



# **A Study of Information on Knowledge Management and Communication in CPSs, RRPs, and TA Reports**

**Final Report**

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**Knowledge Management Center  
Regional and Sustainable Development Department**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background and Purpose

1. To pursue ADB's vision and strategic agenda, Strategy 2020<sup>1</sup> emphasizes five drivers of change: (i) private sector development and private sector operations, (ii) good governance and capacity development, (iii) gender equity, (iv) knowledge solutions, and (v) partnerships. Each driver provides an opportunity for ADB to act more as an agent of change by stimulating growth and synergizing broader development assistance, and to be a more active and better development partner.

2. The fourth driver of change, knowledge solutions, was the primary focus of the present study.<sup>2</sup> Acknowledging the importance of both the generation and application of knowledge to development effectiveness and ADB's central role in providing high-quality knowledge to development partners, Strategy 2020 calls for continuous enrichment of ADB's knowledge through (i) internal learning from operational practice; and (ii) external learning from long-term strategic alliances with development partners. To make this vision come to fruition, an Action Plan on Knowledge Management, 2009–2011<sup>3</sup>, comprising four pillars, was formulated to (i) sharpen the knowledge focus in ADB's operations, (ii) empower communities of practice, (iii) strengthen external knowledge partnerships, and (iv) enhance staff learning and skills development.

3. This study was conceived to assess ADB's progress under the first pillar, which aims to strengthen ties between its operations and knowledge management.<sup>4</sup> To sharpen the knowledge focus in ADB's operations, the action plan determined that ADB would (i) at the regional level, define a focused and coordinated approach to identifying and organizing regional studies; (ii) at the country level, incorporate knowledge management indicators, activities, and resources in the country partnership strategies (CPSs); and (iii) at the project level, encourage project teams to emphasize knowledge management-related considerations when developing loan and technical assistance proposals. To this end, a number of mutually supportive specific activity indicators were recorded in the knowledge management results framework prepared to assess and improve performance under the action plan and help identify problems and their solutions. Conducting this study, designed to ascertain that CPSs, Reports and recommendations of the President (RRPs), and TA Reports address knowledge management and communication considerations, was itself included in the action plan.

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<sup>1</sup> ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank 2008-2020*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/default.asp?p=strtg](http://www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/default.asp?p=strtg)

<sup>2</sup> This study also makes reference to the fifth driver of change, namely partnerships. The partnerships and knowledge solutions drivers of change are closely related so it was decided to include "partnership" as one of the 14 search terms. One of the reasons why partnerships is seen as a driver for change is because of the possibilities that working in partnership creates for mutual learning between ADB and other organizations. The use of the term "partnership" in ADB reports may, therefore, indicate recognition of the important role that partnership can play in knowledge management and communication.

<sup>3</sup> A summary of the action plan is at [www.adb.org/knowledge-management/action-plan.asp](http://www.adb.org/knowledge-management/action-plan.asp). Details of the action plan and associated knowledge management results framework can be found in ADB. 2011. *Enhancing Knowledge Management under Strategy 2020*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/km-action-plan/enhancing-knowledge-management-under-strategy-2020.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/km-action-plan/enhancing-knowledge-management-under-strategy-2020.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Knowledge enriches financing operations and, in combination with ADB's convening power, spurs development effectiveness. Effective knowledge management can—in fact, must—help identify and put potential knowledge services and knowledge solutions to work through regional and country partnership strategies, investment programs and projects, and technical assistance (TA) and policy dialogue.

## B. Method

4. To carry out the assessment, 14 knowledge management and communication terms were selected in consultation with members of ADB's informal community of interest in knowledge management and learning, which includes Knowledge Management Coordinators in offices and departments of ADB. The terms selected were (i) *collaboration*, (ii) *communication*, (iii) *dissemination*, (iv) *download*, (v) *knowledge management*, (vi) *knowledge product*, (vii) *knowledge sharing*, (viii) *knowledge solution*, (ix) *knowledge transfer*, (x) *marketing*, (xi) *network*, (xii) *outreach*, (xiii) *partnership*, and (xiv) *translation*. CPSs, RRP, and TA reports approved in 2009 and 2010 were searched for the 14 terms.

5. The occurrence of the search terms gives an indication of the extent to which consideration was given to knowledge management and communication when preparing CPSs, RRP, and TA reports. In this study, a search term was deemed to *occur* if it appeared at least once in the document. This "low bar" for occurrence was used as some of the search terms were relatively recently introduced terminology. The *rate of occurrence* was defined as the percentage of documents that contained at least one search term. The number of search terms (out of the 14 selected) that were found in the document (regardless of the number of times each word appeared) represents the *frequency of use* of terms relating to knowledge management and communication. The *frequency of use* of search terms in a document was considered to be high if five or more search terms were found.

