

## ADB Support for Gender and Development: Results from Country Case Studies

*This special evaluation study brings country perspective and information on gender issues, gender results from ADB-assisted projects, and stakeholders' view on the challenges for implementing gender mainstreaming. It reports on country-specific experiences with ADB's gender-related activities, and suggests ways for ADB to improve further the gender focus of its assistance.*

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved the Policy on Gender and Development (GAD) in May 1998. ADB's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment was further enhanced in 2008 with the approval of Strategy 2020, which includes gender equity as one of the five drivers of change. ADB's results framework requires that 40% of all public sector projects and 50% of projects financed by the Asian Development Fund (ADF) deliver "significant gender mainstreaming" by 2012.

The study, which was carried out in two phases, assesses ADB's support to GAD Policy between 1998 and 2009. Phase 1 assessed the relevance of the Policy and ADB's broader corporate response to the Policy, and was completed in December 2009. Phase 2 brings country perspective and information on gender issues, gender results from ADB-assisted projects, and stakeholders' view on the challenges for implementing gender mainstreaming. It reports on country-specific experiences with ADB's gender-related activities, and suggests ways for ADB to improve further the gender focus of its assistance.

### Key Findings

In total, 55 projects were selected through purposive sampling for in-depth assessment and rating from GAD perspective. The results show that GAD-related performance of the projects was modest. About 51% of the projects were rated successful in GAD-related performance. Gender performance ratings show that about 82% of the sample projects were rated GAD relevant or higher; 44% effective or higher in achieving the intended GAD outcomes; 31% efficient or higher; and 45% likely to be sustainable in terms of continuity of GAD outcomes. This is despite the fact that 45 out of the 55 projects in the sample were category I and category II, and they were, therefore, expected to produce substantial GAD outcomes.

Cross-tabulation of overall success ratings for the sample projects, in terms of GAD categories and Strategy 2020 core and noncore and/or other sectors, validates the present focus on category I and category II projects. Of the 20 category I and category II projects in core sectors, 50% were rated *successful* or higher, whereas of the 25 category I and category II projects in noncore and/or other sectors, 60% were rated *successful* or higher. However, of the 10 category III and category IV projects, 30% were rated *successful* or higher and the only highly successful project in the sample was in category III.

The other findings of the study include (i) while country gender assessments captured the country-specific gender issues and government gender priorities, the evidence was weak on the influences of country gender assessments to ADB's country partnership strategies;



Women attending lectures for informal education programs in Bangladesh under ADB's Women Empowerment Project.

### QUICK LINKS

**ADB Support for Gender and Development: Results from Country Case Studies**

[www.adb.org/Documents/SES/REG/SES-REG-2010-80/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/Documents/SES/REG/SES-REG-2010-80/default.asp)

**ADB Support for Gender and Development: Relevance, Responsiveness, and Results to Date**

[www.adb.org/Documents/SES/REG/SES-REG-OTH-2010-03/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/Documents/SES/REG/SES-REG-OTH-2010-03/default.asp)

**ADB Policy on Gender and Development**

[www.adb.org/gender/policy-gad.asp](http://www.adb.org/gender/policy-gad.asp)

**ADB Management Response**

[www.adb.org/Documents/Evaluation/Management-Response/SES/MR-SES-REG-2010-80.pdf](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Evaluation/Management-Response/SES/MR-SES-REG-2010-80.pdf)

**Chair's Summary of the Development Effectiveness Committee (DEC)**

[www.adb.org/BOD/dec/DEC-ChairSum-13May2011.pdf](http://www.adb.org/BOD/dec/DEC-ChairSum-13May2011.pdf)

ADB projects have four gender mainstreaming categories:

- **Category I:** gender equity as a theme
- **Category II:** effective gender mainstreaming
- **Category III:** some gender benefits
- **Category IV:** no gender elements

Details of these categories are available at [www.adb.org/gender/gender-categories.asp](http://www.adb.org/gender/gender-categories.asp)

(ii) capacity to address gender issues, including in category I and category II projects, was often limited; and (iii) ADB's business processes, particularly for project implementation and related management information systems, were weak in capturing gender-related performance data.

Findings from the assessment of technical assistance (TA) activities include the need for greater allocations of resources for mainstreaming gender in country strategy and programming processes and for evaluations of GAD achievements. Increased clarity is needed on the twofold categorization process at entry that exists for TA activities. More systematic and periodic monitoring of TA-funded gender achievements and policy dialogue are required to track its contribution to wider country gender mainstreaming efforts.

## Key Issues

- Review of gender categorization of projects during implementation and likelihood of achieving intended gender outcomes by them is important.
- Capacity of executing agencies in addressing GAD matters is limited.
- Use of gender analysis is limited.
- Tracking of gender results is weak.
- Continued awareness of gender equality in ADB business processes and gender reporting practices is needed.

## Lessons

- **Several specific factors contribute to successful gender mainstreaming**
  - ❖ Projects are more successful when coherence is strong between upstream analytical work and downstream project design and implementation.
  - ❖ Project-specific gender analysis strengthens responsiveness and provides a foundation for assessing potential and actual impacts.
  - ❖ Project documents that pay explicit attention to gender-related targets, output, and outcome indicators can facilitate monitoring of implementation progress.
  - ❖ Provision of resources to implement gender-focused design features is critical to both successful design and effective implementation.
  - ❖ Capacity development of executing and implementing agencies and others responsible for project implementation to address gender-related issues in the sector and project is crucial to effective implementation of gender-related design features.
- **Gender mainstreaming involves many actors, and opportunities to build and strengthen partnerships exist.** Strengthening consultation and participation throughout the project cycle, and working with development partners to improve coordination and collaboration around key issues, is an important element of strengthening country and project gender mainstreaming.
- **The quality of project implementation and operations is fundamental in achieving intended gender outcomes.** There is ample room for improving GAD results by strengthening monitoring and evaluation of GAD projects during their implementation, in addition to ensuring high quality at their entry.

## Feedback

ADB Management noted the findings of the study reinforcing various existing internal GAD review reports. Management agreed with the overall recommendation. Management highlights the importance of in-country field-level analysis and interviews with beneficiaries in determining gender equality results given the underreporting of these results in project performance and completion reports.

The Chair's Summary of the Development Effectiveness Committee (DEC) welcomed the study, in line with ADB's commitment to gender equity and women's empowerment. DEC appreciated the success rating of 51% while encouraging staff and Management to further improve this rating hopefully to be reflected in future evaluations of projects that were currently ongoing, as well as the integration of country gender assessments into country partnership strategies and setting sector priorities. DEC also supported the gender reclassification of a project if required.

## Recommendations

- *Make more effective use of country- and sector-level gender assessments in the preparation of country partnership strategies, sector road maps, results frameworks, operations business plans, and project design*
- *Strengthen tracking of gender results in ADB project performance monitoring systems*
- *Increase collaboration with development partners, including nongovernment and community-based organizations in developing member countries, to jointly deepen gender focus in country policy dialogue and technical assistance activities and in strengthening capacity of executing agencies*

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*Learning Curves* are a handy, two-page quick reference designed to feed findings and recommendations from evaluations to a broader range of clients.