



HIGHLIGHTS OF ADB'S COOPERATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS 2022

MAY 2023

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Notes:

In this publication, “\$” refers to United States dollars, and “MNT” refers to Mongolia togrog.

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Abbreviations

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
CARD	–	Center for Agriculture and Rural Development
CCAP	–	Climate Change Action Plan
CDC	–	community development committee
CDG	–	community development group
COVID-19	–	coronavirus disease
CPS	–	country partnership strategy
CSO	–	civil society organization
DMC	–	developing member country
ETM	–	Energy Transition Mechanism
GBV	–	gender-based violence
MDB	–	multilateral development bank
MPA	–	marine protected area
NFT	–	non-fungible token
NGO	–	nongovernment organization
NGOC	–	NGO and Civil Society Center
OP	–	operational priority
PCR	–	project completion report
PRC	–	People's Republic of China
SPS	–	Safeguard Policy Statement
WUTMI	–	Women United Together Marshall Islands



Community engagement on agricultural extension programs.

Am Phanny, 28, earned a degree in agronomy in 2017 at the Royal University of Agriculture in Phnom Penh. She is one of the Agricultural Cooperative Sangha Phal community members in Prey Sangha Village, Kgnach Romeas commune, Bavel district in Battambang province, Cambodia. Phanny is an outstanding woman exercising her service to the community on agricultural extension programs and rice seed production (photo by ADB).

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in unprecedented health, economic, and social crises at a global scale. It has disproportionately affected the poor and most vulnerable segments of society while exacerbating already existing structural problems and inequalities. In many countries, civil society organizations (CSOs) have made valuable contributions to COVID-19 response by providing vital social services, promoting innovative vaccination campaigns, advocating for inclusive policy measures, and working in remote areas to deliver participatory and community-led public health responses. In 2022, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) actively cooperated with CSOs in delivering positive development results, taking into consideration the rapidly changing development needs of its developing member countries (DMCs) as they recover from the effects of the pandemic.

The global health emergency has overstretched government resources and worsened the lives of poor people who continue to suffer from its lingering effect. In 2022, ADB made significant progress in the implementation of the regional technical assistance, *Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions*.¹ Through this project, ADB successfully established meaningful partnerships with a range of CSOs across seven DMCs to provide social protection and economic support to the region's poorest people who still feel the persisting impacts of the pandemic.² The success of these partnerships underscores the vital role of CSOs as the region transitions into the new and emerging normal.

Despite disruptions in the lives and economies caused by COVID-19, ADB remains committed to achieving the vision of a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, as stated in its long-term plan, *Strategy 2030*.³ Aligned with the approaches in *Strategy 2030*, ADB continued to actively collaborate with CSOs in designing, implementing, and monitoring projects in 2022. Experience has proven that tapping into CSOs' local presence and specialized knowledge and experience helps improve the quality of ADB's programs and services.

¹ ADB. *Regional: Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions*.

² ADB. *Communities Against COVID-19 and Poverty*.

³ ADB. 2018. *Strategy 2030: Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.



Livelihood support. One of the beneficiaries of livelihood support is 52-year-old Erdenetsetseg who improved her income after receiving a dairy production machine and baking tools from the technical assistance grant (photo by ADB).

This report presents stories from the ground that feature meaningful CSO participation at various stages of ADB's project cycle. As an example, ADB engaged the women's rights nongovernment organization (NGO), National Center Against Violence, to respond to increased cases of domestic violence in Mongolia during the COVID-19 crisis.⁴ In Nepal, more than a thousand community development groups (CDGs) led the planning and implementation of infrastructure works and catchment management practices through the project, Building Climate Resilience in Mountain Ecoregions.⁵ In Indonesia, active NGO involvement helped coastal communities in marine protected areas (MPAs) in Bali and West Nusa Tenggara provinces to manage coral reef resources in a sustainable manner.⁶

In addition to CSO involvement in ADB-supported projects, Strategy 2030 highlights the importance of seeking CSO input and advice on the review of its major policies. As part of the Safeguard Policy Update, ADB successfully carried out a series of consultations in 2022 to ensure diverse participation across various stakeholders that include CSOs, project-affected people,

⁴ ADB. Mongolia: Addressing and Preventing Domestic Violence in Mongolia during the COVID-19 Crisis.

⁵ ADB. Nepal: Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-regions.

⁶ ADB. Indonesia: Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program–Coral Triangle Initiative Project.

indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups.⁷ ADB's commitment to transparency and openness in engaging stakeholders was recognized when it retained a good standing in the 2022 Aid Transparency Index, the only independent measure of aid transparency among the world's major aid providers compiled by the international NGO, Publish What You Pay. It retained a top spot in the index's "very good" category, with scores of 94.8 for ADB's sovereign portfolio and 82.3 for its nonsovereign portfolio.⁸

This publication highlights the evolving cooperation between ADB and CSOs in the context of a rapidly changing Asia and the Pacific. It brings into light important lessons on civil society participation as a valuable element in ensuring positive development results as the region approaches the emerging post-pandemic future (Box 1).

Box 1: ADB's Commitment to Cooperate with Civil Society Organizations

Strategy 2030, the long-term corporate strategy of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), outlines ADB's vision for a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific. Under Strategy 2030, ADB has committed to strengthening its engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs). ADB pursues an expanded program of engagement with CSOs, where appropriate, in its member countries, in consultation with the government, with a view to strengthen the effectiveness, sustainability, and quality of the development

services ADB provides. The objective of ADB's engagement with CSOs, where appropriate, is to tap the unique strengths of CSOs, such as their local presence and specialized knowledge, in order to explore opportunities for increasing their involvement in ADB operations and seek their inputs and advice on major ADB policies. ADB explores this engagement such that the development efforts ADB supports will more effectively address the issues and priorities reflected in ADB's development agenda.

Source: ADB. 2021. Promotion of Engagement with Civil Society Organizations. *Operations Manual*. OM E4. Manila.

⁷ ADB. Safeguard Policy Review.

⁸ ADB. 2022. ADB Retains 'Very Good' Rating in Aid Transparency Index of Development Organizations. News release. 13 July.



Indonesia's recovery through social development. A family in Riau Islands, Indonesia is preparing food for the household. As social development continues to be a concern in Indonesia, magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic, ADB committed \$1.88 billion in 2022 to help accelerate Indonesia's recovery from the pandemic where well-being is one of the focus areas (photo by ADB).

CAPTURING MEANINGFUL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION ENGAGEMENT IN ADB OPERATIONS

2

ADB reports its performance on CSO engagement in ADB's annual Development Effectiveness Review. Since 2020, ADB has been tracking CSO participation in ADB-supported projects using an indicator system, which aims to thoroughly capture actual meaningful CSO engagement. ADB's NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC) reviews the reports of all completed projects each year to determine whether the meaningful engagement planned at the project design stage materialized into CSO participation during implementation. In 2021, ADB updated its Operations Manual E4 on promotion of engagement with civil society organizations by providing a definition of CSO, such as in Box 2, and defining what meaningful CSO engagement means in terms of various approaches and levels of involving CSOs in ADB's work. In 2022, the NGOC assessed documents upon project approval, particularly the reports and recommendations of the President to the Board of Directors, together with the Summary Poverty Reduction and Social Strategies and other linked documents. The review covered 106 projects, which closed in 2022, to determine if they included elements of planned meaningful CSO participation.⁹

⁹ This report includes eight project completion reports (PCRs) circulated in the Board document system in 2022 but with publication dates of December 2021. These PCRs were not included in the report on this indicator for 2021.



Box 2: ADB's Definition of Civil Society Organization

The term “civil society organization” (CSO) refers generically to organizations (i) not based in government, and (ii) not created to earn profit. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) defines CSOs as nonprofit organizations independent from the government, which operate around common interests. They vary in size, interests, and function, and include

nongovernment organizations, youth groups, community-based organizations, independent academic and research institutes, professional associations, foundations, faith-based organizations, people's organizations, and labor unions. CSOs represent interests of their members or others.

Source: ADB. 2021. Promotion of Engagement with Civil Society Organizations. *Operations Manual*. OM E4. Manila.

The indicator rests on four approaches to participation, as outlined in the succeeding table: information generation and sharing, consultation, collaboration, and partnership. Based on the included planned meaningful CSO engagement, projects are categorized as follows that demonstrate the relevant types of participation as reflected in the project documents:¹⁰

- (i) Information Generation and Sharing: *High*;
- (ii) Consultation: *High*;
- (iii) Collaboration: *Low, Medium, or High*; and
- (iv) Partnership: *Low, Medium, or High*.¹¹

The tracking system further monitored the delivery of planned meaningful participation based on a review of the project completion report (PCR) prepared upon closure of the project. If the PCR indicates that the planned, meaningful CSO participation took place, the project is counted as having delivered CSO participation and having fulfilled the CSO participation requirement for the purposes of ADB's corporate results framework indicator.

¹⁰ ADB. 2021. *A Sourcebook for Engaging with Civil Society Organizations in Asian Development Bank Operations*. Manila.

¹¹ Ratings of indicators in the old Summary Poverty Reduction and Social Strategy (SPRSS) templates—information sharing, consultation, collaborative decision making, and empowerment—are recalculated in the format of the new indicators—information generation and sharing, consultation, collaboration, and partnership—by the NGOC for the purpose of analysis. Re-ratings are based on planned CSO engagement recorded in the project report and recommendation of the President (RRP), SPRSS, and other documents linked to the RRP.

Different Approaches and Depths of Civil Society Organization Participation

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

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

Notes: These generic definitions can be adapted to specific types of projects and programs (e.g., rural water supply) and for priority operational themes (e.g., gender or individual projects). Any segments highlighted in yellow indicate planned, meaningful CSO engagement.

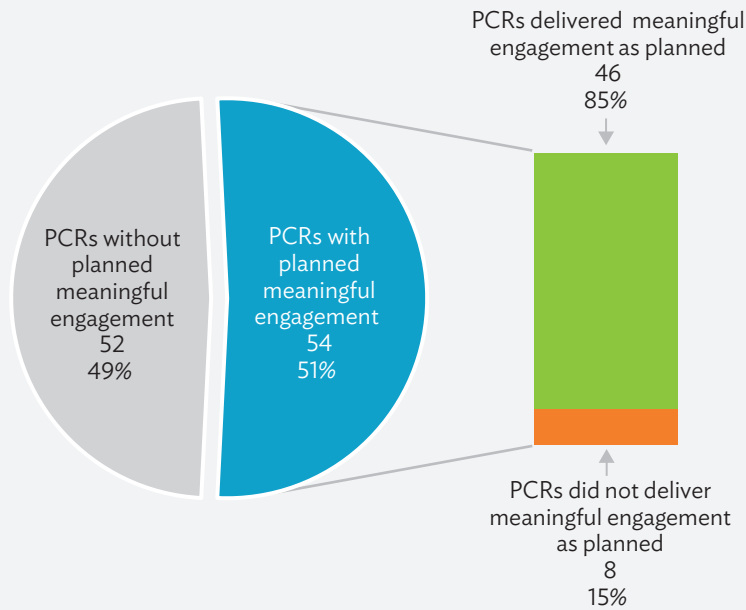
^a This includes community participation in procurement, CSOs providing consulting services, and CSOs providing nonconsulting services.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

A. Meaningful Civil Society Organization Engagement in 2022

A total of 106 projects prepared PCRs in 2022. Among these, 54 projects (51%) reflected planned meaningful CSO engagement based on the review of project documents. Of the 54 completed projects in 2022 with planned meaningful civil society engagement, 46 or 85% delivered their meaningful CSO engagement plans (Figure 1). The 46 projects are categorized as having meaningful CSO participation because elements of meaningful CSO involvement were present in the planning documents and these were also carried out during implementation. When compared against the total number of completed projects, 43% of the projects that prepared PCRs in 2022, or 46 out of 106, are considered as having meaningful CSO engagement.

Figure 1: The Planning and Delivery of Meaningful Civil Society Organization Engagement in 2022 Sovereign Project Completion Reports



PCR = project completion report.

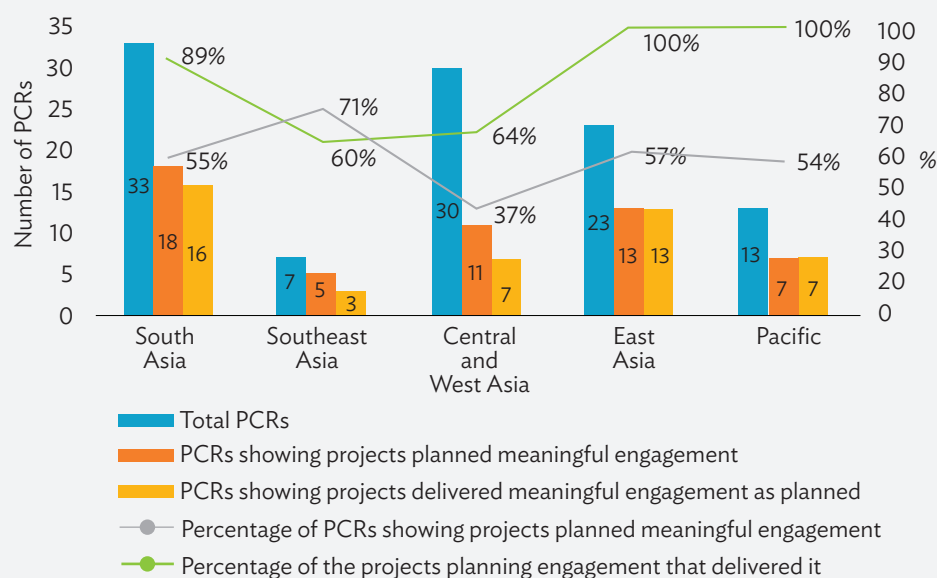
Source: Asian Development Bank.

B. Meaningful Civil Society Organization Engagement by ADB's Regional Departments

ADB's South Asia Department continued to deliver the highest number of projects with planned meaningful CSO engagement, as reflected in 18 of 33 projects (55%) for 2022 (Figure 2). Of the 18 projects with planned meaningful CSO engagement, 16 (89%) delivered on their commitment, as designed. Box 3 summarizes the lessons from ADB's CSO engagement in South Asia, highlighting the benefits of engaging CSOs early in the project preparation stage.

As shown in Figure 2, following South Asia Department is the Central and West Asia Department, where 11 out of 30 projects (37%) included planned meaningful CSO engagement; seven of these 11 projects (64%) implemented their plans. In East Asia Department, 13 of 23 projects (57%) that prepared PCRs in 2022 had planned meaningful CSO engagement, where all 13 projects (100%) implemented their plans. Similarly, in the Pacific Department, seven of 13 projects (54%) that delivered PCRs in 2022 had planned meaningful CSO engagement, and all of these seven projects (100%) delivered their meaningful planned CSO cooperation. The Southeast Asia Department had planned meaningful CSO engagement in five of its seven projects (71%) that closed in 2022, of which three of the five projects (60%) implemented the intended cooperation with CSOs.