## II. OVERALL RESULTS

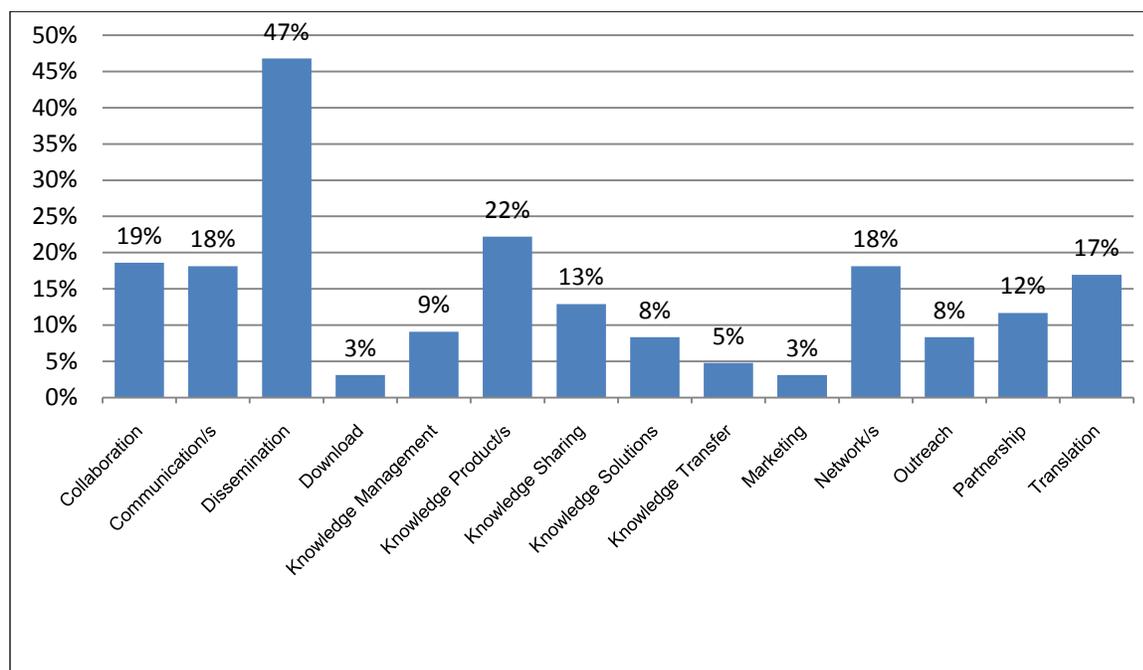
6. A total of 419 documents were reviewed, consisting of 10 CPSs, 138 RRP, and 271 TA reports. A significant majority (72%) of these documents contained explicit references to knowledge management and communication (Table 1). From 2009 to 2010, there was an increase of 3% in the percentage of documents incorporating knowledge management and communication considerations.

**Table 1: Overall Results of Review of Documents**

Year	Total No. of Documents	No. of Documents Containing References to Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms	Rate of Occurrence
2009	207	147	71%
2010	212	156	74%
<b>Total</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>72%</b>

7. Ranking the occurrence of search terms revealed that "dissemination" was the most frequently used term at 47% (Figure 1). Often, this term was used in the context of information dissemination or dissemination of study results in the TA reports. "Knowledge product/s" followed at 22%, mainly because many loans and TAs listed "knowledge products" as a project output. Ranking third was "collaboration", at 19%, suggesting that these projects were explicitly recognized as collaborative efforts between ADB and its development partners.

**Figure 1: All Documents—Rate of Occurrence of References to Knowledge Management and Communication per Search Term, 2009 and 2010**



### III. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION IN COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES

8. Ten CPSs were formulated after the approval of Strategy 2020. These covered Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Palau, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, and Tajikistan. Six of these CPSs made reference to terminology associated with knowledge management and communication (Table 2). The 10% increase in the number of documents containing knowledge management and communication-related search terms from 2009 to 2010 suggests an increase in the uptake of knowledge management and information considerations in CPSs (though the small number of documents makes it difficult to draw a firm conclusion from the data).

**Table 2: CPSs—Rate of Occurrence of References to Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms, 2009 and 2010**

Year	Total No. of CPSs	No. of CPSs Containing References to Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms	Rate of Occurrence
2009	7	4	57%
2010	3	2	67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>60%</b>

CPS = country partnership strategy

9. It is evident that the CPS for India has the highest frequency of use of knowledge management and communication search terms, indicating a significant consideration of

knowledge management and communication activities and plans for the country. Nepal followed with two search terms found in the CPS (Table 3). The table also shows that all CPSs from the South Asia Regional Department (SARD) mentioned related terms. For the Pacific Regional Department, three out of five (60%) CPSs made reference to knowledge management and communication, while for the Central and West Asia Regional Department (CWRD), one out of three (30%) CPSs included knowledge management and communication considerations.

