

Regional Forum on Successful Project Design and Implementation 2024

Strengthening Project Quality through
Enhanced Readiness, Implementation,
Monitoring, and Evaluation

Pakistan, January 2024

Post-Forum Survey Analysis
October 2024



1

Evaluation Approach and Key Survey Findings: Progress and Changes Overview



Objectives

Assess initial effects on participants' knowledge and behavior
Evaluate behavioral change based on the application insights from the Forum
Collect feedback to identify gaps and improve future events



Feedback collection methods

Online survey
Semi-structured interview



Expected (intermediate) outcomes

Improved opportunities for increased engagement in cross country and peer learning
Enhanced practical knowledge for increasing project readiness
Enhanced application of adaptation and mitigation strategies in project readiness and monitoring



Key Survey Findings: Progress and Changes Overview

Expected (intermediate) outcomes of the forum's knowledge exchange

Improved opportunities for increased engagement in cross-country and peer learning

- The recommendation for preparing project completion reports were applied in the work.
- The forum has greatly improved my project management skills and equipped me for further challenges.
- I plan to organize more forums to share knowledge and improve collaboration among the team.
- Individual experiences broadened my understanding of the latest industry trends, particularly agile methodologies and digital transformation.
- The sessions provided practical insights into risk management and stakeholder engagement, that I am eager to apply to my projects.

Enhanced practical knowledge for increasing project readiness

- The department assesses its preparedness before launching the project at the national level.
- Efforts are underway to ensure project readiness, including Feasibility Study (F/S), land acquisition, resettlement plans, Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) plans and climate screening.
- Apply Project Readiness Financing (PRF) to the new project (first time)
- Small Expenditure Financing Facility (SEFF) is being introduced to EA and IA to meet upcoming project milestones in due course.

Direct results*

Summary results

- A strong foundation for peer knowledge sharing but also underscores the need to address time, resource limitations, and content relevance to improve peer learning engagement (sharing with management, subordinates)

[From survey data]

- **Current engagement level: Approximately 95% of respondents are involved in informal discussions for knowledge sharing.**
- **Knowledge sharing with peers is high at 92%, and 73% also engage in sharing with higher officials and subordinates.**
- **Sharing scales: Most respondents (85%) reported knowledge sharing with fewer than 20 individuals.**
- **Challenges: Key barriers to engagement including time constraints, limited resources, and relevance of the content shared.**
- **Additionally, there were improvements in peer learning (46%), and collaboration with other teams (44%).**

- While many organizations are actively working on enhancing project readiness and have mobilized substantial resources, they face significant challenges related to resource availability and support.
- Addressing these obstacles and improving methodological application could further strengthen practical knowledge in project readiness.

[From survey data]

- **Current initiatives: 62% organizations have developed plans or initiated tasks aimed at enhancing project readiness. Key activities are in the areas of building project management team and capacity (65%), coordinating with stakeholders (65%), and evaluating project (48%).**
- **Resource mobilization: A significant majority (90%) of organizations have mobilized resources to support these tasks. Commonly mobilized resources include stakeholder engagement (71%), training (68%)**
- **Establishment of PMU (39%), and internal project budgets (22%)**
- **Challenges: Obstacles impacting planning and implementation include resource availability (63%), lack of management support (33%), time constraints (22%), and inflexible department work plans**
- **Methodologies Applies (various methodologies and applications discussed during the forum): 95% or organizations have applied key methodologies to their tasks.**

Expected (intermediate) outcomes of the forum's knowledge exchange

Enhanced application of adaptation and mitigation strategies in project readiness and monitoring

Direct results*

- Apply a life-cycle approach with introduction of Result-Based Metrics (RBMS) to project implementation
- Prepare projects by conducting mandatory feasibility studies for costs above a set threshold. (The concept of the well-prepared and include mandatory feasibility studies for costs above a certain threshold).
- Gender budgeting and green budgeting are being introduced in the planning, preparation and execution of projects.
- Coordination with stakeholders, regular M&E of the projects and staff capacity building

Summary results

- When methodologies (various methodologies and applications discussed during the forum): were applied or shared, positive challenges were observed in various aspects. 72% reported improved work performance, 57% saw better teamwork within their organization, and 54% noted enhanced project performance.