**Figure 2: Meaningful Civil Society Organization Engagement in 2022
Based on Project Completion Reports, by Region**



PCR = project completion report.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

Box 3: Early Civil Society Engagement in South Asia

The South Asia Department of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) identified trends and changes in its approaches to civil society engagement, through the publication, *Working Together for Development Results: Lessons from ADB and Civil Society Organization Engagement in South Asia*, prepared jointly with ADB's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department. One of the strongest themes to come out of this report is the need to engage civil society organizations (CSOs) early in project preparation. Survey respondents and interviewees who engaged with the study commented on the benefits of early CSO engagement, such as

- (i) engaging with CSOs as potential beneficiaries to improve project design,
- (ii) improved engagement with communities on project design,
- (iii) helping project teams validate issues and collect baseline data,

- (iv) gaining community support for project objectives, and
- (v) creating trusted relationships between CSOs and project teams to improve implementation.



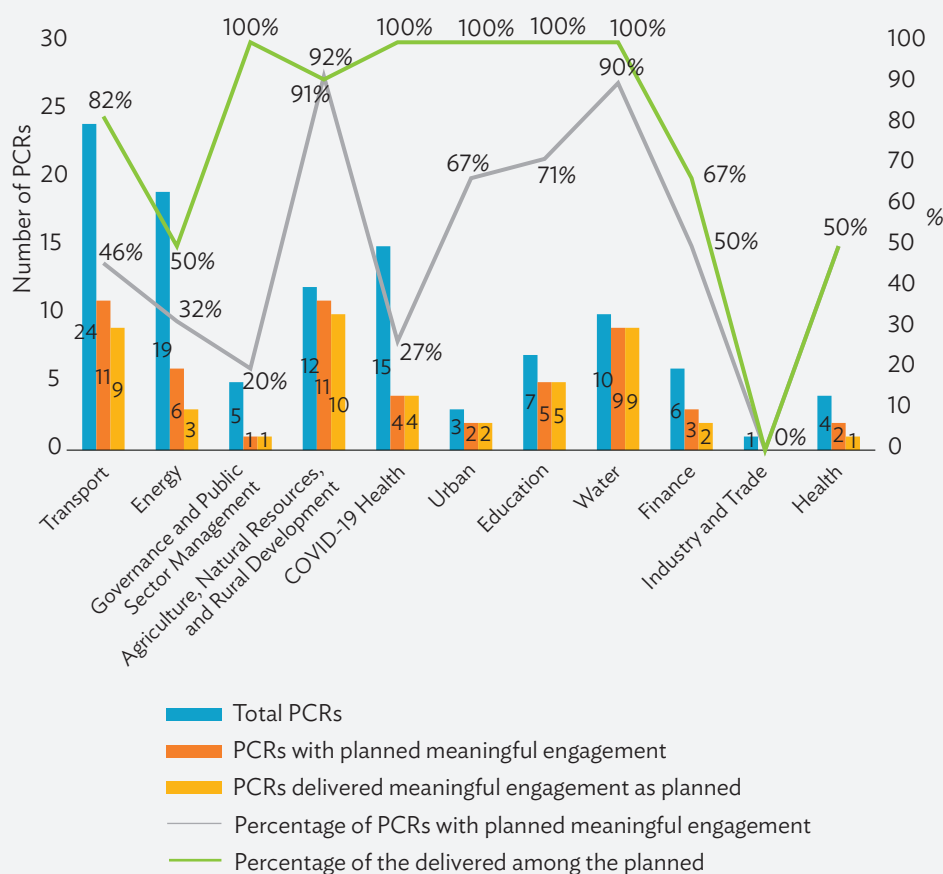
Skills training. Trainer, Kamali Chakma, shows different tools to the trainees at the Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs school under the Skills for Employment Investment Program in Chittagong, Bangladesh (photo by ADB).

C. Meaningful Civil Society Organization Engagement by Sector

The agriculture, natural resources, and rural development sector registered the highest number of PCRs in 2022 that delivered on planned meaningful CSO engagement, with 10 out of 11 projects (91%) (Figure 3). This was followed closely by the water and transport sectors with nine projects each. In the transport sector, nine out of 11 projects (82%) with planned meaningful CSO engagement delivered as planned; whereas, all nine projects (100%) under the water sector delivered meaningful CSO engagement as planned.

With relatively small sample sizes, 100% of the projects under COVID-19 health, education, governance and public sector management, urban, and water sectors delivered on their planned meaningful CSO engagement (Figure 3). Consistent with past experiences, ADB project teams were able to incorporate more project stakeholders because of the significant number of CSOs working in these sectors.

**Figure 3: Meaningful Civil Society Organization Engagement in 2022
Based on Project Completion Reports, by Sector**



COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, PCR = project completion report.

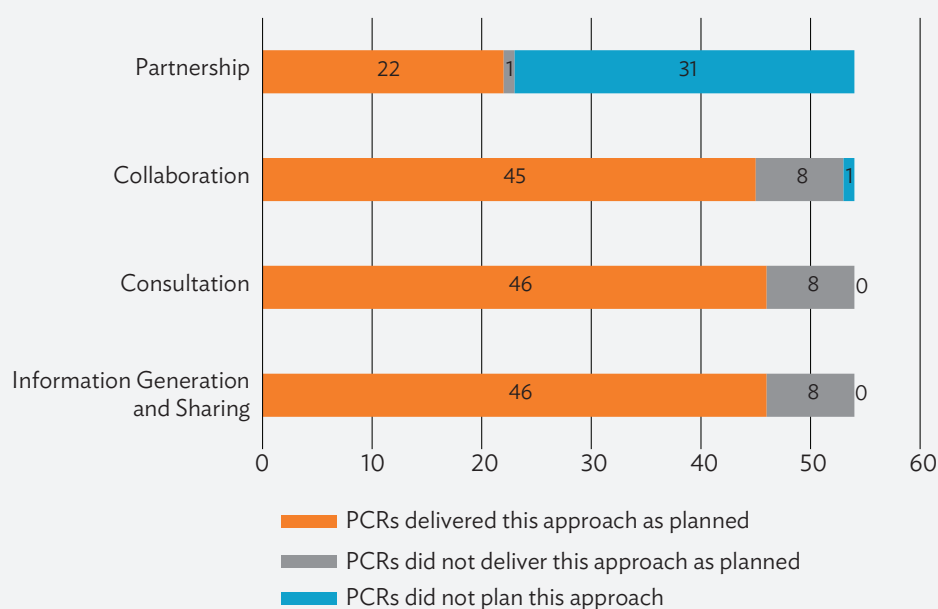
Source: Asian Development Bank.

D. Civil Society Organization Engagement According to the Four Approaches to Participation

CSOs participate in ADB projects through four approaches of increasingly deeper participation: information generation and sharing, consultation, collaboration, and partnership, as illustrated in the table. CSOs participate through one or a combination of these approaches.

Among the 54 projects that delivered PCRs in 2022 and had planned meaningful CSO engagement, 46 projects (85%) delivered both information generation and sharing and consultation, as intended (Figure 4). Comparably, of the 53 projects that had planned collaboration, 45 projects (85%) delivered this approach. Partnership represents the highest form of CSO participation, requiring greater efforts to partner and making the project more complex to deliver. In 2022, 23 projects planned to work with CSOs through partnership, and 22 of them (96%) delivered. These are improvements from 2021, where 39 of 51 projects (76%) delivered planned civil society engagement, and 33 of 45 projects (73%) that had planned collaboration delivered this approach. In 2021, only 15 projects planned partnerships, and 13 of these projects (87%) delivered.

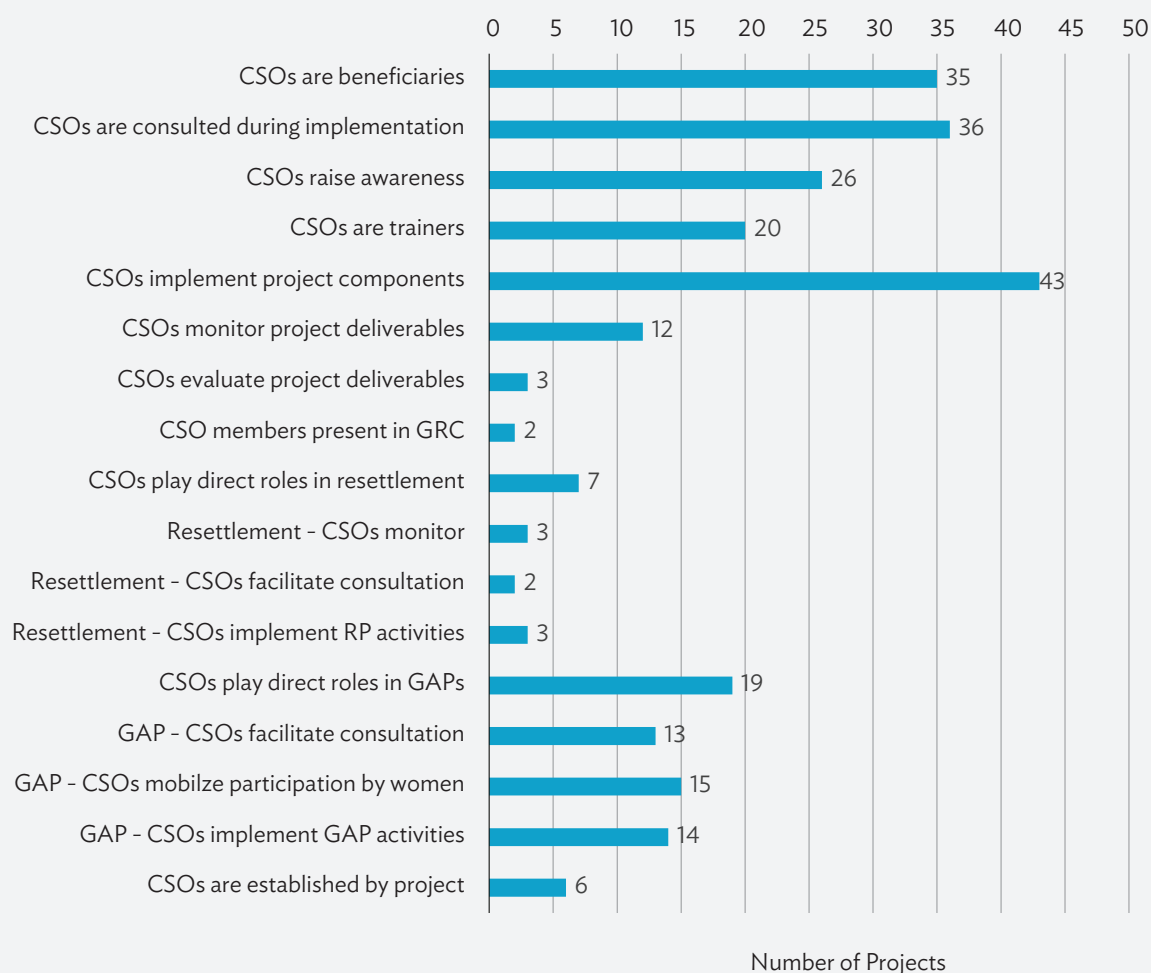
Figure 4: Civil Society Organization Engagement Approaches in 54 Project Completion Reports with Planned Participation



PCR = project completion report.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

Figure 5: Roles of Civil Society Organizations in 46 Projects with Meaningful Engagement as Planned, as per Project Completion Reports



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

Source: Asian Development Bank.

Figure 5 describes the roles performed by CSOs in the 46 completed projects that submitted PCRs in 2022 and also delivered on their planned meaningful CSO engagement. The key roles undertaken by CSOs are outlined below:

- (i) A high 93% (43 projects) of the completed projects tapped CSOs to implement specific project components;
- (ii) In 78% (36 projects) of the completed projects, CSOs were consulted during implementation;

- (iii) In 76% (35 projects) of the completed projects, CSOs were project beneficiaries;
- (iv) In 57% (26 projects) of the completed projects, CSOs were involved in raising awareness;
- (v) In 43% (20 projects) of these completed projects, CSOs acted as trainers; and
- (vi) A significant 41% (19 projects) engaged CSOs in Gender Action Plans.

Boxes 4–6 present cases of completed projects in 2022, which demonstrate the highest levels of meaningful CSO engagement using the indicators discussed earlier.

Box 4: Supporting Human Capital Development in Meghalaya

Meghalaya is a remote tribal state in India with hilly terrain and poor infrastructure. The low quality of its secondary and higher secondary schools as well as outdated technical and vocational education training program make it difficult for the state's youth to transition from primary to secondary or tertiary education, and to compete for formal employment.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB), through its Supporting Human Capital Development Project, provided needed support to improve access to quality secondary and higher secondary education, as well as enhance technical and vocational skills training in Meghalaya. The project aimed to improve the employability of the youth from 16 to 35 years old.

During project design, ADB consulted with a wide range of stakeholders, which included relevant government departments, peoples'

representatives, and nongovernment organizations (NGOs). Representatives of major and minor tribal groups, *durbars* and *nokmas* (councils of tribal elders), women's groups, teachers, and students participated in the consultation.

One of the important factors for the project's success was the strong partnership with NGOs to raise awareness of community members on girls' education and skills development opportunities. The project collaborated with 20 local NGOs in 11 districts of Meghalaya to organize a series of public consultations and campaign activities to educate stakeholders on the importance of girls' education and skills development. The active participation of women and girls in the skills development training programs, where they outnumbered men, confirmed the success of awareness-raising programs organized by NGOs.

Source: ADB. 2022. *Completion Report: Supporting Human Capital Development in Meghalaya, India*. Manila.

Box 5: Community-Managed Water Supply Systems Improve Lives in Nepal's Small Towns

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) collaborated with the Government of Nepal in making clean water accessible in 70 of the country's small towns through three Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector projects (Loan 1755-NEP;^a Grant 0157-NEP;^b and Loan 3157-NEP^c). Using participatory, community-managed, and demand-responsive approach, more than 1.35 million people came together to make their communities healthy and clean. The Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector projects ensured that access to clean water is socially inclusive and gender-focused. They also emphasized community ownership and introduced a financing mechanism for beneficiaries and for the operation of water supply and sanitation services through local bodies or water users' associations.