**Table 3: CPSs—Frequency of Use of Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms, 2009 and 2010**

Country	Region	Frequency of Use of Search Terms
<b>2009</b>		
1 Afghanistan <sup>1</sup>	CWRD	0
2 India (abridged)	SARD	4
3 Nepal	SARD	2
4 Pakistan	CWRD	0
5 Palau	PARD	0
6 Solomon Islands (interim)	PARD	1
7 Vanuatu	PARD	1
<b>2010</b>		
1 Kiribati	PARD	0
2 Papua New Guinea	PARD	1
3 Tajikistan	CWRD	1

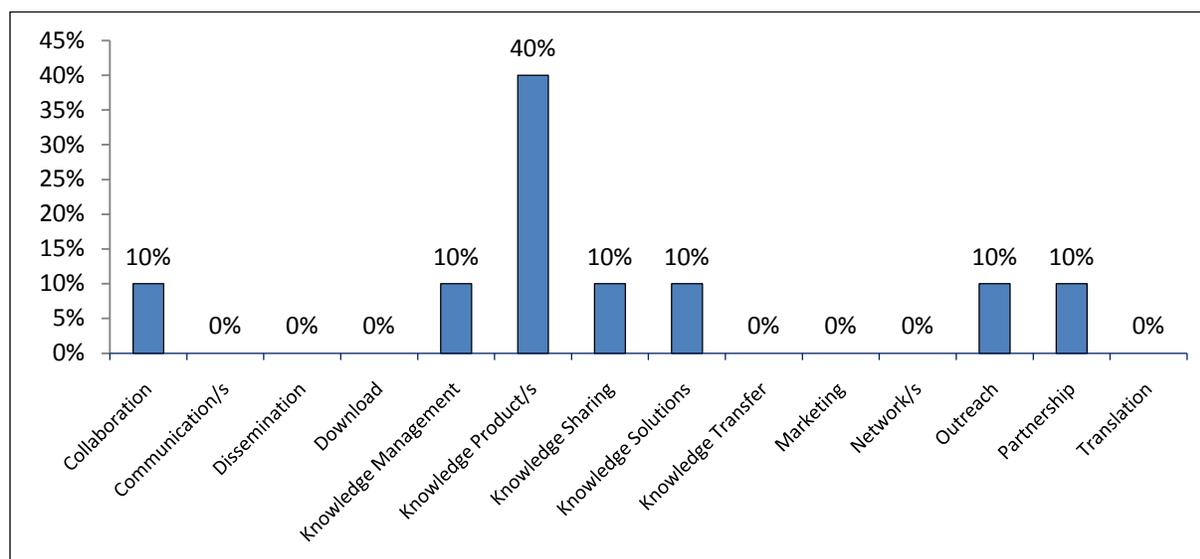
CWRD = Central and West Regional Department, PARD = Pacific Regional Department, SARD = South Asia Regional Department

Note:

The CPS for Afghanistan was approved in November 2008, after the approval of Strategy 2020 in April 2008, and was therefore included in this study.

10. "Knowledge products" was the most cited of the 14 search terms, found in 40% of CPSs (Figure 2). The terms "collaboration", "knowledge management", "knowledge sharing", "knowledge solutions", "outreach", and "partnership" were each found in one CPS. Interestingly, half of the 14 knowledge management and communication terms were not used in any of the CPSs. This may be explained by the slow uptake of more recently introduced terminology and the enduring preference for using more familiar terms such as "lessons learned" and "policy dialogue."

**Figure 2: CPSs—Rate of Occurrence of References to Knowledge Management and Communication by Search Term, 2009 and 2010**



#### IV. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION IN REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PRESIDENT

11. A total of 186 projects were approved in 2009–2010, out of which 138 RRP were available.<sup>5</sup> There were 75 RRP for projects approved in 2009 and 63 for those approved in 2010 (Table 4). Only 42% of RRP contained references to knowledge management and communication search terms. It is notable that the percentage of documents referring to knowledge management and communication decreased from 49% in 2009 to 33% in 2010.

**Table 4: RRP—Rate of Occurrence of References to Knowledge Management and Communication, 2009 and 2010**

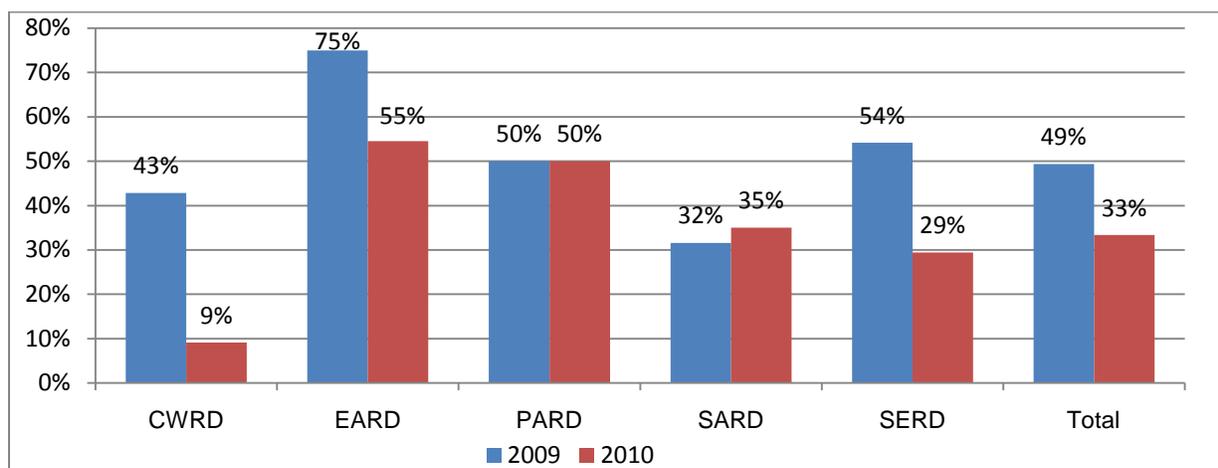
Year	Total No. of RRP	No. of RRP Containing References to Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms	Rate of Occurrence
2009	75	37	49%
2010	63	21	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>42%</b>

