officer’s participation in project design, the key entry point usually was when the design team was on a mission. This required the social development and gender officer to carefully plan her time if several missions were taking place at the same time.

Executing agencies noted that ADB is identified as taking gender seriously because of the incorporation of full GAP implementation into loan assurances. Several executing agency project directors noted that ADB was a pioneer in incorporating assurances into the structure of the loan agreement to ensure that gender is integrated and monitored. They further stated that such assurances were acceptable only because ADB offers gender and development (GAD) technical support in the design phase and budget allowances.

**Gender Action Plan Design**

Several criteria emerged from the experience at BRM for a GAP to be implemented successfully.

- A structured plan that carefully analyzes gender issues directly related to the project’s objectives and for each component, which highlights the importance of immediately demonstrating that a gender equality approach will bring results to women and contribute to achieving overall project objectives in a more equitable and efficient manner.
- A step-by-step approach that addresses gender concerns with outputs for each step, building confidence among team members as each output is achieved.
- Identification of necessary resources (human and financial) to carry out activities.
- Detailed capacity building (or strengthening) required for the GAP’s implementation, both with executing agency team members and project partners/beneficiaries (e.g., local government officers and community organizations).
- A monitoring plan linked to project logframe outputs.

Despite the requirement in the *Operations Manual* for detailed gender assessment in a loan design, in practice, the BRM social development and gender officer has refined this requirement to a two-page GAP for inclusion in the core appendix of the report and recommendation of the President, with a more detailed analysis and GAP provided in a supplementary appendix, as needed. There are also stated provisions in each GAP for the elaboration of each element of the GAP during early project implementation stages to revalidate the approach and resources allocated. The shift to performance-based criteria for loan tranche release can also provide an opportunity to build in further targets for GAP implementation with incentives for fund release, which has been tested with the subsequent Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Sector Project.

As indicated in the second GAD policy review in 2006, most ADB loans with a GAD theme or effective gender mainstreaming were traditional investment loans. However, an increasing number of sector and policy-based loans have been approved with GAD themes or gender mainstreaming characteristics. The structure of ADB-financed projects/programs also became more complex, as reflected in a large number of sector development program loans, which include both policy and investment components. Several of these loans have GAD themes or gender mainstreaming characteristics, and demonstrate the possibilities of combining gender-related policy reform with gender-responsive project designs. The proportion of sector and policy-based loans is also growing in Bangladesh, e.g., in the small and medium-sized enterprise and power sectors, but the nature of these sectors has limited potential for gender responsiveness.
Flexibility in Gender Action Plan Implementation

This has been identified as a contributing factor to achieving gender-related results in rapid gender assessments. The need for flexibility has created tension in some countries, in which disbursement schedules have been threatened, as elements of GAP implementation (as well as other social inclusion elements) have brought about delays. Project directors from executing agencies such as the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) noted that a GAP has to be designed hypothetically and then reassessed on a regular basis throughout implementation to improve elements. Community resistance to challenging gender relations may take different forms or may not occur at all. Women may come up with new ways to smooth implementation as they gain confidence and knowledge of expectations from other project components. Such factors cannot necessarily be predicted. Although GAP elements may have to be implemented in an innovative way, there is a limit to the flexibility that can be expected from other project elements.

Other Technical Assistance Grants

Since 1999, several technical assistance grants have been made available to support gender mainstreaming. Under these funds, managed by ADB headquarters, gender technical resources have been put in place, and funds have been made available to pilot gender mainstreaming approaches related to specific sectors or loans. These funds have also been used to explore emerging women’s issues. BRM has been able to draw on these funds in several strategic cases to test approaches to gender mainstreaming that have later been picked up and funded through loans. Regional Technical Assistance for Enhancing Gender and Development Capacity in Developing Member Countries funded GAD training for LGED senior officials when gender components were first proposed in their loans and for a prominent nongovernment organization (NGO), Nari Uddug Kendra, to test approaches for incorporating gender issues in two municipalities. The lessons learned were later considered in the design of the Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Sector Project. The legal advocacy and empowerment activities funded under the regional technical assistance at the village level were piloted by the legal advocacy NGO Ain O Shalish Kendra, with lessons learned applied to local governance components of other projects. FemCom Bangladesh was supported to produce a film on gender and arsenic that has been used in several integrated rural infrastructure projects. The regional technical assistance funds were also used when a funding gap was identified in a project to support women’s participation in various activities. For example, they were used to train female-headed NGOs on financial management that were eligible for Palli Karma–Sahayak Foundation funding, ensuring that women-headed microfinance organizations could qualify alongside mainstream NGOs to participate in loan activities.

Gender Specialist Support within the Bangladesh Resident Mission

The support provided by the social development and gender officer was identified by ADB staff, executing agencies, and other stakeholders as instrumental for progress on gender mainstreaming that has been achieved at BRM. The characteristics of this support identified during interviews include the following observations.

