



Regional Forum on Successful Project Design and Implementation

7-9 July 2026 | Astana, Kazakhstan

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB - Asian Development Bank	EU - European Union	PMO - project management office
AI - Artificial Intelligence	FM - financial management	PPFD - Procurement, Portfolio and Financial Management Department
BUILD - Border Upgrades for Integration, Logistics, and Development Facility	GRIP - Guide to Risk Identification and Planning	PRC - People's Republic of China
CAREC - Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation	IA - implementing agency	PRF* - Project Readiness Financing
CARTIF - CAREC Trade and Investment Facilitation Partnership	ICE - Information Common Exchange	RAMP - risk assessment and management plan
CATS - CAREC Advanced Transit System	KEEP - Knowledge and Experience Exchange Program	RBL - results-based lending
CSPPF - Climate and Sustainability Project Preparatory Fund	KPI - key performance indicator	RCI - Regional Cooperation and Integration
DMC - developing member country	MDB - multilateral development bank	RKSI - Regional Knowledge Sharing Initiative
EA - executing agency	MIS - management information system	SEFF* - Small Expenditure Financing Facility
EME - early market engagement	MOU - memorandum of understanding	TA - Technical Assistance
ESG - environmental, social, and governance	NGO - nongovernment organization	
	PAM - project administration manual	
	PCR - project completion report	

* ADB will roll out an enhanced Project Support Lending (PSL) modality, replacing PFR and SEFF to better support project readiness, preparation, and implementation.

ABOUT #SUCCESSFULPROJECTS

The SPDI Forum is ADB’s flagship platform for strengthening how development projects are designed and implemented. It brings together ADB experts, policy makers and executing and implementing agencies (EAs/ IAs) from across Asia and the Pacific to share knowledge, tackle implementation challenges, and build institutional capacity in project management, quality at entry and readiness, risk management and overall quality of implementation of public projects.

This year’s theme is “Strengthening Project Risk Management for Stronger Development Impact.” It responds to persistent gaps in how project risks are identified, monitored, and updated. It also translates lessons from ADB’s risk study and portfolio analysis into actionable practice.

SPDI Forum 2026 in Kazakhstan was co-organized by the ADB’s Procurement, Portfolio and Financial Management Department; the Central and West Asia Regional Department; and the East Asia Regional Department; with the support of the Kazakhstan Resident Mission.

LEARN MORE

Forum Recap

Read bite-sized summaries of the presentations, questions, debates, and practical lessons that unfolded in Astana.

[Presentations and Photos](#)

Browse the slide decks that spurred the conversations and the images that capture the energy of the forum.

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#SuccessfulProjects

Forum Recap

More than 100 project practitioners from 12 developing member countries gathered in Astana, Kazakhstan, from 7–9 July 2026, to discuss a challenge that is becoming impossible to ignore: risks. Climate shocks, supply chain disruptions, and evolving institutional capacities are reshaping how development projects are designed and delivered. The Regional Forum on Successful Project Design and Implementation (SPDI) focused on a timely question: how can projects become more prepared before risks turn into crises?



1. Opening Remarks



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Risk management is not a compliance exercise. It is not a static spreadsheet to be filled out at processing and then shelved. Risk is active. Our management must be active, too.

Guoliang Wu
Director
Portfolio Management Division
PPFD, ADB

We must end the era of fragmented risk management by adopting an integrated approach. Historically, risks have been treated in isolated silos like procurement or finance; however, project realities do not respect these boundaries, and a single breakdown in one area can quickly cascade through the entire implementation process. By fostering cross-functional collaboration and establishing integrated early warning systems, organizations create "operational armor" that provides the foresight to act before a delay becomes a disaster.

Achieving project resilience requires a focus on "quality at entry" and a candid analysis of past failures. It is essential to enhance project readiness by fixing structural gaps through robust due diligence before loan effectiveness rather than after. Furthermore, avoiding future disasters depends on studying failures with honesty to understand the consequences of poorly managed risks and weak ownership.

While these analytical foundations are vital, they must be supported by **operationalizing frameworks through practical tools like the Guide to Risk Identification and Planning (GRIP)**. This knowledge product is designed to put living tools directly into the hands of executing and implementing agencies to systematically capture and analyze field data. By doing so, hard-earned institutional knowledge is injected back into project pipelines and frameworks are effectively utilized in the field.