RRP = report and recommendation of the President

12. Across regional departments, the East Asia Regional Department (EARD) consistently had the highest percentage of RRP using knowledge management and communication search terms for both years, with 75% in 2009 (Figure 3). However, this number decreased to 55% in 2010. Notably, the percentage decreased for almost all regional departments except for the Pacific Regional Department (PAR) which remained at 50% in both years, and SARD which increased slightly by 3%.

<sup>5</sup> Projects include multitranchise financing facilities (MFF). The second and subsequent tranches of MFF do not have RRP. The related document for these tranches is the Periodic Financing Request, which was not reviewed under this study.

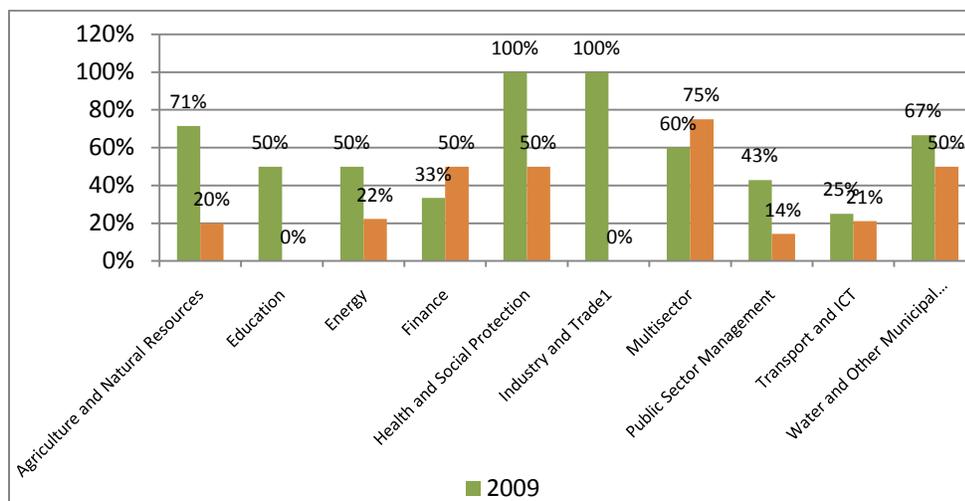
**Figure 3: RRP—Rate of Occurrence of References to Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms by Year and Region, 2009 and 2010**



CWRD = Central and West Regional Department, EARD = East Asia Regional Department, PARD = Pacific Regional Department, SARD = South Asia Regional Department, SERD = Southeast Asia Regional Department

13. In 2009, all RRPs in the Health and Social Protection, and Industry and Trade sectors discussed knowledge management and communication activities using the search terms (Figure 4).<sup>6</sup> For the Health and Social Protection sector, this percentage went down to 50% in 2010. In the case of the Industry and Trade Sector, the number apparently decreased to zero but this is because no projects under this sector were approved in 2010. The Agriculture and Natural Resources sector followed at 71% for 2009 but this dramatically decreased to only 20% in 2010. There was a general decrease in the percentage of RRPs making reference to the search terms for knowledge management and communication across all sectors from 2009 and 2010 except for the Multisector and Finance sectors, which showed increases of 17% and 15%, respectively.