Through these three projects, more than 230,000 households (including poor and vulnerable households) now enjoy improved access to piped water supply and private toilets. Access to improved water services enabled women and poor and vulnerable people to enhance their personal and family health, save time, and participate in income-generating opportunities and educational activities. Strong stakeholder participation, including the active involvement of water users' associations, facilitated the participation of women and poor and vulnerable groups in community consultations and public awareness campaigns.

According to Bindu Subedi, founding member of Lekhnath Water User Committee, "I still remember when water first gushed out of the tap here, I felt as if [the municipality of] Lekhnath had turned into heaven."^d

^a ADB. Nepal: Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector.

^b ADB. Nepal: Second Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project.

^c ADB. Nepal: Third Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project.

^d ADB. 2017. Clean Water Brings Hygiene and Happiness in Nepal's Small Towns. Video. 18 April.

Source: <https://www.adb.org/news/videos/clean-water-brings-hygiene-and-happiness-nepals-small-towns>.

Box 6: Improving Household Incomes in Chittagong Hill Tracts

Chittagong Hill Tracts lies in the southeast of Bangladesh where 90% of the area are sloping lands. Its inhabitants are Bengali and indigenous peoples from 11 distinct ethnic groups who relied mostly on agriculture for their source of living. The Second Chittagong Hill Tracts Rural Development Project of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) aimed to improve rural infrastructure, provide access to on-farm and off-farm productive technologies,

and increase rural household incomes in the project areas. Capacity building of local government institutions, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and beneficiaries to plan and implement local development activities was an important component of the project. NGOs actively participated in gender sensitization training, which focused on the basic concepts of gender and development, needs assessment of women community

continued on next page

Box 6 continued

members, and ways of engaging women in project design and implementation. ADB also collaborated with NGOs in the implementation of the resettlement plan as well as the income and livelihood restoration plan. NGO consortia

were involved in community mobilization and capacity development activities. At the completion of the project, agricultural production and household income increased.



The local women. Marma women return home from the village market after shopping, Boli Para, Thanchi, Banderban (photo by ADB).

Source: ADB. 2022. *Completion Report: Second Chittagong Hill Tracts Rural Development Project in Bangladesh*. Manila.



CSO partner, Cook Islands Child Welfare Association Inc. (CICWA) provided vulnerable groups including people with disabilities and young children with information and access to COVID-19 prevention facilities such as handwashing stations, contact tracing tools, and personal protective equipment. CICWA reached a total of 31 communities in Rarotonga, Aitutaki, and Mangaia (photo by ADB).

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION ENGAGEMENT IN DELIVERING ADB'S STRATEGY 2030

ADB's Strategy 2030: Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific sets the course for the bank's strategic direction to address the region's changing needs by "sustaining efforts to eliminate extreme poverty and expand its vision to achieve a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific." The long-term corporate strategy emphasizes the importance of increasing CSO involvement in the design and implementation of projects. ADB acknowledges that CSOs bring unique strengths and specialized knowledge of their communities and constituencies and are invaluable allies in the fight against poverty. In this regard, particular focus will be on operations that use grassroots participatory approaches to target poor and vulnerable groups, mobilize women and young people, and monitor project activities and outputs.

To achieve the vision of Strategy 2030, ADB operated on seven operational priority (OP) areas (footnote 3). CSOs, including NGOs, contribute meaningfully to achieving the OPs, that are outlined below.

- OP 1: Addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequalities;
- OP 2: Accelerating progress in gender equality;
- OP 3: Tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability;
- OP 4: Making cities more livable;
- OP 5: Promoting rural development and food security;
- OP 6: Strengthening governance and institutional capacity; and
- OP 7: Fostering regional cooperation and integration.

The following discussion describes some of the various ways by which CSOs contributed to the achievement of the seven OPs in 2022.

A. Operational Priority 1: Addressing Remaining Poverty and Reducing Inequalities

The first OP puts emphasis on human capital and social development to address the non-income dimensions of poverty. It will continue to address poverty through quality job creation using strategies, that include support for small and medium-sized enterprises and inclusive businesses. In addition, ADB will support DMCs to improve education and training outcomes, achieve better health for all, and strengthen social protection systems and service delivery for those in need. Under OP 1, ADB is committed to enhancing partnerships with relevant institutions, including CSOs, to generate knowledge, share good practices, and improve policy dialogue.¹²

Mobilizing communities to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

The pandemic disproportionately affected poor households in Mongolia, particularly women, older persons, and people with disabilities. Border restrictions and countrywide lockdowns caused significant loss of income and raised food security concerns. The pandemic has exacerbated preexisting inequalities and vulnerabilities for disadvantaged groups, requiring immediate community-based response. With support from the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific, the Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund, the People's Republic of China Poverty Reduction and Regional Cooperation Fund, and the Regional Cooperation and Integration Fund, ADB launched in 2020 the technical assistance, Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions (footnote 1). Through this project, ADB collaborated with 10 community-based CSOs in seven countries to support the mitigation of the impacts of COVID-19, including providing livelihood programs for vulnerable groups.

“Grassroots efforts and community-led programs deliver impactful results and high value for money. This COVID-19 project leverages the on-the-ground presence and experience of civil society organizations to respond in areas where formal assistance channels may not reach.”

Pinsuda Alexander, Economist, ADB

(Quoted from ADB. 2021. Communities Against COVID-19 and Poverty. <https://www.adb.org/multimedia/partnership-report2021/stories/communities-against-covid-19-and-poverty/>)

¹² ADB. 2019. *Strategy 2030 Operational Plan for Priority 1: Addressing Remaining Poverty and Reducing Inequalities, 2019–2024*. Manila.



Livelihood support for women during the pandemic. The COVID-19 lockdown in Mongolia significantly affected the income of 42-year-old Nyamajav, head of her five-person household. After receiving baking tools and livelihood trainings through an ADB grant, Nyamajav reopened and expanded her small business. She even later hired her female neighbors who lost jobs because of the pandemic (photo by ADB).



Livelihood support for people with disabilities during the pandemic. Bat-Erdene and his wife Agartuvshin, who are both hearing impaired, work at their sewing business. Through an ADB grant, they received sewing equipment and vegetable gardening set, which helped improved their income. They are now earning more than MNT2 million (\$660) a month and are receiving orders from the local community to sew children's clothes (photo by ADB).

A consortium of 26 CSOs, led by the Mongolian Remote Sensing Society, has been organizing community training and business support, which included sewing (Box 7), vegetable gardening, building greenhouses, chicken farming, food storage, dairy production, and baking. The consortium sent out a community survey to determine the various forms of assistance that the community needed. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the CSOs led creative communications campaign featuring videos and posters to inform people of health protocols and urge them to take vaccines. They also distributed sanitation packages and set up hand sanitation points at strategic locations as part of the campaigns.

Promoting social protection for economic inclusion through the graduation approach. Large numbers of poor families have benefited from the expansion of social protection systems in the region, especially from targeted social assistance. However, since cash transfers can address only a part of the poverty story, governments are becoming increasingly concerned in applying social protection to achieve economic inclusion. The graduation approach aims to strengthen the resilience of poor and vulnerable population to tackle the multifaceted challenges of poverty. Economic inclusion and social protection strategies through the graduation approach are innovative and empirically proven ways to address poverty and reduce inequality, which is a key operational priority of ADB Strategy 2030.

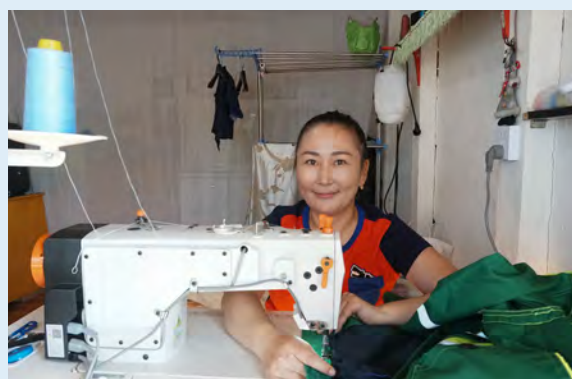
Box 7: More than Just a Sewing Machine

Tungalagnamir Namsrai, 38, suffers from hearing impairment and lives with her child and mother in Ulaanbaatar. She is a single parent to a child with autism. She lost her job due to the pandemic. Her hearing impairment prevented her from securing income to feed her family.

As a grant beneficiary of the Asian Development Bank, Tungalagnamir trained to learn to sew, which enabled her to start her own tailoring business as a source of steady income. The project also gave her sewing tools, which helped her earn MNT1 million (\$330) each month. With this income, she was able to support her family, buy a new hearing aid, and pay for medical bills.

Tungalagnamir also shared her success with mothers whose children struggle with autism. Due to the lack of specialized schools in Mongolia, many children with disabilities stay at home and receive education from their mothers. She trained and hired fellow mothers

so that they too could enjoy additional income for their families. Together, they improved their craft, attracted more clients, and earned higher incomes, even expanding to online services. According to Tungalagnamir, “I want to give back, to share with others, as I once received help when I needed it the most.”



Thriving sewing business. Tungalagnamir receives sewing orders from street cleaners, kindergarten and primary school teachers, parents, and neighbors (photo by ADB).

The graduation approach is a comprehensive, holistic, time-bound, and carefully sequenced set of interventions that aims to “graduate” people from extreme poverty to more sustainable livelihoods. The approach combines support for immediate needs (through cash transfers or food support, depending on the context) with longer-term investments (through training; enterprise development; and building skills, knowledge, and confidence).

As an integral component of the Expanded Social Assistance Project in the Philippines, the Padayon Sustainable Livelihood Program has been incorporating the social protection for economic inclusion additionalities into the country's existing sustainable livelihood program.¹³ ADB engaged BRAC's Ultra Poor Graduation Initiative (UPGI) to implement the graduation approach. To ensure the sustainability of its interventions in addressing the poverty challenges of target beneficiaries, a key component of the project is the provision of seed capital for establishing livelihood, with continuous support through technical training for managing these livelihoods. Governments are increasingly interested in using this approach to serve poor and vulnerable groups by building on existing government-led national programs (such as livelihoods and jobs programs, social safety nets, and financial inclusion programs) in response to the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as in investing in long-term economic recovery.



Sustainable livelihood program training. With her husband's assistance, Elvie Gallo now manages a growing chicken-rearing business after she began participating in the Padayon SLP project located in Tagbac Sur Barangay, Iloilo, Philippines (photo by BRAC/Robert Irven 2022).

¹³ ADB. Philippines: Expanded Social Assistance Project.



Our collaboration with ADB, other institutions, and individuals that share the same mission with Center for Agriculture and Rural Development Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD) furthers financial inclusivity and contributes to our shared goal of sustainable livelihood and the realization of zero poverty in the Philippines. Together, we and our partners strive towards our common goal of empowering Filipino families.

Aristeo A. Dequito
Managing Director
CARD

Expanding access to affordable finance. The Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD), Inc. is a microfinance NGO in the Philippines that provides working capital for microborrowers, many of whom are women and farmers. With presence in most provinces in the country, CARD has 1.3 million microborrowers, 85% of them women. As of December 2020, CARD's loan portfolio reached ₱8.8 billion (equivalent to \$160 million). Small community stores, food vendors, and backyard farmers and growers borrow from CARD as it offers low interest rates and does not charge a service fee.¹⁴

ADB has disbursed a loan to CARD worth \$4 million to increase its lending capacity, which will help improve the livelihoods of low-income earners and help them withstand future crises. The project recognizes the fact that lockdowns during the pandemic significantly reduced the income of women-owned microborrowers (footnote 14).

Supporting people with disabilities. In 2022, ADB convened the inaugural meeting of the Disability Inclusion Reference Group to help guide strategies on disability inclusion going forward. Members of the Disability Inclusion Reference Group represent organizations of persons with disabilities or organizations that work with persons with disabilities. The engagement of the Disability Inclusion Reference Group is one of the priority actions in ADB's road map for strengthening disability-inclusive development, which was approved in November 2021.¹⁵

¹⁴ ADB. 2023. ADB Provides \$4 Million Loan to CARD to Expand Microfinance Access for Women in the Philippines. News release. 26 January.

¹⁵ ADB. 2022. *Strengthening Disability-Inclusive Development: 2021–2025 Road Map*. Manila.

Mitigating learning loss from school lockdown during the pandemic.

In 2022, ADB approved a \$200 million concessional loan to help the Government of Nepal strengthen the equity, quality, and resilience of its school education.¹⁶ The program will enhance learning provisions for basic and secondary schools, and strengthen teaching and learning in schools; importantly, it will accelerate the recovery from learning losses caused by the school lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁷ Selected secondary schools will be upgraded to increase opportunities to study science education in grades 11–12, especially for girls. The inclusive and pro-poor scholarship program will be expanded from grades 9–12 to grades 6–12 to improve retention.

To mitigate learning loss as a result of the pandemic, ADB is undertaking a recovery and accelerated learning program in collaboration with CSOs. According to Rudi Van Dael, ADB principal social sector specialist for South Asia, “This program will help accelerate reforms and transform the country’s education system to develop human capital, reduce social inequity, and attain sustainable growth” (footnote 16).



Strengthening Nepal's science education system. Muna Gharti Magar and Renu attend science lab class at Kalika Model School, Ram Bazar in Pokhara, Nepal (photo by ADB).

¹⁶ ADB. 2022. ADB Approves \$200 Million Loan to Strengthen Education System in Nepal. News release. 6 December.

¹⁷ ADB. Nepal: Supporting the School Education Sector Plan.



Supporting Nepal's School Education Sector Plan, 2021–2030.
The project aims to accelerate the recovery from learning loss resulting from school lockdown during the pandemic (photo by ADB).

Fighting the pandemic's negative impact on the labor market.

The quarantine measures as a result of the pandemic made significant changes in Kazakhstan's labor market. The unemployment rate sharply increased among professions requiring traditional skills and workers who have not been able to adapt to the new realities. The service sector and industrial production suffered the most, which led to mass layoffs. To minimize the effect on the most vulnerable workers who lost their jobs and to find for them new opportunities in the post-pandemic environment, ADB partnered with the Government of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Development Programme in developing an apprenticeship program, which was implemented by the Kameda Public Fund. Over 260 unemployed, self-employed, and people with disabilities participated in the program, which was supplemented by a training program and mentors' support activities.