[From survey data]

- **A significant majority (69%) of respondents applied key methodologies in their work.**
- **However, several factors inhibited the broader application of these methodologies, with the primary barrier being the availability of resources (60%).**
- **Other challenges included lack of management support (23%) and insufficient time (21%).**

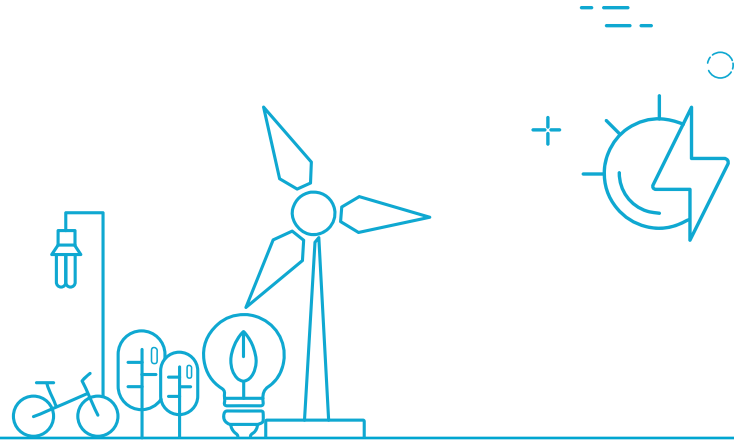
*Source:

The information for the 'Direct results' is derived from from open-ended responses concerning (i) methodology applications and approaches, and (ii) comments and suggestions from the SPDI forum post-forum survey results.

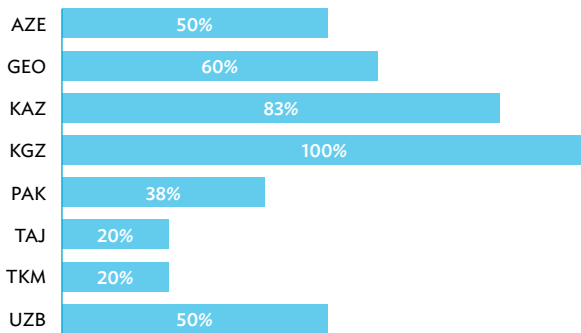


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Detailed Survey Results



Response rate



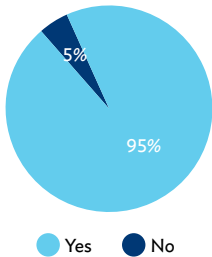
Total DMC participants:
122

Total response received:
52

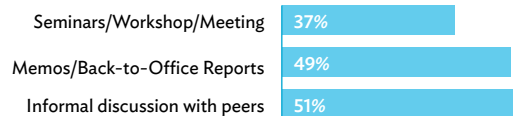
Response rate:
43%

Knowledge sharing details: Recipients and approaches

Was Forum knowledge shared in your organization?



Knowledge was shared through (multiple answers)

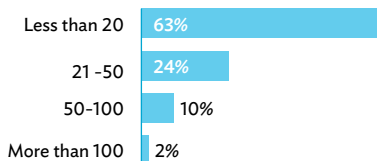


95% of respondents shared forum knowledge within their organization, primarily through informal or formal written methods.

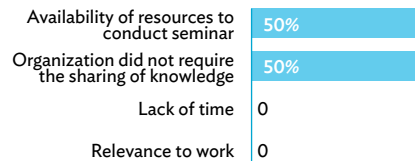
Reliance on informal or formal written methods may limit the reach and effectiveness of the shared information, indicating a need to explore additional communication channels.

Knowledge sharing: Recipients and barriers

Knowledge was shared with how many persons



What are the factors that prevent knowledge sharing?

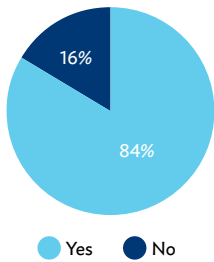


The focused reach to a small number of people suggests that knowledge sharing is effective within specific areas.

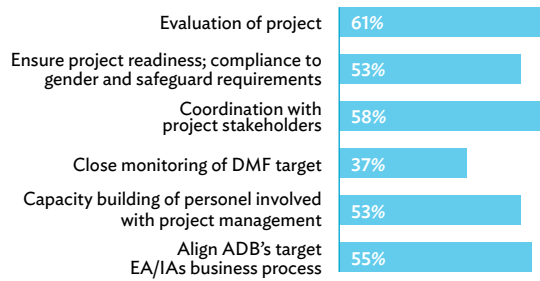
Limited resources and specific organizational needs may influence how efforts are made, helping to make information sharing more effective and relevant.

