

Working with ADB

A Primer for Identifying Business Opportunities for Civil Society Organizations

An Overview:

How ADB and civil society work together



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) recognizes the contributions that civil society makes to development, and continually seeks to increase civil society organization (CSO) participation involved in its projects, from the design phase through to evaluation.

ADB is a nonprofit multilateral development bank made up of [69 members](#). It co-designs and funds programs and projects of its developing member countries. It also finances private sector companies for their projects where traditional investors may be less likely to invest but have clear development outcomes.

ADB does not have a facility where CSOs can directly apply for funding of their activities. However, CSOs can respond to calls for expressions of interest to help implement approved projects. For example, the [Community Resilience Financing Partnership Facility](#) includes a trust fund to support governments and civil society undertake measures to build resilience at the local level. These include measures that address the nexus of gender, poverty, and climate risk. Projects supported by this trust fund promote participation of CSOs, and in some cases, directly support grassroots women's groups to help implement specific activities.




CSOs are increasingly involved in ADB-financed projects, usually at the design phase, and typically through consultations.

In addition, CSOs can bid for contracts to implement components of ADB-financed projects in various sectors. There is growing interest among international CSOs with strong capacities to bid for and win contracts on ADB-financed projects

These business opportunities related to contracts to implement parts of ADB-financed development projects. ADB, however, does not request proposals designed by CSOs for such contracts.

Instead, ADB defines the the scope of work and engages CSOs who win contracts to implement ADB projects in the same way as it does commercial firms, i.e., as service providers under a contractual relationship with standard conditions for compliance

Bidding for an ADB contract is not always a suitable match for CSOs. To help decide, consider these factors first:

-  ADB has already decided how this activity is to be implemented. The engaged CSO will be expected to carry out the activity in alignment with the implementation plan, with limited scope to modify the approach.
-  CSOs working on an ADB-financed contract must be from one of ADB's 69 members. However, experts under a firm's contract may be from nonmember countries, subject to ADB's approval. In exceptional cases, there may be limited opportunities for experts from nonmember countries, subject to ADB's approval.
-  ADB offers a standard contract. Ensure that your organization is willing to agree to these terms and conditions before bidding, as there is limited scope for changing contract terms. Learn more about [ADB contracts](#).

If bidding for ADB financed contracts is still of interest, read on to understand what the different types of business opportunities are.

How ADB finances development projects



Understand the three main financial products ADB offers to governments—loans, grants, and technical assistance—and how CSOs fit into each.

ADB offers three main financial products to governments: loans (given to a government and paid back, but at very low rates because the money is for development projects), grants (given to a government for development projects in ADB's poorest members that is not repaid, and which is managed by the government), and technical assistance (money that is managed by ADB, that is not repaid, which is used to pay for expert advice).

Since technical assistance projects (TAs) are managed by ADB, and grants and loans by the government, CSOs engaged under a grant or loan would enter into a contract with the government. On the other hand, CSOs hired to work on a TA would be engaged directly by ADB. ADB also has products for the private sector but typically they do not include business opportunities for civil society.

ADB does not lend money to CSOs or give CSOs grants or technical assistance. ADB does not fund unsolicited project proposals from CSOs and has no facility to do so. However, ADB may hire a CSO to perform a specific service ADB defines. From ADB's perspective, this is a business relationship only, defined under its standard contractual arrangements.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance can be used for providing upstream capacity development, providing policy advice, or conducting research; preparing a project which ADB intends to finance; developing public—private partnership projects; or, helping deliver outputs or mitigating project risks for an ongoing project.

CSOs can be involved in technical assistance that is preparing an upcoming project. This is money that ADB spends to design a loan for a development project that a government has requested ADB to finance. ADB staff prepare proposals for funding. A TA budget for project preparation usually ranges from about \$500,000 to \$2 million and usually lasts about a year. ADB manages the TA funds and hires all of the consultants. The TA activities are related to loan design and preparation, such as commissioning reports, convening workshops, and hiring experts to provide input for the project design. CSOs can be involved in loan preparation activities, like facilitating community or stakeholders' engagements, mobilizing communities, and raising awareness.

To design a loan, ADB must address social issues, social and environmental impact assessment such as resettlement (and livelihood restoration in some cases), and impact on Indigenous Peoples. ADB must conduct an assessment of the poverty, social, and gender situation to identify relevant social issues and determine measures to address these issues within the scope of the project. ADB should also consult with communities and collect data for a poverty and social analysis, among other requirements. As a result, there may be opportunities for CSOs to contribute to TA work.