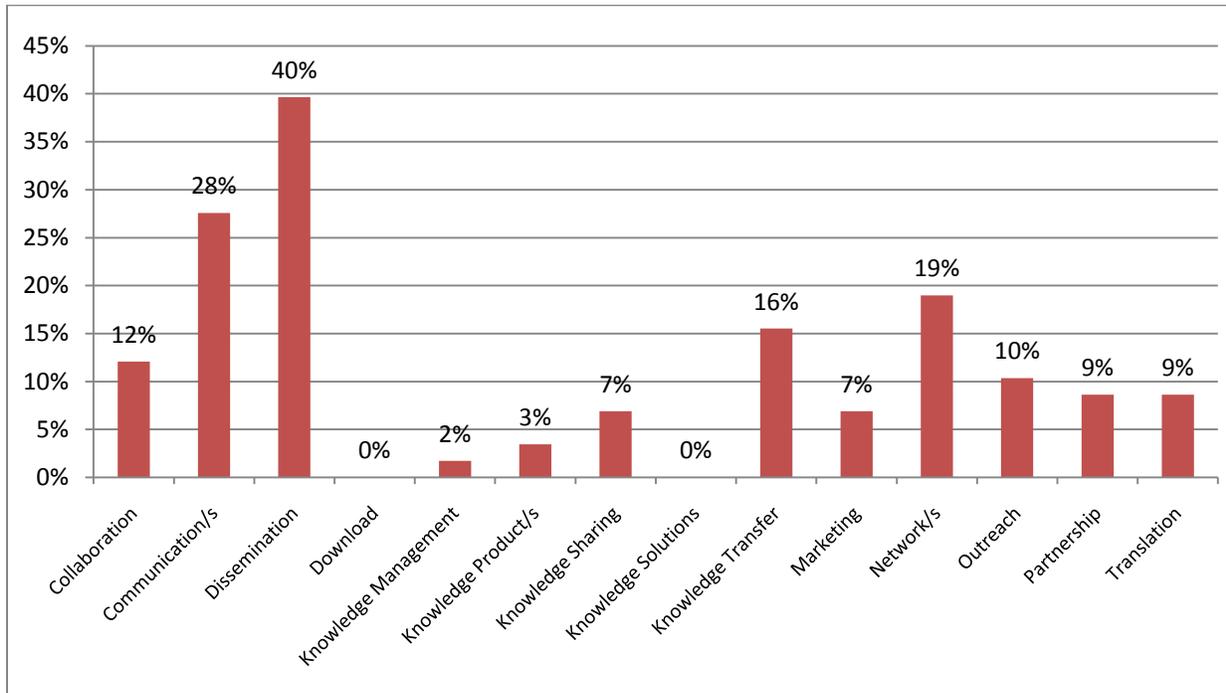
**Figure 4: RRP—Rate of Occurrence of References to Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms by Year and Sector, 2009 and 2010**



<sup>6</sup> Although there were only two RRPs each for the Health and Social Protection, and Industry and Trade sectors in 2009, all contained references to knowledge management and information.

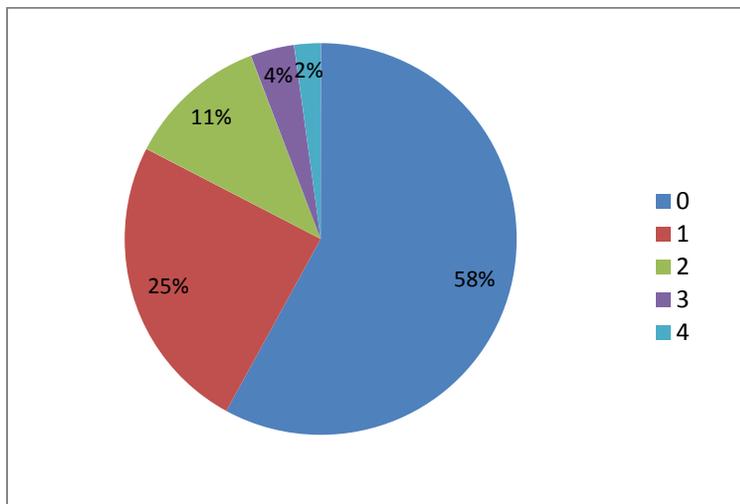
14. "Dissemination" was the most commonly used search term, found in 40% of the RRP (Figure 5). Second in rank was the term "communication" found in 28% of RRP. The terms "download" and "knowledge solutions" were not found in any of the RRP.

**Figure 5: RRP—Rate of Occurrence of References to Knowledge Management and Communication Information by Search Term, 2009 and 2010**



15. None of the RRP was considered to have a high frequency of use of knowledge management and communication search terms since none used five or more of the terms (Figure 6). The highest number of terms found in a single document was four and this in only 2% of the RRP. This provides an indication of the nature and prevalence of references to knowledge management and communication in the RRP.

**Figure 6: Frequency of Use of Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms in RRP, 2009 and 2010**



## V. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORTS

16. A total of 506 TAs were approved in 2009 and 2010. However, only 271 TA reports were available since many of these approvals were either supplementary or small-scale TAs that were only briefly described in Quarterly Summary Reports. All 271 TA reports were reviewed under this study.

17. Approximately 88% of TA reports included references to knowledge management and communication search terms (Table 5). This high rate of occurrence was expected because many TA projects involve research studies or are feasibility studies, the outputs of which are knowledge products. During the period 2009-2010, there was a 6% increase (from 85% to 91%) in the occurrence of search terms, which may imply a more conscious effort by project staff to incorporate knowledge management and communication considerations in TAs, a greater familiarity with the more recently introduced terminology, or a deeper understanding of the importance of knowledge management in TAs related to loans.