Plans and implementation of tasks & activities in your organization

Has any plans or tasks been implemented in your organization?



Which tasks/activities were these? (multiple choices)

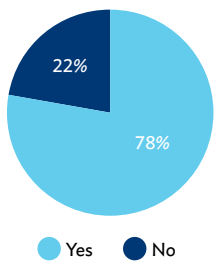


Implementing over 80% of action plans is very encouraging, with a wide range of actions directly benefitting from the forum.

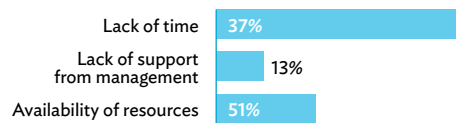
The high implementation rates indicate strong engagement and effective application of forum insights, leading to substantial benefits.

Resource mobilization and barriers to planning and implementation

Has any plans or tasks been implemented in your organization?



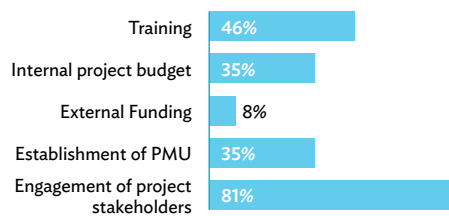
Which tasks/activities were these? (multiple choices)



Over 70% of respondents noted that resources, particularly project stakeholders and training opportunities, were mobilized for implementing plans.

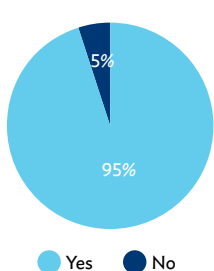
However, lack of time is a critical barrier, with 66% citing it as a significant issue. This time constraint could undermine the effectiveness of resource allocation and plan execution, despite the higher resource availability indicated earlier.

What type of resources were mobilized?

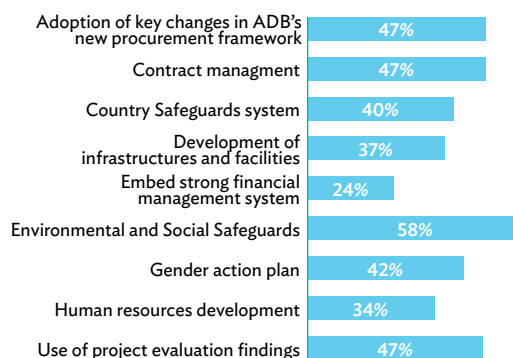


Application of forum methodologies: What was used, what prevented their use

Has your organization applied the forum's key methodologies?



What methodologies and approaches were used?

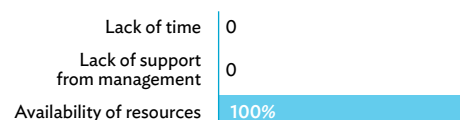


Over 95% of participants applied key methodologies, especially in critical areas like safeguards and procurement.

However, capacity gaps and resource shortages, possibly due to a lack of specific or technical resources, affect project quality and implementation speed.

The high application of key methodologies reflects strong adherence to best practices and effective use of forum knowledge.

What hindered the use of key methodologies



Which methodologies and approaches discussed were applied to the project?



Readiness

11

responses*

Agile and design thinking
Project design and readiness
Procurement readiness
Project preparation facility
Project readiness initiative

Project Readiness Financing (PRF) model
Stakeholder consultations, surveys
Risk identification and mitigation plan
TA (Technical Assistance)

* The total includes repeated answers from respondents.



Portfolio Management

5

responses

Project Management
Project planning
Six sigma, Critical Path Methods (CPM), Critical Chain Project Management (CCPM)
Team management

Better approach to implement project with the time



Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

6

responses

M&E Framework
Project design and monitoring framework
Monitoring at design stage implementation plan
KPI establishment

A life-cycle approach with introduction of RBMs
Evaluating of tender documents in line with ADB guidelines



Reporting

2

responses

Financial Reporting
Manual for Development Project 2021 Public Financial Management Act, 2019 PRF



Capacity Development

4

responses

Capacity building
Safeguard policies
Financial management
Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction, WEBS & smart budgeting



Any additional comments and suggestions

Comments

Overall

Extremely helpful for my individual professional skill development

Relevant, improve work performance

Good opportunity to understand how it works in ADB-financed projects

The forum has greatly improved my project management skills and equipped me for further challenges.