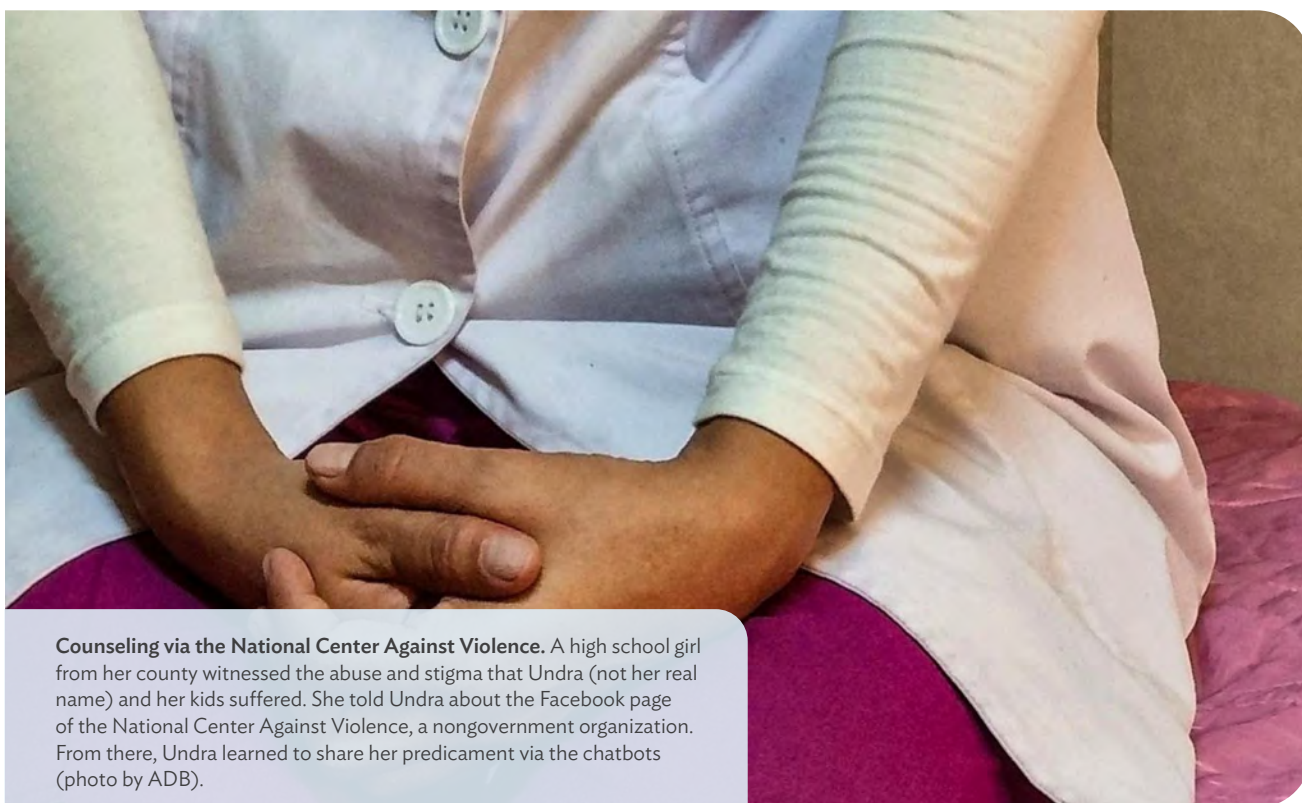
B. Operational Priority 2: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality

ADB recognizes that gender equality is important in its own right as well as for helping achieve genuine socioeconomic development. It will continue to build on good practices and institutional innovations. It also aligns with Strategy 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals to meet the rapidly changing needs of the region.¹⁸

¹⁸ ADB. 2019. *Strategy 2030 Operational Plan for Priority 2: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality, 2019–2024*. Manila.

Preventing domestic violence and providing a continuum of care for survivors and families. The COVID-19 crisis has escalated gendered human rights and socioeconomic impacts, including a shadow pandemic: domestic violence. In 2020, Mongolia's national police data revealed a 30% increase in reported cases of domestic violence compared with 2019. Of the total number of survivors, 93% are women and 90% of the crimes were committed in a household setting.

Under the technical assistance, Addressing and Preventing Domestic Violence in Mongolia during the COVID-19 Crisis (footnote 4), ADB engaged three NGOs—the National Center Against Violence, Beautiful Hearts against Sexual Violence, and Institute of Applied Psychology—to help strengthen the country's mechanism against domestic violence.¹⁹ The project was designed and implemented collaboratively with the government, NGOs, survivors and their families, and private IT and communication firms to provide a continuum of care for survivors of domestic violence. In addition, the project also intended to boost the COVID-19 safety of first responders and survivors by providing essential personal protective equipment, first aid kits, and disinfection items, among others.



Counseling via the National Center Against Violence. A high school girl from her county witnessed the abuse and stigma that Undra (not her real name) and her kids suffered. She told Undra about the Facebook page of the National Center Against Violence, a nongovernment organization. From there, Undra learned to share her predicament via the chatbots (photo by ADB).

¹⁹ ADB. 2023. Partnering with Civil Society to Combat Domestic Violence. *Development Asia*. 23 January.

Increasing awareness about gender-based violence and creating safety nets in the community. ADB supports targeted operations to empower women and girls. Specifically, ADB continues to seek gender equality outcomes across five areas: economic empowerment, human development, decision-making and leadership, time poverty reduction, and resilience to external shocks. CSOs, particularly grassroots organizations, have been valuable partners in community mobilization activities to achieve gender-related outcomes (footnote 18).

In Mongolia, ADB collaborates with Good Neighbors to help vulnerable women and poor households in selected *ger* (traditional dwelling) areas. Good Neighbors is an NGO that works toward sustainable development by assisting neglected and vulnerable people through people-centered participatory approach. Through the regional technical assistance, Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions, the NGO trained 50 community health workers to strengthen informal health systems and enhance people's basic hygiene capacity (footnote 1). Recognizing the stress on families from the economic disruptions caused by the pandemic, Good Neighbors also carried out a family development program for 2,000 families to increase awareness about gender-based violence (GBV) and form family-based groups as safety nets in the community. In addition, the NGO installed a hotline to provide women and girls with easy access to help in times of distress (footnote 2).



Supporting the hygiene needs of *ger* communities. Badamtsetseg's family received a portable sink through an ADB grant. She and her nine-person household use the sink for regular handwashing and toothbrushing. During winters, they move the portable sink inside their *ger* and plug it into the shower so they can have readily available warm water. The 15-liter capacity of the water tank is enough to cover the hygiene needs of the family (photo by ADB).

Supporting survivors of gender-based violence. In Palau, ADB's COVID-19 Response for Affected Poor and Vulnerable Groups Project offers multidisciplinary responses to address family and GBV.²⁰ ADB is working with two NGOs to deliver services to victims of GBV and their families at the time of the pandemic.²¹ The NGO called Semesemel a Klengelakel works with families at risk to improve communications, facilitate problem-solving, and prevent potential violence and family breakdown. They provide case management and referral services to victims and families affected by violence. On the other hand, the Belau Association of Non-Governmental Organizations has been engaged to do social marketing and capacity building for frontline workers and women's community-based organizations on GBV services and referral pathways.

Promoting telephone hotline for victims of gender-based violence.

The NGO, Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI), established a telephone hotline in Majuro, the capital of the Marshall Islands, to help victims of domestic violence during the COVID-19 lockdown. ADB worked with WUTMI, the leading voice against violence against women and girls in the Marshall Islands, through the Health Expenditure and Livelihoods Support Program.²² The NGO collaborates with another NGO, Weto in Mour (A Place of Life) Center, which has programs expanding to Ebeye, a highly populated island. Weto in Mour offers free and confidential services, prioritizing the safety of women and girls who are victims of violence. The center also encourages women and girls who have experienced other forms of violence, such as sexual abuse, trafficking or sexual exploitation, or forced marriage, to seek appropriate help.²³

Advancing gender equality and social inclusion. In Maldives, gender inequality persists as women continue to shoulder most of the unpaid care work. Domestic violence and GBV also remain prevalent.²⁴ In 2022, ADB approved a \$7.51 million grant to Maldives to support ADB's first ever holistic gender equality project in Maldives.²⁵ The grant supports transformative gender equality initiatives to eliminate barriers that prevent equal rights, participation, and benefits for women. It will pilot three new domestic violence and GBV shelters, improve the use and collection of gender equality and social inclusion data, and introduce gender-responsive budgeting into government planning and budgeting processes.

ADB will also be administering an attached technical assistance project that aims to strengthen the social service system for aged care, early childcare, and domestic violence and/or GBV services.²⁶ The project will introduce new partnership mechanisms between the Government of Maldives and CSOs to prevent domestic violence and GBV and improve access to social services and elderly care.

²⁰ ADB. Palau: COVID-19 Response for Affected Poor and Vulnerable Groups Project.

²¹ ADB. 2021. *Grant Agreement (Special Operations) for Grant 0796-PAL: COVID-19 Response for Affected Poor and Vulnerable Groups Project*. Manila.

²² ADB. Marshall Islands: Health Expenditure and Livelihoods Support Program.

²³ Australian Aid and Pacific Women. 2016. WUTMI Opens Weto in Mour (A Place of Life). News release. 17 March.

²⁴ ADB. 2022. ADB Supports Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Maldives. News release. 5 December.

²⁵ ADB. Maldives: Strengthening Gender Inclusive Initiatives Project.

²⁶ ADB. 2022. *Technical Assistance to the Republic of Maldives for Capacity Building for the Strengthening Gender Inclusive Initiatives Project*. Manila.



Strengthening gender-inclusive initiatives. Transformative gender equality initiatives will address barriers that prevent equal rights, participation, and benefits for women (photo by ADB).

In another development, ADB partnered with Plan International to celebrate the International Day of the Girl Child on 11 October 2022, in recognition of the girls' rights and the unique challenges they face (Box 8).

Promoting gender-inclusive development in communities. In Central and West Asia, CSOs are involved in promoting gender equality in ADB-supported projects through participatory and community-based interventions. Through the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Corridors 1 and 6 Connector Road (Aktobe–Kandyagash) Reconstruction Project,²⁷ NGOs in Kazakhstan will help organize social and gender-inclusive road safety awareness campaigns among communities in the project area. In Tajikistan, the NGO Umedbakhsh was engaged to organize training activities for 65 selected farms, including female-owned farms, through the Water Resource Management in Pyanj River Basin Project.²⁸ The purpose of the training program was to put into practice new and improved technology for agricultural production and efficient water use. New methods of crop irrigation were also applied, which were not previously used in the project areas.

²⁷ ADB. 2019. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan to KazAvtoZhol National Joint Stock Company for the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Corridors 1 and 6 Connector Road (Aktobe–Kandyagash) Reconstruction Project (Guaranteed by the Republic of Kazakhstan)*. Manila.

²⁸ ADB. Tajikistan: Water Resources Management in Pyanj River Basin Project.

Box 8: ADB and Plan International Celebrate International Day of the Girl Child

To commemorate the International Day of the Girl Child on 11 October 2022, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) worked with Plan International in organizing a webinar, #GirlsGetEqual: Measuring Opportunities for Women and Girls. The online event presented the key findings of Plan International's Girl's Leadership Index (GLI) for Asia and the Pacific.

The webinar featured young girls from Nepal and the Philippines who shared their experiences about exercising their rights, making decisions by themselves, and leading the way to tackle issues that affect them.

Using information from globally recognized databases, the GLI measures the opportunities of adolescent girls and young women in selected countries in Asia and the Pacific to develop and demonstrate leadership capabilities. In the context of the GLI, girls' leadership is defined as, "the ability of girls and young women to make decisions by themselves and exercise their

rights at different levels and in different aspects of their lives, and their ability to individually and collectively influence decision-making and decision-makers about issues that affect their ability to realize their rights."



Source: Plan International. 2022. *The 2022 Asia-Pacific Girls' Report: Their Fight for the Future*. Bangkok: Plan International Asia-Pacific Regional Hub.

Strengthening the role of women as agents of change toward community resilience. Oxfam and the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement led the implementation of the pilot project that engaged women and vulnerable groups in community-led infrastructure projects in the Philippines. ADB's technical assistance project, Promoting Urban Climate Change Resilience in Selected Asian Cities, involved breaking the culture of exclusion and addressing sociocultural barriers that inhibit women's active participation in community development initiatives.²⁹ Women and other vulnerable groups play valuable roles in addressing complex community issues. Their knowledge and perspectives as well as unique assets, skills, and resources can help strengthen collective community action.³⁰

Through this project, Oxfam also supported urban poor communities to be involved in resilience planning, identifying solutions, and leading the implementation. Oxfam also convened community stakeholder groups in eight pilot sites in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the Philippines.

²⁹ ADB. Regional: Promoting Urban Climate Change Resilience in Selected Asian Cities.

³⁰ ADB. 2022. Women as Agents of Change for Strengthening Community Resilience. *Development Asia*. 29 December.



Women's role in community-led projects. Local women gardeners and farmers in La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines are part of the community stakeholder group that identified the community-led flood mitigation project (photo by ADB TA 9329).

Representatives from women's groups and women's rights organizations helped ensure meaningful community participation and led the implementation of project activities.

C. Operational Priority 3: Tackling Climate Change, Building Climate and Disaster Resilience, and Enhancing Environmental Sustainability

ADB is scaling up support in the areas of tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability. OP 3 seeks to build strong partnerships with think tanks, NGOs, the academe, and the private sector to address these issues.

Mobilizing community development groups for improved access to water.

The Sudurpashchim Province in Nepal is assessed as highly water-stressed and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In this remote region, women and children used to spend 3–8 hours each day to collect water during the dry season. Agriculture was predominantly subsistence and largely dependent on rainwater. The communities experienced seasonal food insecurity, thereby forcing men, mostly, to migrate in search of low-paying unskilled jobs to cope.

ADB's project on Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-Regions developed springs on which communities in Sudurpashchim Province relied on for their source of water.³¹ A total of 51,278 households,

³¹ ADB. 2022. *Completion Report: Building Climate Resilience of Watersheds in Mountain Eco-Regions Project in Nepal*. Manila.



comprising 318,208 individuals, now have access to improved source of domestic and irrigation water. The time women and children spend collecting water is reduced by 73%, and water collected increased from 8 liters to 12 liters per day. Women and children have more time now to engage in productive chores.

The success of the project can be attributed to the 1,057 community development groups (CDGs) formed to lead planning and implementation of the small infrastructure works and catchment management practices within their own catchment area (subwatershed). The CDGs were supported by community development committees (CDCs) elected from the CDG members, which represented one former village development committee—the smallest administrative unit in Nepal prior to federalism. While the CDCs coordinated procurement and liaising with the local government, the CDGs led the construction of small infrastructure and watershed management interventions.

Importantly, the project applied inclusive approach resulting in 46% representation by women and 26% representation by disadvantaged groups in CDGs and CDCs. In addition, women held leadership positions in 42% of CDGs and 37% of CDCs. This modality ensured that the most vulnerable settlements were selected, and the works were completed without delay and with high level of community ownership.