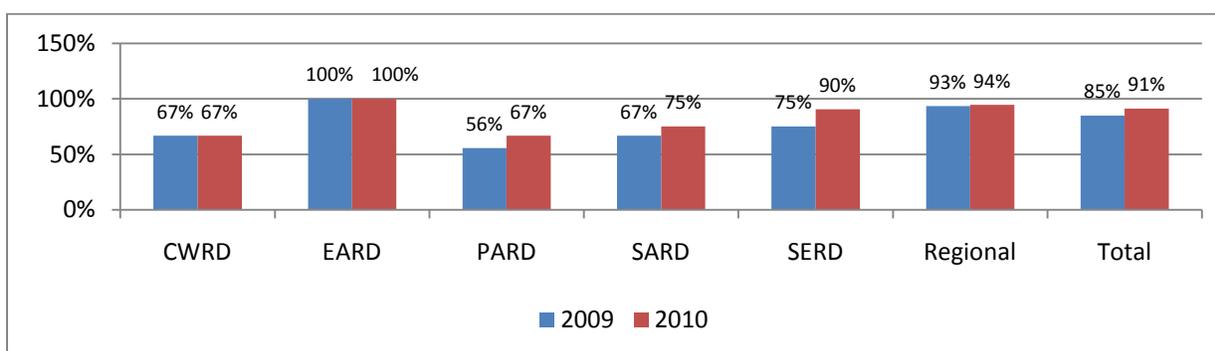
**Table 5: TA Reports—Rate of Occurrence of References to Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms, 2009 and 2010**

Year	Total No. of TA Reports	No. of TA Reports Using References to Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms	Rate of Occurrence
2009	125	106	85%
2010	146	133	91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>88%</b>

TA = technical assistance

18. By organizing the TA reports into their corresponding region based on developing member country/ies involved, and by separating regional TAs (RETAs) into another group, it was clear that EARD topped other regional departments with 100% of the TA reports they formulated using the knowledge management and communication search terms in both 2009 and 2010 (Figure 7). RETAs ranked second with 93% and 94%, respectively for 2009 and 2010. There was a general increase in the percentage of TA reports using the knowledge management and communication search terms, except for EARD and CWRD, which remained constant at 100% and 67%, respectively.

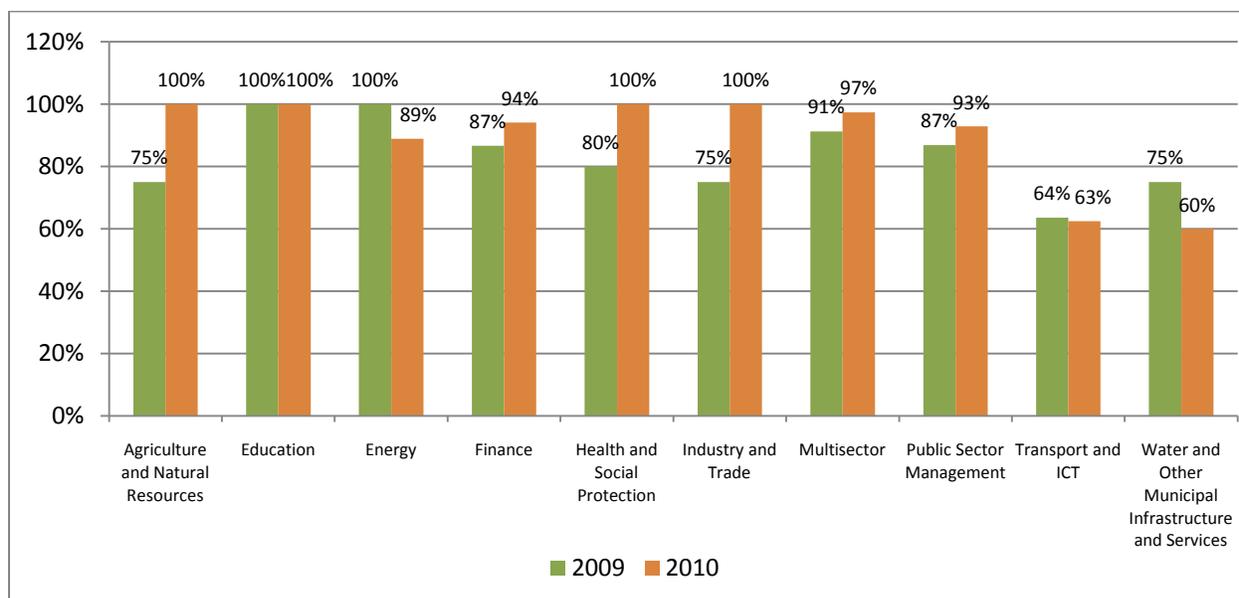
**Figure 7: TA Reports—Rate of Occurrence of References to Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms by Year and Region, 2009 and 2010**



CWRD = Central and West Regional Department, EARD = East Asia Regional Department, PARD = Pacific Regional Department, SARD = South Asia Regional Department, SERD = Southeast Asia Regional Department

