

**STRATEGY 2030  
OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR PRIORITY 2  
ACCELERATING PROGRESS IN  
GENDER EQUALITY, 2019–2024**

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SEPTEMBER 2019

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**OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR PRIORITY 2**  
**ACCELERATING PROGRESS IN**  
**GENDER EQUALITY, 2019–2024**

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Operational Priority 2  
**Accelerating Progress  
 in Gender Equality**

- Build on good practices on gender in operations
- Go beyond gender mainstreaming in country partnership strategy
- Develop stronger gender pipeline
- Improve quality of project gender designs and target setting
- Continue to improve gender equality results in projects
- Conduct pilots and technical assistance (TA) on innovative and transformative approaches
- Enhance gender knowledge products, events, and partnerships
- Update and strengthen business processes and tools
- Combine ordinary capital resources with TA and concessional resources
- Build knowledge and expertise in emerging areas

**Strategic Operational Priorities**

**1** Women’s economic empowerment increased

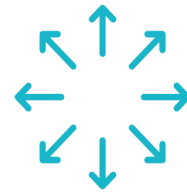
**2** Gender equality in human development enhanced

**3** Gender equality in decision making and leadership enhanced

**4** Women’s time poverty and drudgery reduced

**5** Women’s resilience to external shocks strengthened

**Operational Approaches**



**Scale up gender mainstreaming in operations across sectors and themes**



**Integrate Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5’s “transformative” gender agenda, e.g., economic assets and resources for women, unpaid care and domestic work, digital technology/ ICT, and gender-based violence**



**Expand gender mainstreaming in nonsovereign operations**



**Tackle multiple gender inequalities through integrated solutions, e.g., livable cities program**



**Develop capacity of developing member countries and clients in tracking and achieving gender-related SDGs**

**Sub-pillars**

- Women’s access to job skills improved
- Women’s financial inclusion increased
- Women’s entrepreneurship supported
- Women’s access to infrastructure and services improved

- Women’s and girls’ participation in nontraditional education and training increased
- Quality and access to women’s and girls’ health services improved
- Protection from gender-based violence strengthened

- Women’s leadership capacity improved
- Regulatory, legal, and institutional environment for gender equality improved

- Provision of time-saving or gender-responsive infrastructure improved
- Quality and access to child and elderly care services improved

- Resilience-building community-based initiatives for women and girls implemented
- Provision of climate and disaster-resilient infrastructure for women and girls improved
- Financial protection systems for women strengthened
- Dedicated crisis-responding social assistance systems for women and girls strengthened

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# ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
CPS	–	country partnership strategy
DMC	–	developing member country
EGM	–	effective gender mainstreaming
GAP	–	gender action plan
GEN	–	gender equity theme
ICT	–	information and communication technology
MSME	–	micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise
PCR	–	project completion report
PSOD	–	Private Sector Operations Department
SDCC	–	Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department
SDG	–	Sustainable Development Goal
SGE	–	some gender elements
STEM	–	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
TA	–	technical assistance
TVET	–	technical and vocational education and training

# I STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

## A. Overview

1. Accelerating progress in gender equality in Asia and the Pacific is one of the seven operational priorities in Strategy 2030 of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).<sup>1</sup> ADB recognizes that gender equality is critical in its own right as well as for helping realize socioeconomic development. Strategy 2030 holds that, to achieve a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable region, it is imperative that ADB contributes to the efforts of accelerating gender equality outcomes in the region in five areas: economic empowerment, human development, decision making and leadership, time poverty reduction, and resilience to external shocks. ADB is committed to support gender equality through gender-inclusive project designs in at least 75% of its sovereign and nonsovereign operations by 2030.

2. Support for gender equality and women’s empowerment is also central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>2</sup> which ADB and its developing member countries (DMCs) have committed to support. This is reflected not only in stand-alone Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5—to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls—but also in the mainstreaming of gender-related targets and indicators across the other SDGs. The vision of the SDGs to “leave no one behind” can only succeed in Asia and the Pacific if entrenched gender biases and inequalities are eliminated, especially for women and girls in poor and marginalized communities.

3. Building on good practices and institutional innovations under its Policy on Gender and Development (1998), ADB has accelerated progress in gender mainstreaming under Strategy 2020 and the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Operational Plan, 2013–2020.<sup>3</sup> This new gender operational plan, *Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality, 2019–2024*, further builds on experience and aligns with Strategy 2030 and the SDGs to meet the rapidly changing needs of the region. It also reflects findings and recommendations from the gender vision background paper prepared by the ADB Gender Equity Thematic Group and latest thematic evaluation of ADB gender equality operations conducted by the Independent Evaluation Department.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ADB. 2018. *Strategy 2030: Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations General Assembly. 2015. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Resolution A/70/1, adopted 25 September. New York.

<sup>3</sup> ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank, 2008–2020*. Manila; and ADB. 2013. *Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Operational Plan, 2013–2020: Moving the Agenda Forward in Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.

<sup>4</sup> ADB. 2017. *Vision for Gender Equality in Asia and the Pacific by 2030: Possible Future Directions for Asian Development Bank’s Gender Work*. Manila; and Independent Evaluation Department. 2017. *Asian Development Bank Support for Gender and Development, 2005–2015: Thematic Evaluation*. Manila: ADB.



## B. ADB Experience and Contributions

4. During the implementation period 2013–2018 of the current operational plan (footnote 3), ADB made significant efforts through sovereign operations to meet gender performance targets of both project at entry and at completion. However, concerns remain with regard to gender quality at entry in country partnership strategies (CPSs) and the low level of projects designed with gender equity theme.

5. **Country partnership strategies.** Over 2013–2015, ADB made constant progress in highlighting gender equality agenda in CPSs, as the percentage of these strategies meeting the gender equality quality-at-entry criteria<sup>5</sup> rose from a baseline of 53% in 2010–2012, to 75% in 2014, and 100% in 2015. However, the percentage fell back to 50% in 2016 and only recovered slightly at 63% in 2017 against the target of 70%, mainly because several of the newly approved strategies did not include gender indicators in their results frameworks, due to a more streamlined structure. By 2018, the percentage again reached 100%, showing volatility over the years. ADB regularly conducts country gender assessments to inform CPSs, but the scope of ADB's ability to address key gender issues in a DMC largely depends on the sector portfolio structure. As a result, a country gender strategy typically refers to gender mainstreaming in the existing project pipeline, rather than the gender agenda proactively driving the sector and subsector priorities.

6. **Sovereign project designs.** Over 2013–2016, ADB aimed to achieve a target of 45% of newly approved sovereign ADB operations categorized with either a gender equity theme (GEN) or effective gender mainstreaming (EGM), based on a 3-year average.<sup>6</sup> In 2017, ADB raised the target to 50% by 2020, replacing approvals with commitments. ADB exceeded the 50% target but after peaking at 57% in 2015, its performance fell below the 50% target in 2016 and 2017, before exceeding it again at 52% in 2018 (Figure 1). On an annual basis, the application of committed operations resulted in more volatility of annual performance; in 2016, it dropped sharply to 36%. Staff perceive challenges in gender mainstreaming when using some transaction modalities such as results-based lending, due to reluctance to commit to gender-related disbursement-linked targets for fear of failure.<sup>7</sup>

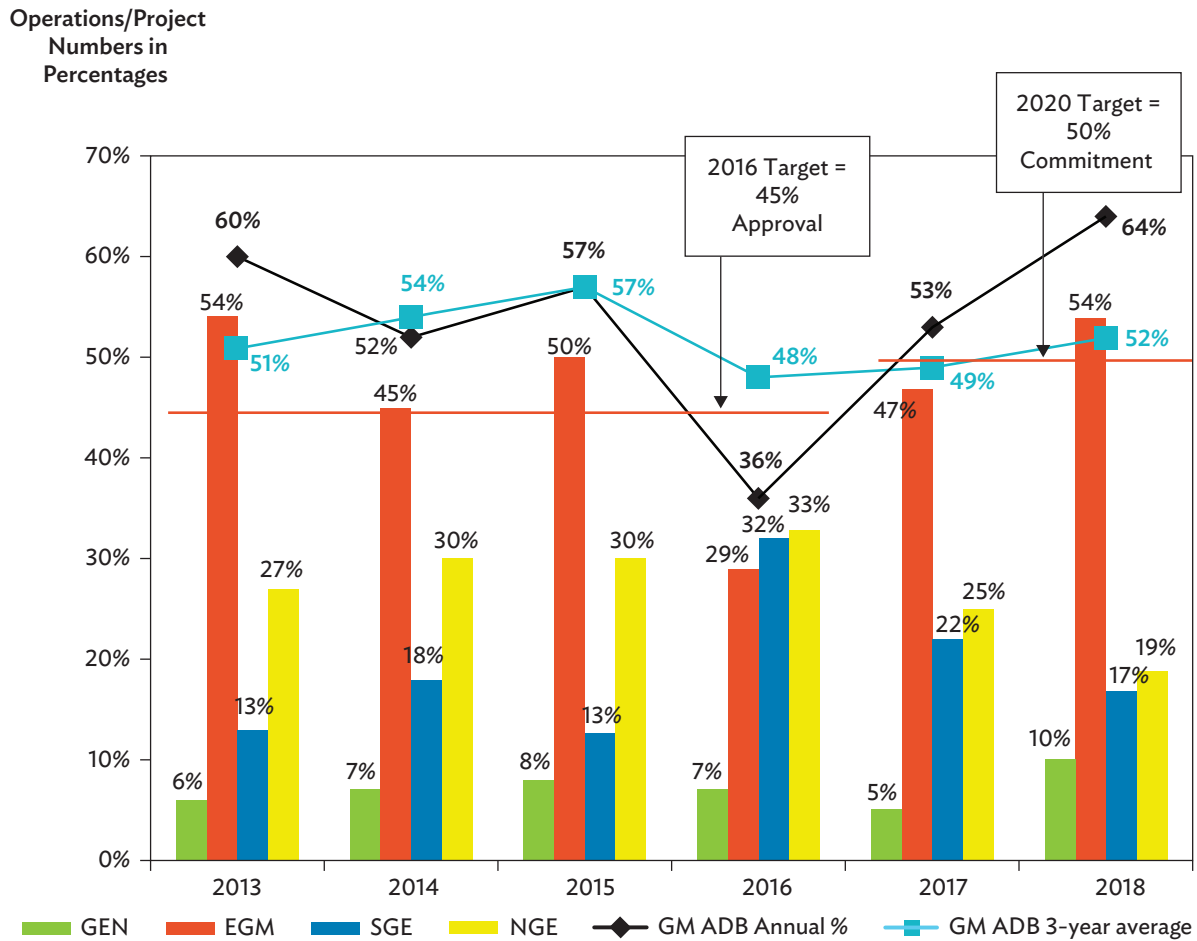
7. ADB struggled to meet its commitment to increase efforts to design more GEN projects in 2013–2018. From a baseline of 6 projects (or 6% of sovereign operations) in 2012, the number of GEN projects rose to 8 projects (or 8% of sovereign operations) in 2015, before declining to 5 projects (or 5% of sovereign operations) in 2017 and peaking to 13 projects (or 10% of sovereign operations) in 2018. Staff and DMC counterpart feedback indicate the following reasons for the low level of GEN projects:

<sup>5</sup> Criteria used are clear country gender strategy specified, gender analysis integrated into sector analysis (which was later lifted and replaced with “Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Assessment”), and gender indicators specified in the CPS results framework.

<sup>6</sup> All ADB operations are classified into one of the four gender categories: gender equity theme, effective gender mainstreaming, some gender elements, and no gender elements. The gender categories are defined in ADB. 2012. *Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming Categories of ADB Projects*. Manila.

<sup>7</sup> For nonsovereign operations, in 2016–2018, ADB committed to a total of 17 GEN or EGM projects, representing 23% of the nonsovereign operations committed in that period, in such sectors as finance, agribusiness, education, housing finance, and telecommunications.