The type of work supported under other types of TA varies widely, and includes, for example, general institutional capacity building, policy advice, and research. Depending on the nature of the project, CSOs may be competitive bidders for contracts to deliver these services.



LOANS

- money for development projects
- managed by the government
- paid back at low rates



GRANTS

- money for development projects
- managed by the government
- not repaid



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- money for expert advice
- managed by ADB
- not repaid



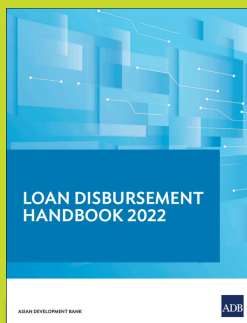
GRANTS

Likewise, some activities in a grant could be carried out by a CSO. Because governments are not repaying a grant, grant projects often have more innovative features and “soft” components, such as pilot initiatives, communications, or community mobilization work, which may include opportunities for CSOs. The government issues the call for proposals and selects the firms—which could be a CSO—to implement those activities in line with ADB procurement procedures.

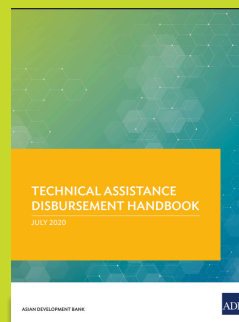
LOANS

Although it is less common, part of a loan (which is most often for infrastructure) may have a component that could be contracted to a CSO. For example, in a road project, the government may decide to use a CSO to lead a road safety campaign, or to train affected communities about HIV and AIDS or human trafficking. A government may hire CSOs to deliver health services in remote areas where it does not have a presence. But the bulk of the loan activities are typically large-scale construction contracts, for which international firms bid and implement.

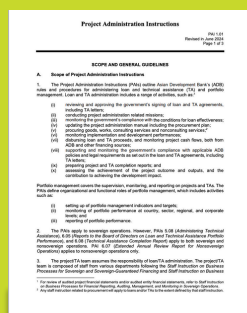
Check out the following references for further guidance in handling different types of ADB financial products:



ADB's Loan Disbursement Handbook (for loans and grants)



ADB's Technical Assistance Disbursement Handbook (for technical assistance projects)



Project Administration Instructions

How to bid for ADB-financed contracts



Resources for registering and viewing current business opportunities:

- ⚙️ **Register in the [ADB Consultant Management System \(CMS\)](#)** to become eligible to bid for any of the opportunities.
- ⚙️ **Visit the [ADB Business Center](#)** to see a range of resources.
- ⚙️ **View the current business opportunities** in ADB-financed projects at the [Consulting Services Recruitment Notices \(CSRN\)](#).
- ⚙️ **Sign up** for the **e-Alerts email notification system**, which provides updates while enabling customization of notifications based on preference, including business opportunities, publications, and other types of information.
- ⚙️ **Respond as a CSO** to an **opportunity for an individual (by proposing a candidate)** or **for a firm (by proposing several candidates)**. All proposed candidates must be from ADB members. ADB will pay the CSO who proposes a candidate, not the candidate.

TIPS FOR REGISTERING IN THE CMS

- Ensure that the CMS registration is complete and comprehensive.
- Update the profile at least once a year to keep it active.
- Use a generic organizational email address rather than an individual staff email address as the main contact.

To view current business opportunities, visit csrns.adb.org

Tips for identifying future business opportunities:

In addition to responding to currently advertised opportunities that are posted on the CSRN, some background research can identify what opportunities may be coming up.

Part A—Identifying Projects

1

Go to [ADB.org > Projects and Tenders](#) to learn more about the specific project.

2

Contact the Project Officer who is indicated in the project data sheet (PDS) to learn more about potential opportunities for collaboration.

3

Check to see if there are business opportunities during the TA.

1. Identify a specific project that is in the pipeline that might be of interest to your organization, or go to the ADB project database. Once a project's concept paper has been approved, it will have a page on the ADB website. Select the ADB member and then filter for Proposed Projects. Click on a project to learn more about it.
2. Project Data Sheets (PDS) provide details about each project, including those that are not yet approved. To learn more about the project and potential opportunities for collaboration, contact the project officer whose name is indicated in the PDS.
3. The TA paper, which is posted online, details the expertise the project officer will hire during the TA.