Managing coral reef resources and protecting biodiversity. The Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program in Indonesia contributes to the government's target of establishing 32.5 million hectares of effective marine protected areas (MPAs) by 2030 (footnote 6). It supports coastal

communities in three MPAs in Bali and West Nusa Tenggara provinces to manage coral reef resources, associated ecosystems, and biodiversity in a sustainable manner.³² This approach improves the economic and social welfare situation of these communities.

The project is developing model MPAs with effective management, financial sustainability, and capacity for community co-management. The involvement of NGOs helped to effectively implement community-based activities and increase project sustainability. Community members actively participated in managing the protected areas through surveillance, monitoring, and ecotourism activities. The project has trained close to 100 local community surveillance volunteers who have been certified by MPA authorities. In addition, training programs on Marine Ecotourism also benefited community members. Through the Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program, training programs for home industry aided in improving the livelihood capacity for at least three community-based enterprises.

Promoting innovation in “tokenizing” real-world assets. In its bid to call for proposals on how non-fungible tokens (NFTs) can be used to advance ADB’s Strategy 2030 OPs in selected Asian countries, ADB organized the “NFTs for Development in Asia” in 2021.³³ The NFTs are unique cryptographic tokens that exist on a blockchain and cannot be replicated. They can represent real-world items such as photos, videos, audio, and other types of digital files. “Tokenizing” these real-world tangible assets offers opportunities for new business models because it makes buying, selling, and trading them more efficient while reducing the probability of fraud.

As the winner of the competition, Fauna NFT partnered with Reef Check Indonesia Foundation and the Indonesian Climate Change Trust Fund to contribute to ADB’s Coral Triangle Initiatives. Reef Check Indonesia Foundation is dedicated to empowering coastal communities through integrated coastal and marine ecosystem management. It is part of Reef Check International, the largest coral reef conservation network, spanning over 90 countries in the world.³⁴ Fauna NFT launched its first collection, “the non-fungible reef,” in December 2022. The funds raised through sales will support Reef Check Indonesia’s ongoing coastal restoration and education programs.

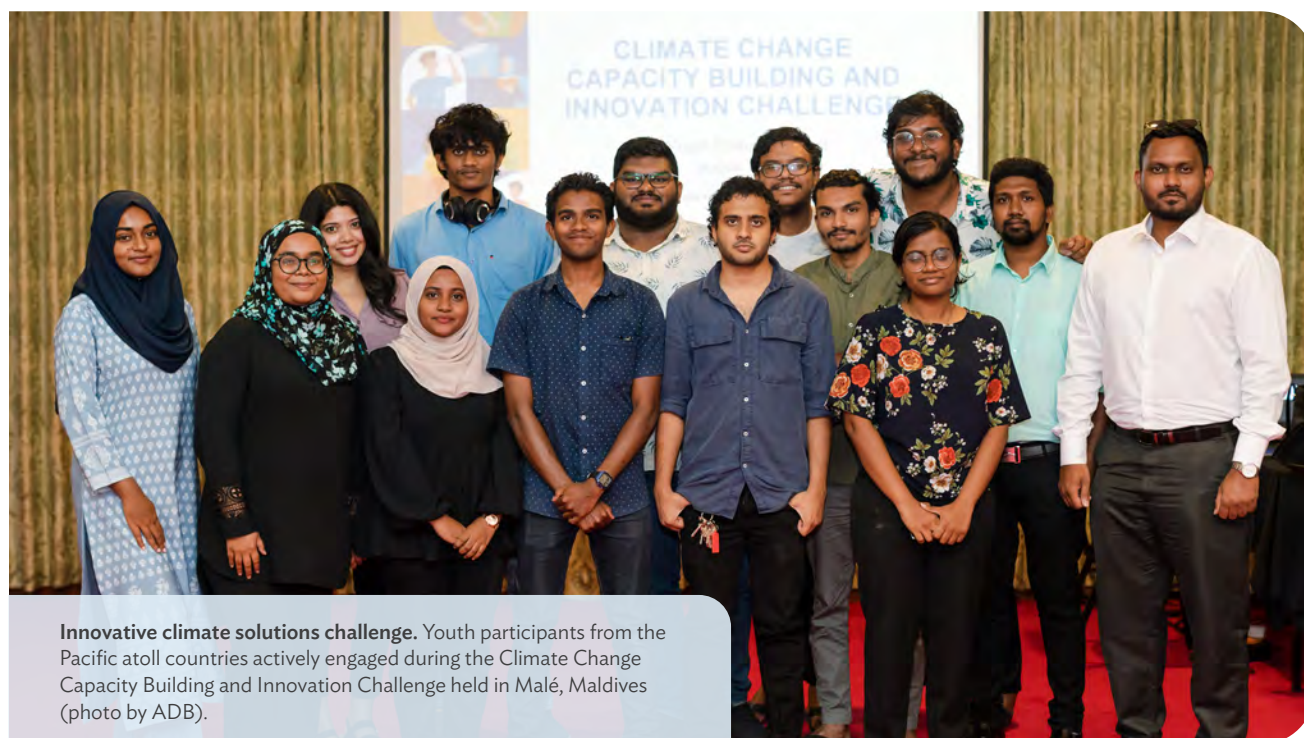
Collaborating with young people for climate solutions. Through the regional technical assistance, Demonstrating Innovative Employment Solutions through Regional Knowledge-Sharing Partnerships with Youth Organizations, ADB works through CSOs based in the four atoll countries of Kiribati, Maldives, the Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu to catalyze youth-led

³² ADB. 2013. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan and Administration of Grant to the Republic of Indonesia for Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program—Coral Triangle Initiative Project*. Manila.

³³ ADB. Digital X ADB Technology Innovation Challenge: NFTs for Development in Asia.

³⁴ Reef Check Indonesia Foundation.

climate action.³⁵ As part of an initiative to empower young people in the Asia and Pacific region to be agents of change in their communities, the project builds capacity of youth and provides opportunities for young people to conduct research, identify issues, and develop solutions to address those issues. The climate-focused component of the work mobilized training on climate change for young people by working with local implementing CSOs: the Kiribati Climate Action Network, Dhivehi Masverin–Maldives, College of Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu Climate Action Network. The youth conducted their community climate change risk assessment and then developed proposals for small projects to be implemented in their communities to address climate vulnerabilities identified in the assessment. A total of 254 young people were trained, 24 project proposals from the youth participants were received, and 11 projects were selected to be implemented in the communities.



Innovative climate solutions challenge. Youth participants from the Pacific atoll countries actively engaged during the Climate Change Capacity Building and Innovation Challenge held in Malé, Maldives (photo by ADB).

D. Operational Priority 4: Making Cities More Livable

OP 4 seeks to build livable cities that are green, competitive, resilient, and inclusive.³⁶ ADB will continue to pursue projects that promote urban health, urban mobility, gender equality, and environmental sustainability through inclusive and participatory urban planning. Meaningful participation of

³⁵ ADB. Regional: Demonstrating Innovative Employment Solutions through Regional Knowledge-Sharing Partnerships with Youth Organizations.

³⁶ ADB. 2019. *Strategy 2030 Operational Plan for Priority 4: Making Cities More Livable, 2019–2024*. Manila.

CSOs in the various stages of the project cycle helps facilitate citizen-centric approaches in service provision aimed at making cities more livable and inclusive.

Responding to the needs of the older persons. In the People's Republic of China (PRC), Yichang City was recognized in June 2022 as the first batch of “national key contact cities,” owing to its impactful response to its aging population. About 25% of the city's 4 million residents are above the age of 60. Yichang has successfully innovated its elderly care service system, with guidance from its elderly care strategic plan. By taking a multipronged approach, the city has built a comprehensive elderly care system, which integrates community, home-based, and institutional services, and medical care.³⁷

ADB assisted the Yichang Municipal Government in preparing a strategic development plan for elderly care through the technical assistance to the PRC on Strategic Elderly Care Services.³⁸ Strategies on engaging the private sector and civil society as well as on improving the quality of long-term care were thoroughly discussed and integrated into the plan. One of the lessons from the project is the importance of participatory planning that is comprehensive and evidence-based.

Supporting the graduation program for coastal communities. Coastal towns in Bangladesh experience high levels of hazard and vulnerability to climate-related disasters because of its low elevation, high population, poverty, and limited capacity of *pourashavas* (local governments) to implement resilience programs.³⁹ The communities also lack adequate infrastructure for coping with flood and cyclone risks. Approved in 2022, the Coastal Towns Climate Resilience Project aims to improve climate and disaster resilience of coastal towns and improve the adaptive capacity of vulnerable households, especially poor women, to deal with climate shocks.⁴⁰

ADB will put into operation the graduation approach, comprising a sequenced and comprehensive set of interventions to help poor households improve their living conditions. CSOs will support the design and implementation of the graduation program for each *pourashava*. The graduation approach is based on four pillars: (i) social protection through a subsistence allowance and links to basic services, (ii) livelihood promotion through access to sustainable and resilient livelihoods, (iii) financial inclusion through access to formal savings mechanisms and financial literacy, and (iv) social empowerment for positive behavior change among families and communities.

³⁷ ADB. 2022. Upgrading Elderly Care in Yichang City, People's Republic of China. Project result/ Case study. 2 December.

³⁸ ADB. China, People's Republic of: Strategic Elderly Care Services Development in Yichang.

³⁹ ADB. 2022. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loans and Grant to the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the Coastal Towns Climate Resilience Project*. Manila.

⁴⁰ ADB. Bangladesh: Coastal Towns Climate Resilience Project.

Building inclusive and gender-responsive cities. In Maldives, ADB is working to help increase women's access to sustainable gender-responsive social services through the Strengthening Gender Inclusive Initiatives Project.⁴¹ To promote livable cities that are inclusive, one of the outputs of the project is to build on the government's commitment to partnerships with CSOs, local councils, and women's development committees. The project includes creating a small grants scheme for CSOs to collaborate with local councils and women's development committees on addressing domestic violence and GBV by providing improved access to safe accommodation of survivors as well as social and economic support services. The grant facility will also support innovative activities to promote quality long-term care and healthy aging, as well as ensure the well-being of older people and their caregivers. In addition, the project will strengthen the capacity of partner CSOs, local councils, and women's development committees to implement care activities for victims of domestic violence and GBV and aged care.

Addressing the needs of young people in urban development. ADB partners with Save the Children in Mongolia through the regional technical assistance, Demonstrating Innovative Employment Solutions through Regional Knowledge-Sharing Partnerships with Youth Organizations,⁴² and the technical assistance, Enhancing Youth-Led Engagement for Creating an Inclusive and Livable City in Ulaanbaatar's Ger Areas.⁴³ Save the Children in Mongolia helps build the capacity of local youth to conduct situational analysis to identify the issues, needs, and aspirations of local young people. The approach makes use of youth-led participatory research, the results of which will be integrated into urban planning and development of *ger* areas of Mongolia. ADB's collaboration with the youth, CSOs, and government counterparts is crucial to supporting meaningful youth engagement as part of a participatory process in the ger urban development project.

E. Operational Priority 5: Promoting Rural Development and Food Security

Promoting rural development and food security will help DMCs increase agricultural productivity and food security. ADB has long recognized the important role of CSOs in effectively implementing rural development programs using community-based participatory processes.

Building capacity for livelihood activities and financial literacy. ADB's Bridge Replacement for Improved Rural Access Sector Project aims to replace aging and single-lane Bailey bridges and other badly deteriorated

⁴¹ ADB. 2022. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Grant and Technical Assistance Grant to the Republic of Maldives for Strengthening Gender Inclusive Initiatives Project*. Manila.

⁴² ADB. 2018. *Technical Assistance for Demonstrating Innovative Employment Solutions through Regional Knowledge-Sharing Partnerships with Youth Organizations*. Manila.

⁴³ ADB. Mongolia: Enhancing Youth-Led Engagement for Creating an Inclusive and Livable City in Ulaanbaatar Ger Areas.

bridges on the national highways in Papua New Guinea with double-lane permanent bridges.⁴⁴ In addition to the physical infrastructure, the project also supported a livelihoods restoration program that imparted skills trainings on marketing support services. The training activities helped enhance the livelihood and income-earning capacity of affected people through production, processing, storage, and marketing of quality crops and livestock species.

The project engaged the CSO, People's Unite to Serve Humanity Inc., to conduct livelihood trainings in agriculture, livestock, and financial literacy to the affected people at each of the 12 Bridge Sites along the New Britain Highway in the West New Britain Province. The training programs benefited 739 participants among affected people, almost half of whom were women. People's Unite to Serve Humanity Inc. led the initiative, which generated positive results and drew interest from non-affected villagers in the West New Britain Province.

Enhancing women's leadership skills among farmers' cooperatives.

Gansu Province is one of the poorest provinces in the PRC. It faces significant environmental challenges that climate change will likely exacerbate. ADB approved in 2022 a \$150 million loan to demonstrate sustainable rural economic diversification and climate change mitigation in the province. The Gansu Environmentally Sustainable Rural Vitalization and Development Project will strengthen institutional capacity for improving green governance and promoting climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.⁴⁵ As part of the social development and gender action plan,⁴⁶ the project will (i) improve the capacity of women-led cooperatives for private sector partnership and green governance through incubation, and (ii) enhance women's decision-making and leadership skills among farmers' cooperatives.

Building farmers' capacity. In Uzbekistan, 49.5% of the population lives in rural areas where 15 million people work in agriculture. In recent years, CSOs have introduced themselves into the country's agriculture sector, acting as mediators between rural communities, local bodies, and national institutions. They can provide the expertise to support farmers by raising awareness of agricultural programs; training farmers in new, resource-smart techniques; and attracting investment and projects to the sector.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ ADB. Papua New Guinea: Bridge Replacement for Improved Rural Access Sector Project.

⁴⁵ ADB. China, People's Republic of: Gansu Environmentally Sustainable Rural Vitalization and Development Project.

⁴⁶ ADB. 2022. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan to the People's Republic of China for the Gansu Environmentally Sustainable Rural Vitalization and Development Project*. Social Development and Gender Action Plan. Manila.

⁴⁷ M. Best and D. Zakirova. 2022. Civil Society Organizations Are Key to Developing Rural Areas. *Asian Development Blog*. 2 February.



Building farmers' capacity. Civil society organizations in Uzbekistan help enhance the capacity of farmers to increase their productivity (photo by ADB).

In Khorezm and Karakalpakstan, the CSO, Khorezm Rural Advisory Support Service, discovered that farmers often introduce new species of plants and livestock without the needed technical knowledge about their proper cultivation and management. This CSO supported the farmers by offering seminars on a wide range of issues, including the current government agenda on the livestock sector, as well as feed and forage crops, pedigree cattle, and veterinary diseases, among others.