**Figure 1: Projects with Gender Equity and Mainstreaming, 2013–2018**  
Annual and 3-Year Averages by Commitment, Sovereign



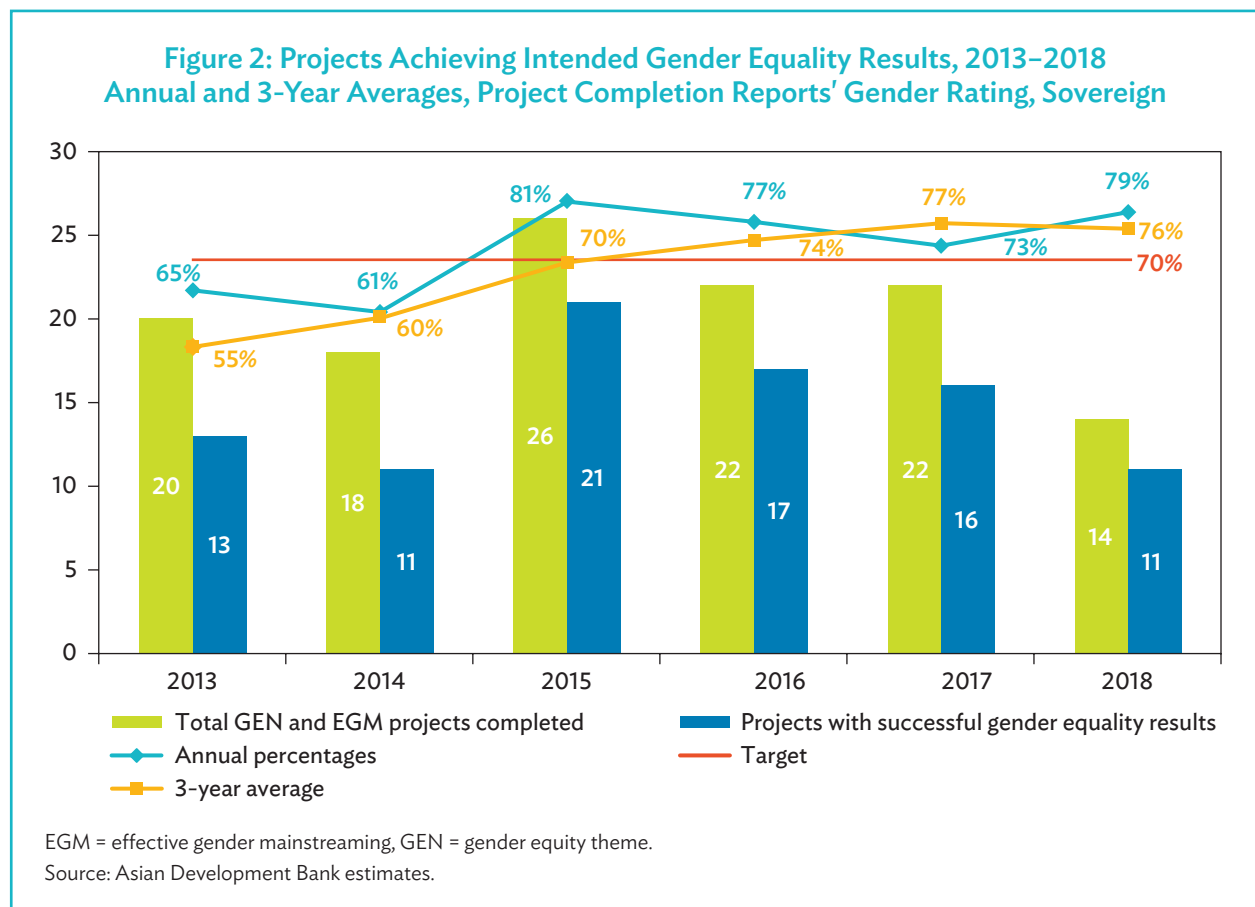
EGM = effective gender mainstreaming, GEN = gender equity theme, GM ADB = gender equity and mainstreaming in ADB operations, NGE = no gender elements, SGE = some gender elements.

Source: Asian Development Bank estimates.

- (i) a challenging pipeline structure in terms of both the sector mix (with the sectors that lend themselves more easily to gender mainstreaming, such as social sectors, water, and agriculture, currently shrinking) and the modality mix (in particular, results- and policy-based lending being considered more challenging to pursue a GEN category due to its requirement for more gender targets with adequate sex-disaggregated baseline data at the outcome level); and
- (ii) the conservative decision to aim for EGM by both ADB project teams and DMCs for fear of not achieving the outcome gender target at the time of project completion that is required for GEN projects.

8. **Gender equality results from completed sovereign operations.** ADB committed to deliver intended gender equality results in at least 70% of its completed sovereign projects by 2016 based on a 3-year average.<sup>8</sup> ADB already met this target in 2015, and performance rose steadily to 77% in 2017 (from a baseline of 49% in 2010–2012) and to 76% in 2018. Although this is still above the 70% target, it will be important for ADB to support executing and implementing agency staff to further develop their ability to collect and analyze sex-disaggregated and qualitative data, and to document, monitor, and report on gender-related results in project progress reports and project completion reports (Figure 2).

9. Over 2013–2018 project completion reporting year,<sup>9</sup> ADB had 122 completed sovereign operations categorized GEN or EGM. They have helped DMCs narrow gender gaps and/or empower women and girls, as summarized by sector, below.



<sup>8</sup> The criteria used for the intended gender equality results delivered include sex-disaggregated beneficiary data reported, at least 75% of the numerical targets in the project gender action plan (GAP) met, and at least 70% of the actions in the project GAP successfully completed. These are assessed for sovereign operations categorized as GEN or EGM.

<sup>9</sup> From 1 July of the previous year to 30 June of the year of report.

10. **Agriculture.** The agriculture and natural resources sector had the largest proportion (32 projects of 122) with the highest gender success rate (81%). These projects have contributed to increased income and productivity of women farmers and farm households through improved access to agriculture extension and skills training, marketing, improved agriculture inputs and methods including crop diversification, access to improved rural infrastructure, and participation in rural community-based organizations (e.g., farmer groups, irrigation water groups, and self-help groups). In Viet Nam, a project introduced affordable household biogas digesters to 68,000 women who reduced their cooking time by 2–4 hours per day, aided in the drudgery of managing livestock waste, and increased agriculture productivity using organic fertilizer. More than 7,200 women also gained access to bank credit for biogas units.<sup>10</sup>

11. **Finance.** ADB supported women's economic empowerment through access to finance, although the number of projects was limited. Six of nine completed finance sector projects with gender mainstreaming categories successfully supported women's access to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) finance by setting up a target for finance access by women-led or women-owned MSMEs. In Armenia, ADB supported a comprehensive sector development program comprising policy reforms (which supported the implementation of a national plan for women-owned MSMEs, review of the Strategy for Women's Entrepreneurship, and collection of sex-disaggregated data); training and business development services support (i.e., 204 female and 195 startups and entrepreneurs by Armenia's Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development National Center); and improved access to finance (2,780 loans disbursed from partner financial institutions, out of which 2,040 were to women entrepreneurs).<sup>11</sup>

12. **Education.** Education projects had the second-largest share (22 projects), with a 77% success rate on gender mainstreaming. They contributed to narrowing gender gaps in enrollment and female completion of secondary and higher education and, in more recent cases, technical and vocational education and training (TVET). These were achieved through improved equality in education; expanded and improved school infrastructure, including equal access to modern facilities, separate sanitation facilities, and separate dormitories; teacher training with targets for female teachers; curriculum reforms, including content on tackling gender stereotypes; stipends and scholarships for girls from remote areas or disadvantaged communities; and subsidized internships for girls in nontraditional trades, such as engineering and mechanics in TVET. In Viet Nam, a project targeting ethnic minorities supported the enrollment of an additional 99,075 students in lower secondary education (with 47% female), of which about 60% are from ethnic minorities from remote areas who did not have access to schooling previously.<sup>12</sup> More than 22,000 teachers (with 54% female and 25% from ethnic minorities) also strengthened their teaching capacity. Student dropout rates decreased from 4.2% in 2008 to 1.9% in 2013, and the proportion of girls in lower secondary education rose to 48.8% by the end of the project. In Mongolia, a project addressed the high dropout rate of boys in secondary education, which resulted in the completion rates of boys in secondary education increasing from 45% in 2007 to 97% in 2013, leveling the gender parity index at the secondary level from 1.11 in

<sup>10</sup> ADB. 2018. *Completion Report: Quality and Safety Enhancement of Agricultural Products and Biogas Development Project in Viet Nam*. Manila.

<sup>11</sup> ADB. 2018. *Completion Report: Women's Entrepreneurship Support Sector Development Program in Armenia*. Manila.

<sup>12</sup> ADB. 2016. *Completion Report: Lower Secondary Education for the Most Disadvantaged Regions Project in Viet Nam*. Manila.

2007 to 1.02 in 2014, and lowering the average dropout rate by grade from 4.1% in 2006–2007 to 1.7% (1.0% for girls and 2.3% for boys) in 2013–2014.<sup>13</sup>

13. **Health.** ADB completed 15 health projects with gender mainstreaming, although success ratings have been mixed at 67%. These projects contributed to improving women’s access to primary health care, with many focusing on maternal and child health and some on communicable diseases including HIV and AIDS. In Bangladesh, an urban primary health care project<sup>14</sup> focusing on urban poor communities through government–nongovernment contractual partnership arrangements, reached 26.5 million (79% women and 21% men). It nearly tripled the number of institutional child deliveries, increased sixfold antenatal care, and eightfold prenatal care checkups; increased the use of married women’s use of modern contraception to 65%; and introduced safe counseling for gender-based violence cases. The project overall reduced maternal mortality rates in the project areas by 41%, underage 5 years mortality rate by 26%, and sexually transmitted infections by 88%.

14. **Social protection.** In social protection, two large-scale cash transfer programs, though yet to be fully completed, have significantly benefited women from poor communities as direct recipients of cash transfers. In Pakistan, ADB financial contribution to the national Benazir Income Support Programme leveraged an additional 846,000 women to be enrolled in the program by the end of 2017 through the issuance of computerized national identity cards, which allowed these women access to other social and finance services for the first time.<sup>15</sup> In the Philippines, the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program (Bridging Program for the Filipino Family) delivered benefits to 4.4 million poor households nationwide in 6 years by the end of 2014, with more than 90% of these registered grant recipients being women. The program also promotes women’s use of health care services including improved child delivery with skilled health personnel and/or in a health facility, improved school attendance by girls and boys, and men’s participation in family sessions on reproductive rights and gender-based violence.<sup>16</sup>

15. **Water, sanitation, urban, and rural infrastructure.** ADB completed 19 water supply and sanitation projects in 2013–2018, with 15 achieving a gender success rating. The projects significantly contributed to reducing women’s and girls’ drudgery and time poverty arising out of their disproportionate domestic work responsibilities, and giving women dignity and safety through affordable sanitation facilities. These projects also typically supported women’s roles as community change agents in managing water and sanitation, managing solid waste, raising hygiene awareness through water user and other community groups, and supporting female employees’ skills and leadership in water utilities (Box 1 and para. 33.iii). ADB often includes women’s leadership training in this process. In Bangladesh, the Second Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement (Sector) Project supported the training of 1,878 town-level female staff and 175 female ward-level elected councilors to prepare gender action plans (GAPs). More than one-third of the town-level coordination committees and 40% of the ward-level coordination committees were represented by women. Their active participation in GAP formulation and implementation monitoring contributed to 31 out of 35 towns gaining access to a second round of budget allocation for urban infrastructure improvement from the project, and an additional 47 towns in the third phase. In this process, 25% of paid labor in

<sup>13</sup> ADB. 2015. *Completion Report: Education Sector Reform Project in Mongolia*. Manila.

<sup>14</sup> ADB. 2014. *Completion Report: Second Urban Primary Health Care Project in Bangladesh*. Manila.

<sup>15</sup> ADB. Pakistan: Social Protection Development Project. <https://www.adb.org/projects/45233-001/main>.

<sup>16</sup> ADB. Philippines: Social Protection Support Project. <https://www.adb.org/projects/43407-013/main>.

construction went to women, with the total of \$3.3 million earned by women laborers altogether.<sup>17</sup> Five other completed multisector rural and urban infrastructure projects (out of seven total completed projects) contributed to reducing women's time poverty, expanding their access to economic and social services, and providing income-generating opportunities through maintenance.

16. **Transport and energy.** All of the five completed transport projects with gender mainstreaming successfully implemented gender-focused components, contributing to reducing women's time poverty and enhancing their mobility in urban and rural areas. Most of these projects also provided women or those in remote areas with unskilled income-generating opportunities. In the Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China, a road network development project created a model for community-based road maintenance contracts targeting ethnic minority women, given the high level of male outmigration. In four counties, ADB established 69 road maintenance groups with 90% women. ADB trained more than 1,500 women on community-based road maintenance and generated substantial additional income. Other counties and provinces later replicated this model, as well as to northern Viet Nam.<sup>18</sup> During 2013–2018, there was no completed energy project with gender mainstreaming, given that gender mainstreaming in design started relatively recently in the sector.