Part B—Submitting a Bid

1. Register in the CMS well before you plan to submit a bid.
2. Familiarize yourself with the [Quick Reference Guides](#) and videos on the consultant tutor page of CMS.
3. Once a business opportunity becomes advertised in CSRN, then click on the Express Interest button and follow the CSRN instructions. For technical problems, email cmshelps@adb.org.

Part C—Other Resources for Business Opportunities

1. Participate in the [ADB Business Opportunities Fair \(BOF\)](#) each year. A one-stop forum for consultants, contractors, manufacturers, and suppliers looking to provide goods and services for ADB projects, the BOF is an excellent opportunity to network not only with peers in the industry, but also with ADB specialists in different sectors. The annual program also includes a dedicated session on opportunities for civil society.
2. ADB posts information on shortlisted firms for those who may wish to deal directly with a shortlisted firm. CSOs can get experience on ADB-financed projects as subcontractors to experienced firms. Check the [list of shortlisted firms](#).
3. Search the [project database](#) for what will be approved in the next year and review projects to see what skills the project will recruit for. Also, review the [procurement plans](#) for new projects to see what is coming up in the future.
4. CSOs may want to consider partnering with [these successful firms](#) to get experience on ADB-financed projects.
5. Read the ADB [Fact Sheets](#), as on the last page is a table showing who has won the biggest and most ADB contracts. Some CSOs new to ADB will partner with a consultant or contractor who has a lot of experience with ADB before applying directly themselves. The fact sheet is a good starting place to see who has been successful in winning ADB contracts. [Here is the Philippines Fact Sheet](#).

Top 5 Contractors/Suppliers from the Philippines Involved in Goods, Works, and Related Services Contracts under ADB Loan and Grant Projects, 1 January 2020–31 December 2024

Contractor/Supplier	Sector	Contract Amount (\$ million)
Acciona Construction Philippines Inc.	TRA	823.99
Leighton Contractors (Asia) Ltd. – First Balfour Inc. (JV)	TRA	382.50
Pfizer Philippines Inc.	HLT	154.93
M. Abubakar Construction and Engineering, Inc. – Sino Road and Bridge Group Co. Ltd. (JV)	TRA	32.29
China Wuyi Co. Ltd. (Philippines)	TRA	30.48
Others	-	9,205.77
Total	-	10,629.96

HLT = health, JV = joint venture, TRA = transport

Top 5 Consultants from the Philippines Involved in Consulting Services Contracts under ADB Loan, Grant, and Technical Assistance Projects, 1 January 2020–31 December 2024

Consultant	Sector	Contract Amount (\$ million)
CTI Engineering International Co. Ltd.	TRA	13.58
NIRAS Asia Manila Inc.	ANR, EDU, ENE, PSM, TRA, WUS	8.66
International Technology Management Corp.	EDU	3.83
Endec Inc.	MUL	2.67
LPPA Design Group Inc.	EDU	2.61
Individual Consultants		81.11
Others		25.81
Total		138.27

ANR = agriculture, natural resources, and rural development; EDU = education; ENE = energy; MUL = multisector; PSM = public sector management; TRA = transport; WUS = water and other urban infrastructure and services.

What you need to know



Be guided by the essentials to managing an ADB contract.

CSOs can successfully implement ADB-financed contracts. But CSOs bidding for ADB contracts need to think like a consulting firm. Here are some additional tips:

-  CSOs are expected to cover all of their costs and overheads from an ADB contract. The contract budget does not have to be prepared on an at-cost basis.
-  ADB's budget template does not include a line for administrative or indirect costs such as negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). Therefore, prepare a budget that breaks down and covers all indirect costs.
-  Engage a dedicated administrator with strong finance skills to manage your ADB contract and include the administrator in your proposal.
-  If possible, visit the ADB headquarters in Manila to connect with staff working on projects across Asia and the Pacific.
-  Maximize the information, education, and communication resources on the ADB website, including signing up for the ADB Alerts to get timely updates.
-  Remember not to treat an ADB contract as funding for organizational activities; instead play the role of a service provider that ADB requires.
-  Be familiar with ADB's requirements, and consider your CSO's own institutional requirements, which may not support this type of contract.
-  Read the ADB contract and become familiar with it. ADB does not provide training on its own procedures but expects those it engages to learn them.
-  Keep good records and be prepared to provide clear statements of consulting inputs and actual inputs.
-  Realize that ADB's standard conditions of contract are nonnegotiable.