When I shared my knowledge during the application in my work, I would like to hold more such forum also for my colleagues to improve cooperation with other teams.

I plan to organize more forums to share knowledge and improve collaboration among teams.

It was a wonderful experience. Participants from different countries came up with different ideas.

Interacting with regional development practitioners provided valuable insights into project planning and execution by other local organizers.

Peer-learning

Many useful tips from other executing agencies on project preparation, TA, and financing methods

Experience exchange is crucial for project performance and progress. To support human and environmental factors and ensure successful project implementation, having the right knowledge and experience is essential.

Useful and productive, particularly experience sharing and learning from colleagues/participants from other countries.

Leveraging project management tools is crucial. Before diving into project implementation, secure initial funding to cover upfront costs, ensuring a solid foundation and smooth project initiation.

Individual experiences broadened my understanding of the latest industry trends, particularly in agile methodologies and digital transformation.

Networking with industry leaders and peers were equally rewarding, offering new perspectives and potential collaborations.

The sessions provided practical insights into risk management and stakeholder engagement, which I am eager to implement in my projects.

The part of FM of the forum was immensely organized and insightful.

Suggestion

Overall

Conduct more detailed seminar on project management to familiarize with new ADB Products

Conduct quarterly based to enhance the skill of PPR professionals and beyond

Should be held regularly as it is useful and effective

The contents of the course has not been shared so far which was promised during the training sessions.

Training session should be minimum 5 days.

Organize more regional and sub-regional forums in the future to enhance the skills and methodologies of the EAs.

of DMCs

The number of representatives from each country should be not more than 5 countries in order to have more focused discussions.

Customization

It is necessary to adapt to local environment and conditions.

Modality

The forum can be conducted to bring all participants together in one place to discuss experiences, challenges and find solutions.

Participants should be accommodated in one location to maximize time for sharing personal experiences and lessons learned, benefiting all attendees.

The forum was a valuable experience but was too compact and lacked interactive sessions.

There was an overload of information and presentations, making it difficult to focus and absorb every detail.

More case studies on project design (appraisal, matrix of results development) would be useful.

Design

Organize detailed training programs and courses for professionals to improve their understanding of terminology and ensure alignment with national guidelines

The flow chart along with the timeline of financial modalities may help in learning and implementation of new financing modalities especially SEFF.

There is a dire need to formulate regulations/rules regarding project preliminary studies in Pakistan.

Another round of technical and professional experts of decision making level be arranged involving experts from Europe on project readiness financing to be organized in the Netherlands, or France or Melbourne, or UK, or USA. Total participants should be executive level such as chief country directors, forum each fields finance, water, environment food, project management.

Emphasize common factors in all project preparations with case studies and project management tools to enhance participants' understanding of their benefit.

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Interview Stories



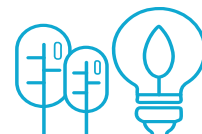
PAKISTAN: Impactful Project Management Story

Sarah Rehman has always advocated for flexibility in project management, an approach she has practiced since joining public service in 2016, equipped with a law degree from Oxford and legal practice in the private sector. Sarah is Chief of the International Development section at Pakistan's Planning and Development Department in the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Sarah Rehman

*Chief International Development Planning and Development Department
Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan*





“Pakistan experiences extreme weather events, which weren’t with us seven or eight years ago when we began some of our infrastructure projects,” and this builds an even stronger case for flexibility in project planning and implementation, Sarah says. Pakistan is fifth most vulnerable country to climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index in 2019. This means catastrophic floods, severe drought, and loss of lives.

“Aside from the need to adapt to the impacts of climate change, **we have a multi-layered political structure.**” With different in political leadership and jurisdictions at various levels, some reforms cannot be pursued as priorities evolve in the political transitions. **“We must anticipate these changes and risks in projects, manage them, and maintain flexibility to innovate and adapt.”**

Sarah articulated this crucial point when she sat as a resource person in a panel discussion at the Regional Forum on Successful Project Design and Implementation in January 2024 in Pakistan: **“When you start any project, you have an objective, and to fulfill your objective, you need better design and readiness to embark on the project. For example, in an education project, we aim for resilience in times of disasters. How do you help the education system deal with the impacts of a disaster—without stopping the education system? You need some flexibility to move around in your project plan and approach.”**

The forum provides an invaluable platform for exchanging views and learning from other countries’ experiences, she reflects. In fact, **she found like-minded allies and partners whose insights have bolstered her cause for flexibility.**

“

We must anticipate these changes and risks in projects, manage them, and maintain flexibility to innovate and adapt.