Integrated project lifecycle management is necessary for sustainable development, as project design, strong implementation, and proactive management can no longer be treated as separate components. In today's complex environment of economic uncertainty and climate challenges, achieving lasting development impact depends entirely on our ability to deliver investments effectively by treating these stages as mutually reinforcing foundations.

Proactive and institutional risk management is key to this integrated approach. It shifts the focus from reacting to issues after they arise to anticipating them early for timely mitigation. Structured frameworks and forward-looking plans are not enough on their own; effective execution depends largely on institutional quality, team capacity, and a willingness to learn from experience.

This continuous learning is best achieved through **cross-regional knowledge sharing and collaboration, which transforms individual project issues into collective regional solutions across Central, West, and East Asia**. By openly exchanging practical experiences across borders, country teams can identify solutions more quickly, avoid repeating common mistakes, and leverage the OneADB platform to turn peer networks into tools for stronger portfolio performance.

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Successful development is determined not only by the quality of our investments, but equally by our ability to deliver them effectively.

Balabhaskara Reddy Bathula
Regional Head
Operations and Coordination
East Asia Regional Department
ADB



2. Keynote Address



A strategic commitment to risk-based public investment is essential for Kazakhstan as it navigates economic uncertainty, climate change, and institutional challenges. While the nation has successfully reformed its public financial management, budget planning, and project selection mechanisms, true project success under current conditions relies on the agile management of emergent risks throughout the entire project cycle.

Regional knowledge-sharing platforms serve as an invaluable tool for public governance. By bringing together government agencies, international organizations, and experts, these forums allow practitioners to learn from past challenges and successful experiences. They generate new and effective solutions that move beyond traditional frameworks.

This collaborative approach is directly reflected in **Kazakhstan's partnership with ADB, which continues to drive both infrastructure development and vital social programs.** From completing major transport corridors through the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), like the road reconstruction project, to current projects on the Saryagash bypass and the regional pediatric hospital investment program, this cooperation transforms modern, sustainable project designs into tangible benefits for the people and the regional economy.



The success of projects depends not only on the quality of their preparation, but also on the ability to manage emergent risks in a timely manner.

Urazalin Akzhol
Ministry of National Economy
Government of Kazakhstan

3. Stage Setting: Why Risk Management Matters in Development Projects [Keynote Presentation]

Proactive risk management determines development outcomes.

It moves an organization away from being a reactive problem solver and turning it into a fully accountable partner. When risks that are left unmanaged materialize, the true cost is borne by local communities through delayed infrastructure, by governments through increasing debt, and by ADB through eroded credibility. Therefore, mapping risks early is not an impossible task, but an integral exercise to safeguard efficiency, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability.

Institutions must confront the reality that many critical project risks are unmonitored or not identified. Audit findings show that 44 percent of risks that materialize in the field were not captured in the risk assessment and management plan (RAMP), largely because risk frameworks were treated as one-off, paper-based compliance checklists rather than living instruments. This disconnect highlights an urgent cultural and institutional need to shift perspectives— by reinforcing that identifying risks is a collaborative effort that helps teams succeed, not something to be held against individuals.

We must work toward systematic, digitalized actions that institutionalize risk monitoring across all regions and sectors. This means developing specific, actionable risk profiles that clearly outline ownership, thresholds, and operational triggers. By modernizing the RAMP into a dynamic digital platform that is continually updated during review missions, project teams can identify shocks early and minimize the exponential cost of fixing failures down the road.



The choice before us isn't whether we should manage risks. The choice is whether we want to pay the baseline price today, or the twenty-fold price tomorrow.

Guoliang Wu
Director
Portfolio Management Division
PPFD, ADB



4. Beyond Data: Bridging the Gap Between Risk Management Design and Practice [Panel Session]



(From L-R): Sevil Maharramova, Principal Portfolio Management Specialist, ADB; Guoliang Wu, Director, PPF, ADB; Indu John-Abraham, Operations Manager for Central Asia, World Bank; Balabhaskara Reddy Bathula, Regional Head, Operations Coordination, ADB; Ganzorig Bulgankhuu, Head, Development, Financing Division, MOF, Government of Mongolia



Problems are not a problem. Surprises are. Which makes proactivity so much more important.

Indu John-Abraham
World Bank

Risk management failures are rarely caused by a lack of framework, guidance, or tools. The discussion highlighted that the more common challenge is the disconnect between risk management as designed and risk management as practiced. Risk registers are often prepared during project design but are not consistently updated or used to support implementation decisions. Panelists emphasized that risk management must evolve from a compliance exercise into an active management function, where risks are continuously reviewed, monitored, and addressed throughout the project cycle.