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21 The Palli Karma–Sahayak Foundation is the apex of microcredit funding organizations in Bangladesh, mandated to mobilize funds in the form of grants, loans, and contributions from a wide variety of sources that include the government, private individuals and organizations, foreign governments, international donors, lending agencies, and capital markets.
(i) Placing the social development and gender officer position within the programming unit (see Figure 1) provides the potential to work with loan processing and policy dialogue, and have direct accountability to the country director—a signal to other BRM staff and partners of the importance of gender mainstreaming. This also indicates that the social development and gender officer must work on projects in the early formulation stage, because concepts move from the pipeline and sector road maps to fact-finding missions. It also enables the social development and gender officer to provide support if required to project preparatory technical assistance teams. Project GADs developed at this early stage have been the most effective in achieving GAD results that contribute directly to the main project objectives.

(ii) The social development and gender officer is also tasked specifically to provide support to staff (including project information officers) in the project management unit for delegated projects and technical assistance as required. This is important because there is a large portfolio of delegated projects in Bangladesh with often urgent requirements for support. The social development and gender officer is the only position in BRM with this potential to work with staff in both units. Several BRM staff also noted how important it is to make an immediate link between the social development and gender officer and executing agency GAD focal points (consultant or other project team member). Several project information officers have encouraged the social development and gender officer to establish close communication with executing agency staff so that collegial relationships can be developed for working together to overcome implementation issues quickly and positively.

(iii) The transfer of the gender specialist position from consultant to national officer demonstrated additional recognition from senior management of the need for consistent technical support, as required under ADB’s GAD policy. Under Regional Technical Assistance for Enhancing Gender and Development Capacity in Developing Member Countries, a gender specialist consultant was first contracted in July 1999. Responsibility for gender mainstreaming was clearly identified in the terms of reference and reporting lines to both the country director (responsible overall for BRM operations) and ADB headquarters gender specialists (RSDD), who are responsible for implementation of the regional technical assistance. This ensured that the country director was informed of the gender specialist consultant’s contributions to the project management unit’s overall work and the administration of all resident mission-based consultants. This position was converted to national officer, social development and gender in 2002, at which time responsibility for NGO partnerships was included in the terms of reference. It was thought at that time that there would be insufficient work for a full-time gender specialist national officer.

(iv) The manner in which the social development and gender officer provides technical support was also identified as very important. Gender mainstreaming raises sensitive and sometimes visceral issues. It was noted that the national officer took a nonthreatening and “helping
attitude” to her relationships with ADB staff and executing agencies. The social development and gender officer herself noted she had to be strategic and tackle each sensitive issue instead of trying to change everyone's attitude on every point. This meant compromise was necessary to win over general support, while returning to some issues after confidence in her support and the potential for gender to bring positive results were established. She helped projects identify good practices and, with a step-by-step approach, achieve GAP objectives. As each step was accomplished, team members felt encouraged to move on to the next. If steps were too big or time-consuming, many technical staff members without a social analysis background felt discouraged. However, providing examples of proven good practices also motivated project teams, as well as ADB staff members, to think how the next steps might be taken by applying these ideas, increasing the sense of ownership from the executing agency team and other stakeholders. For this approach to be successful, the social development and gender officer had to understand the dynamics of each sector, the realistic potential of executing agencies to achieve gender results, and the role of each project component in the context of the overall project objectives/results. Much of this information was gleaned from the overview perspective available to the officer as part of the programming unit.

This strategic and supportive approach was possible only because of the collaborative attitudes of BRM
staff members who encouraged the social development and gender officer to develop appropriate and realistic inputs for projects. Opening project files for analysis, inviting the officer to meetings with stakeholders, and keeping her informed of project events helped identify relevant and practical GAD components.

The approach that the social development and gender officer has taken since 1999 started by identifying and working with those staff members most interested in gender mainstreaming in their projects and in sectors where openings readily appeared. The first three projects on which the officer worked were already being implemented, but nonetheless, both the project information officer and executing agency officers showed interest. In the Third Rural Infrastructure Development Project,\(^\text{23}\) the first project to adopt a project-specific GAP, women’s market centers were constructed as part of the renovations to local market buildings. With training provided to female traders and workshops with local officials, women who had never before sold goods or services in public markets were accepted. These traders soon started to earn income and, hence, become less vulnerable to poverty. The implementation of this component encouraged the executing agency to explore options to involve more women in other project components. In fact, the project director noted that the Prime Minister actually singled out this GAD project component as being the way of the future for small-scale infrastructures.

These early successes were then used to demonstrate to other project information officers how taking a gender approach in their projects through a practical and realistic GAP would contribute to achieving overall results. Missions for loan preparation also accepted inputs from the social development and gender officer more readily when they noted the practical nature of the early GAPs.

(v) The increased proportion of projects mainstreaming gender concerns within the Bangladesh portfolio is now placing more demands on the time of the social development and gender officer, especially because she is now seeking to work with more challenging sectors, such as rail and energy, and bring more projects from category III to category II, with effective gender mainstreaming elements. In addition, the officer has to address other social issues such as children’s rights, inclusiveness, and participation and civil society. Experience has also shown that technical inputs are not only required during project design but also for ongoing monitoring during implementation.\(^\text{24}\) Recognition of this increasing pressure on the officer’s time was acknowledged by the contracting in 2006 of a gender consultant under Regional Technical Assistance for Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.\(^\text{25}\)

This work is now to be replicated as GAD training in integrated water resource management projects. In August 2007, a consultant was contracted to provide technical support under the guidance of the social development and gender


\(^{24}\) This was confirmed in the findings of the RGAs and documented in ADB. 2005 Gender Equality Results in ADB Projects: Bangladesh Country Report.

officer through the regional technical assistance. The consultant is providing technical support for implementing the loan and technical assistance projects in selected sectors. The inputs include executing agency capacity building, development or elaboration of a GAP where needed, and implementation and monitoring of the plan.