17. **Public sector management.** Thirteen completed public sector management programs, nine with a successful gender rating, have contributed to gender-related policy actions and institutional reforms in a range of sectors. These reforms include decentralization support, public finance management, judiciary and police reforms, state-owned enterprise reforms, law and legal framework reforms in support of gender equality and women's empowerment, pension and social assistance reforms, economic and finance sector reforms, and youth employment support program.

18. **Crisis response.** Seven completed projects and programs supported meeting women's needs and mitigating adverse impacts on poor women and men through crisis responses, including economic and financial crisis and food and oil price hikes, disasters such as tsunami and earthquakes, and conflict. These operations contributed to building women's resilience and participation in reconstruction efforts through secured public resource allocation to social assistance and public services, including the use of gender-responsive budgeting as a method, providing targeted social assistance to households headed by women and individual women in poor and vulnerable groups, and promoting women's voices in community development through livelihood development and infrastructure reconstruction.

19. **Cross-sector gender results.** The current operational plan, on a pilot basis, began to aggregate gender equality results of completed sovereign projects across sectors in the areas of human capital development, economic empowerment, voice and decision making, and reduced vulnerability to shocks and crises. For example, for projects completed in 2018, ADB supported the skills training of more than 427,000 women and girls (i.e., human capital development); new income-generating activities for almost 40,000 women (i.e., economic empowerment); representation by more than 20,000 women in local governance and community groups (i.e., voice and decision-making); and resilience building for more than 89,000 women against extreme climate events, disasters, food insecurity, and economic crises (i.e., strengthened resilience).

<sup>17</sup> ADB. 2017. *Completion Report: Second Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement (Sector) Project in Bangladesh*. Manila.

<sup>18</sup> ADB. 2017. *Completion Report: Yunnan Integrated Road Network Development Project in the People's Republic of China*. Manila.

20. **Lessons learned.** The Independent Evaluation Department thematic evaluation<sup>19</sup> and annual gender operational plan performance summaries indicate the following key lessons from the implementation of the current gender operational plan:

- (i) It is central to engage the executing and implementing agencies and nonsovereign clients and borrowers as early as possible to build the GEN and EGM pipeline and to develop their capacity in gender mainstreaming and results reporting; in this process, ADB knowledge products such as country gender assessments, gender thematic assessments, and gender mainstreaming tool kits and tip sheets can play important roles.
- (ii) The explicit results focus of the current operational plan, including the project completion targets, has significantly contributed to better delivery of gender equality results in ADB operations.
- (iii) The project GAPs and gender targets and indicators in the design and monitoring framework remain essential tools, while attention to adequate gender analysis, implementation arrangements, budget allocation, and reporting mechanisms need to be ensured.
- (iv) Technical assistance (TA) and grant investment projects provide essential catalytic roles in deepening the quality of gender mainstreaming in lending operations, by studying what works for gender equality and piloting and demonstrating new and innovative approaches and partnership arrangements.

## C. Key Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities in Asia and the Pacific

21. **Progress in gender equality.** In the past 2 decades, Asia and the Pacific has made significant strides in establishing laws, policy, and institutional frameworks, and conducting programs for gender equality. Under the Millennium Development Goals, the region has seen substantial improvements in women's literacy and life expectancy, gender equality in educational enrollment, reduction in maternal mortality rates, and more job opportunities for women that were previously not available. Some DMCs have also introduced affirmative action for women's representation at different levels of government.

22. **Persistent gender inequalities.** Gaps persist in education completion, health outcomes, employment, and participation and leadership in decision making. A McKinsey Global Institute report estimated that if these gender inequalities are eliminated in Asia and the Pacific, the region could add \$4.5 trillion to the regional annual gross domestic product in 2025, a 12% increase over the no-action scenario.<sup>20</sup> Despite decades of impressive growth, the region is the only global region where female labor force participation has dropped from 56% in 1990 to 49% in 2013. On a regional average, women earn 77% of men's wages,<sup>21</sup> but there are huge variations across countries and industries.<sup>22</sup> Subject segregation, wherein more boys study science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

<sup>19</sup> Independent Evaluation Department. 2017. *Asian Development Bank Support for Gender and Development, 2005–2015: Thematic Evaluation*. Manila: ADB.

<sup>20</sup> J. Woetzel et al. 2018. *The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Asia Pacific*. New York: McKinsey and Company.

<sup>21</sup> ADB. 2015. *Asian Development Outlook 2015 Update: Enabling Women, Energizing Asia*. Manila.

<sup>22</sup> For example, in Pakistan, men in the garment, textile, and footwear industry earned 1.67 times that of women in 2014–2015. International Labour Organization. 2017. *Developing Asia's Garment and Footwear Industry: Recent Employment and Wage Trends. Asia-Pacific Garment and Footwear Sector Research Notes*. 8. Geneva.

(STEM) and information and communication technology (ICT) subjects than girls, contributes to the ongoing feminization of nontechnical occupations and concentration of women in less well-paid and skilled jobs.

23. Secondary education completion rates for girls also remain uneven across the region. In many countries, the rate of youth neither in employment nor in education or training is higher for females, indicating the gender gap in school-to-work transition. Only about 20% of women in the region are covered by pension schemes, compared to 35% of women globally; moreover, retirement regulations in many DMCs require women to retire earlier than men, resulting in lower savings and pension amounts.<sup>23</sup> Child marriage and strong patterns of son preference persist, and prevalence rates for intimate partner violence in parts of the region are above the global average, particularly in South Asia and the Pacific. Influenced by gendered sociocultural norms, gender discrimination and restrictions on mobility and heavy household responsibilities continue to limit many women's economic and social activities outside of the home, reducing their opportunities for economic security, independent decision making, and personal growth.<sup>24</sup> Only less than 20% of women are represented in Parliaments across the region; this is below the globally recognized minimum critical mass of 30% and significantly well below gender parity (footnote 23).

24. **Emerging regional challenges.** The challenges facing the region require urgent attention so that the gains in gender equality are not reversed. The increasing competition for quality jobs driven by the youth bulge in parts of the region and the possible labor displacement due to technological advancement, such as ICT and artificial intelligence, may expose women's jobs to more risk. Rapid aging in some DMCs also add a care burden for women on top of their child and domestic care responsibilities, while elderly women face increasing vulnerability due to lack of pensions and social isolation. Rural-urban migration is further accelerating the feminization of agriculture in rural areas, where women have limited opportunities for resources and skills for higher productivity and food production. Rapid urbanization and increasing population sizes living in slums and low-lying areas, and the heightened vulnerability to climate change and disasters triggered by natural hazards, add further vulnerabilities to women and girls, as they lack coping capacity due to their general lack of economic and human capital as well as their care and domestic work burdens.<sup>25</sup>

## D. Strategic Priorities of the Operational Plan

25. The new operational plan will have the following five strategic operational priorities. As recommended by the 2017 Independent Evaluation Department Thematic Evaluation Report on ADB support for gender and development (footnote 19), ADB will capture and track results from its operations (both sovereign and nonsovereign) using project completion report (PCR) data:

<sup>23</sup> ADB and UN Women. 2018. *Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: Baseline and Pathways for Transformative Change by 2030*. Manila.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Population Fund. 2012. *Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage*. New York; K. Bhatia. 2016. Harmful Traditional Practices: Regional Realities and Implications for ADB. Presentation at the ADB External Forum on Gender and Development Seminar. Manila. 22 June; World Health Organization; Department of Reproductive Health and Research, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; and South African Medical Research Council. 2013. *Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-Partner Violence*. Geneva. p. 47.

<sup>25</sup> ADB. 2017. *Vision for Gender Equality in Asia and the Pacific by 2030: Possible Future Directions for Asian Development Bank's Gender Work*. Manila.



- (i) women's economic empowerment increased,
- (ii) gender equality in human development enhanced,
- (iii) gender equality in decision making and leadership enhanced,
- (iv) women's time poverty and drudgery reduced, and
- (v) women's resilience to external shocks strengthened.

26. **Women's economic empowerment increased.** ADB will help DMCs generate quality jobs and higher value-added entrepreneurship opportunities for women. While ADB will pursue every employment opportunity for women through its operations for short-term income gains, including unskilled construction work where other options do not exist, ADB will shift focus to supporting more quality jobs and economic opportunities with higher skills and incomes to proactively narrow existing gender wage gaps and to reduce the concentration of women in lower-paid segments and sectors in the labor market.

27. **Gender equality in human development enhanced.** ADB will help DMCs accelerate gender equality in human capital development in education, health, and social protection to unleash the full talents of women and girls. While ADB will continue to assist DMCs in addressing remaining gender gaps, it will further provide DMCs with new knowledge solutions to effectively address the different needs of women and men in responding to new challenges such as aging, the youth bulge, rapid migration, and the future of work.

28. **Gender equality in decision making and leadership enhanced.** In the past, ADB has successfully involved women in project-related consultations and representation in community-based groups and local governance structures through quotas and training programs. Moving ahead, it is necessary to scale up these interventions by linking with larger-scale institutional and legal reforms, shifting from consultation to meaningful participation by women to garner changes in public decision making. ADB's support to DMCs for women's participation in decision making will be more systematically linked to women's leadership development to enable tangible changes in public resource allocation, urban and rural infrastructure design, and public service delivery quality. ADB will explicitly combine women's public participation and leadership with arrangements to provide child and family care support to facilitate a better work-life balance.

29. **Women's time poverty and drudgery reduced.** Dual responsibilities for paid work and unpaid domestic and care work, and their disproportionate time use on the latter, continue to disadvantage women in building human capital, participating in economic activities, and being active in public representation. ADB has significantly helped DMCs reduce women's drudgery and time-consuming household work through basic infrastructure, and this will be continued and scaled up. ADB will also explore direct investments and policy changes for reducing or rebalancing unpaid care responsibilities to accelerate progress in women's time poverty reduction.

30. **Women's resilience to external shocks strengthened.** The preventive and coping capacity of women is more limited than that of men in the event of external shocks and risks such as climate change impacts and disasters triggered by natural hazards, food insecurity, economic crisis, and conflict and other political insecurities, due to existing gender inequalities in resource endowments, exposure to gender-based violence, human capital, labor market, and decision-making power. ADB will help DMCs invest in women and girls in building resilience to these shocks.

31. This operational plan has five approaches: (i) scaling up gender mainstreaming in operations across sectors and themes, (ii) integrating SDG 5's transformative gender agenda, (iii) enhancing gender mainstreaming in nonsovereign operations, (iv) tackling multiple gender inequalities simultaneously through integrated solutions, and (v) developing the capacity of DMCs and clients. The theory of change framework of the operational plan is presented in Figure 3.