Effective risk management requires moving beyond generic assessments and understanding how projects operate in practice. Country circumstances, institutional arrangements, implementation capacity, and even subnational conditions can significantly influence risk profiles and project outcomes. Risks often emerge from local realities that may not be fully visible during project preparation, underscoring the importance of continuous engagement with executing and implementing agencies and the need to adapt mitigation measures to changing circumstances.

While digital tools, guidance notes, and monitoring systems play an important role, panelists agreed that people, relationships, and institutions remain the most critical drivers of successful risk management. Strong information flows, trusted partnerships, stable implementation arrangements, and clear accountability help ensure that emerging risks are identified and addressed before they become major implementation bottlenecks. Institutional readiness and capacity building were highlighted as essential foundations for strengthening project delivery across both development institutions and government agencies.

Strong government ownership improves risk resilience. Experiences shared by panelists reinforced the importance of government ownership in strengthening risk management practices. Reforms led



Good risk management is not only about managing individual projects. It is about building a stronger system and improving institutional capacity.

Ganzorig Bulgankhuu
Ministry of Finance
Government of Mongolia

by Mongolia's Ministry of Finance to integrate project implementation units within line ministries, strengthen project readiness, and digitalize public investment management are helping build stronger institutional capacity, improve coordination, and enhance accountability.

The discussion underscored that successful risk management depends on continuous learning, timely intervention, and close collaboration among governments, development partners, and project teams. Ultimately, effective risk management is not about eliminating risks, but creating systems that can anticipate, adapt to, and respond to them before they undermine development results.

5. Enhancing Project Readiness and Quality at Entry through Effective Risk Identification [Presentation]



Risk management is a design tool and strategic investment decision rather than a compliance exercise. Organizations should minimize risks from the outset, particularly in emerging sectors such as mining and digitalization, where information asymmetries are high, and in non-sovereign portfolios exposed to supply chain disruptions. While investments inevitably involve risks, these can be anticipated and managed to achieve intended results and benefits.

Project readiness bridges design and implementation by converting risks into deliverable conditions. Rigorous readiness filters—such as market-testing and validated cost estimates—act as hard gates to prevent escalation, as early mitigation can cost 20 times less than intervention during implementation. These filters can prevent delays caused by cost-focused national frameworks or complex merit-point procurement criteria.

Long-term success is driven by institutional readiness and the use of credible data. While government capacity is the primary driver of performance, note that large implementation teams correlate negatively with success due to their complexity. Teams must resist delivery commitment bias—the pressure to meet key performance indicators or KPI targets regardless of readiness. By prioritizing capacity building and harmonizing project appraisal documents, we can transform readiness from a one-off hurdle into an essential element of public financial management.



A project that is not ready is not simply delayed. I think we should ultimately see it as being more risky, and if it's riskier, we need to think whether we should invest in this project.

Mirzo Iskandar Gulamov
Country Operations Head
Uzbekistan Resident Mission
Central and West Asia Regional Department
ADB



6. Strengthening Project Implementation Through Cross-Functional Risk Management [Panel Session]

THE COST OF SILOS

Note: This summary includes comments from the audience.

Risk management challenges often originate as symptoms of poor coordination across functional areas, where a failure in one domain triggers a chain effect that undermines the entire project. For instance, weak financial management readiness, such as lack of staff or unallocated budgets, leads to delayed payments that escalate into contract disputes, work stoppages, and stalled safeguard compensation activities.

Similarly, **what appears to be a procurement failure is frequently a symptom of upstream design gaps** or unresolved land acquisition issues that were not properly addressed in bidding, thus causing bidders to either overprice their proposals or opt out entirely.

While the interplay between financial management and procurement is often the most visible due to high transaction volumes, **the juncture between procurement and safeguards frequently presents the highest unmanaged risks in practice**. Breakdowns occur at this interface because procurement requires certainty to attract quality bidders, while safeguards are often evolving, protracted, and dependent on shifting project designs. This issue becomes even more complicated in design-build modalities, where strong incentives to accelerate civil works often leave inadequate time for safeguard compliance, which can result in significant implementation bottlenecks.