**Learning Readily from Success**

Several ADB staff members noted how learning from gender successes in nontraditional sectors, such as rural infrastructure (i.e., nonsocial sector), encouraged them to see how this approach could be applied elsewhere. This learning atmosphere has been supported by recent country directors at BRM and SARD senior management.

Documents and case studies of good practices were developed with support from RSDD, and relevant analysis was provided in the country gender assessment for Bangladesh. These documents and tools were most useful for the social development and gender officer and project gender specialists.

The increased attention to gender mainstreaming also coincided with a shift in focus within ADB to address capacity gaps within partner developing member country agencies to improve governance of infrastructure investments and promote sustainability. This provided an important entry point for including women in more accountable governance at the community level, reinforced by pressure from the government to increase the number of women participating in political decision making.

Increasing focus on improved governance provided a strong rationale for working with agency-wide GAP capacity development events. Several project information officers have made provisions for workshops that bring together project teams from different loans within one executing agency to exchange experiences on gender mainstreaming, building capacity, and generally promoting a learning environment. These workshops also build confidence between ADB and executing agencies to try innovative approaches for addressing challenges inherent to some gender components. This has also consolidated progress with key partners such as LGED and the Bangladesh Water Development Board.

Capacity building has also been encouraged through international peer learning. For example, project directors noted how much they learned for the design of the Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Sector Project from a Sri Lanka case study regarding blending infrastructure and community mobilization components. Workshops bringing together project directors from different countries—but from the same sectors—were also considered highly successful by several project directors. Support from project information officers for capacity-building opportunities with executing agencies has consolidated progress with key partners and for training of government and elected officials and other key stakeholders on GAP implementation.

**Flow of Information**

As noted previously, a series of institutional supports has been in place at ADB headquarters and resident missions to encourage gender mainstreaming. The social development and gender officer at BRM noted that a clear and timely flow of information (outlined in Figure 2) among BRM and gender specialists in RSDD and SARD has facilitated requests for additional support and new ideas for capacity development from other countries and agencies. Since 2007, regular conference calls between BRM and ADB headquarters is an example of an improvement to this flow of information. Similarly, annual workshops with all GAD specialists from different resident missions and ADB headquarters have facilitated further exchange of ideas and good practices, as well as built confidence among the group regarding what is often a challenging job.

BRM staff noted the social development and gender officer’s proactive approach to
exchanging ideas among different projects was an important impetus for them to try new ideas. As noted previously, this flow of information is facilitated by the placement of the social development and gender officer within the programming unit with an explicit role and responsibilities extending to the project management unit.

**Figure 2: Information Flow Chart for the Social Development and Gender Officer**

Legend
- Information flow in Bangladesh Resident Mission
- Information flow for social development and gender officer/national officer

CSO = civil society organization, LCG WAGE = Local Consultative Sub-Group on Women’s Advancement and Gender Equality, NGO = nongovernment organization, NO–GS = national officer–gender specialist

Source: Author.
Local Government Engineering Department Case Study

The Local Government Engineering Department

Are there actions taken by partner government organizations or executing agencies that can lead to sustained institutional change, with evidence of wider gender mainstreaming beyond ADB-supported projects? To illustrate examples of gender mainstreaming changes within a partner agency, a key Bangladesh Resident Mission (BRM) partner, the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), was examined. Since 1999, technical and organizational factors have evolved within LGED that have sustained gender mainstreaming and contributed to gender-related results from loan projects and beyond.

LGED is mandated under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Local Government Division. LGED’s functions are to provide technical support to rural and urban local government institutions as well as to the planning and implementation of infrastructure development projects in rural and urban areas, which aim to improve the communication and transport network, generate employment, and reduce poverty.

LGED’s programming is organized around three major divisions: (i) rural development and institutions, (ii) small-scale water resources, and (iii) urban governance and development. It is headquartered in Dhaka, and it has 10 regional offices and 64 districts and upazilas (subdistricts), providing an extensive reach to all regions of the country. LGED is recognized as an innovative government institution in Bangladesh.