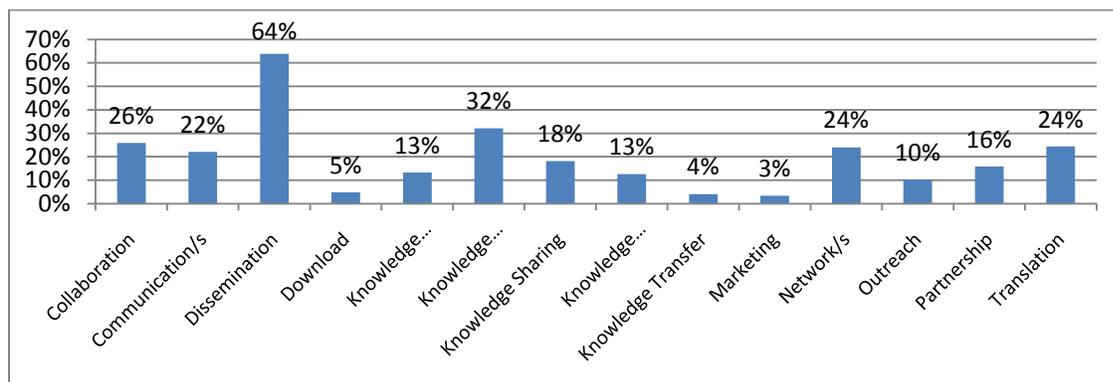
19. An examination of TA reports by sector reveals that all Education sector TA reports approved in both years consistently made reference to knowledge management and communication using the search terms (Figure 8). In 2009, 100% of the Energy sector TA reports also included sections addressing knowledge management and communication but this declined to 89% in 2010. In 2010, an increase was seen as three more sectors, namely the Agriculture and Natural Resources sector, Health and Social Protection sector, and the Industry and Trade sector had 100% of TA reports using the search terms to make reference to knowledge management and communication. This implies a general increase in most of the sectors except for the Energy, Transport and ICT, and Water and other Municipal Infrastructure Services sectors.

**Figure 8: TA Reports—Rate of Occurrence of References to Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms by Year and Sector, 2009 and 2010**



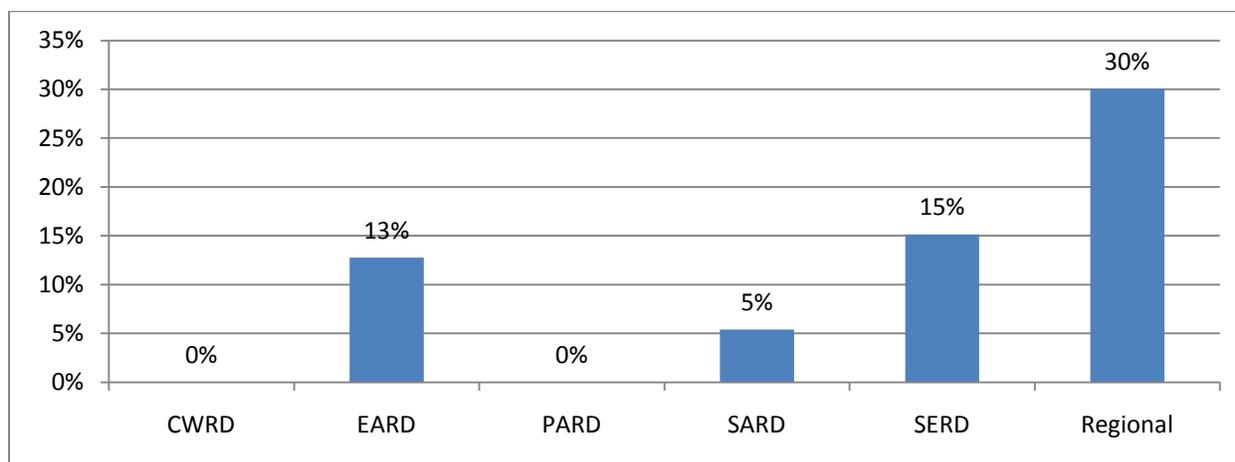
20. "Dissemination" was the most frequently used among the 14 knowledge management and communication terms with 64% of TA reports using the term (Figure 9). The term was often used in the context of information dissemination or dissemination workshops. A distant second was "knowledge product/s" which was found in 32% of the TA reports. The term was most often found in TAs involving research studies or in RETAs that fund regular ADB publications.

**Figure 9: TA Reports—Occurrence of References to Knowledge Management and Communication Information by Search Term, 2009 and 2010**



21. Since TA projects often involve project preparatory and capacity development activities, or entail cooperation between a number of agencies, it was expected that knowledge management and communication would form an integral part of the TAs and that this would be reflected in TA reports (Figure 10). Figure 10 shows which regions initiated TA reports with a high frequency of use of the search terms (in which reports used five or more of the 14 knowledge management and communication terms). It shows that 30% of RETA reports contained five or more of the selected terms. None of the TA reports prepared by CWRD and PARD used five or more of the knowledge management and communication search terms.