(From L-R): Elbek Yusupov, Financial Management Specialist, ADB; Sophio Omanadze, Safeguards Specialist (Social), ADB; Jamshid Umarov, Senior Procurement Officer, ADB; Rhodora Concepcion, Country Operations Head, Tajikistan Resident Mission, ADB

PROCUREMENT

A significant majority of procurement risks—estimated at 60 to 70 percent—originate from upstream constraints such as unresolved safeguard conditions, inadequate project design, and cross-functional misalignment, rather than from the procurement process itself. Issues like delayed land acquisition or vague technical specifications that are not market-tested create high-risk allocations. This uncertainty frequently causes quality bidders to either opt out entirely or overprice their proposals, thus leading to severe budget overruns. Consequently, the procurement function must be managed as an integrator of these upstream risks.

When a procurement process is assessed as high-risk, project teams should first examine safeguard approvals, budget adequacy relative to current market prices, and the existing institutional capacity. Because outdated feasibility studies often lead to unrealistic cost estimates, implementing agencies are encouraged to conduct fresh market assessments right before publishing opportunities to reflect real-world pricing and capacity.

Early market engagement (EME) is an important tool for validating cost estimates and ensuring that procurement methods are "fit-for-purpose." By proactively consulting with reputable potential bidders before a tender is launched, agencies can identify hidden risks, determine if the current market is ready to engage with specific project packages, and define more realistic timelines and deliverables.

The success of procurement relies on the transparency of bidding documents and the integrity of the evaluation process to prevent systemic delays. Ensuring clear, generalized specifications that do not favor specific manufacturers helps prevent collusion and corruption. It also encourages broader market participation. Managing these processes through integrated risk registers and strict readiness filters further ensures that funding and safeguard clearances are fully confirmed before any contracts are awarded, thereby safeguarding the implementation timeline.



Managing risks has cost implications. When risks are not properly expressed in bidding documents, they can significantly affect the outcome of the procurement exercise.

Jamshid Umarov
Senior Procurement Officer
Uzbekistan Resident Mission
PPFD, ADB



FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT



Robust financial management is the backbone for project implementation activities—it ensures that funds can support technical and safeguard goals. Weaknesses in financial management (FM) readiness, such as the absence of agreed funds flow mechanisms or budget allocations, pose substantial risks to the entire project. If a project cannot finance its activities duly and timely, a chain reaction of delays is triggered, which spreads across procurement and safeguards and which can result in work stoppages or contract claims.

Monitoring financial data provides essential early warning signals for broader cross-functional risks. This action moves beyond mere fiduciary compliance to track overall implementation health. Low budget utilization, large budget variances, slow replenishment of funds, or unpaid invoices often signal underlying procurement delays, impending contractor claims, or stalled safeguard payments. Furthermore, a lack of reconciliation between project and bank records or a decline in financial reporting quality can limit a management unit's ability to detect and mitigate these emerging bottlenecks before they undermine development outcomes.

The most effective and frequently implemented mitigation measure is the early assignment of qualified financial staff. These professionals act as the primary drivers for all subsequent implementation arrangements. They drive essential systems such as accounting mechanisms, internal controls, and the development of specialized financial management manuals. Their presence ensures that the project implementation unit has the necessary institutional capacity required to manage complex funding structures from day one.



Financial management indicators are implementation indicators.

Elbek Yusupov

Financial Management Specialist
Kyrgyz Republic Resident Mission
PPFD, ADB

SAFEGUARDS



Don't have a contract ready if your site isn't ready.

Sophio Omanadze

Safeguards Specialist (Social)
Office of Safeguards
ADB

Safeguard readiness requires the early and comprehensive identification of social and environmental impacts before any civil works or procurement begins. This entails allocating adequate time and resources for impact assessments and ensuring that all necessary safeguard instruments are prepared during the appraisal stage. When these assessments are rushed, unanticipated impacts often emerge during implementation, leading to costly delays, international scrutiny, and a breakdown of trust among local communities.

Safeguard risks identified at appraisal, particularly those involving resettlement and social impacts, are likely to escalate when they are tied to delayed or evolving engineering designs.

Because impact assessments depend on detailed technical outputs, any delay in the engineering design pushes back the preparation of safeguard instruments. Mapped timelines can ensure that the availability of detailed engineering designs feeds into impact assessments, which in turn informs a realistic contract award process.

Safeguard requirements must be integrated into bidding documents so that contractors can budget for mitigation costs. Bidders are highly sensitive to these risks, and failing to include safeguard responsibilities into the contractual framework leaves contractors without the necessary understanding or budget to manage anticipated impacts during construction. This omission frequently results in significant penalties, budget overruns, and implementation challenges when grievances arise.