When decentralization was evolving in the 1990s, LGED undertook additional responsibilities to support the governance of infrastructure investments. At that time, senior managers recognized that LGED’s mandate

Chronology and Steps Taken by the Local Government Engineering Department

- Project-specific gender action plans (GAPs) developed in Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)—implemented rural, urban, and water sectors (1999–2000).
- Gender and development (GAD) forum established and convened by LGED additional chief engineer (August 2000).
- GAD guidelines developed by a committee established by the GAD forum to cover rural, urban, and water sectors.
- Training-of-trainers courses organized for LGED senior officers, including project directors (August 2000).
- Training of trainers courses organized for mid-level LGED officers (August 2002).
- Training manual for a gender sensitization course developed to guide LGED officers to train project staff.
- Research study undertaken to assess how gender issues are addressed in LGED projects (2002). Key findings included the lack of systematic use of sex-disaggregated data in the LGED management information system and reporting and adequate documentation of good practices.
- Gender training for project staff institutionalized in LGED projects.
- Gender-based monitoring system institutionalized at both institutional and program/project levels in 2006.
- LGED senior staff invited as members of the ADB’s External Forum on Gender and Development (2007).

Source: Author.
must change from a technical institution solely concerned with infrastructure to one that takes into account infrastructure users and how the infrastructure can be managed to meet their needs. This change coincided with ADB’s increased focus on improving the governance of infrastructure investments, requiring stronger buy-in from local communities and government bodies for investment sustainability. LGED recognized that “[w]e are not just bricks and mortar; we learned that we need to be working with people. We then earned the capacity to address soft [non-engineering] issues as well.”

**Working with ADB on Gender Mainstreaming**

In 1999, the newly contracted gender specialist at BRM started to work on identifying gender entry points in projects from all three LGED subsectors. By 2000, the first gender action plan (GAP) was prepared and adopted by the Third Rural Infrastructure Development Project team. Within months, GAPs were also developed and adopted by the executing agencies of the Secondary Town Infrastructure Development Project and the First Small-Scale Water Resources Development Project.

By 2002, ADB noted that a lack of capacity within LGED was hindering implementation of the GAPs, so training on gender and development (GAD) for executing agency staff was offered. That same year, LGED developed its first gender mainstreaming strategy across the whole agency with a 5-year work plan, through assistance from other development partners. As new loans were processed, technical assistance funds were used to test different approaches to gender mainstreaming, and lessons were incorporated into project designs.

Over the next few years, several project directors and other project team members attended international and ADB workshops that explored gender mainstreaming experiences in similar subsectors. Senior LGED staff members were also invited to provide training on gender mainstreaming in other countries and participate in other gender-related events at ADB headquarters. In 2007, LGED conducted an internal review of progress on its institutional GAP and developed a new strategy or agency-wide GAP from now until 2015.

LGED recognizes that ADB has triggered growing support for gender mainstreaming across the division. Based on this partnership, the following characteristics have been identified as having facilitated and sustained gender mainstreaming. These characteristics, providing insight into the institutional changes adopted by LGED that have sustained results that benefit women, are discussed in the following sections.

**High-level management commitment.** Clearly, few senior managers consistently supported not only the incorporation of “soft issues” into their work but also required that these social issues include gender dimensions. A commitment to gender and social dimensions is now endorsed through a monthly high-level committee at LGED (involving 15 ministries) to discuss progress on all projects, not only those supported by ADB. Project directors are accountable for progress on gender components through regular monitoring reports to this committee. Higher levels of policy makers and legislators now recognize LGED as an experienced agency working on gender issues in local government. For example, LGED was recently asked for recommendations on how to improve ordinances governing women’s representation at the district and subdistrict levels. It was suggested that women be elected to more specific wards to give them a more clear-cut constituency.

ADB recognized excellent senior management support for gender in the efforts of Wahidur Rahman, who was the first LGED project director to approve and implement a GAP and is now the superintendent of engineering projects. He has recently been appointed to the ADB External Forum on Gender and Development. Such recognition is widely admired by other LGED staff and reinforces the importance of gender issues.

**Institutionalized structure for gender mainstreaming.** LGED developed a gender strategy for 2002–2007, with support from
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the Embassy of the Netherlands, to review experiences and provide training and awareness of gender issues to staff. Because this strategy has now expired, LGED established its own process to assess progress and develop a new strategy without external support. The new strategy is considered by staff to be an LGED-wide GAP for its work from 2007 until 2015. In a 2007 workshop, it was agreed that all projects must have GAD components with monitoring mechanisms, set out in ADB-style GAPs. In other words, LGED is carrying GAPs now from project to project, applying the same principles of design early in project formulation, with flexible implementation to facilitate improvements as practical opportunities and challenges emerge. Progress on GAP implementation must be reported regularly, and data must be collected at the district level on a systematic basis. GAD component guidelines also stipulate that in project design, each component must be analyzed regarding how women can be involved—even components such as procurement, in which women can be employed. Thus, it is fair to conclude that gender has been mainstreamed and institutionalized in LGED’s prime mandate and functions.

Developing appropriate technical gender skills. Contracting suitable gender advisors to work with project teams was initially a challenge for LGED. Yet skills are growing in Bangladesh, with more interest from women, as well as men, who have previously worked with nongovernment and community-based organizations. At a broader level, LGED also recognized that for all social issues to be addressed comprehensively in its work, sociologist positions and community organizer positions are required as regular members of its project teams. This acknowledged the need for different skills to ensure community participation effectively, as engineering personnel do not have all necessary skills. The creation of sociologist and community organizer positions clearly indicates that LGED identified a constraint that was addressed with internal changes and resources. These positions have now been regularized in LGED budgets, but filling the sociologist positions in some districts has been difficult.

