

Civil Society Participation at the Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the **Asian Development Bank**





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The ADB Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank attracts between 2,500 and 5,000 participants from across the world, and is hosted by an ADB member country.

Annual Meetings are statutory occasions for Governors of ADB members to provide guidance on ADB administrative, financial, and operational directions.

The meetings also provide opportunities for member governments to interact with ADB staff, civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs, media and representatives of observer countries, international organizations, academe, and the private sector.

As a sustainable event, the ADB Annual Meeting makes sure that efforts are made to safeguard the environment, develop skills in the local community, increase tourism, create new business opportunities, and share the host country's traditions and history.

15

The Philippines has played host to the most number of ADB Annual Meetings, at 15 times.



1968

The first Annual Meeting took place from 4 to 6 April 1968, in Manila, the Philippines.



2005

Since the 38th Annual Meeting in Turkey in 2005, the ADB Annual Meetings have been held in the first week of May.



2016

On May 3 to 5, the 49th Annual Meeting will be held in Frankfurt, Germany.



CSOs at the Annual Meeting

ADB welcomes the participation of CSOs and NGOs to its Annual Meeting. To participate, a CSO needs to be accredited in advance. The Annual Meeting provides a venue for dialogue on key development topics, knowledge sharing, and networking.

ADB's NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC) organizes a yearly Civil Society Program which has

become an integral part of ADB's Annual Meetings. The Civil Society Program is designed in cooperation with key CSOs in Asia and the Pacific.

While participation in the Annual Meeting is free, CSO participants are expected to pay for their own travel and accommodation expenses.





Why CSOs Participate

- The ADB Annual Meeting offers an opportunity to network with other civil society and development partners in Asia and the Pacific.
- It is a venue for dialogue with ADB Management about important development issues.
- The Annual Meeting helps CSOs learn about ADB programs and policies.
- It is a chance to advocate policies with ADB Management and Board of Directors.
- It is an opportunity to seek financial support for programs and projects.

850

**CSOs and
NGOs
accredited**

As of 2015, there are more than 850 CSOs and NGOs accredited to attend the Annual Meeting, coming from more than 30 member countries. The highest number of CSO participation took place in Manila, in 2012, with 395 CSO representatives in attendance.



Accreditation and Registration

In order to participate, a CSO needs to be accredited in advance. To receive accreditation, a CSO should possess the following criteria:

- Operates legally in an ADB member country
- Is independent of the state and nonprofit
- Engages in activities related to development policies and practices relevant to ADB operations

Request for accreditation is done online by completing a CSO Accreditation Form and submitting a few requirements such as :

- Proof of registration as a nonprofit and nongovernment organization with an authorized government office where the CSO is based
- Latest financial statement
- Latest annual report of activities



CSO accreditation usually opens 4 months before the Annual Meeting. Once accredited, a CSO receives an invitation from the ADB to register online.



ADB's Engagement with CSOs

The NGO Cooperation Policy was approved in 1998, with a view of strengthening the effectiveness, sustainability, and quality of ADB's development services. The objective of NGO cooperation is to be able to integrate NGO experience, knowledge, and expertise into ADB operations.

The ADB's long term strategic framework, Strategy 2020, identifies drivers of change that will be stressed in all its operations—developing the private sector, encouraging good governance, supporting gender equity, helping developing countries gain knowledge, and expanding partnerships with other development institutions, the private sector, and with CSOs.

In 2014, the Midterm Review of Strategy 2020 came on stream, and with it, greater opportunities for engaging CSOs will be explored. CSOs will be more actively involved in designing and implementing projects, particularly those that use grassroots participatory approaches to development. Their inputs and advice will be sought in implementing ADB's safeguard policies and major policy reviews. In addition, business process constraints to engagement with CSOs are to be improved and addressed.

Today, ADB engages CSOs in country programming, in the various stages of the project cycle, and in policy review.



The Civil Society Program

The Civil Society Program can be divided into three main parts:

01

Meeting with Members of ADB Senior Management

Provides an opportunity for CSOs to ask questions to Senior Management, traditionally represented by the ADB President, about ADB policies and operations.

02

Civil Society Panel Discussions

Co-organized with CSOs and covers discussions on development or specific operational topics relevant to ADB operations.

03

Learning with Partners

CSOs, private sector, and ADB staff share innovative solutions, insights, and experiences on key development themes, showcasing the work of CSOs in development work.



In addition, the NGOC organizes youth events in recognition of the role of young people in the development of Asia and the Pacific.



CSO Meeting with Members of ADB Senior Management



CSO representatives raise questions to members of ADB Senior Management about ADB programs and policies. The 1-hour meeting is exclusively for ADB Management, staff, and CSO participants.



Civil Society Panel Discussions

Civil Society Panel Discussions are organized with CSOs and cover discussions on development or specific operational topics relevant to ADB operations.



Examples of topics include:

- ADB's Climate Finance
- Food Security
- Social Protection and Pensions
- Responsible Development Financing
- Safeguard Policies





Learning with Partners

CSOs, private sector, and ADB staff share innovative solutions, insights, and experiences on key development themes, showcasing the work of CSOs in development.

Examples of topic includes:

- Bridging the Road Safety Gap through Civil Society Partnerships
- Solutions Market: Showcasing Innovation, Partnerships, and Empowerment
- Disaster Response and Management
- ICT and Development





Youth Events

The Voice of Youth Debates help raise awareness of young people about important development issues in the region and showcase youth's knowledge and debating skills. The debates are part of the sessions organized under the ADB Youth Initiative.

The NGOC manages the Youth Initiative which supports youth participation in ADB operations, and to enable young people to benefit from, and contribute to the sustainable development of Asia and the Pacific.





Through their participation at the Annual Meeting, CSOs are able to network with ADB, private sector, and other CSO representatives. They are also able to discuss concerns in relation to ADB operations with ADB Management and staff. CSO participants are lastly able to share knowledge and innovation with other development partners.



About ADB NGOC

Launched in 2001, the NGOC supports CSO participation in ADB operations. Working with an ADB-wide network of CSO focal persons, it helps integrate CSO knowledge and experience into ADB operations, engages CSOs in continuing dialogue, and manages ADB's overall communications with civil society. As part of ADB's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department, the NGOC helps improve ADB's institutional capacity to share knowledge and collaborate productively with CSOs, and develops strategic partnerships between ADB and key CSOs in Asia and the Pacific.



*Children going to school using Mahalchari bridge over the Chengi River. The bridge was built in 2009 under the Chittagong Hill Tracts Rural Development Project by ADB.
Photographer: M R Hasan*

Connect with the ADB NGOC:

-  www.adb.org/site/ngos/ngo-civil-society-center
-  www.facebook.com/ADBandNGOs
-  www.twitter.com/adbandngos
-  civilsociety@adb.org

Connect with ASSIST and AsianNGO:

-  www.assistasia.org
-  www.facebook.com/assistasia
-  www.asianngo.org
-  www.facebook.com/AsianNGO

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB's vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region's many successes, it remains home to the majority of the world's poor. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