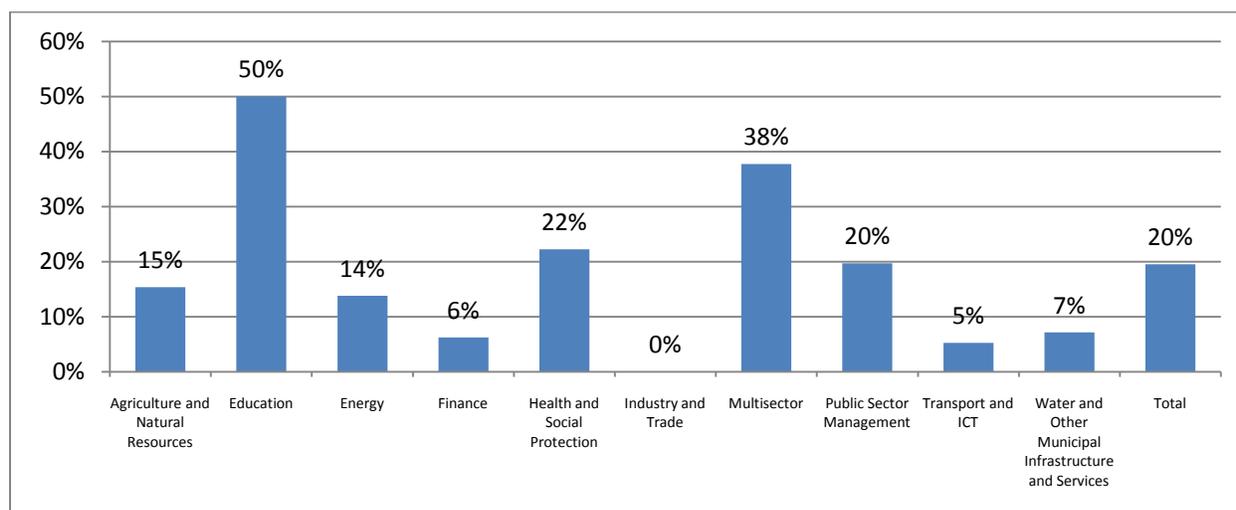
**Figure 10: TA Reports—High Frequency of Use of Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms by Region, 2009 and 2010**



CWRD = Central and West Regional Department, EARD = East Asia Regional Department, PARD = Pacific Regional Department, SARD = South Asia Regional Department, SERD = Southeast Asia Regional Department

22. Comparing sectors, the Education sector outranks all other sectors as 50% of Education TA reports used five or more of the knowledge management and communication search terms (Figure 11). This was followed by Multisector (38%) and then by the Health and Social Protection sector (22%). None of the TA reports in the Industry and Trade sector used five or more of the knowledge management and communication terms.

**Figure 11: TA Reports—Frequency of Use of Knowledge Management and Communication Search Terms by Sector, 2009 and 2010**



## VI. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

23. It is important to begin by acknowledging that the absence of search terms in a document does not categorically indicate that knowledge management and communication are given no consideration in the work to which the document refers.

24. Nevertheless, the occurrence (or absence) of key words that are part of ADB's long-term strategic framework provides a powerful tool for analyzing ADB's uptake of these concepts and a good indicator of how strongly the concepts are integrated in ADB's work practice. On the evidence of the occurrence of the 14 search terms in the 417 documents examined in this study, the results indicate that knowledge management and communication are given limited consideration in the majority of ADB's operations. There is also evidence that consideration of knowledge management and communication has increased somewhat from 2009 to 2010.

25. CPSs made quite limited reference to knowledge management and communication. Although 60% of the CPSs employed at least one knowledge management and communication search term, the generally low use of the search terms suggests that knowledge management and communication are given only limited consideration in these documents.

26. RRP had the lowest rate of occurrence of knowledge management and communication terms. The decrease in the number of RRP that included reference to any of the search terms from 49% in 2009 to 33% in 2010 (a period in which one might expect greater familiarity with, and use of, the search terms), and also the general decrease across sectors, may indicate a declining focus on knowledge management and communication in lending products.

27. Many TA reports (88%), as expected, included references to knowledge management and communication. It is perhaps the truest indication of the sharpened focus on knowledge, envisioned by the Action Plan on Knowledge Management, 2009–2011, that all (100%) of the 2010 TA reports in four of ADB's ten sectors made reference to knowledge management and communication using the search terms.

28. The data shows that in all three types of report, the scope and depth of discussion of knowledge management and communication may, in some cases, be somewhat limited. It is noteworthy that none of the documents examined include more than five of the 14 knowledge management and communication terms. The limited use of the 14 terms may indicate that although knowledge management and communication are addressed to some extent in reports of ADB's work related issues may not yet be sufficiently addressed in actual ADB operations. The results also show that some regional departments pay significantly less attention than others to addressing knowledge management and communication issues across the three types of report examined.

29. Finally, it was not the intention of this study to make oversimplified comparisons between regions and across sectors, and readers should guard against the "league table syndrome"<sup>7</sup> when examining the data. Nevertheless, differences in the rates of occurrence and the frequency of use of the search terms between regions and across sectors are both noticeable and worthy of further discussion. Understanding and addressing these differences can be viewed as a valuable opportunity for organizational learning in ADB. A conjecture is that the low rates of occurrence and frequency of use of the search terms are due to (i) insufficient communication from senior staff about the continuing importance of the drivers of change under Strategy 2020, and (ii) the fact that the templates for CPSs, RRP, and TA reports do not focus attention on knowledge management and communication. That second point may, in the final analysis, be the most likely explanatory variable for the modest representation or related terms in key operational documents of ADB.

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<sup>7</sup> The syndrome is a common disorder in which more emphasis is given to the ranking in a list than to the reasons for, or wider significance of, the results. The "league table syndrome" often leads to poor decisions made primarily to improve the ranking level.