Testing approaches to gender mainstreaming. LGED was willing to incorporate suggestions from the BRM social development and gender officer to pilot ideas for gender components, e.g., the ADB trust fund that supported women’s market center pilots in the Third Rural Infrastructure Development Project.

Working with women. LGED staff recognized the need to promote buy-in from local community leaders—as well as women—to participate in project activities. This has been refined, for example, to working with local officials when selecting women to participate in components, identifying destitute women to be offered employment opportunities first in construction components, or identifying women with interest and potential to take up market stalls and small business opportunities in women’s market sections. LGED recognized that it must look beyond infrastructure components to the many possible ways to bring people into the project. Overall, LGED staff members seem to be more used to working out how to incorporate gender issues in all projects.

Based on the experiences at LGED, the ADB social development and gender officer is working with the Bangladesh Water Development Board. Gender training has been conducted, and an overall gender strategy has been developed. It is too early to identify changes in approaches to project design and implementation, however.
Conclusion

This review of gender mainstreaming progress at the Bangladesh Resident Mission (BRM) demonstrates that specific factors contributed to success in some areas of ADB operations. Once a project is closed, many challenges remain, however, to sustain institutional changes within partner agencies that facilitate gender mainstreaming.

This report illustrates the importance of raising gender issues during early stages of loan preparation, and of ADB demonstrating how gender mainstreaming can maximize project benefits to both genders when project components are discussed. It may be argued that the selection of sectors in country strategy and programs can either facilitate or hinder the potential impacts of operations on gender equity. Gender mainstreaming experience is growing in what were once considered to be gender-neutral sectors, such as rail or power. Introducing the importance of potential gender benefits—during initial dialogue concerning project scope and as the sector road maps are developed—is vital if such operations are to incorporate elements with more direct links to communities and users.

To facilitate policy dialogue during the early stages of sector and subsector selection with partner governments, solid knowledge of topics’ gender dimensions is required. The social development and gender officer must be aware of the priorities to be raised in these discussions, with sufficient time and resources (including technical assistance research funds, in some cases) to explore potential gender dimensions. This will ensure that gender technical inputs are relevant and practical.

ADB must proactively harmonize development planning with development partners to maximize exchanges of learning and knowledge. The Local Consultative Sub-Group on Women’s Advancement and Gender Equality provides a forum for exchanges on gender and development (GAD), but engagement with bilateral agencies needs to be based on a better understanding of ADB’s relationships with ministries and executing agencies. There is different potential for ADB to leverage support for gender mainstreaming as compared with that of bilateral agencies working through grant mechanisms. The loan environment offers greater potential for building buy-in from executing agencies and to influence areas of policy dialogue and institutional change that will build sustainability of gender mainstreaming results.

Further consideration should be given to engaging with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in Bangladesh (and similar national women’s machineries in other countries) to increase capacity toward providing technical support to government agencies beyond social development programming. This ministry, for example, rarely interacts with agencies such as the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), particularly concerning infrastructure investments, yet these kinds of government divisions are actively seeking technical support for their gender programming. ADB should consider how to encourage more active engagement with the ministry, especially during capacity building and training support provided for the gender action plan (GAP) implementation.

To consolidate gains in loan operations, the following factors were identified.

**Pressure to maintain disbursement schedules.** According to social development and gender and project information officers, senior managers must acknowledge that adopting new approaches to governing investments, which take into account community needs, require more time than initially anticipated. This is especially the case
for GAD components that might be highlighting social changes, raising tensions between generations. Promoting accountability of local government officials similarly challenges well-established patterns of relationships between different elements of society and is frequently met with resistance that takes time to resolve. Learning from past experiences is important for building in flexibility to components that facilitate social change, bringing greater sustainability and effectiveness to project outputs. Gender elements must be implemented in parallel with other components so that links between components are maintained. BRM has begun to create an environment that encourages learning and flexibility, but incentives for project information officers and executing agencies to excel in gender mainstreaming should be considered.

**Monitoring the gender action plan and other aspects of project implementation.**

The social development and gender officer noted that providing technical support for ongoing monitoring is as important as technical support for design elements. Executing agencies with limited experiences or skills in GAP implementation may easily become discouraged when they face resistance among their own staff or in a community. Links between the GAP and other project outputs may be unclear, and additional encouragement (or pressure to meet loan assurances) may be required to ensure full GAP implementation.

Similarly, the shift to performance-based incentives for loan tranche release, which is associated with improving local government governance and accountability, acknowledges that outputs must be monitored throughout project implementation. Built-in incentives for such governance elements within projects have been tested at BRM to ensure that complex interrelationships between components are maintained as planned, and necessary adjustments are made during implementation. Highlighting this type of monitoring for gender components within a project is, therefore, not unique.

Several stakeholders also suggested that monitoring indicators and mechanisms be more closely aligned to those of the government. This encourages more sustained monitoring of gender-related project outcomes by government agencies over the longer term if they are rooted in national policy objectives.