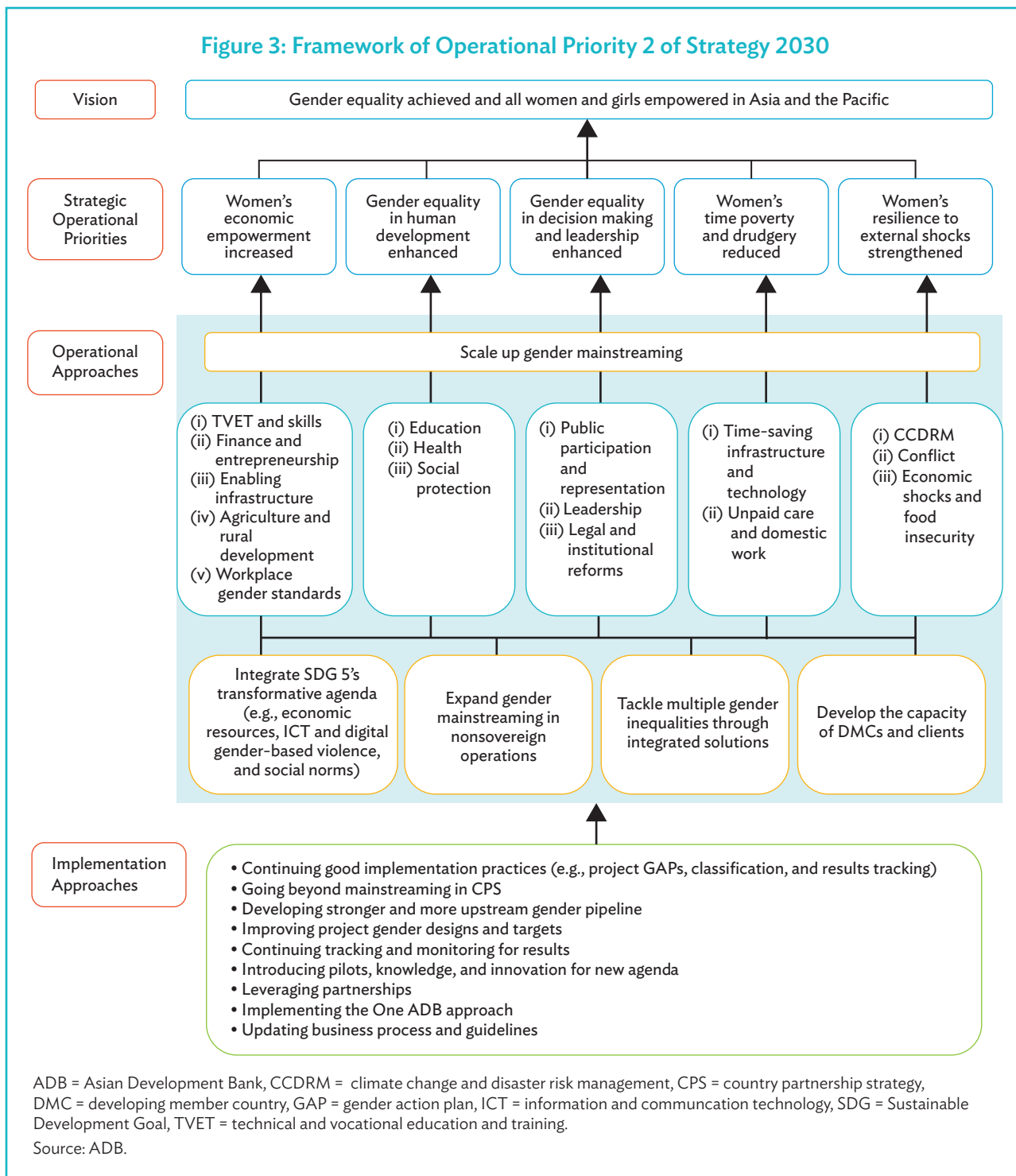
## A. Scaling Up Gender Mainstreaming in the Five Operational Priorities

32. ADB will scale up its gender equality operations through both sovereign and nonsovereign operations across the seven ADB sector groups—education, energy, finance, health, transport, urban, and water; seven other thematic groups—climate change and disaster risk management, governance, social development, rural development and food security, environment, regional cooperation and integration, and public–private partnership; and six other Strategy 2030 operational priorities. A matrix highlighting how each sector and thematic group, and operational plan will contribute to the five strategic priorities of this operational plan is in Appendix 1.

33. **Pillar 1: Women's economic empowerment increased.** ADB will help DMCs through the following:

- (i) **Technical and vocational education and training and skills development programs.** ADB will emphasize building employable skills for women, particularly in nontraditional, STEM, and higher-paying job sectors through such measures as scholarships, subsidized apprenticeships, social marketing, and career counseling. There will be an enhanced focus on entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and digital literacy education at a younger age. Job skills training will also enhance soft skills such as life skills and leadership, which are particularly missing among girls. Finally, ADB will consider skills development in potential areas of green jobs that are likely to provide opportunities for women.
- (ii) **Financial inclusion and entrepreneurship.** ADB will expand operations for financial inclusion of women and women-led or women-owned micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) by expanding the scale and reach of the full suite of finance services such as savings, credit, insurance, payments, and remittances. ADB will do this by supporting reforms of the regulatory frameworks, laws, and policies such as secured transactions and MSME laws; accelerating the use of digital and nondigital finance technologies; and working

Figure 3: Framework of Operational Priority 2 of Strategy 2030



with finance institutions to develop and to provide services and products targeting women clients, as well as promoting women's leadership in banking. ADB will continue to combine financial inclusion operations with building the skills of women entrepreneurs in business development, marketing, and financial literacy, and supporting more networking and advocacy opportunities for women's business coalitions.

- (iii) **Improved access to enabling infrastructure.** Infrastructure such as digital technology and ICT, water and sanitation, transport, electricity; and urban, rural, and regional economic infrastructure will maximize marketing and business opportunities for women and women-led MSMEs. ADB will provide physical sale spaces, explore gender-responsive procurement to enable women-led enterprises for public bidding as service providers, and establish better links with women's skills and entrepreneurship development programs. Infrastructure projects will also proactively encourage employing more women in skilled and semi-skilled jobs in sector agencies, utilities, and nonsovereign clients; and support upgrading the skills of women staff and employees (Box 1). ADB will enhance partnerships with formal and nonformal TVET institutions.
- (iv) **Rural development, water resources, and agriculture.** ADB will expand operations in support of agribusiness value chains whereby women's jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities will be enhanced in higher value-generating activities as well as gender-equal access to market information and training on commercial agriculture. ADB will also help improve women farmers' productivity through agriculture extension, demonstration plot training and skills development in climate-smart agriculture technologies, practices, and crop varieties; enhance value chains through value-added processes, land, and other rural assets and productive resources; and give greater voice in environmental and water resources management to ensure access to these resources.
- (v) **Workplace gender equality standards.** ADB will more systematically capture opportunities for assessing and improving performance in sovereign and nonsovereign operation partners' workplace gender equality standards across sectors, including maternity and paternity leave, anti-sexual harassment, gender-equal pay for equal work value, promotion opportunities, and the decent work framework. Global good gender equality practice accreditation systems such

### Box 1: Women's Leadership in Water Utilities in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

The chronic lack of women working in infrastructure sectors at the technical and management levels makes it difficult for the voices of women users of infrastructure to be integrated into project designs. In the Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) supported 26 female high school graduates from 11 provinces to study water and environment engineering and other water-related topics in Vientiane; and the training of 282 female staff members in 10 provincial water utilities on information and communication technology, accounting, water quality, customer service, leadership, and gender equality, who were otherwise excluded from training activities. Two-thirds of the graduates got a job in provincial water utilities; today, more women are in higher-level positions in the water utilities. ADB has extended its support for scholarships for female engineers to other infrastructure projects such as Bangladesh's Southwest Transmission Expansion Project.

Sources: ADB. 2017. Annual Progress Report: Gender and Development Cooperation Fund Fourteenth Progress Report (2017). Manila; ADB. 2018. Bangladesh: Southwest Transmission Grid Expansion Project. Manila

as Economic Dividends for Gender Equality certification process,<sup>26</sup> as well as diagnostic tools such as Women's Empowerment Principles,<sup>27</sup> can be applied more proactively.

34. **Pillar 2: Gender equality in human development enhanced.** ADB will help DMCs in the following sectors.

- (i) **Education.** ADB will continue to target narrowing gender gaps in access (particularly in remote and underserved areas), completion, learning outcomes, and school-to-work transitions; promote girls' access to STEM, nontraditional sectors and trades in TVET, ICT, digital education, personal initiative training for entrepreneurship, and soft skills to meet diverse labor market needs; reduce gender stereotypes through teacher training and curriculum reforms; explore opportunities for supporting the needs of adolescent girls such as sexuality education, menstrual hygiene education, and sanitation facilities; address boys' higher dropouts where relevant; and support gender-equal access to lifelong learning and reskilling programs.
- (ii) **Health.** ADB will further reduce the maternal mortality rate in the region; address women and girls' priority needs in affordable and quality health care services and health financing; expand support to women and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights and reduce gender-based violence drawing on a life cycle approach in collaboration with non-health interventions; reduce early pregnancy, child marriage, and sex-selective abortions through effective public campaigns, health provider training, and a focus on adolescent girls and boys; increase applications of digital health services to support women's health; address health issues disproportionately affecting men such as road accidents, disabilities, and alcohol and drug abuse, as they directly impact the welfare of women as family caretakers as well as their economic security; and invest in building skills and the capacity of health workers, particularly in rural areas.
- (iii) **Social protection.** Expanded ADB social protection operations will address women's needs in elderly care services and pension reforms; address the needs of women with disabilities; explore and support early childhood development programs for better learning outcomes and nutrition for boys and girls as well as a reduction in unpaid care responsibilities; target women in low-income and vulnerable households with conditional cash transfers and social assistance for disaster, conflict, food insecurity, and economic recovery; build financial safety nets for women such as savings and insurance; explore gender-inclusive digital identification for social financial inclusion and access to basic services; and explore support to regional policy dialogues to address women migrants' vulnerabilities.

35. **Pillar 3: Gender equality in decision making and leadership enhanced.** ADB will help DMCs in the following areas.

- (i) **Public participation.** ADB will actively engage citizens and youth in service delivery. In this process, ADB will accelerate women's participation in public consultations for investment designs, public finance management, and resource allocation including gender-responsive budgeting and redistributive tax policy, and in providing direct feedback on the quality of public

<sup>26</sup> Economic Dividends for Gender Equality certification is the leading global assessment methodology and business certification standard for gender equality, applied by many companies to benchmark their institutional gender equality status.

<sup>27</sup> United Nations Global Compact. 2010. *Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business*. New York. <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/library/65>; and United Nations Women. 2010. *Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business*. New York. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2011/10/women-s-empowerment-principles-equality-means-business#view>.

service delivery including crowdsourcing and open data systems for greater accountability and transparency.

- (ii) **Representation.** ADB will accelerate women's greater representation in public offices and decision-making positions through continued application of female quotas or targets and leadership training. For more meaningful participation, ADB will explore better measurement of consequent changes such as institutional and policy reforms, budget allocation, and service quality. ADB will consider childcare arrangements to enable women's participation and public campaigns advocating for women as leaders and decision makers to challenge the prevailing norms against women as leaders.
- (iii) **Leadership.** ADB will provide systematic support to women's leadership in public and private sectors at all levels through enabling policy and institutional reforms and focused training (Box 2).
- (iv) **Legal and institutional reforms.** Through public sector management operations, sector reforms, and TA projects, ADB will scale up support to legal, institutional, and governance reforms to remove gender-discriminatory provisions and to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Some operations will support women's legal literacy and access to justice (SDG 16) (Box 3).

### Box 2: Asia Women Leaders Program

Started in 2014, an Asian Development Bank (ADB) signature initiative, the Asia Women Leaders Program, addresses significant gaps in women's leadership in Asia and the Pacific. The regional program targets senior women government officials in finance, planning, and infrastructure ministries, who are in positions to influence their countries' public finance, policies, and services. It provides leadership capacity development to strengthen their knowledge, skills, networks, and confidence. In addition to women leaders motivating and mentoring participants with their experiences and insights, top-level trainers share techniques to improve skills for communication, negotiation, and building alliances. The program has trained 96 mid-management leaders and will be rolled out to countries in collaboration with the national gender focal agencies and civil service academies.

Source: ADB Institute. Fifth Asia Women Leaders Program. <https://www.adb.org/news/events/asia-women-leaders-program-2018>

### Box 3: Capacity Development for Increased Access to Justice for Women

Since 2017, the Office of the General Counsel of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been implementing a technical assistance project for Legal Literacy for Women in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The project focuses on capacity development of legal service providers such as judges, prosecutors, magistrates, and religious scholars. To date, ADB has trained about 300 judges from Punjab, the largest province of Pakistan, and trained a cohort of 20 judges as trainers. ADB developed training modules following a needs assessment and customized to the Pakistan context. ADB also developed three courses on gender sensitization and decision writing of gender-based violence cases for the Punjab Judicial Academy. ADB's work with the Punjab judiciaries resulted in the establishment of Asia's first model gender-based violence court in Lahore, which covers victims including women, children, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender people, and is designed to protect testifying victims. In addition, ADB launched a media campaign, including legal aid radio shows, documentaries, and puppet shows, aimed to challenge social norms underpinning gender-based violence. In Afghanistan, ADB has trained 200 people from the informal justice sector and conducted a needs assessment of 100 judges and prosecutors.

Source: ADB. 2016. *Law and Policy Reform Program: Effective Legal Systems for Sustainable Development*. Manila.