Contractors should not enter project sites until resettlement and environmental compliance are completed. Granting site access to a contractor before safeguard measures are completed—such as the full payment of compensation to affected persons—often leads to grievances, legal disputes, and the total stoppage of civil works. Ultimately, safeguards, design, and procurement must be managed as interconnected workstreams, following the core principle of never having a contract ready before the site is legally and socially cleared.



7. Risk Management in Action: Lessons from Successful Project Implementation Practices [Case Studies]

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We have built an excellent team with good management skills. We try to maintain team stability, and all the team members have stayed from preparation stage until now.

Hou Beilei
Staff
Project Management Office
People's Republic of China

The Guangxi Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Agricultural Project represents **a pioneering effort in international finance by utilizing the first Renminbi-denominated ADB sovereign loan and integrating a dedicated ESG evaluation framework.** This innovative approach leverages SHIBOR interest rates to reduce financing costs and promote the internationalization of the Renminbi. By tying loan interest rates to ESG performance scores, the project incentivizes agricultural enterprises to adopt greener and more socially responsible operating models.

The project maintains stability through comprehensive risk management and a highly experienced, multi-disciplinary management team. To manage foreign-funded projects, the Guangxi administration established a dedicated leading group and ensured that project management officers were retained throughout the five-year preparation stage. This stability, combined with continuous professional development and collaboration with technical assistance experts, helped the team manage diverse risks ranging from issues in financial auditing to procurement.

The project continuously adapts to tackle implementation issues, such as complex documentation requirements and shifting sub-project eligibility. Many agricultural enterprises initially found the ESG assessment data requirements complicated. This prompted the creation of a "one-stop working list" to simplify procedures. Furthermore, the project team has had to reconcile ADB policies and domestic regulations. It also dealt with risks arising from the long project preparation period, which could discourage some enterprises from participating, as well as the presence of other domestic financing channels that offer financial products to these enterprises.

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Choosing Results-Based Lending is not only a choice of financing method, but also a choice of reform path.

Ding Tao
Executive Director
Project Management Office
People's Republic of China

Scientific design and thorough preparation are essential foundations for project success, including solid preparation, reliable data, and a scientific outcome framework that balances reform goals with implementation capacity. People's Republic of China's results-based lending (RBL) package was aligned with the Xi'an Preschool Education Development Plan (2019–2025), so that it can complement national and municipal inclusive education policies. It also used authoritative data and measurable, verifiable indicators to establish a clear baseline for quality implementation.

Efficient cross-departmental coordination and strong professional partnerships are crucial for transforming project design into actual results. Because RBL projects involve various government sectors—such as education, finance, and natural resources—a coherent organizational mechanism and a stable leadership group are necessary. A "project implementation community" that includes the government, professional consultants, and independent verification institutions, provides the technical support and objective evaluation needed during implementation. To improve efficiency, the project implemented a synchronized budget management and full-process auditing throughout the project lifecycle. Moreover, the project used a risk mechanism centered on risk identification, adjustment, and scientific decision-making. Early intervention—such as advance assessment of land acquisition issues and the use of domestic funds while awaiting loan disbursement—can help avoid implementation delays.

The value of the RBL model lies in its ability to drive institutional innovation and create long-term, sustainable development. Rather than just focusing on capital investment and engineering, the model emphasizes a management philosophy that prioritizes institutional construction and policy innovation. This approach has enabled the Xi'an project to generate replicable and scalable achievements, such as climate-friendly kindergarten guidelines and improved educational governance, which provide the blueprint for future preschool education reforms.

Note:

This summary is based on an AI-generated English translation of the original presentation in Chinese; it may contain some inaccuracies.



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



The Sindh Emergency Housing Reconstruction Project stands as the world's largest post-disaster housing initiative, targeting the reconstruction of 2.1 million resilient houses to benefit over 15 million people from the most vulnerable communities. This massive undertaking utilizes **environment-responsive and multi-hazard designs to ensure an inclusive recovery** for those displaced by the 2022 floods.

The project prioritized the early identification of governance risks, with a focus on institutional capacity, fiduciary management, and sustaining community ownership. To mitigate these, the team

established a special purpose vehicle utilizing market-based staffing and strategically outsourced operational tasks to specialized experts. This approach allowed the project to maintain focus on strategic oversight while ensuring that complex technical, legal, and social safeguards were managed by those with specialized expertise.