**Passing on good practices and lessons.** Some good practices and lessons from individual executing agencies within Bangladesh include:

- ADB senior management must support risk-taking when integrating gender components into projects and encouraging a learning environment between sectors and staff.
- Data and analysis must be conducted to demonstrate the importance of the link between taking a gender approach and achieving the objectives and results of each sector loan/technical assistance.
- Peer learning between countries must be encouraged.
- Good practices from GAP design and implementation must be applied while recognizing the need to be highly specific and practical for each project circumstance.
### Appendix 1: Loan and Asian Development Fund IX Grants Approved for Bangladesh by Gender Category, 1998–2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loan/Grant Number</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Project Division</th>
<th>Approval</th>
<th>Closing</th>
<th>Net Loan/Grant Amount ($ '000)</th>
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<td>1634(SF)</td>
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<td>1690(SF)</td>
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<td>1881(SF)</td>
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<td>Dec 2008</td>
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<td>1947(SF)</td>
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<td>Dec-2002</td>
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<td>2015(SF)</td>
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<td>2070(SF)</td>
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<td>2101(SF)</td>
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<td>2117(SF)</td>
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<td>2254(SF)</td>
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### Loan/Grant Number

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<th>Approval</th>
<th>Closing</th>
<th>Net Loan/Grant Amount ($ '000)</th>
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<td>Oct 2002</td>
<td>Dec 2007</td>
<td>73,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jamuna–Meghna River Erosion Mitigation Project</strong></td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Nov 2002</td>
<td>Jun 2009</td>
<td>47,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dhaka Clean Fuel Project</strong></td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Nov 2002</td>
<td>Jun 2007</td>
<td>26,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dhaka Clean Fuel Project</strong></td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Nov 2002</td>
<td>Jun 2008</td>
<td>30,200</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Road Network Improvement and Maintenance II</strong></td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Nov 2003</td>
<td>Dec 2008</td>
<td>128,255</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency Flood Damage Rehabilitation Project</strong></td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Jan 2005</td>
<td>Jul 2007</td>
<td>144,633</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Improvement of Capital Market and Insurance Governance Project</strong></td>
<td>SAGF</td>
<td>Mar 2006</td>
<td>Jun 2008</td>
<td>3,172</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Power Sector Development Program (Project Loan, Part E on Capacity Development)</strong></td>
<td>SAEN</td>
<td>Jun 2007</td>
<td>Jun 2010</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Power Sector Development Program (Program Loan)</strong></td>
<td>SAEN</td>
<td>Jun 2007</td>
<td>Jun 2008</td>
<td>63,717</td>
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**Subtotal Gender Category II** 613,135

**Gender Category III: Some Gender Benefits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Project Division</th>
<th>Approval</th>
<th>Closing</th>
<th>Net Loan/Grant Amount ($ '000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Southwest Road Network Development Project</strong></td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Sep 1999</td>
<td>Sep 2006</td>
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<td><strong>Southwest Flood Damage Rehabilitation Project</strong></td>
<td>BRM</td>
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<td>Dec 2003</td>
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<td><strong>Roads Maintenance and Improvement Project</strong></td>
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<td>Nov 2000</td>
<td>Jun 2008</td>
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<td>BRM</td>
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<td>Dec 2007</td>
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<td><strong>Road Network Improvement and Maintenance</strong></td>
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<td>Dec 2007</td>
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<td>Jun 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dhaka Clean Fuel Project</strong></td>
<td>BRM</td>
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<td>Jun 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dhaka Clean Fuel Project</strong></td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Nov 2002</td>
<td>Jun 2008</td>
<td>30,200</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Road Network Improvement and Maintenance II</strong></td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Nov 2003</td>
<td>Dec 2008</td>
<td>128,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency Flood Damage Rehabilitation Project</strong></td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Jan 2005</td>
<td>Jul 2007</td>
<td>144,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improvement of Capital Market and Insurance Governance Project</strong></td>
<td>SAGF</td>
<td>Mar 2006</td>
<td>Jun 2008</td>
<td>3,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Power Sector Development Program (Project Loan, Part E on Capacity Development)</strong></td>
<td>SAEN</td>
<td>Jun 2007</td>
<td>Jun 2010</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Power Sector Development Program (Program Loan)</strong></td>
<td>SAEN</td>
<td>Jun 2007</td>
<td>Jun 2008</td>
<td>63,717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subtotal Gender Category III** 761,261

*continued on next page*
### Appendix 1: continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loan/Grant Number</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Project Division</th>
<th>Approval</th>
<th>Closing</th>
<th>Net Loan/Grant Amount (S‘000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1666</td>
<td>Flood Damage Rehabilitation</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Dec 1998</td>
<td>Jan 2002</td>
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<td>1730(SF)</td>
<td>Dhaka Power Systems Upgrade</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Dec 1999</td>
<td>Jun 2008</td>
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<td>1731</td>
<td>Dhaka Power Systems Upgrade</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Dec 1999</td>
<td>Jun 2008</td>
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<td>West Zone Power System Development</td>
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<td>Dec 2001</td>
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<td>1888(SF)</td>
<td>Gas Transmission and Development</td>
<td>SAEN</td>
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<td>Dec 2010</td>
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<td>2317(SF)</td>
<td>Railway Sector Investment Program</td>
<td>SATC</td>
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<td>Jun 2011</td>
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<td>2362</td>
<td>Good Governance Program</td>
<td>SAGF</td>
<td>Oct 2007</td>
<td>Mar 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>2397</td>
<td>South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Information Highway Project</td>
<td>SATC</td>
<td>Dec 2007</td>
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<td>3,123</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Subtotal No Gender Elements** 1,275,797