F. Operational Priority 6: Strengthening Governance and Institutional Capacity

OP 6 seeks to support public management reforms to improve governance in DMCs and create an enabling environment for sustainable growth. ADB will continue to collaborate with civil society and citizen networks to ensure accountability, transparency, and inclusivity.

Improving community-based monitoring of seismic safety. Since the massive Spitak earthquake in 1988, national authorities in Armenia have taken enormous steps to develop emergency response systems and improve building design and construction. ADB's Seismic Safety Improvement Program is supporting the Government of Armenia (i) to enhance school seismic safety to reduce casualties and damage during earthquakes, and (ii) to enable better use of school buildings as shelters

during earthquakes.⁴⁸ The project promotes sustainable urban systems and improved environment and resilience.

The government collaborated with the community-based organization, Armavir Development Center, in conducting community-based monitoring initiatives to reduce potential integrity and safeguard risks. The CSO conducted a training of community monitors who visited the construction sites to assess the progress of the project. Around 179 monitoring visits to the construction sites were completed. A problem-solving mechanism was established, which helped address issues related to project delays, health and safety, low quality of materials, and non-inclusion of target beneficiaries, among others. Dialogue with key stakeholders was part of the community-based monitoring. The project highlighted the important role of community-based organizations in participatory monitoring.⁴⁹

Enhancing innovative citizen engagement through civil society organizations. Dialogue between citizens and governments is important in ensuring transparency, sound public decision-making, and strong governance. Positive links exist between citizen engagement and improved public service delivery, public financial management, governance, and social inclusion, among others. Citizen engagement practices are carried out across the region. However, there are often gaps in engagement, particularly for women, youth, poor, vulnerable, marginalized, and excluded groups.

In 2022, ADB approved the regional technical assistance, Mainstreaming Citizen-Led Mechanisms for Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Development Results.⁵⁰ The corporate regional technical assistance recognizes the role of CSOs as vital intermediaries between citizens and DMC governments. CSOs are vehicles through which citizens—especially women, youth, poor, vulnerable, marginalized, and excluded groups—may be mobilized to affect sustained change. ADB will seek opportunities to better engage CSOs. ADB will also support integration of citizen participation in the project cycle by developing operational tools to facilitate a more effective and innovative citizen engagement.

G. Operational Priority 7: Fostering Regional Cooperation and Integration

Regional cooperation facilitates collective action to mitigate cross-border risks, such as climate change, pollution, energy and water security, and communicable and infectious diseases. CSOs can play important roles in creating a more inclusive and participatory approach to regional cooperation and integration by ensuring that the voices and interests of

⁴⁸ ADB. Armenia: Seismic Safety Improvement Program.

⁴⁹ G. Mousaelyan and N. Arakelyan. 2022. Seismic Safety Improvement Program. PowerPoint presentation prepared for ADB for the webinar on CSO Conversations: CSO Roles in Monitoring and Evaluating Projects. Mandaluyong City, Philippines. 10 May.

⁵⁰ ADB. Regional: Mainstreaming Citizen-Led Mechanisms for Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Development Results.

citizens are considered in decision-making processes. ADB's Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program leading to 2030 aims to enhance engagement with civil society to promote people-to-people contacts, including among border communities with strong traditional ties, across countries.⁵¹ In addition, CSOs can monitor and evaluate the implementation of regional cooperation initiatives by providing feedback to governments and other stakeholders and by helping ensure that these efforts are meeting the needs and interests of citizens. Through their vast networks and alliances among civil society groups across the region, CSOs can promote dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders to improve understanding and minimize possible conflict. Importantly, they can advocate for policies and initiatives that promote regional cooperation and integration, such as regional infrastructure projects, or harmonization of regulations and standards.

Helping vulnerable communities in border areas mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The Regional Cooperation and Integration Fund is supporting regional technical assistance, Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions (footnote 1). Through this project, CSOs, led by Mith Samlanh and its partners, Friends International and Peuan, have been working among 20 cross-border communities around Bangkok and Aranyaprathet in Thailand; and Poipet, Siem Reap, and Phnom Penh in Cambodia. The partner CSOs have been providing assistance to strengthen health resilience, prevent and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, and provide social protection to vulnerable communities in the border areas. They have also been offering employment support to those whose livelihoods were impacted by the pandemic.

The project has established a network of community social workers, referred to as Child Safe Agents, to support at-risk and marginalized youth and their caregivers. The Child Safe Agents provide emergency hotlines, distribute emergency supplies, and provide training for employment readiness and job placement. The network also conducts outreach activities to grassroots communities to encourage enrollment in formal social protection programs, such as ID Poor in Cambodia. In addition, they carry out awareness-raising activities to guide beneficiaries on how to access the COVID-19 vaccines and other medical services.

The regional technical assistance has also engaged Humana People to People in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Raks Thai Foundation in Thailand to promote regional cooperation and integration. The CSOs have been helping improve health resilience in cross-border communities and migrant workers, with funding support from the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific and the PRC Poverty Reduction and Regional Cooperation Fund.

⁵¹ ADB. 2017. *CAREC 2030: Connecting the Region for Shared and Sustainable Development*. Manila.



Helping cross-border communities during the pandemic. CSO partners, Mith Samlanh and Friends International, work with communities living near the Cambodia–Thailand border. The pandemic significantly affected their livelihood because of border closure and lockdowns. The population who lives here are mostly poor people, working as scavengers or cart pullers. Unemployment, unsafe migration, debts, drugs, and violence are very common (photo by ADB).



Supporting migrant families during the pandemic. CSO partner, Raks Thai Foundation, works in communities like Samut Sakhon's Talat Kung (shrimp market), which had a large outbreak of COVID-19 among the migrant workers. The foundation worked with dormitory owners to establish a community volunteer network and humanitarian food support during the community lockdown. It also assisted the health ministry's community testing and vaccine campaigns (photo by ADB).

Enhancing people's preparedness to mitigate the impacts of floods and droughts. The capital city of Vientiane in the Lao People's Democratic Republic is situated in the lower basin of the Mekong River. Large fluctuations in the water levels of the river often caused flooding during the wet season and drought during the dry season in the surrounding areas. The regional project, Greater Mekong Subregion Flood and Drought Risks Management and Mitigation Project, helped reduce economic

losses resulting from flood and drought.⁵² It also helped rehabilitate flood embankment and stabilized agricultural production by constructing concrete canal systems as part of the pump irrigation schemes.

The NGO, Center for Development of Community Initiative and Environment, carried out capacity development programs (i) to enhance beneficiaries' skills and preparedness in managing and mitigating the impacts of flood and drought events, and (ii) to reduce economic losses. Toward project completion, a total number of 61,500 people benefited from the project. A post-project survey showed that the area under rice double-cropping increased threefold to 1,071 hectares. There was also an increased number of rice producers that were able to harvest in the dry season. Moreover, travel times from villages in the embankment to the city center were reduced by 60%.

“In the past, we made a small amount of rice. Now we can produce a lot more than before. Our family's living condition has improved. I have kept part of my income for household spending. I also have some savings to support my children for their further education in the future.

Bountung Lathsachack, Farmer, Nalong Village
(Quoted from ADB. 2022. Boosting Livelihoods in Lao People's Democratic Republic through Better Water Infrastructure. Video. 15 August.)

Empowering communities for climate-resilient and sustainable blue economies. Countries in the Pacific have land areas that are small, remote, and isolated. Most people live in coastal areas and rely on coastal and marine resources for food and livelihoods. Coastal areas in the Pacific are already highly exposed to natural hazards and extreme climate change impacts, such as increased intensity and frequency of tropical cyclones, storm surges, coastal flooding, and sea level rise, among others. Climate change is projected to result in widespread damage to the ecosystems and economies, and to amplify vulnerabilities of communities in the region.

Approved in 2022, the technical assistance, Promoting Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Blue Economies, aims to build enabling conditions and capacity of Pacific DMCs to build climate-resilient and sustainable blue economies.⁵³ Through this project, community-focused capacity development activities will be conducted in collaboration with CSOs, with the purpose of supporting meaningful participation in climate adaptation and blue economies.

⁵² ADB. Regional: Greater Mekong Subregion Flood and Drought Risk Management and Mitigation Project (LAO/VIE).

⁵³ ADB. 2022. *Technical Assistance for Promoting Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Blue Economies*. Manila.



Community engagement on disaster risk reduction. Residents of Muluk Gaon in Dibrugarh have gathered to understand how the floods in the river Brahmaputra could affect them and minimize the disaster (photo by ADB.).

4

PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN POLICY REVIEW AND COUNTRY PROGRAMMING

Policy development and review offer significant opportunities for CSOs to engage with ADB. For its part, ADB recognizes the importance of seeking inputs through consultations with civil society because it reflects a variety of alternative views and perspectives.

Perspectives of civil society organizations on ADB's Safeguard Policy Review and Update. Approved in 2009, ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement (SPS) sets out the policy objectives, scope and triggers, and principles for three safeguard areas: environmental safeguards, involuntary resettlement safeguards, and indigenous peoples safeguards.⁵⁴ The goal of the SPS is to promote the sustainability of project outcomes by protecting the environment and the people from projects' potential adverse impacts. ADB is currently conducting a comprehensive review and update of the 2009 SPS, taking into consideration the changing development context in Asia and the Pacific.⁵⁵

The safeguard policy review is an inclusive process that promotes diverse participation across many perspectives and backgrounds. CSOs, project-affected people, indigenous peoples, and vulnerable groups are important stakeholders in the review process. In 2022, ADB organized regional and in-country consultations, which were participated in by 1,755 stakeholders,

⁵⁴ ADB. 2009. *Safeguard Policy Statement*. Manila.

⁵⁵ ADB. Safeguard Policy Review.

more than half of which were CSO representatives. ADB also listened to 622 project-affected people through 50 focus group discussions and 64 household interviews. The experiences of affected people in the implementation of safeguards in projects are valuable to ensure that the updated policy reflects the needs and voices of stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific.⁵⁶ During the consultations, CSOs articulated their desire to continue to be involved in ADB-supported projects.

Close to a thousand CSO representatives have participated in the review of policy, which started in 2020. In 2022, ADB organized consultations with CSOs on key topics such as sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics; sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment; gender and safeguards; climate change; and country safeguard systems, among others.

Outreach to civil society organizations on ADB's Energy Transition

Mechanism. The Asia and Pacific region accounts for more than half of all global greenhouse gas emissions and is, at the same time, highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.⁵⁷ The region can only realize its climate goals if emissions from existing coal-fired power plants are addressed. To move away from coal-based energy, ADB is working with regional and international partners to accelerate the retirement or repurposing of fossil fuel power plants through the Energy Transition Mechanism (ETM). Simultaneously, the ETM aims to create space and investment opportunity for renewable and clean energy technologies.

Just transition and safeguards are key elements of every stage of the ETM. The principles of equity and inclusion are integral to how countries plan and implement climate action. Just transition ensures that the negative impacts of climate action on people are anticipated and the challenges and risks of transition are adequately addressed.⁵⁸ ADB has been organizing consultations and outreach activities with communities, civil society, and NGOs as part of safeguards and just transition work.⁵⁹

Perspectives of civil society organizations on ADB's Climate Change

Action Plan. To deliver on its climate commitments and enhance action under its climate agenda, ADB is developing its Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). ADB organized three conversations with key CSOs in 2022 to seek their views at the early stage of the plan's formulation. Among the issues covered are as follows: the strong intersectionality between gender issues and climate change, the importance of climate impact assessment at the project level, and the need to integrate climate in the safeguard policy. CSOs expressed appreciation for ADB's inclusive and participatory process

⁵⁶ ADB Safeguard Team official Facebook page.

⁵⁷ ADB. 2022. ADB Launches Just Transition Support Platform. News release. 14 November.

⁵⁸ ADB. 2022. *Technical Assistance for Enabling a Just Transition to Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Economies and Societies in Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.

⁵⁹ ADB. 2022. Why ADB's Energy Transition Mechanism is Prioritizing Safeguards and a Just Transition. Article. 21 July.



in preparing the CCAP. They reiterated the importance of accountability to communities to get climate action right. ADB will continue to consult with key stakeholders, including CSOs, in the preparation of the CCAP.

Inputs of civil society organizations to the natural gas and waste-to-energy guidance notes. In accordance with the new Energy Policy approved in 2021, ADB is preparing a staff guidance, which provides the screening criteria for its operations involving natural gas, large hydropower plants, and waste-to-energy plants. The purpose is to guide ADB staff in planning and developing natural gas and waste-to-energy projects based on the methodology developed by the multilateral development bank (MDB) Working Group on Paris Alignment. The MDBs, which include the African Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the World Bank Group, have committed to implementing the Paris Alignment approaches as they develop programs addressing climate mitigation, climate resilience, and climate adaptation.⁶⁰

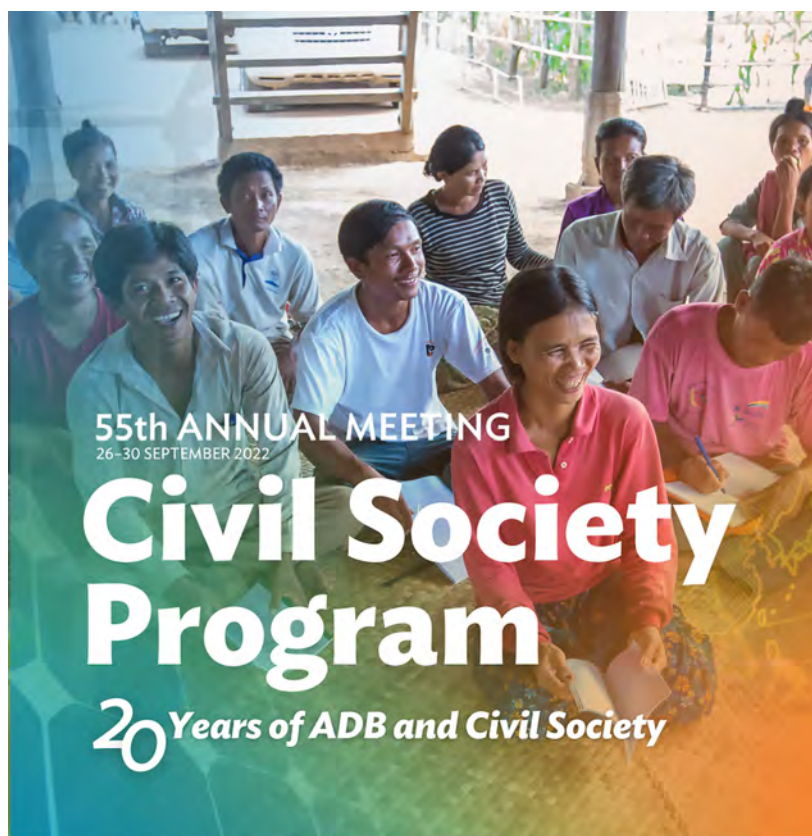
In 2022, ADB met with the advocacy group, NGO Forum on ADB, in the preparation of the draft guidance notes for gas and waste-to-energy. The draft document was also shared publicly to seek feedback from stakeholders, including CSOs. ADB will continue to engage with key stakeholders on important policy concerns.