How else ADB engages with civil society



Reach out to ADB in five other ways: through the CSO anchor, during country partnership strategy preparations, when ADB reviews its policies and strategies, throughout the project cycle, and through knowledge events.



Introduce yourself to the CSO anchor in each country where you have an office. The CSO anchor is a person who is appointed as the focal point for civil society relations in each ADB field office. Check the [full list of CSO anchors](#) and their contact details.



ADB updates its [country partnership strategies \(CPS\)](#) in line with the government national poverty reduction strategy. They are ADB's primary platform for designing operations to deliver development results at the country level. Find out when ADB will be [updating its next CPS](#) by seeing when the current CPS will run out. Participating in the consultations for the CPS is an excellent way to stay informed about what ADB is planning in each country.



Participate in [strategy and policy reviews](#). ADB holds consultations on all of its major policy reviews, typically hosting several dedicated to seeking civil society views. Thus, CSOs interested in the strategy or policy that is being reviewed may want to share their perspectives while representing people's interest and their rights. This ensures dialogue and consultation with all stakeholders and potential beneficiaries of ADB projects in communities that often access information on development initiatives through civil society.



CSOs and their [networks](#) participate in consultations throughout ADB's project cycle in various ways. The majority of ADB-CSO collaboration takes place on a voluntary basis, such as during consultations. Some CSOs monitor ADB projects without compensation to ensure they maintain independence. Most CSOs who participate in consultations and monitoring are local organizations who bring their local knowledge to a project.



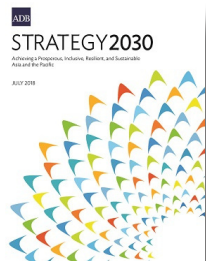
ADB's Strategy 2030 states that ADB will work with CSOs to tap their unique strengths, such as their specialized knowledge. View ADB's [planned events](#) for details. ADB's Annual Meeting includes a dedicated [CSO program](#), where CSOs actively participate and share knowledge.

Additional Resources

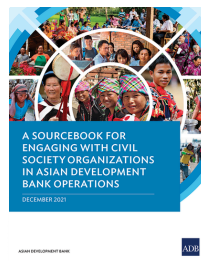


Review other key documents and references to get you started.

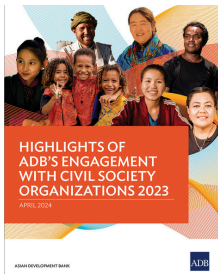
Navigate the ADB website for essential documents, contacts, and other information that can help you identify areas of interest for your organization.



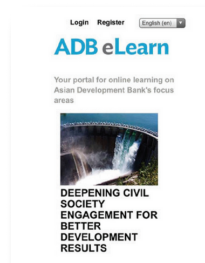
ADB's *Strategy 2030* is the key strategic document of ADB



A Sourcebook for Engaging with Civil Society Organizations in Asian Development Bank Operations
This publication provides guidance on how CSOs can be more effectively engaged in ADB operations to maximize the benefits for its developing member countries.



Reports of ADB-civil society participation are annual reports describing how ADB and CSOs work together. These explain the processes and practices of collaboration with civil society, including charts that illustrate what ADB is doing with CSOs in regions, sectors where collaboration is highest, and by financing modality.



Deepening CSO Engagement for Better Development Results is an e-learning course that aims to give CSOs an introduction on ADB-financed operations and how they can be involved in the different stages of the ADB project cycle. Learners will also get an overview of the business opportunities available for civil society organizations and how they can bid for them.



The **ADB and Civil Society webpage** is a repository of information on how CSOs can increase their participation in ADB-financed projects.



Working Together for Development Results: Lessons from ADB and Civil Society Organization Engagement in South Asia. This report highlights ADB's commitment to enhancing collaboration with civil society as part of its Strategy 2030. It emphasizes the progress made in updating ADB's approach to civil society, through a range of policy and guidance materials designed to support both ADB teams and government partners in effectively engaging with civil society in their operations.

Notes:

In this brochure \$ refers to United States dollars. ADB recognizes "China" as the People's Republic of China.

ADB NGO and Civil Society Center

civilsociety@adb.org

www.adb.org/civilsociety

@ADBAndNGOs

Scan to access our webpage



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