Stringent fiduciary controls and a transparent management information system (MIS) were implemented to ensure financial accountability and prevent corruption. By engaging all "Big 4" auditing firms in the country and utilizing technology-driven validation protocols, the project maintained rigorous internal and external oversight of its multi-billion-dollar portfolio. Furthermore, financial risk was minimized by linking cash grants directly to the achievement of specific construction milestones rather than providing lump-sum payments.

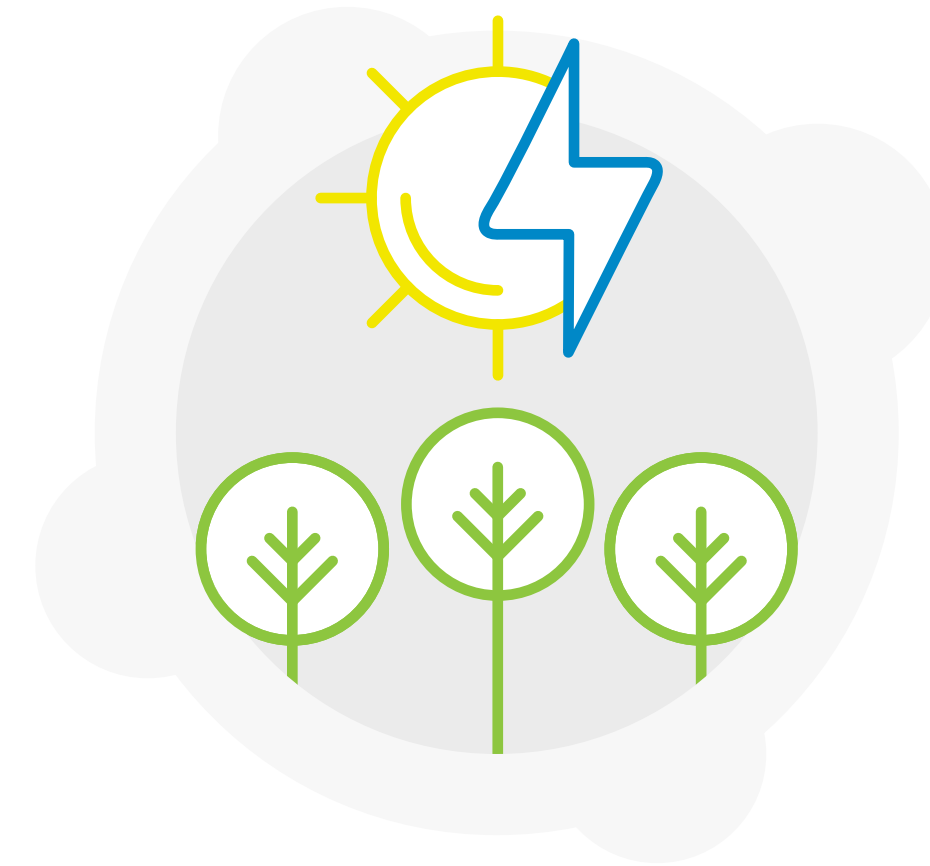
Sustaining community ownership through embedded implementation partners and proactively managing supply chain constraints were vital for operational resilience. The project engaged nongovernment organizations (NGOs) with historical presence in the communities and formed over 40,000 village reconstruction committees to facilitate social cohesion and local support. To mitigate operational risks like price gouging and material shortages, the team synchronized construction activities with provincial production cycles and established a robust grievance redress mechanism to address complaints in real-time.



This experience has helped us demonstrate that even highly complex post-disaster reconstruction programs can achieve scale, speed, and quality when risk management is integrated into project design at the very onset.

Sajida Ayaz

Chief of Foreign Aid and Project Director
Project Implementation Unit
Sindh Public Resources for Inclusive Development
Pakistan



8. Risk Management in Action: What Can Go Wrong If Risks Are Not Managed Well [Case Studies]



Adopting a proactive "traffic light" monitoring system enables managers to track performance indicators and take timely action before implementation issues affect development outcomes.

Anders Pettersson
Country Operations Head
Georgia Resident Mission
Central and West Asia Regional Department
ADB



Implementing robust readiness filters during project preparation is vital for identifying implementation gaps and ensuring that institutional and governance schedules are synchronized. These filters clarify the processing steps for both implementing agencies and ADB staff, and they identify pending actions before a project is even approved. Because governance processes can evolve, these filters must remain living documents that are updated to reflect the current operational environment. ADB provides a range of lending facilities and technical assistance (TA) resources that can support projects throughout the preparation and implementation stages.