36. **Pillar 4: Women’s time poverty and drudgery reduced.** ADB will help DMCs in the following areas:

- (i) **Time-saving and welfare-enhancing infrastructure and technology.** ADB will continue to invest in basic infrastructure such as water and sanitation, household electrification, roads and transport directly serving households, and other last-mile infrastructure, as well as measuring and capturing time-saving benefits (Box 4). ADB will also continue to maximize opportunities to invest in affordable and climate-smart time-saving technologies and infrastructure in rural areas and innovate women-friendly urban and rural infrastructure and technology designs that facilitate safety, mobility, and convenience for women in access to vital services and work. This includes spatial planning of childcare facilities to work, streetlights, CCTV cameras, and secured spaces for women in public transport, use of women’s safety smart apps, and internet access to enable work from home.
- (ii) **Support to reduce and rebalance unpaid care and domestic work.** ADB will address care and domestic responsibilities disproportionately held by women and girls through establishing more explicit links of ADB investments across sectors to childcare services, both in urban and rural areas; expanding investments in affordable public and private elderly care services; supporting policy frameworks and institutional capacity for the care economy and work–life balance; and piloting effective public campaigns for men’s roles in care and domestic work.

#### Box 4: South Asia Gender and Inclusive Energy Initiative

A study, which presented the results of renewable energy technology audits conducted in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, recommended prioritizing the reduction of women’s time spent on household chores and support of their economic empowerment as criteria for energy system design and modeling. Critical findings, drawing on the World Bank Global Tracking Framework for Electricity Consumption, are that meeting tier 3 levels of energy access will be conducive to reducing women’s time poverty. This will cover electricity for productive use, such as water pumps, air coolers, and food processing equipment, and providing electricity for at least 50% of working hours; this will also contribute to women being able to establish their own businesses and thus contribute to their economic empowerment. In addition, in the ongoing energy transition to low-carbon fuel, distributed generation provides entry points for gender equality and social inclusion through mini-grid-based community energy systems and other applications. As an example, new energy industries, such as solar photovoltaic systems, are driven by small power producers, which offer great potential for the participation of women and marginalized groups.

Source: ADB. 2018. *Energy Technology Innovation in South Asia: Implications for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion*. Manila.

37. **Pillar 5: Women’s resilience to external shocks strengthened.** ADB will help DMCs through the following actions:

- (i) **Climate change and disaster risk management.** ADB will help DMCs accelerate the integration of gender equality in national and subnational policies, strategies, and action plans on climate change and disaster risk management in line with global commitments; conduct better analysis and data collection of gender-differentiated climate change and disaster impacts; expand green job opportunities for women and access to finance for women-owned and women-led green businesses; build women’s resilience to climate change and disaster

impacts and environmental degradation through greater access to climate-smart technologies, diversified livelihoods, natural asset building, crop insurance, savings, and other financial safety nets; encourage participation in community-led solutions; enhance knowledge, preparedness, and skills; and emphasize women’s active participation in related decision-making process at all levels (Box 5).

- (ii) **Conflict-affected situations.** ADB will integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment measures in post-conflict reconstruction operations, including supporting women’s participation in the peace-building process, providing economic opportunities, and prioritizing basic infrastructure that meet the needs of women and measures to protect women from gender-based violence (SDG 16).
- (iii) **Economic shocks and food insecurity.** ADB will support gender-responsive budgeting and other budget support to directly meet the basic economic, infrastructure, and social service needs of women through countercyclical and other post-economic crisis operations; and provide targeted social assistance to women from vulnerable and lower-income households such as food-for-work opportunities, food stamps, and cash transfers.

#### Box 5: Building Women’s Climate Resilience in the Pacific

In the Pacific, building the resilience of island and atoll communities to climate change and disaster impacts is urgent. Women and girls bear disproportionate burdens of coping with the impacts of climate change at the households and communities, but they are systematically excluded from making decisions to manage risks. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been maximizing access to global climate funds to build climate and disaster resilience among women and girls and to support them as proactive change agents. In Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu, women’s participation is supported through climate change committees in the communities; disaster early warning systems in the communities, climate-resilience infrastructure, and disaster management plans to incorporate women’s needs; and training courses for food production, climate-smart agriculture and agribusiness, and fishery ecosystem management. ADB supports the young women through scholarships to pursue climate change-related degrees in Tonga. At the national policy level, policy-based lending supports gender mainstreaming guidelines for the Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management in Tonga and the special application criteria on social and gender elements in the Tuvalu Climate Change and Disaster Survival Fund.

Sources: ADB. 2015. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Administration of Grant to Papua New Guinea for Building Resilience to Climate Change in Papua New Guinea*. Manila; ADB. 2017. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Policy-Based Loans, Policy-Based Grants, and Technical Assistance Grant for Building Resilience to Climate Change in Papua New Guinea*. Manila.

## B. Integrating Sustainable Development Goal 5’s Transformative Gender Agenda

38. The transformative gender agenda—as highlighted in SDG 5—includes eliminating violence against women and girls; recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work; emphasizing sexual and reproductive health and rights; encouraging women’s participation in decision making and leadership; and creating access to economic and productive resources, ICT, and legal or institutional reforms for protecting women’s rights and changing gendered social norms. ADB will go beyond standard gender mainstreaming and integrate more transformative agenda. These



transformative areas are strongly interlinked with the achievement of other SDGs, such as poverty reduction (SDG 1), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), decent work (SDG 8), and climate change (SDG 13). In Asia and the Pacific, adopting a transformative and integrated approach is particularly relevant given the rapidly changing regional context that threatens gender equality gains if a business-as-usual approach continues. Evidence indicates that gender inequalities in education and skills, economic and productive resources, and unpaid care work restrict women's access to the digital economy and new skilled jobs, increase their vulnerability to climate change, and increase their care burden in the face of demographic shifts (footnote 23).

39. **Gender equality in economic resources.** Women have far less ownership and control of productive assets and resources than men in the region. Available data show that women's agriculture land ownership ranges from as low as 3.6% to 29.7%. Urban population lacking adequate housing and lack of tenure security ranges from 11.9% to 62.7%, increasing women's and girls' vulnerability to eviction and exploitation (footnote 23). ADB will expand support to urban housing (including tenure security), access to finance for women, and women's enhanced access to and ownership of natural resources. For land and other fixed assets, ADB will explore opportunities for law and policy reforms and sex-disaggregated data collection, and encourage women's own and husband-wife joint titling of land and assets.

40. **Information and communication technology and digital technology for gender equality.** Digital gender gaps are prevalent in Asia and the Pacific, with a 17% gap between women and men's use of the internet.<sup>28</sup> Women in South Asia are 26% less likely to own a mobile phone than men and are 70% less likely to use mobile internet.<sup>29</sup> Where ICT and digital technology are introduced to meet the needs of women and girls, they have great potential for reducing gender gaps. ADB will accelerate gender equality in the growing ICT and digital technology operations, such as e-commerce and financial technology for women entrepreneurs; e-health medical data sharing and mobile clinics for reproductive health services; blockchain technology for women farmers' better access to inputs and finance; gender equality in distance learning and digital education; and digital identity for poor women through conditional cash transfer and social assistance schemes. ADB will conduct more pilot testing and research on how to make technologies work for women, accompanied by impact evaluations to strengthen future project designs. ADB will also actively pursue trust funds, such as the High-Level Technology Fund, other grant financing sources, and technical partnerships.

41. **Eliminating gender-based violence.** As many as one in two women in Asia and the Pacific experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in the last 12 months (footnote 23). Reducing and preventing all forms of gender-based violence will result in better outcomes of all spheres of socioeconomic development. ADB will expand operations addressing gender-based violence through dedicated components or measures in education and health; women's personal security and safety measures in infrastructure investments (Box 6) and technology adoption; assessment of project risks of sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse; and HIV and sexually transmitted infection and human trafficking risks, following the principles of the joint statement of

<sup>28</sup> GSM Association. 2015. *Connected Women, Bridging the Gender Gap: Mobile Access and Usage in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*. London.

<sup>29</sup> International Telecommunications Union. 2016. *How Can We Close the Gender Digital Gap?* [https://www.itu.int/en/itu/news/Documents/2016-04/2016\\_ITUNews04-en.pdf](https://www.itu.int/en/itu/news/Documents/2016-04/2016_ITUNews04-en.pdf)

the heads of multilateral development banks.<sup>30</sup> It will also explore stand-alone grant and TA projects in support of violence prevention and response, such as law and policy reforms, institutional capacity building for multisector coordination, and support for survivors' shelters.

42. **Eliminating harmful social norms and practices.** Harmful practices, such as sex-selective abortions, child marriage, honor killings, and dowry deaths, persist in parts of the region. These are strongly associated with gendered social norms in which more value is attached to boys over girls. Gendered social norms and stereotypes also influence expectations of how women and girls and men and boys should behave, and often inhibit acceleration of progress in gender equality. ADB will (i) assess how these gendered norms and stereotypes interface with its interventions and explore opportunities to address these issues through continued support to STEM and nontraditional TVET sectors; (ii) support the legal, institutional, and governance reforms to remove gender-discriminatory provisions; and (iii) promote the role of men and boys in gender equality and behavioral changes through education and skills training and public campaigns, particularly in preventing gender-based violence, recognizing women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, rebalancing unpaid care and domestic work, participating in sanitation and hygiene activities, and supporting women's participation in decision making and leadership. ADB investments will better capture the role of media in more effective behavioral change communication. ADB will engage countries through evidence-based policy dialogues to obtain their greater buy-in.

#### Box 6: Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Ger Areas in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Women and girls in low-income *ger* (tent) areas in Ulaanbaatar particularly suffer from multiple disadvantages in access to urban services and economic opportunities. During project preparation, a gender analysis identified that the high prevalence of gender-based violence incidences in public and private spaces is one of the main contributors to such disadvantages. However, community consultations with both men and women identified that rather than challenging traditional patriarchal attitudes, tackling men's economic distress will help address violence against women. Drawing on this, the second tranche of the Ulaanbaatar Urban Services and Ger Areas Development Investment Program supports the infrastructure for women and citizens' safety (e.g., street lighting, CCTV cameras, and open space designs for easy community monitoring), awareness raising and peer educators on gender-based violence at schools, pilot transitional housing for domestic violence survivors, multidisciplinary teams trained on handling cases of gender-based violence and domestic violence, and behavioral change communication targeting both men and boys and women and girls on violence on public spaces. These are complemented by support to improve access to quality urban infrastructure, social services, and income generation for both men and women.

Source: Asian Development Bank. 2018. Translating Women's Voices into Action in Mongolia: Addressing Gender-Based Violence through Investments in Infrastructure. Manila.

43. **Intersectionality with other discrimination.** The SDG "leave no one behind" principle requires DMCs to address discrimination against and disadvantages for women, including those related to class, ethnicity, indigenous status, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, religion, age, and migration. Women, among the vulnerable and poor households affected by climate change and

<sup>30</sup> ADB et al. 2018. Joint Statement on Continuous Advancement of Standards to Prevent Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment. 24 April. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/statement/2018/04/24/joint-statement-of-ifis-on-continuous-advancement-of-standards-to-prevent-sexual-harassment-abuse-exploitation>.

disaster impacts, economic shocks, and involuntary resettlement, may also require special attention. ADB will continue to identify these multiple discriminations and vulnerabilities through project poverty, social, and gender analysis.

## C. Expanding Gender Mainstreaming in Nonsovereign Operations

44. To scale up gender equality operations of ADB, nonsovereign operations must rapidly catch up its gender mainstreaming performance with that of sovereign operations. ADB will do this by providing access to finance, enabling entrepreneurship, creating employment and improving livelihood opportunities for women; proactively identifying pipelines in sectors that are more conducive to gender mainstreaming such as finance inclusion, agribusiness, education, health, and inclusive businesses; scaling up the resources and increasing Private Sector Operations Department (PSOD) staff capacity on gender mainstreaming to enhance the quality of gender due diligence; enhancing ADB guidelines for gender mainstreaming to consider the nature of nonsovereign operations; engaging clients early and more closely to explore ways to improve gender equality at the corporate and project levels (Box 7); proactively seeking concessional funds or trust funds (e.g., the Canadian Climate Fund for the Private Sector in Asia II), blended finance, and TA support for pilot testing innovative gender mainstreaming approaches, as well as demonstrating solid project gender action plans (GAPs) in more challenging infrastructure sectors; and allocating resources to support implementation and monitoring of GAPs adopted by private sector clients. In order to accomplish this scaling up and increased nonsovereign operational contribution to ADB's gender corporate target, ADB will also increase its practical resources to enhance the quality of gender due diligence and capacity to assess, design, and develop robust gender action plans. PSOD will create a dedicated gender team which will work closely with the Gender Equity Thematic Group Secretariat in Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (SDCC).