”

Even as a panelist, Sarah took time to join some sessions as a participant, noting how she found the successes and challenges of project managers from other countries at once illuminating and animating. **She notes how they shared the same pain points in procurement and safeguards, and how the learning sessions on these two areas of project readiness helped her navigate succeeding projects.**

“Look, ADB is an institution that has spent decades studying and testing and implementing projects.” **The learning sessions with ADB experts, she says, “helped her better appreciate the fiduciary standards and guiding principles of accountability that are behind stringent ADB requirements.”** Sarah thinks that now, projects in the portfolio she manages do better in complying with ADB’s procurement and safeguards requirements, thanks in part to those learning sessions.



Amire Anuarbek

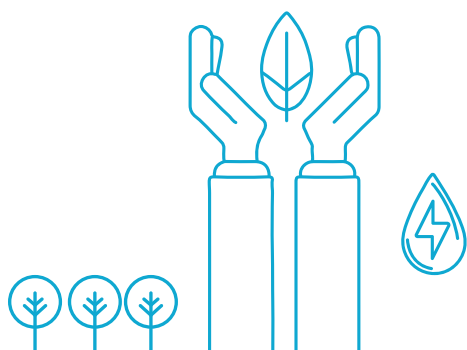
Head of Wastewater Treatment Department
JSC Kazakhstan Center for Modernization and Development
of Housing and Communal Services, Kazakhstan



KAZAKHSTAN: Adaptive Knowledge Story

Amire Anuarbek looked at the agenda and knew he would have much to learn from the Central and West Asia Regional Forum on Successful Project Design and Implementation in January 2024. The forum promised valuable discussions and exchanges on project readiness, climate adaptation and mitigation, gender issues, safeguards, and monitoring and evaluation—areas critical to his role as department head for wastewater treatment at the Kazakhstan Center for Modernization of Housing and Communal Services. Within two weeks, he was on a plane to Pakistan, joining over 100 project development practitioners from eight countries for the three-day event.

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Amire is part of a technical team overseeing a major government infrastructure investment in Kazakhstan, partly funded by ADB's Kazakhstan Urban Infrastructure Modernization Program. ADB's \$100 million facility supports Kazakhstan in crafting effective urbanization policies and enhancing capacity to undertake urban sewerage projects, including increasing water reuse and improving the quality of treated wastewater from factories and industrial plants. This support comes as Kazakhstan grapples with aging infrastructure, inadequate public and private investments, and the challenge of maintaining wastewater facilities for a growing urban population.

His team's responsibilities span various phases of project preparation and implementation. They evaluate the technical merits of proposed wastewater facilities and ensure that the structures comply with relevant laws and policies. Their role is **crucial in vetting that each facility meets stringent environmental and technical standards before receiving government approval for implementation.**

In the forum, Amire found the session on the project readiness filter invaluable. **The insights he got from talking with teams from Georgia and Azerbaijan reinforced Kazakhstan's approach to project preparation.** By completing detailed engineering designs, environmental plans, business models, and spatial plans ahead of loan signing, Kazakhstan aims to optimize project costs and minimize delays.

He notes the importance of upstream stakeholder consultation. The forum affirmed the value he puts on **regular dialogue not just with affected communities but equally critical, with various government offices.** "Our project has to align with the policies of the Ministries of National Economy, Ecology and Natural Resources, Water Resources, Industry and Construction, Finance, and many other offices." These agencies must approve taxes, tariffs, zoning, and urban plans. They also check for compliance with discharge and sanitary-epidemiological standards. All these requirements must be met before municipalities can implement water projects through public utility companies.

However, Amire notes that **project preparation is made extremely difficult when ADB's requirements do not align with national systems. This disconnect presents both policy and technical issues.** The forum did provide valuable technical skills and frameworks for project design and implementation, but **he found the country case studies particularly useful for identifying and navigating various policy approaches.**

Taking with him lessons from other countries and continuing his conversation post-forum with other delegates, Amire conducted extensive research when he returned to Kazakhstan. He reviewed project documents and consulted with colleagues to understand how past issues were addressed in his country. **Although he cannot disclose specifics at this time, Amire has submitted recommendations for concrete actions to bridge the gap between ADB policies and national systems.**