Participation of civil society organizations at the 55th ADB Annual Meeting. In view of the continuing challenges posed by the pandemic, the 55th ADB Annual Meeting was conducted in two stages. The first stage was a virtual meeting of the Board of Governors, which was held on 5 May 2022. ADB organized the second stage on 26–30 September 2022 at the ADB headquarters in Manila, which featured face-to-face and virtual events. The theme of the virtual event was Positioning Climate Resilient Green Economy for the Post COVID-19 World.⁶¹ A dedicated Civil Society Program featured discussions and knowledge-sharing activities covering important development issues in Asia and the Pacific. As in previous years, the Civil Society Program was organized in partnership with key CSOs in the region.

On 27 September 2022, ADB Senior Management met online with more than 700 participants from mostly CSOs, governments, the academe, and the private sector on topics related to ADB's support for development across Asia and the Pacific. The ADB President mentioned three key areas of ADB's work that will need CSO insights and inputs: (i) meeting ADB's climate ambition, (ii) responding to the ongoing global health and economic crises, and (iii) ADB's Safeguard Policy Review.

⁶⁰ ADB. 2022. MDBs to Expand Support for Countries Seeking Climate-Resilient Sustainable Transition. News release. 6 November.

⁶¹ ADB. 55th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors.



55th ANNUAL MEETING
26–30 SEPTEMBER 2022

Civil Society Program

20 Years of ADB and Civil Society

Civil society participates in annual meeting. Civil society organizations led six sessions during the 55th ADB Annual Meeting to discuss key development topics within Asia and the Pacific (photo by ADB).



Meeting of ADB Senior Management and civil society organizations. ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa met online with representatives of civil society organizations and nongovernment organizations to discuss ADB's support for development across Asia and the Pacific and its continuing engagement with civil society (photo by ADB).



ADB's NGOC collaborated with NGOs, such as Oxfam, Plan International, WWF, and Worldfish, in organizing online knowledge events on important topics including tackling economic inequality in Asia, building sustainable blue economies, and empowering youth in just transition to greener economies. In addition, the NGO Forum on ADB organized sessions presenting civil society perspectives on just transition and ADB's new Energy Policy, and lessons from the ground on ADB's safeguard policy implementation.

Cooperation of civil society organizations in the country partnership strategy for Timor-Leste. The country partnership strategy (CPS) is ADB's primary platform for designing operations to deliver development results at the country level. Approved in June 2022, the CPS for Timor-Leste, 2023–2027 is geared to helping the country overcome critical development impediments and emerge stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶² The CPS for Timor-Leste underscores collaboration with development partners and CSOs in improving public financial management and in supporting reforms and activities related to corporatization, national accounting and audit systems, fiscal policy, and agricultural productivity.

⁶² ADB. 2022. *Country Partnership Strategy: Timor-Leste, 2023–2027—A Strategy for Economic Recovery, Inclusive Development, and Climate Resilience*. Manila.

Engagement of civil society organizations in governance assessment.

ADB's Staff Guidance for Governance Assessments now requires a working group to be established for each governance assessment that is undertaken in the preparation of the CPS. The working group includes a staff member who specializes in civil society and citizen engagement. The provision complements the expanded coverage of the governance assessments, which now includes an analysis of the extent to which DMC governments engage with civil society and communities in the following three thematic governance areas: public financial management, public procurement, and anticorruption. This approach was pilot tested in the governance assessment for the Kyrgyz Republic and is now being rolled out in succeeding assessments and CPSs.



ADB and civil society for Asia and the Pacific. ADB met with stakeholders, including civil society organizations and NGOs, to discuss how the seven operational priorities of its Strategy 2030 may be implemented (photo by ADB).

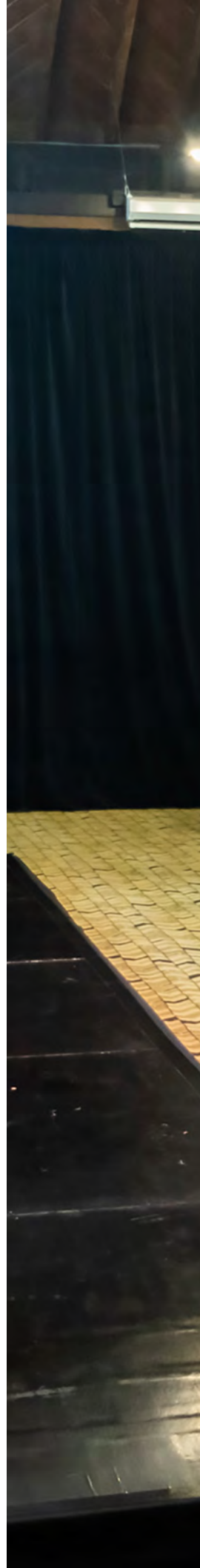
5

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NGO AND CIVIL SOCIETY CENTER'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2022

ADB's NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC) continues to be an active focal point for the bank's cooperation with CSOs (Box 9). The year 2022 featured a celebration of 20 years of the NGOC since it was created in 2001. It was an opportunity for the NGOC to reflect on lessons in engaging with CSOs in the last 2 decades. Despite disruptions caused by the pandemic, the year 2022 saw the deepening involvement of a wide range of CSOs in the various stages of ADB-supported programs and projects. In the same year, the NGOC organized a series of institutional strengthening activities to continue to build staff capacity to work with CSOs more effectively. In addition, the NGOC helped facilitate more active CSO engagement in policy review, utilizing various online platforms to ensure inclusive process in consultation activities.

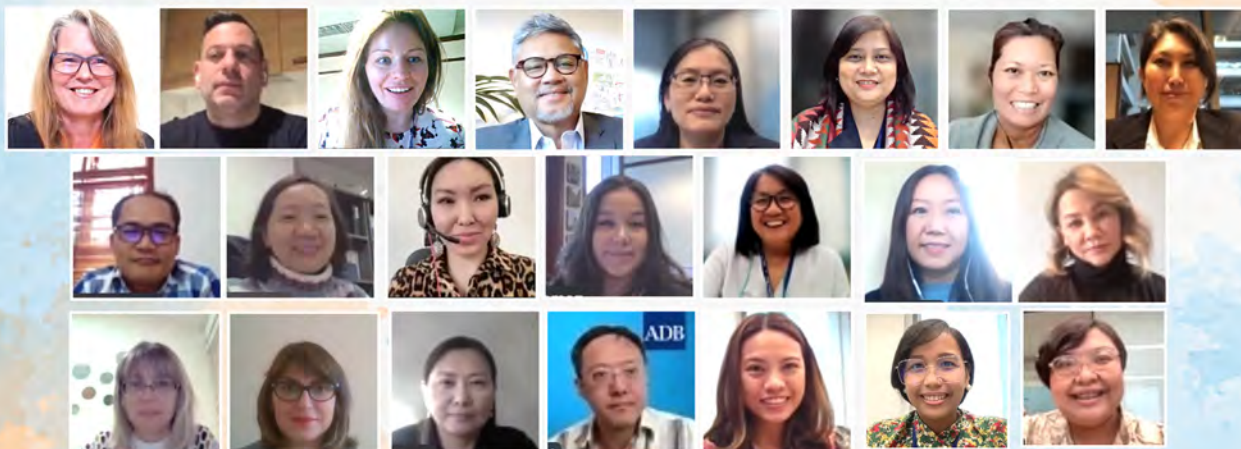
Peer learning among ADB's civil society organization focal persons. The NGOC organizes regular meetings with CSO Anchors, who function as focal persons for CSO engagement across ADB operations. The purpose of the meetings is to promote interaction and share lessons and good practices of effective cooperation with CSOs. CSO focal persons from ADB's regional departments and the Private Sector Operations Department met online on 10 May 2022 to share lessons on CSO engagement and plan actions for the following year.

The CSO Anchors' meeting complemented the webinar series offered to ADB staff and consultants, called CSO Conversations: A Peer-Learning Exchange Series on Meaningful Civil Society Engagement. Held throughout the year, the webinars featured key areas of ADB's cooperation with CSOs, such as the role of CSOs in monitoring and evaluating development projects, CSO engagement in climate action, mainstreaming citizen engagement, and disability and inclusion.



NGO and
CIVIL SOCIETY
CENTER

CSO Anchors Business Meeting

Visit ngoc.adb.org for more information

#ADBAndCivilSociety

CSO Anchors' business meeting. The CSO Anchors Network, from ADB's regional and private sector operations departments, and the NGO and Civil Society Center team members discussed ADB's work with civil society and the action plan for the following year (photo by ADB).

Box 9: ADB's NGO and Civil Society Center

In February 2001, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) created the NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC) as its institutional focal point for communication and interaction with civil society organizations (CSOs). The establishment of the NGOC took place 3 years after the adoption in April 1998 of the new policy on cooperation with nongovernment organizations and was based on the recommendations of a high-level task force appointed by then ADB President Tadao Chino.

The NGOC began operations in February 2001 by providing knowledge and support to ADB operations departments in engaging with CSOs. Through the years, the NGOC helped build institutional capacity in engaging effectively with CSOs. To complement the NGOC, an ADB-wide network of CSO Anchors was established with staff members from operations

departments and resident missions. The CSO Anchors are focal persons on collaboration with CSOs. Through the network, the NGOC ensures consistency and synergy in CSO cooperation initiatives across ADB, by promoting knowledge exchange on best practices on effective CSO engagement.



Source: ADB. 2022. *Highlights of ADB's Cooperation with Civil Society Organizations 2021: Celebrating 20 Years of the NGO and Civil Society Center*. Manila.

Meaningful engagement of young people in ADB operations.

From 21 November 2022 to 9 December 2022, the NGOC organized an online training, Learning Circles on the Meaningful Engagement of Young People in ADB Operations. The series of learning sessions discussed the rationale and approaches for engaging young citizens in various ADB operations. The training helped promote and encourage meaningful youth engagement in ADB-financed projects.

Knowledge sharing with other multilateral development banks.

Together with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Islamic Development Bank, ADB organized the online knowledge event, “Civil Society Engagement for Development Effectiveness,” on 23–24 February 2022. The workshop shared valuable experiences and lessons in effective CSO engagement from among participating MDBs. It also covered relevant themes that provided participants with important information, skills, and tools to work with CSOs and ensure long-term sustainable development in their DMCs.



Grassroots LGBTQI+ voices amplified at IDAHOTB 2022 webinar.

Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) community have made tremendous progress globally in claiming their rights and promoting inclusive societies. However, they continue to face immense challenges and barriers that hinder their active participation in society. ADB marked the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOTB) on 18 May 2022 with a webinar titled, Driving Inclusion: Addressing Legal Barriers for Sexual and Gender Minorities. ADB collaborated with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank in organizing the event. The IDAHOTB webinar also featured ADB's joint research with the World Bank on the impact of legal barriers that restrict access of LGBTQI members to public services and other benefits. Representatives from CSOs, such as the Micro Rainbow International Foundation in Cambodia and Tbilisi Pride in Georgia, were invited as resource persons.⁶³

IDAHOTB 2022

Driving Inclusion Addressing legal barriers for sexual and gender minorities



(From L-R) Director General Kenichi Yokoyama (ADB), Amb. Chantale Wong (ADB), Louise Cord (World Bank), Oliver Chapman (ADB), Mamikon Hovsepyan (Pink Armenia), Tenzin Gyeltshen (Pride Bhutan), Anri Abuladze (Tbilisi Pride), Yara Kong (Micro Rainbow International Foundation), Kaushal Ranasinghe (Sri Lanka), T. Shu (Bhutan), and Farha Farin (Bangladesh) (photo by ADB).

⁶³ ADB. 2022. Driving Inclusion - Addressing Legal Barriers for Sexual and Gender Minorities. Event. 18 May.

New corporate regional technical assistance on citizen engagement.

Engaging citizens and communities is essential for better development results as it helps identify issues early in projects and makes projects more relevant, which enhances its overall effectiveness. CSOs remain critical intermediaries for engaging with citizens, especially women, youth, poor, vulnerable, and excluded groups. They are often uniquely placed to reach the poorest, most vulnerable, and most excluded households through their local knowledge and on-the-ground presence; hence, they can aggregate interests, voice preferences, and exercise the power necessary to affect sustained change.

In 2022, the NGOC launched a corporate regional technical assistance, Mainstreaming Citizen-Led Mechanisms for Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Development Results (footnote 50). The project will support DMCs to achieve stronger, more effective, and more sustainable development outcomes by building their knowledge and equipping them with relevant tools to engage directly with citizens. In particular, the technical assistance will contribute to enhancing citizen and government engagement in public accountability, transparency, and participation. It will also develop a Citizen Engagement Framework for DMCs as a strategic document to better integrate citizen participation throughout the project cycle. Recognizing the role of CSOs as critical intermediaries between citizens and DMC governments, the technical assistance will also seek opportunities to increase engagement with CSOs.



Sustainable renewable energy for the family. Photo of Emmanuel and Dorothy Seuli with family, who just received electricity from the grid. The Town Electrification Investment Program will improve power supply in provincial urban centers in Papua New Guinea by replacing high-cost diesel power generation with sustainable renewable energy power generation (photo by ADB).

6

THE FUTURE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN ADB AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

In recent years, government institutions have prioritized COVID-19 response at an unprecedented speed and scale, placing huge demands on their capacity and resources. As the region recovers from the lingering effects of the pandemic, enhancing collaboration with CSOs will supplement government efforts toward recovery.⁶⁴ The rapidly changing development landscape calls for new and innovative approaches where the needs of poor and vulnerable people are at the core of the recovery process. In this context, a thriving civil society community is essential to ensure that development efforts are inclusive and sustainable.

While the pandemic has resulted in unparalleled social and economic crises, it has also offered a unique opportunity to discover innovative approaches and embrace different ways of thinking. The pandemic called for collective action from all development actors. As the region approaches the new and emerging post-pandemic world, governments, MDBs, and international organizations should seek new mechanisms that will tap CSOs as full partners in development.