### Box 7: Boosting Gender Equality through the Trade Finance Program

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) launched a series of institutional gender equality assessments with the Trade Finance Program's partner banks in 2016. This project established for the first time the extent to which human resource policies and gender strategies at banks in the region contribute to gender equality. In the process, ADB used a range of research tools, coaching conversations, and guiding approaches. Focus areas included gender strategy, recruitment, promotion, learning, family-friendly workplaces, maternity and paternity leave, and retention. The project supported these banks in adopting recommendations to develop gender-inclusive workplaces. ADB foresees additional phases of the program to replicate the approach and link to good gender equality certifications.

Source: ADB. 2018. *Boosting Gender Equality through ADB Trade Finance Partnerships*. Manila.

## D. Tackling Multiple Gender Inequalities through Integrated Solutions

45. ADB will help DMCs tackle multiple gender inequalities through integrated solutions for increasingly complex issues such as urbanization, aging, and climate change. Such integrated solutions offer significant opportunities for gender mainstreaming in ADB operations through enhanced collaboration with other sector and thematic groups. For example, a livable cities' program could simultaneously address multifaceted aspects of gender inequalities in economic opportunities, human capital development, time poverty, voice, and climate resilience by providing secure tenure and husband–wife joint titles for affordable housing, so women can use them for assets and collateral; safer toilets, brighter streets in slums, and safer mobility in public transport free from harassment and violence; a smart ticketing system in public transport that does not penalize women's shorter and multiple travel patterns; job opportunities through TVET and entrepreneurship training; and enhanced voice in urban planning and disaster preparedness.

46. ADB can employ such integrated investment solutions through a mix of policy reforms and investment designs, both of which need to be driven by evidence of what works (Box 8). By using TA and grant financing, ADB will conduct more pilots and impact evaluations of new approaches where impacts are yet to be tested.

### Box 8: Integrated Solutions—Women's Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship represents an important avenue for women's economic empowerment and opportunity to contribute to the region's inclusive growth. However, across the region, women-owned businesses, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) struggle to access finance due to a combination of factors, including women's lack of collateral, their lower level of business skills, and the low gender-responsiveness of finance institutions. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been pursuing a systemic approach to supporting women's entrepreneurship in an integrated manner at the country level. This ecosystem approach recognizes that the development of women's entrepreneurship requires a comprehensive approach requiring gender-responsive SME policies and regulations, capacity development of finance institutions and government agencies, finance and business skills training of women-owned and women-led SMEs, mentorship and networks, and innovation and technology to create new tools to enhance women's financial inclusion and improve their access to markets. In Sri Lanka, ADB is fostering an enabling entrepreneurial environment for women through a \$75.0 million SME loan to 10 financial institutions and a \$12.5 million grant from the Women's Entrepreneurship Finance Initiative using the systemic approach, supporting about 600 women-owned and women-led SMEs. The same initiative also supports similar activities in the Pacific countries and Viet Nam.

Source: ADB. 2018. ADB Receives \$12.6 Million Grant from We-Fi to Promote Sri Lankan Women Entrepreneurs. News release. 19 April.

## E. Developing the Capacity of Developing Member Countries

47. Together with other development partners, ADB, through various TA activities, has helped DMCs advance their own country systems to promote gender equality, including developing gender equality laws, strategies, and national plans; conducting country gender assessments; establishing

gender units in sector line ministries; and training staff in gender analytical skills in collaboration with gender focal agencies. Some TA projects also supported national statistics offices in collecting and analyzing national gender statistics as well as providing women's leadership training. ADB has also supported cross-regional learning events for the governments, think tanks, and civil society organizations within and outside of the region on gender issues on a range of topics. Moving forward, ADB will expand its support for developing DMC capacity in gender equality work, particularly in tracking and achieving gender-related SDG goals; obtaining DMC buy-in and implementing transformative gender agendas; and implementing integrated solutions, which require more complex implementation arrangements. ADB will also start engaging nonsovereign clients in these efforts. It will also strengthen gender-related capacity development of civil society partners involved in ADB operations.

48. At the project level, ADB has closely engaged sector line ministries, project management offices, municipalities, provincial governments, and gender focal agencies, and trained them on how to implement gender mainstreaming in the ADB project cycle. During 2015–2017, 521 DMC participants (196 females and 325 males) in 13 DMCs went through such project-level gender mainstreaming training offered by ADB. DMCs and peer-to-peer lateral learning events between executing and implementing agencies about project GAP implementation, including study tours, proved one of the best methods of capacity development. However, capacity gaps remain in applying the learned knowledge to day-to-day operations, and institutionalizing sex-disaggregated data collected at the project level for new project designs. ADB will continue to support DMCs to fill in these capacity gaps and to expand on current project-focused gender mainstreaming training.



# IMPLEMENTATION

49. **Build on good practices on gender in operations.** ADB has built 2 decades of experience in gender mainstreaming in its operations. ADB will continue to build on and further adjust the implementation approaches that have been working well, including the well-established four-tier project gender categorization system (gender equity theme [GEN], effective gender mainstreaming [EGM], some gender elements [SGE], and no gender elements), use of corporate targets, use of project GAPs and gender indicators in the design and monitoring framework, project results focus and tracking during implementation, and engagement and capacity building of DMCs.

50. **Go beyond gender mainstreaming in country partnership strategies.** The country partnership strategy (CPS) process, which is informed by respective country gender assessments, will continue to guide priority gender issues and solutions in each DMC. ADB will improve explicit integration of gender indicators in the CPS results framework and better monitor and report the implementation of the country gender strategy during CPS implementation. Further, the country gender strategy in CPSs will present a more comprehensive road map of how ADB's combined operations can address key gender inequalities in a particular DMC.

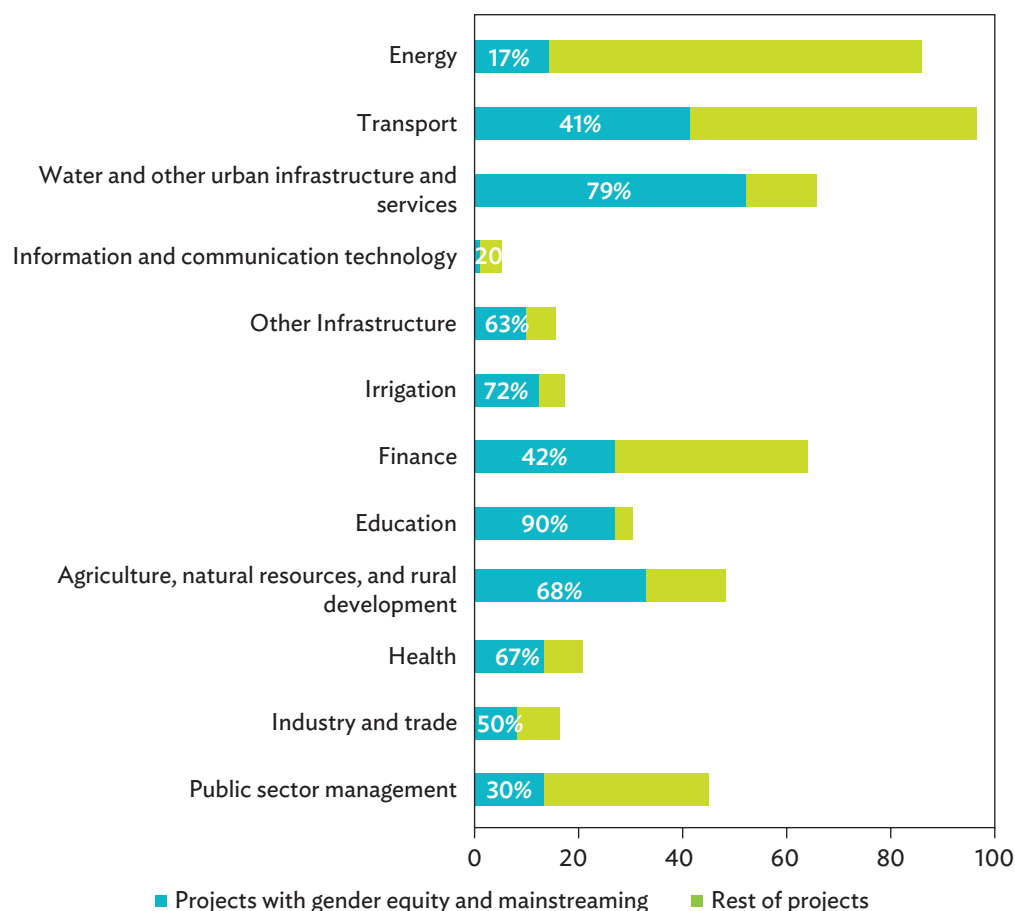
51. **Develop stronger gender pipeline more upstream.** Strategy 2030 sets out ambitious at-entry targets by 2030, including (i) at least 75% of the number of ADB's committed sovereign and nonsovereign operations will be classified as those *with gender elements* (GEN+EGM+SGE); and (ii) at least 55% of the number of ADB's committed sovereign and nonsovereign operations will be classified as those *with gender equity and mainstreaming* (GEN+EGM).<sup>31</sup> Given that the 2016–2018 baseline for sovereign and nonsovereign operations *with gender elements* (GEN+EGM+SGE) is 70% and sovereign and nonsovereign operations *with gender equity and mainstreaming* (GEN+EGM) is 47%, and that ADB seeks the increase of the number of nonsovereign operations share from 20% to 33% by 2024, major efforts for scaling up nonsovereign gender pipeline is needed, while sovereign operations should continue to increase GEN, EGM, and SGE. The new targets by 2024 are proposed as at least 71% will be classified as operations (sovereign and nonsovereign) *with gender elements* (GEN+EGM+SGE), and at least 50% (sovereign and nonsovereign) will be classified as operations *with gender equity and mainstreaming* (GEN+EGM).

<sup>31</sup> Both are based on the project-at-entry designs for sovereign and nonsovereign operations, on a 3-year rolling average. The first target represents the proportion of the number of committed operations classified as GEN, EGM, and SGE, and the second target represents the proportion of the number of committed operations classified as GEN and EGM. ADB. 2012. *Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming Categories of ADB Projects*. Manila. <https://www.adb.org/documents/guidelines-gender-mainstreaming-categories-adb-projects>.

52. Achieving these at-entry targets requires serious commitments by all ADB operational departments to develop solid pipeline with strong gender design elements in mind. Figure 4 indicates that, if sectors and subsectors that lend themselves more to gender mainstreaming do not miss gender mainstreaming opportunities, and if transport and energy, which occupy the large proportion of committed operations, improve gender mainstreaming performance, ADB is on track to achieve these at-entry targets.

53. To build a stronger gender pipeline in operations, ADB will engage DMCs more upstream in pipeline development for gender equality through the 3-year rolling pipeline in country operations business plans and country programming process with participation by ADB and DMC gender experts; seek concessional financing resources for introducing a transformative gender agenda or introducing gender mainstreaming in more difficult subsectors, including providing incentives to nonsovereign clients to implement unfamiliar design elements in GAPS; and pursue more cross-sector and integrated pipelines, as committed in Strategy 2030.

**Figure 4: Projects with Gender Equity and Mainstreaming by Sector, 2016–2018  
3-Year Average by Project Number, Sovereign and Nonsovereign**



Source: Asian Development Bank estimates.

54. **Improve the quality of project gender designs and target setting.** ADB worked on improving the quality of gender targets and gender-inclusive actions in project GAPs under the current operational plan, but progress has been uneven. While more gender targets in design and monitoring framework now include baseline data, they are often “baseline: 0” rather than the “proxy” baselines, which represent the current comparable data in other similar projects and provide justifications to the gender targets set. The pressure for faster project preparation with declining resources during the current period has resulted in much fewer projects having conducted quality gender analysis to guide project GAP designs. Some GAP designs are disproportionately “activities and milestones” and do not sufficiently capture gender equality results at output and outcome levels to be achieved during the project implementation. In other cases, GAP actions may lack prioritization and are not evidence-based. While lessons learned on gender are increasingly well-documented in project completion reports (PCRs), they are often not used to guide new project gender designs.

55. ADB will continue to improve gender mainstreaming designs at entry through strengthening evidence-based gender designs through better quality of ex-ante gender analysis, impact evaluations, and better integration of PCR findings; improving the quality of sex-disaggregated baseline data to set more appropriate gender targets; and enhancing systematic integration of lessons learned and data gathered from PCRs and evaluation documents.