An effective monitoring system allows project teams to identify performance trends and address risks before they undermine a project's overall success. By utilizing a **"traffic light" system to track indicators such as contract awards, disbursement, progress in planned project outputs, financial management and safeguards compliance,** project leaders can distinguish between projects that are on-track and those requiring immediate intervention. This systematic validation helps us determine if specific sectors face long-term issues that require action.

Prioritizing institutional readiness and continuous capacity building is critical in managing risks associated with personnel turnover and shifting government priorities. Even projects with strong technical designs can struggle if the implementing agency lacks experience or if frequent changes in leadership lead to delays in contract signatures and disbursements. Consequently, providing early and ongoing training—starting right at the project concept stage—is essential to ensure that partners remain aligned on the project's intended outcomes.



Project risk indicators are not just reporting arrangements. They are management signals for actions.

Chandra Mohan Arora
Country Operations Head
Mongolia Resident Mission
East Asia Regional Department
ADB

Mongolia's project portfolio has grown, but project risks have also increased. Lending has increased from about \$500 million a year to nearly \$700 million this year, and the active portfolio has grown from about \$1.5 billion in 2022 to nearly \$2.5 billion. Transport, water, urban, and human and social development are the largest sectors. Projects at risk increased to 22 percent in 2025 but later fell to 14 percent following efforts to further improve project readiness.

The three case studies illustrated how risks that are not identified and managed early can lead to implementation delays and weaker project performance. Common challenges included low project readiness, procurement delay and contract management issue, weak implementation capacity, design and scope changes, delays in meeting safeguard and land-related requirements, inadequate coordination among stakeholders, impact of external shocks and projects resilience, cost escalations, and unresolved operation and maintenance arrangements. In some cases, projects had reached close to 90% of their planned implementation period while achieving only about 50% of their intended progress, highlighting the significant impact of unmanaged risks on project delivery and outcomes.

Early risk management and strong project readiness are essential for successful implementation. Unmanaged risks can lead to delays, cost overruns, reduced project scope, failure to achieve project objectives, poor use of loan funds, low project ratings, and weaker confidence in the executing agency. It is important to identify risks early, update risk assessments throughout implementation, match project size to the executing agency's capacity, select the right lending modality, avoid overly complex project designs, and include sustainability and implementation capacity during project design.



9. Guiding Risk-Informed Implementation – ADB’s Experience In The Road Sector of Kazakhstan [Presentation]



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If a project is rated for attention or at risk, the next question should be what exactly is the issue, what evidence supports it, and who will act, by when and how, and who will monitor the progress.