**TOTAL** 3,400,128

BRM = Bangladesh Resident Mission; SAEN = Energy Division, South Asia Department; SAGF = Governance, Finance and Trade Division, South Asia Department; SANS = Agriculture, Natural Resources and Social Services Division, South Asia Department; SATC = Transport and Communications Division, South Asia Department; SAUD = Urban Development Division, South Asia Department; SF = Special Fund; SME = small and medium-sized enterprise.

Source: ADB Gender Projects Database.
Appendix 2: Asian Development Bank Project Classification System: Gender and Development

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) assigns certain categories to projects with the aim of promoting the systematic integration of gender considerations and for monitoring purposes. Category I is based on ADB’s project classification system, which includes gender and development (GAD) as a theme. A project can be assigned up to three themes. Categories II and III were developed by the Poverty Reduction, Gender, and Social Development Division to monitor ADB’s portfolio from a gender perspective.

Category I: Gender and Development Thematic Classification in Bangladesh

Projects can be assigned a GAD thematic classification if they (i) promote gender equity by attempting to narrow gender disparities in access to basic services, productive resources, income opportunities, public decision making, and dispute resolution mechanisms or rights; or (ii) integrate a gender perspective in socioeconomic development processes to achieve equal benefits, participation, and protection of rights of women and men.

Projects with this theme will include a

- gender analysis during project preparation;
- gender-related purpose or activities identified in the project/program framework;
- gender action plan (GAP) that incorporates gender-inclusive design features, or components to directly benefit women or girls; and
- loan covenant to support the GAP or gender-inclusive features.

The theme can apply to projects in all sectors.

Category II: Effective Gender Mainstreaming

ADB’s policy on GAD26 has adopted mainstreaming as its key strategy, thus gender considerations are to be mainstreamed in all ADB operations. A project is integrated in this category when (i) the social analysis conducted during project preparation includes careful consideration of gender issues, (ii) the project includes several design features to facilitate women’s participation in activities supported by the project and/or women’s access to project/program benefits, and (iii) these design features are supported by appropriate loan covenants.

These design features may include several of the following:

- targets for women’s participation and/or access to project/program benefits (e.g., education/training; formation of beneficiary groups; receipt of loans and scholarships; women representatives in project committees or associations; or numbers or percentage of female staff members in an executing agency, project implementation unit, among extension workers, social mobilizers, or nongovernment organization facilitators);

Institutionalizing Gender Equality: The Experience of the Bangladesh Resident Mission

• facilities, training programs, and beneficiary groups for women or girls; or design of gender-sensitive physical infrastructure;
• components directly benefiting women or girls (e.g., provision for ownership of land or other assets, reproductive health services, support for food production, and subsistence activities);
• reform measures likely to benefit women or girls (e.g., increases in government budget for reproductive health, reform of discriminatory laws on land ownership or titling, changes in public sector hiring, and equitable employment practices), usually in a program or sector development loan;
• mobilization of women to participate in project activities, provision, or preference for hiring women for project-related work (e.g., construction or maintenance of project facilities); and requirement of equal or fair pay for male and female workers;
• collaboration with nongovernment organizations that service or work primarily with women;
• for sector projects, a requirement that subprojects include gender analysis and/or consultation with women's groups during preparation and ensure women's participation and/or receipt of benefits (gender checklists can be used as guidelines);
• preparation of GAPs;
• hiring of gender specialists to advise executing agencies or project implementation units, or to work as implementation staff on gender capacity development components;
• consistent use of sex-disaggregated data for project monitoring;
• use of indicators to monitor and assess gender impacts of a project or program;
• requirements for monitoring gender-specific results during midterm reviews; and
• inclusion of the national women's ministry in the project or program steering committee.

Category III: Some Gender Benefits

A project can be considered to have the potential to provide some gender benefits if it has either of the following features: (i) consideration of gender issues in the social analysis carried out during project preparation at least to identify women's concerns in project areas and likely benefits/impacts of the project for them; or (ii) minor design elements or small project components to benefit women (e.g., a small grant fund).