56. **Continue to improve project gender equality results.** Currently, ADB’s focus on results by setting the PCR gender rating target has yielded tangible improvements in monitoring, reporting, and awareness and capacity of the executing and implementing agencies. Moving forward, ADB will raise the target to 80% for both sovereign and nonsovereign operations by 2024. ADB will continue to improve project gender equality results through rigorous monitoring and reporting on GAP implementation progress;<sup>32</sup> improved GAP and gender equality results reporting in PCRs, with better capturing of changes in the lives of women and girls and gender relations; enhanced GAP implementation progress monitoring database standardized across all operations departments; and further enhanced resident mission and headquarters capacity in monitoring, tracking, and documenting gender equality results in collaboration with project administration units.

57. **Conduct pilots, demonstration projects, and technical assistance for innovation and knowledge solutions.** ADB has pursued piloting innovations and knowledge solutions, resulting in the integration of new agendas into designs of lending operations such as gender-based violence, women’s employment in the renewable energy sector, women’s leadership in water utilities, narrowing gender gaps in TVET sectors, women’s entrepreneurship development, and women’s empowerment in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Over the last 2 decades, ADB has become a regional leader in publishing country gender assessments and sector gender tool kits. ADB has also assisted DMCs in gender analyses of their legal, policy, and institutional frameworks, particularly at the sector level. However, DMC stakeholder feedback suggests that practical project-level knowledge on gender mainstreaming has not been well-disseminated.

58. Moving ahead, ADB will strengthen the feedback loop of innovation and knowledge solutions on the transformative gender agenda into the new generation project GAPs. This will be essential in

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<sup>32</sup> For sovereign operations, this entails quarterly review reports, midterm review reports, and country portfolio review reports. For nonsovereign operations, ADB will integrate gender equality results and the project GAP achievements at completion into extended annual review reports.



both scaling up and deepening ADB's gender mainstreaming operations. Strengthening knowledge services is also part of Strategy 2030's priority agenda. ADB will expand innovation and knowledge solutions on gender by enhancing gender research quality through strengthened research partners, increased TA resource allocation, and use of external peer reviewers; strengthened external and internal knowledge links through the Gender Equity Thematic Group, by expanding knowledge partnerships externally with think tanks, universities, foundations, civil society organizations, and bilateral and multilateral partners while internally between operations departments and knowledge departments; regularly engaging DMCs, such as line ministries, gender focal agencies, private sector and civil society partners, and in-country think tanks in prioritizing and generating ADB gender knowledge work to enhance client knowledge relevance; and enhancing dissemination efforts through the use of social media, multimedia, editorials, blogs, and other means.

59. **Leverage strategic and knowledge partnerships.** To help DMCs achieve the ambitious SDGs by 2030 and to provide knowledge solutions to more complex issues, partnerships are imperative. ADB has worked to strengthen and to expand its collaboration with international, regional, and national partners. The partnership with ADB's gender advisory panel, External Forum on Gender and Development, has transformed its nature from that of an external monitor of ADB's gender operation performance to that of a high-level knowledge advisory platform. In operations, for example, the Melbourne Energy Institute at the University of Melbourne supported a series of gender and inclusive energy research in South Asia and training of energy agency staff on inclusive energy policies and operations, transforming ADB project designs. At the project level, civil society organizations, particularly grassroots organizations have helped community mobilization. ADB's knowledge partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (or UN Women) and United Nations Statistics Division resulted in its participation in the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality Initiative and a signature publication, *Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific* (footnote 23). There is a need, however, to carefully assess partners' capacity and select the right partnership modalities to avoid the unexpectedly high transaction costs to make the partnership work.

60. Essential institutional partnerships, such as the Multilateral Development Bank Working Group on Gender, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and its Development Assistance Committee Network on Gender Equality, UN Women and other UN agencies, bilateral partners, and External Forum on Gender and Development, will continue. At the country operational level, ADB capacity should be built to better manage multistakeholder partnerships, particularly with the prospects of having to address more complex gender equality issues such as women's climate change resilience and gender-based violence, involving multiple government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector enterprises, foundations, and partners. For example, partnerships with private foundations working on women's entrepreneurship provide good complementarity.

61. **Implement "One ADB."** Interdepartmental collaboration across and within ADB departments is central to effectively address the region's complex gender issues and to improve gender equality results of ADB operations. ADB reinforces and optimizes a One ADB approach in implementing this operational plan.<sup>33</sup> The Gender Equity Thematic Group, comprising a network, committee, and secretariat, provides the central platform for strategic, operational, and knowledge cooperation

<sup>33</sup> This approach encourages collaboration between ADB's sovereign and nonsovereign operations, synergy in knowledge activities between operations and nonoperations departments, and integrated solutions through collaboration across the sector and thematic groups.

across departments and between the ADB headquarters and resident missions. All operations departments, including PSOD and the Office of Public-Private Partnerships, will continue to perform quality assurance functions at project entry, during implementation, and at completion, in close collaboration with the Gender Equity Thematic Group Secretariat at the SDCC. All departments will generate knowledge products and services, and contribute to capacity-building efforts. Knowledge departments will work closely with operations departments to strengthen knowledge–operations linkages, particularly in providing evidence and lessons in support of gender transformative policies and project designs. The roles of the Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Department; Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department; Treasury Department; Procurement, Portfolio and Financial Management Department; Controllers Department; Office of the General Counsel; Office of Anticorruption and Integrity; and cofinancing and partnership specialists are crucial in conducting necessary business process reforms and securing required resources. Finally, SDCC and Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department will work closely to maximize synergies between the operational and institutional gender equality.

**62. Update and strengthen business process and tools.** Strategy 2030 supports the modernization of business processes and digital transformation to facilitate real-time access to data on all aspects of ADB operations and administration. In line with these overall reforms, ADB will update and remove inconsistencies in project gender categories guidelines and tip sheets, both for sovereign and nonsovereign operations, and make these tools specific to lending and financing instruments; monitor business streamlining and new document templates closely to ensure that the quality ex-ante gender analysis as part of the due diligence is not reduced; continue to integrate gender-related business process requirements into operations manuals and Board document templates; develop ADB-wide real-time sovereign and nonsovereign pipeline database with gender classification for on-time monitoring of performance projections against gender mainstreaming and element targets; develop an ADB-wide GAP implementation matrix and performance rating for country portfolio missions and regular monitoring by project administration units; improve ADB-wide gender equality result database, drawing on PCR gender targets reporting; and populate and utilize Gender Equity Thematic Group SharePoint for closer exchange.

**63. Combine ordinary capital resources with technical assistance and concessional resources.** For lower-income countries and DMCs with insufficient gender-mainstreaming capacity, ADB will mobilize and use technical assistance and concessional resources for the activities that are over and above the standard gender mainstreaming activities (e.g., research, pilot and demonstration projects, and impact evaluation for integrated solutions to transformative gender areas), capacity development and awareness raising of clients on gender issues, policy dialogues, and institutional reforms in support of gender inequality. ADB will also seek sources of concessional finance on a selected basis to support its gender-related activities through its nonsovereign operations for an initial demonstration to clients and borrowers.

**64. Build gender knowledge and expertise in emerging areas of importance.** To achieve the gender targets set by Strategy 2030 and to deepen the quality of gender work through transformative gender agenda focus of the operational priority, ADB will build in-house knowledge and expertise in gender equality operations, particularly in preparing and implementing gender actions through multiple sectors and interdisciplinary solutions, funds mobilization and proposal preparation, private sector experience or knowledge, digital and financial technology, financial engineering, climate change and disaster risk management, social protection, gender impact evaluation and economics research, and gender data and statistics.

# IV

## STRATEGY 2030 OPERATIONAL PRIORITY RESULTS

65. The following are the Strategy 2030 operational priority results under the Operational Plan. These will be monitored under ADB’s corporate results framework<sup>34</sup> and will be reported annually in the Development Effectiveness Review.

Pillar	Description	Indicator with Achievement Rate Target	Sub-pillars
1	Women’s economic empowerment increased	Number of skilled jobs for women generated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women’s access to job skills improved</li> <li>Women’s financial inclusion increased</li> <li>Women’s entrepreneurship supported</li> <li>Women’s access to infrastructure and services improved</li> </ul>
2	Gender equality in human development enhanced	Number of women and girls completing secondary and tertiary education, and/or other training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women’s and girls’ participation in nontraditional education and training increased</li> <li>Quality and access to women’s and girls’ health services improved</li> <li>Protection from gender-based violence strengthened</li> </ul>
3	Gender equality in decision making and leadership enhanced	Number of women represented in decision-making structures and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women’s leadership capacity improved</li> <li>Regulatory, legal, and institutional environment for gender equality improved</li> </ul>
4	Women’s time poverty and drudgery reduced	Number of women and girls with increased time savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of time-saving or gender-responsive infrastructure improved</li> <li>Quality and access to child and elderly care services improved</li> </ul>
5	Women’s resilience to external shocks strengthened	Number of women and girls with increased resilience to climate change, disasters, and other external shocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resilience-building community-based initiatives for women and girls implemented</li> <li>Provision of climate and disaster-resilient infrastructure for women and girls improved</li> <li>Financial protection systems for women strengthened</li> <li>Dedicated crisis-responding social assistance systems for women and girls strengthened</li> </ul>

<sup>34</sup> ADB. 2019. *ADB Corporate Results Framework, 2019–2024*. Manila.

# APPENDIX 1

## CONTRIBUTION OF SECTOR AND THEMATIC AREAS TO THE OPERATIONAL PLAN

Sector and Thematic Group	Contribution to Operational Plan: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality
Education	<p>Focus on girls' completion of quality secondary and post-secondary education (for their transformative impacts).</p> <p>Explore early childhood development programs including girls.</p> <p>Reduce the number of females who are not in employment, education, or training; and support young women's school-to-work transition.</p> <p>Support more young women in nontraditional TVET, STEM, and infrastructure sectors to reduce gender streaming of the labor market.</p> <p>Promote entrepreneurship, financial literacy, leadership, computer skills, and other soft skills for women and girls.</p> <p>Support school curriculum and teacher training on gender-based violence, menstrual hygiene, and sexual education (targeting adolescent girls and boys).</p>
Energy	<p>Expand household access to affordable, modern, and clean energy, resulting in reducing traditional fuel-gathering tasks and easing unpaid care and domestic work responsibilities.</p> <p>Expand opportunities for energy-based livelihoods and income-generating activities for women.</p> <p>Provide employment for and develop new skills in women (including scholarships to build pipelines) in energy projects or power system installation, maintenance, and operation.</p>
Finance	<p>Expand finance inclusion for women and women-led or women-owned MSMEs through support to enabling policies, laws, and regulatory framework, women-relevant financial technology, and women-friendly finance products and services.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to support women's access to insurance, savings, and other finance safety nets to build resilience to disaster-related and economic shocks.</p>
Health	<p>Reduce remaining maternal mortalities in the region.</p> <p>Address women's priority needs in affordable and quality health care services and financing.</p> <p>Expand support to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, and reduce gender-based violence, drawing on a life cycle approach in collaboration with non-health interventions.</p> <p>Reduce early pregnancy, child marriage, and sex-selective abortions through effective public campaigns, health provider training, and focus on adolescent girls and boys.</p>

Sector and Thematic Group	Contribution to Operational Plan: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality
	<p>Increase applications of digital health services to support women's health.</p> <p>Address men's health and safety issues such as road accidents, disability, and alcohol and drug abuse, as they directly impact welfare of women as family caretakers and their economic security.</p> <p>Invest in building skills and capacity of health workers (predominantly women) particularly in rural areas.</p>
Transport	<p>Support employment for women in general but explore opportunities in semi-skilled and skilled job types.</p> <p>Promote women-friendly physical designs of urban and rural transport.</p> <p>Conduct training and awareness campaigns for contractors, construction workers, and communities on prevention of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, HIV/sexually transmitted infections, trafficking, and other social risks, where identified.</p>
Urban	<p>Support gender-sensitive urban design that takes into consideration the safety and needs of women in urban areas by promoting crime prevention through environmental design guidelines in public places.</p> <p>Support the expansion of urban services to save women and girls from drudgery and lack of dignity and to better pursue livelihood opportunities, and provide services that are implemented and designed in a way that caters to women's needs, particularly safety and security.</p> <p>Promote inclusiveness of urban projects by specifically including women in urban planning, design, and implementation, with clear targets, resources, and mechanism to implement the required activities.</p> <p>Enhance accessibility through inclusive urban mobility systems such as provision of accessways, and measures to prevent gender-based violence.</p> <p>Support women's empowerment in leadership and management positions in urban public service and governance bodies.</p> <p>Explore more secure housing land tenure for urban lower-income households.</p>
Water	<p>Expand household access to water and sanitation, and contribute to reducing women's and girls' time poverty at the project level.</p> <p>Support school-based menstrual hygiene education and practice in sanitation programs.</p> <p>Promote women's participation in water-related decision making and leadership positions.</p> <p>Provide female staff and user group members equal access to technical and leadership training opportunities.</p> <p>Promote jobs for women in the water sector and develop new skills in women.</p>
Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management	<p>Ensure differentiated gender responses in climate investments to advance gender equality.</p> <p>Build in-country capacity for gender-responsive climate change and disaster risk management strategy, planning, budgeting, and project preparation to strengthen women's climate resilience.</p> <p>Initiate or continue pilot innovations to develop gender equity or effective gender mainstreaming project pipeline designs.</p>