One such new initiative is ADB's Community Resilience Financing Partnership Facility, which aims to scale up community-level investments in climate adaptation and build the resilience of poor and vulnerable communities to counter the impacts of climate change. In collaboration with the International Institute for Environment and Development and the Huairou Commission,

⁶⁴ V. Bhargava. 2021. Engaging Civil Society Organizations to Enhance the Effectiveness of COVID-19 Response Programs in Asia and the Pacific. *The Governance Brief*. No. 42. Manila: ADB.



ADB uses a partnership-based approach that encourages close collaboration among stakeholders, which include governments, research organizations, and CSOs including grassroots women's groups. Through this facility, ADB will be partnering with CSOs for small-scale community-led pilots to test innovative approaches and solutions to strengthen and scale up community resilience investments.⁶⁵

Climate change disasters create drastic consequences for the most vulnerable people who depend on the environmental resources for livelihood. Over the next decades, governments and development partners will accelerate efforts to meet their climate-related commitments. In this regard, social protection systems will play a strategic role to effectively address the social dimension of the region's transition to a green and sustainable economy and society. A just transition requires global partnerships among governments and international organizations.

In the coming years, engagement of citizens and communities will be integrated more closely into ADB's project life cycle through the technical assistance, Mainstreaming Citizen-Led Mechanisms for Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Development Results,⁶⁶ administered by the NGOC. ADB will support its DMCs to engage with citizens especially women, youth, poor, vulnerable, and excluded groups. The project will empower poor and vulnerable citizens so that they can be mobilized to affect sustained change. Importantly, the technical assistance will seek opportunities to expand engagement with CSOs, recognizing their important role in reaching out to poor and vulnerable communities and citizens.

In recent years, ADB has effectively utilized online platforms to engage with a wide range of CSOs. Consultations related to policy reviews may be accessed easily by interested members of civil society wherever they were, as long they have connectivity. With innovation and progress in digital technology, CSOs are expected to continue to be actively involved in the review and update of ADB's major policies, particularly in the updating of the Safeguard Policy Statement (SPS). Representing a broad range of development perspectives and covering varied demographic groups, CSOs will continue to contribute to the review of the SPS in 2023.

Despite the unexpected disruptions caused by the pandemic, ADB made significant strides in working with CSOs more meaningfully. The achievements made in the past year is a testament that, during the most challenging health and economic crises, cooperating with CSOs bring about the much-needed development results as ADB renews its focus in achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific.

⁶⁵ ADB. 2021. *Community Resilience Partnership Program*. Manila.

⁶⁶ ADB. 2022. *Technical Assistance for Mainstreaming Citizen-Led Mechanisms for Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Development Results*. Manila.

APPENDIX

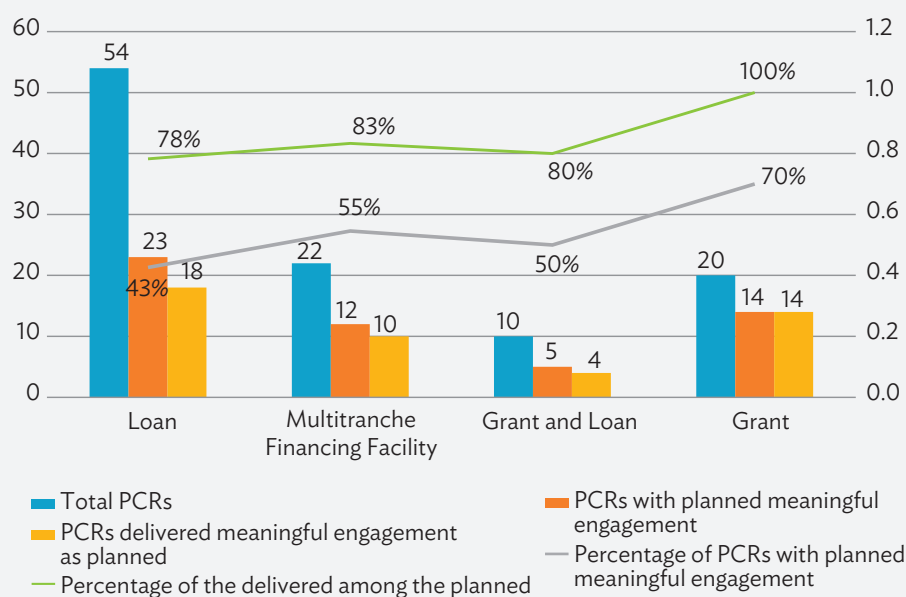
OTHER ASPECTS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION ENGAGEMENT TRACKING

Figure A.1 shows the meaningful civil society organization (CSO) engagement by type of project modality, based on 2022 project completion reports. Among the four types of modality (i.e., loan, multitranche financing facility (MFF), grant and loan, and grant), loans have the highest number of projects with planned meaningful CSO engagement (23 out of 54 projects or 43%), followed by grants (14 out of 20 projects or 70%). In terms of delivery rate, grants have the highest delivery rate of planned meaningful CSO engagement with 100% or 14 out of 14 projects, which is the same as the rate in 2021. MFFs followed at 83% delivery rate, with 10 out of 12 projects delivering on their meaningful CSO engagement plans—this is an improvement from last year’s when MFFs had the lowest delivery rate among the four modalities.

In 2022, 63% of the 46 projects that delivered planned meaningful CSO engagement utilized high levels of information generation and sharing, while 65% delivered high levels of consultation. Out of the 46 projects, 45 (or 98%) implemented some form of collaboration with CSOs. Of these, 25 projects delivered collaboration at a medium level, which means CSOs were implementing project components. Nearly half (48% or 22) of the 46 projects employed the partnership participatory approach, of which 12 projects achieved a low level of partnership with CSOs, nine projects achieved medium level, and one project had a high level of partnership. Figure A.2 presents these data.

Figures A.3 and A.4 reflect the role of CSOs, by sector, in the 46 projects that delivered meaningful CSO engagement as planned. For 2022, 43 projects engaged CSOs in the implementation of project components, with the top four sectors as follows: transport (9), agriculture (9), water (8), and education (5). CSOs played direct roles in gender action plan activities of 19 projects, with the transport (4), agriculture (4), and water (4) sectors giving the most opportunities. Seven projects involved CSOs in resettlement, four of which were transport projects. Lastly, four agriculture and two water projects led to the establishment of CSOs.

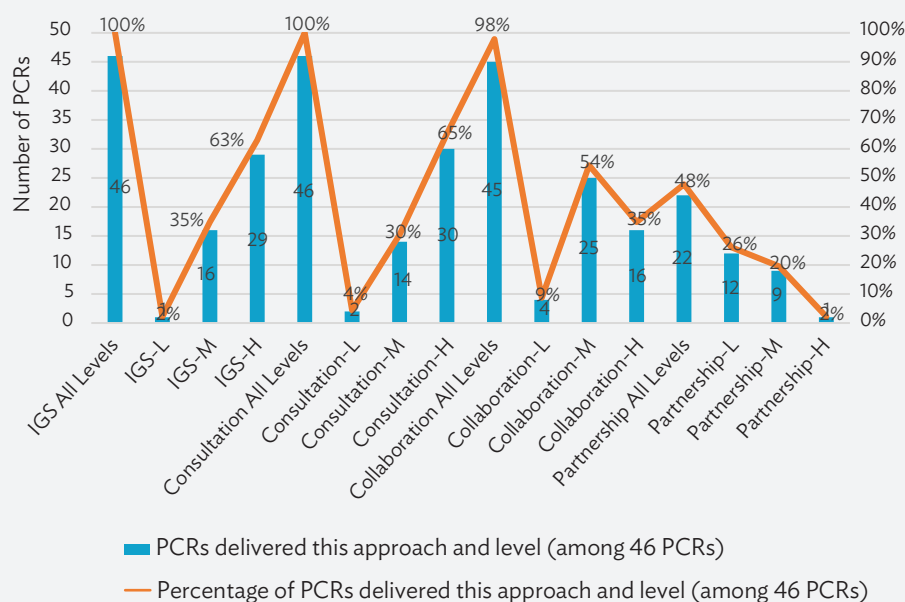
Figure A.1: Meaningful CSO Engagement in 2022 Project Completion Reports, by Modality



CSO = civil society organization, PCR = project completion report.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

Figure A.2: Levels of CSO Engagement Approaches in 46 PCRs That Delivered Meaningful CSO Engagement as Planned

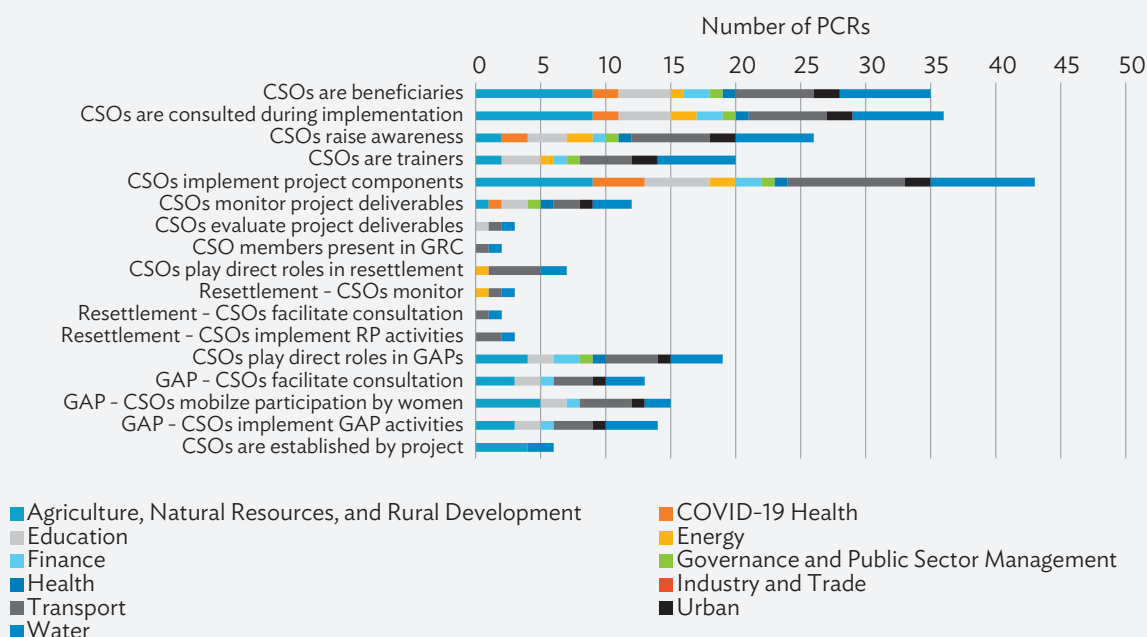


CSO = civil society organization, IGS = information generation and sharing, PCR = project completion report.

Note: The engagement approaches were rated as L = low, M = medium, or H = high.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

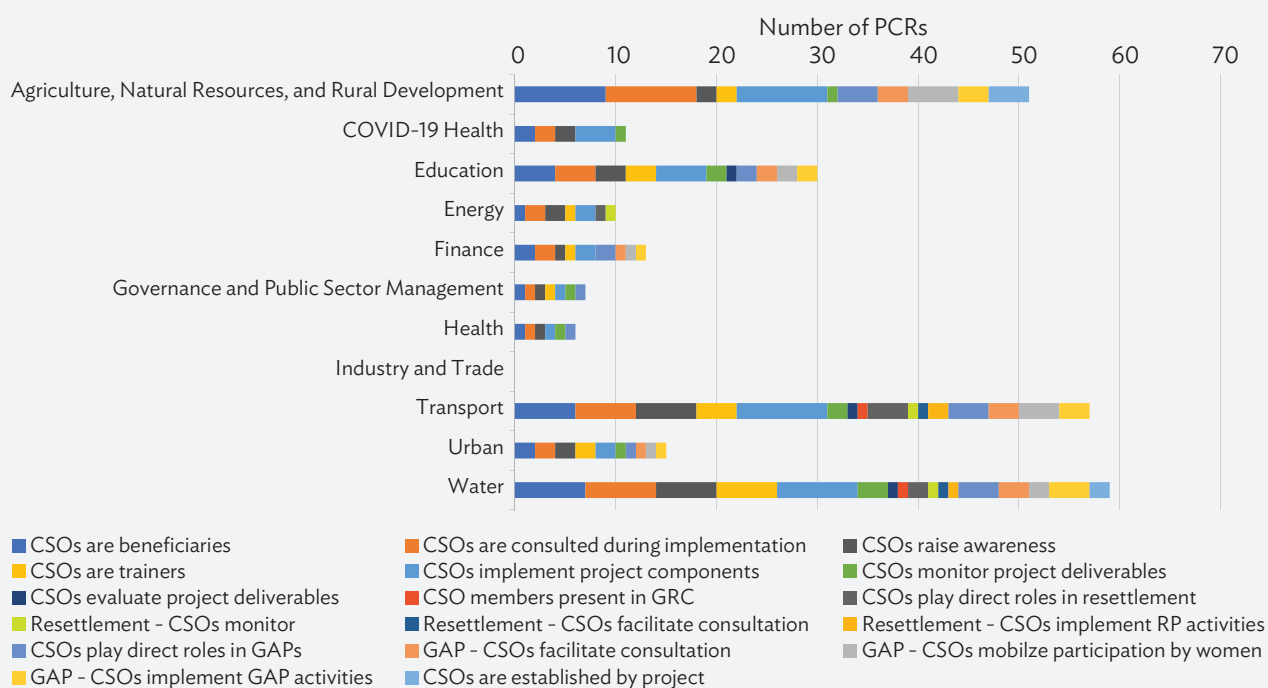
Figure A.3: Sector Breakdown per Role Performed by CSOs in 46 PCRs That Delivered Meaningful Engagement as Planned



COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, CSO = civil society organization, GAP = gender action plan, GRC = grievance redress committee, PCR = project completion report.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

Figure A.4: Roles Performed by CSOs per Sector in 46 PCRs That Delivered Meaningful Engagement as Planned



COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, CSO = civil society organization, GAP = gender action plan, GRC = grievance redress committee, PCR = project completion report, RP = resettlement plan.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

Highlights of ADB's Cooperation with Civil Society Organizations 2022

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been supporting meaningful engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs) in delivering better development results. Partnerships with CSOs help promote community participation and social inclusion throughout the project cycle of ADB-financed operations. In 2022, 54 of 106 completed sovereign projects supported by ADB had planned meaningful CSO engagement. Of these 54 projects, 85% delivered their CSO engagement plans. This report highlights ADB's cooperation with CSOs in 2022 in terms of generating knowledge, tapping expertise, sharing good practices, and improving policy dialogue. It also features lessons and success stories of CSO contributions in Asia and the Pacific.

About the Asian Development Bank

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



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