This category can apply to two distinct types of projects:

• those that by their nature should provide substantial benefits to women (such as education, health, rural development, microfinance, and water supply and sanitation projects), but that include little gender analysis and few or no specific design features to optimize the benefits for women; and
• those that are unlikely to provide direct and substantial benefits to women (such as road or railway projects), but in which effort was made during project preparation to identify possible positive and negative impacts on women, and provide some indirect benefits or include mitigating features in the project design or resettlement plan (such as provision for employment of women in project construction work, information campaigns on HIV/AIDS risk, or special resettlement assistance to households headed by women).
Appendix 3: Terms of Reference for Local Consultative Sub-Group on Women’s Advancement and Gender Equity (Revised April 2006)

Background

The Local Consultative Group Sub-Group on Women in Development was formed in March 1989 at a Local Consultative Group meeting. The objective of the subgroup was to facilitate policy dialogue with the Government of Bangladesh and among development partners on promoting women’s development in Bangladesh. Because of the shift in development approach from women in development to gender equality and women’s rights, the subgroup was subsequently renamed as the Local Consultative Sub-Group on Women’s Advancement and Gender Equality (LCG WAGE).

Purpose

To advocate for policy on women’s rights and facilitate mainstreaming gender in development cooperation. The terms of reference of LCG WAGE are to:

- provide a forum for policy dialogue among development partners on women’s rights and gender equality;
- play an advocacy role among the local consultative group subgroups to mainstream gender in development assistance;
- enhance coordination and collaboration among subgroup members, and maintain a common database of current gender and development/gender-related activities supported by member agencies;
- provide a forum for information sharing and exchange of ideas, and encourage a common understanding and perspective on gender and development issues through organizing regular sessions and forums with the government and civil society organizations;
- facilitate the operationalization of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper from gender perspectives;
- enhance cooperative efforts among the development partners for gender capacity building within the country; and
- maintain a dialogue on pertinent issues with the relevant levels of government, such as women in development focal points and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper working groups.
Appendix 4: List of People Met

Local Government Engineering Department
Md. Wahidur Rahman, Superintending Engineer (Projects)
Md. Abdus Shaheed, Project Director, Rural Infrastructure Improvement Project
Md. Abdul Gaffar, Additional Chief Engineer, Urban Management
Md. Nazmul Hasan, Superintending Engineer, Urban Management
S.K. Amzad Hossain, Project Director, Secondary Towns Integrated Flood Protection Project II
Md. Mohirul Islam Khan, Urban Planner, Urban Management Support Unit
A.B.M. Ashraful Alam, Project Director, Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project
Md. Sohrab Hossain, Social and Gender Development Expert, Performance Evaluation and Monitoring Consultants, Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
M. Afzalur Rahman, Project Director, Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project
Shipon Kumar Das, Assistant Director, Secondary Education Sector Development Project

Roads and Highways Department
Firoz Khan Noon, Additional Chief Engineer/Project Director, Road Network Improvement and Maintenance Project

Bangladesh Water Development Board
Md. Abdun Noor, Project Director, Secondary Towns Integrated Flood Protection Project II
Sharifa Begum, Social and Gender Specialist, Secondary Towns Integrated Flood Protection Project II

Ministry of Industries
Dr. Mohammad Ayub Miah, Additional Secretary/Project Director, SME Sector Development Program, Ministry of Industries

Civil Society
Mostafa Quaium Khan, Executive Director, Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP)

International Development Partners
Shaila Rahman, Social Development Advisor, Department for International Development of the United Kingdom
Rainer Kuhnle, Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)
Zakia Hassan, International Organization for Migration (formerly Gender Advisor to the Embassy of Norway in Bangladesh)
Nilufar Ahmad, Senior Social Scientist, South Asia Social Science, Environment and Water Resources Department, World Bank

Asian Development Bank Staff at Headquarters
Robert J. Dobias, Director, Gender, Social Development and Civil Society Division, Regional and Sustainable Development Department
Sekhar Bonu, Senior Urban Development Specialist, Urban Development Division, South Asia Department (SARD)
Jennifer Francis, NGO and Civil Society Specialist, Gender, Social Development and Civil Society Division, Regional Sustainable and Development Department
Leah Gutierrez, Senior Social Sector Specialist, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Social Services Division, SARD
Kenichi Yokoyama, Principal Water Resources Management Specialist, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Social Services Division, SARD
Hans Carlsson, Principal Project Performance Management Specialist, Office of the Director General, SARD
Susanne Nebel, Rural Development Specialist, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Social Services Division, SARD

Asian Development Bank Staff at the Bangladesh Resident Mission
Hua Du, Country Director
Putu Kamayama, Deputy Country Director, Country Programming Unit
Ahmed Faruque, Project Implementation Officer, Transport
Stefan Ekelund, Transport Specialist
Rafiquil Islam, Project Implementation Officer, Integrated Urban Development
Arun K. Saha, Project Implementation Officer, Agriculture and Rural Development
Institutionalizing Gender Equality: The Experience of the Bangladesh Resident Mission

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has helped advance gender equality and development over the past 10 years across Asia and the Pacific. It is increasingly recognized that adding gender specialists to the staff of selected resident missions (including in Bangladesh) results in more projects tackling gender issues and strengthens the capacity of executing agency staff to bridge gender disparities. The report shows how gender has been integrated successfully into some aspects of Bangladesh policies, strategies, and programming. It also shows what challenges remain. The report aims to identify the success factors that ADB might replicate or strengthen elsewhere.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB’s vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries substantially reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region’s many successes, it remains home to two thirds of the world’s poor: 1.8 billion people who live on less than $2 a day, with 903 million struggling on less than $1.25 a day. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.