Sector and Thematic Group	Contribution to Operational Plan: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality
Environment	<p>Enhance women’s roles in managing natural resources and caring for families during disasters triggered by natural hazards by scaling up investments in green and climate-resilient infrastructure with gender-sensitive design features, including clean cookstoves; improved sanitation; and safer, eco-sensitive, and climate-resilient roads.</p> <p>Support women’s economic empowerment and entrepreneurship by promoting and scaling up green business development, including improving access to green jobs and green finance, adoption of new clean technologies, and policy and institutional reforms that enable green business development.</p> <p>Support legal, institutional, and governance reforms promoting gender equality in environmental decision making, including building women’s legal literacy and institutional capacity to teach, implement, and enforce environment and climate change laws.</p>
Governance	<p>Support legal, policy, and institutional reforms to lift gender-discriminatory legal provisions, support women’s legal literacy, and accelerate gender equality and women’s empowerment.</p> <p>Accelerate women’s participation in public resource allocation through gender-responsive budgeting, and in providing direct feedback on the quality of public service delivery through greater accountability and transparency mechanisms including access to data.</p> <p>Accelerate women’s greater representation in public offices, state-owned enterprises, and public decision-making positions and leadership, with the use of targets and training.</p> <p>Continuing to support the capacity building of the DMCs in gender mainstreaming in sector policies and projects.</p>
Social Development	<p>Generate evidence of and highlight gender-based inequalities across the life ADB operations.</p> <p>Support decent and productive work for women through gender assessment of the future of work and employment, social protection initiatives, and inclusive business.</p> <p>Address gender dimensions of aging, the care economy, and human resources in work on aging and elderly care.</p> <p>Empower women in community-level decision making, and build women’s and girls’ climate and disaster resilience through community-driven development.</p> <p>Coordinate on the methodological integration of poverty and social analysis and gender analysis during project due diligence and training staff and DMC counterparts.</p> <p>Strengthen gender elements in social safeguards and core labor standards.</p>
Rural Development and Food Security	<p>Study and invest in effective countermeasures to ensure equal access of women farmers to productive assets such as land and water, beneficial technologies and information, business opportunities, and finance, so that women can effectively deal with feminization of agriculture as a consequence of male rural-urban migration, gender yield gaps, and malnourished status of women and girls.</p> <p>Through various applications of digital technologies, generate opportunities for women to participate effectively and to increase their role in the sustainable management of land, water, soil, forest, river basin, and agriculture production; agribusiness, marketing, and trade; SMEs and rural income generation; post-harvest; food processing; food safety; outreach and education; and the agriculture-nutrition-health nexus.</p>
Regional Cooperation and Integration	<p>Support women’s jobs and entrepreneurship in regional trade facilitation and tourism as well as border town infrastructure development including special economic zones.</p> <p>Integrate gender equality provisions in regional policy dialogues in trade, tourism, agriculture value chains, education, skills, and labor markets, and regional health through subregional cooperation platforms.</p>

Sector and Thematic Group	Contribution to Operational Plan: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality
Public-Private Partnership	<p>Explore where public-private partnership arrangements (PPP contract tenders) can champion designs or give bidders more points, where their design submissions demonstrate measures to improve women's access to affordable infrastructure and social services by integrating gender analysis and informing gender-responsive and women-friendly designs.</p> <p>Explore where public-private partnership arrangements (PPP contract tenders) can give bidders more points for strong gender actions in bids, including support to enhance employment of women in the more skilled areas in their proposals.</p> <p>Explore and pilot effective public-private partnership arrangements for the services targeted at women.</p>
Operational Plan 1 (Addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequalities)	<p>Narrow gender gaps and build resilience of women, particularly among poor households and socially excluded groups.</p> <p>Support decent and productive jobs and entrepreneurship for women through building employable skills with explicit attention to gender equality in enabling policy and legal frameworks; greater financial inclusion for women in MSMEs, including access to digital finance and financial institutions' expanded outreach, combined with financial literacy, business skills, mentoring, and networking support; enhanced opportunities for women-owned and women-led SMEs in public procurement; workplace gender equality; and work-life balance through reducing and rebalancing unpaid care and domestic work and reduced time poverty.</p> <p>Continue to narrowing gender gaps, particularly in education completion, and support girls in STEM in secondary and tertiary education; support education to reduce gender stereotypes and to promote sexual education and school hygiene, including menstrual hygiene education; improve school-to-work transitions, and enhance job-ready skills for young women through TVET, digital literacy, soft skills, and skills in nontraditional and higher-paying trades and sectors; and emphasize gender-equal access to lifelong learning and reskilling programs.</p> <p>Address women's priority needs through affordable and quality health care services and health financing; expand support to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SDG 5); and reduce early pregnancy and marriage (SDG 5) and sex-selective abortions.</p> <p>Address elderly women's needs in elderly care services and pension reforms; address the needs of women with disabilities; target poor women in conditional cash transfers; target women in low-income and vulnerable households in disaster, conflict, food insecurity, and economic recovery through social assistance and public resource allocation; build financial safety nets for women; and support gender-inclusive digital identification for social financial inclusion and access to basic services.</p>
Operational Plan 3 (Tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability)	<p>Assist the DMCs in accelerating the integration of gender equality in national and subnational policies, strategies, and action plans on climate change and disaster risk management in line with global commitments.</p> <p>Expand green job opportunities for women and access to finance for women-owned and women-led green businesses.</p> <p>Build women's resilience to climate change and disaster impacts and environmental degradation through greater access to climate-smart technologies; diversification of livelihoods and asset building; disaster insurance and other finance safety nets; participation in community-led solutions; enhanced knowledge, preparedness, and skills; and active participation in related decision-making process at all levels.</p>
Operational Plan 4 (Making cities more livable)	<p>Promote gender equality in integrated solutions in support to livable cities through women-friendly city designs, women's participation in urban planning and governance, gender mainstreaming in urban transport, women's employment and entrepreneurship support, and smart technology application incorporating special needs of women.</p>

Sector and Thematic Group	Contribution to Operational Plan: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality
Operational Plan 5 (Promoting rural development and food security)	<p>Support rural and rural-centered infrastructure and technology that reduces women's time poverty; enhances women's safety, mobility, and affordability concerns; and/or maximizes marketing opportunities.</p> <p>Expand women's jobs and value increase in their products in agribusiness value chains and access to finance.</p> <p>Improve the productivity of women farmers through training and skills development in climate-smart agriculture technologies, practices, and crop varieties; improve the access to rural finance including digital financial technologies, land, and other rural assets and productive resources (SDG 5); and enhance women's voice in natural resource management through community-based groups.</p> <p>Enhance women's voices in food security and safety decision making.</p>
Operational Plan 6 (Strengthening governance and institutional capacity)  See also: Governance	<p>Support legal, policy, and institutional reforms to lift gender-discriminatory legal provisions, support women's legal literacy, and accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment.</p> <p>Accelerate women citizen participation in public resource allocation through gender-responsive budgeting, and in providing direct feedback on the quality of public service delivery through greater accountability and transparency mechanisms.</p> <p>Accelerate women's greater representation in public offices, public decision-making positions, and leadership, including ADB's flagship Asia Women Leaders Program for senior government officials.</p> <p>Continue to support DMC capacity building in gender mainstreaming in sector policies and projects.</p>
Operational Plan 7 (Fostering regional cooperation and integration) See also: Regional Cooperation and Integration	<p>Support women's jobs and entrepreneurship in regional trade facilitation and tourism as well as border town infrastructure development including special economic zones.</p> <p>Integrate gender equality provisions in regional policy dialogues in trade, tourism, agriculture value chains, education, skills, and labor markets, and regional health through subregional cooperation platforms.</p>

ADB = Asian Development Bank, DMC = developing member country, MSME = micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise, SDG = Sustainable Development Goal, SME = small and medium-sized enterprise, STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, TVET = technical and vocational education and training.

Source: ADB.



# APPENDIX 2

## INTERDEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION MATRIX

Department/Group	Key Roles for Implementation	Other Partners
Gender Equity Thematic Group Secretariat: SDCC	<p>Corporate reporting of annual performance of operational priority 2, including those in the corporate results framework</p> <p>Verification of project gender category and gender rating at completion</p> <p>External representation of ADB gender work</p> <p>Provision of cross-regional knowledge solutions, pilot innovations, and DMC learning events</p> <p>Staff training and capacity development on gender mainstreaming at the corporate level</p> <p>Corporate-level financial, and staff resource mobilization and skills inventory and talent management for Gender Thematic Group members</p>	<p>Thematic group committee provides strategic and resource guidance on the operational priority and 2-year thematic group work plans</p> <p>Thematic group network members engage in knowledge generation, sharing, and dissemination on gender</p>
Operations Departments	<p>Pipeline development, due diligence gender analysis, resource mobilization, project gender designs, piloting and innovations, monitoring and supporting DMCs implementing project gender action plans and elements, and reporting gender equality results at project completion</p> <p>Provision of annual inputs to Thematic Group Secretariat on key department achievements of operational priority 2 implementation</p> <p>Engagement of the governments and private sector clients and borrowers and the development of their gender mainstreaming capacity and gender equality policy at workplace</p> <p>Country or subregion specific knowledge products and services</p>	
Knowledge Advisory Services Center (SDCC)	Generation, capture, and dissemination of gender-related knowledge from the Gender Thematic Group	
Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department	Gender research, impact evaluation, and gender statistics and data	ADB Institute on gender research and capacity development
Independent Evaluation Department	<p>Thematic, country, and project evaluation with a gender lens</p> <p>Gender rating at project completion reports, staff training</p>	
Department of Communications	Knowledge product development and dissemination	
OGC	Gender knowledge work and capacity development in laws and judicial reforms	

Department/Group	Key Roles for Implementation	Other Partners
Office of Information Systems and Technology	Development of real-time data access, including project-related database related to gender	
SPD	<p>Corporate reporting of annual performance related to gender in operations</p> <p>Business process and document template and staff instructions improvements</p> <p>Preparation of operational priority-related strategic documents</p> <p>Corporate partnership arrangements</p> <p>The Asian Development Fund, corporate technical assistance resource allocation, and other strategic resource mobilization and management</p>	
BPMSD	Human resource mobilization, skills inventory, and talent management	
Cofinancing and partnership specialists	Resource mobilization for gender, including the Gender and Development Cooperation Fund	
Treasury Department	Resource mobilization through a gender bond	
Procurement, Portfolio and Financial Management Department	<p>Gender-responsive procurement</p> <p>DMC executing and implementing agency training on gender mainstreaming</p>	
Working group on preventing sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse	Multilateral development bank partnership on preventing sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse in operations and institutions	Led by the Office of Anticorruption and Integrity with members from SDCC gender, SDCC safeguards, BPMSD, OGC, and SPD

ADB = Asian Development Bank, BPMSD = Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department, DMC = developing member country, OGC = Office of the General Counsel, SDCC = Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department, SPD = Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Department.

Source: ADB.

## **Strategy 2030 Operational Plan for Priority 2**

*Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality, 2019–2024*

Accelerating progress in gender equality is one of seven operational priorities of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under its Strategy 2030. This operational plan specifies the strategic approaches and implementation measures required to operationalize the priority. It is part of a series that includes an overview and operational plans for all seven priorities. The series was prepared by members of ADB sector and thematic groups following extensive consultations with internal and external stakeholders.

### **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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