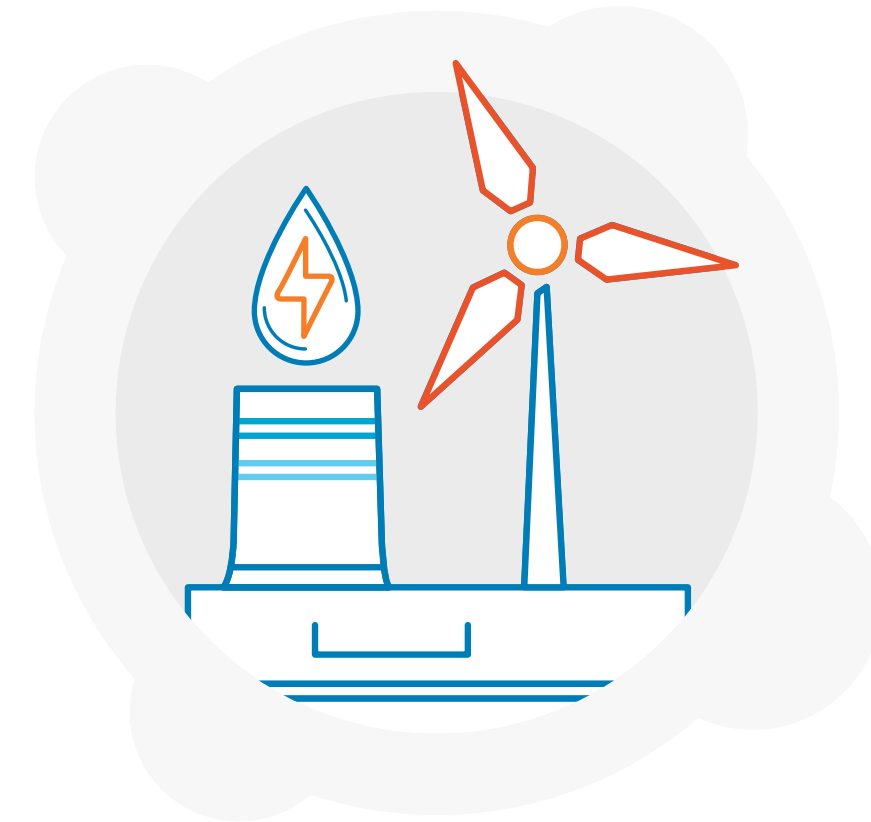
Alibek Abdrakhmanov

Country Operations Head
Kazakhstan Resident Mission
Central and West Asia Regional Department
ADB

Risk informed implementation helps teams identify and address problems before they become major issues. Risks often appear gradually during project implementation, even when a project looks ready at approval. ADB’s project performance rating system helps teams detect risks early through five indicators: outputs, contract awards, disbursement, financial management, and safeguards. These indicators provide an overall view of project health and show how problems in one area can affect others.

Risk ratings should lead to management action, not only reporting. Green ratings require normal monitoring, while amber and red ratings require corrective actions, clear responsibilities, deadlines, and follow up. Risk registers, dashboards, mission action matrices, and review missions support teams in tracking risks and implementing solutions throughout the project cycle.

Kazakhstan’s road projects show common implementation risks at different project stages. The cases highlight risks related to construction supervision, financial management, land acquisition, resettlement, project readiness, procurement, contractor mobilization, safeguards, and project closing. Effective risk informed implementation requires early risk identification, continuous monitoring, and timely action to resolve issues before they affect project results.



10. Regional Cooperation and Integration in Practice [Presentation]



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You have your own practices, but you can always learn some useful points from your neighbor.

Roman Mogilevskii

Senior Regional Cooperation Economist
Kazakhstan Resident Mission
Central and West Asia Regional Department
ADB

Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) is a regional cooperation and integration (RCI) platform with 11 member countries supported by ADB and other partners.

It started with transport, energy, and trade facilitation but expanded into five operational clusters covering economic stability, trade and economic corridors, infrastructure, agriculture and water, and human development. CAREC has implemented about \$58 billion in projects, with most investments in transport and energy.

CAREC is transforming transport corridors into economic corridors to support wider economic development. The Almaty–Bishkek Economic Corridor is an example, with projects in transport, water, tourism, and policy cooperation. Other initiatives include the Border Upgrades for Integration, Logistics, and Development (BUILD) Facility for border improvements, the Climate and Sustainability Project Preparatory Fund (CSPPF), the CAREC Digital Corridor, the CAREC Trade and Investment Facilitation Partnership (CARTIF), and the CAREC Advanced Transit System (CATS) with Information Common Exchange (ICE) for easier customs transit. CAREC also supports energy projects, including hydropower and green energy connections, and works on regional tourism development.

ADB identifies RCI projects through an RCI Scorecard that checks strategy alignment, regional benefits, and knowledge contributions. RCI projects can involve a country or multiple countries with regional benefits. Their implementation requires cooperation with neighboring countries, early communication, and coordination. These projects can create spillovers through knowledge exchange, shared practices, policy coordination, and reforms.

Since 1986 when it became a member-country, People's Republic of China (PRC) has had 310 ADB-supported projects. Among them, 37 are classified as International Cooperation Initiative (ICI) projects. PRC is involved in the Greater Mekong Subregion Program and the CAREC Program. These programs focus on transport, connectivity, trade facilitation, digital connectivity, energy connectivity, and climate action.

ICI projects face several implementation challenges.

The main challenges are cross-border coordination, differences in infrastructure and policies across borders, coordination among government agencies, implementation delays, and turning project outputs into regional integration outcomes. Stakeholders addressed these challenges through dialogues between neighboring countries, customs cooperation, better coordination, stronger project management offices, project monitoring, technical support, and capacity-building activities.

ICI provides important lessons for future projects. Strong institutional leadership and stable project teams improve implementation. Infrastructure investment should be combined with policy reform, trade facilitation, institutional cooperation, and private sector engagement. Cross-border readiness should be assessed early, and long-term coordination among countries is needed to achieve regional integration benefits.

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We maintain continuous dialogue and cooperation with counterparts at the other side of the borders, and we promote customs cooperation, logistics coordination, cross-border labor mobility, and development of smart border facilities.

Yun Zhou

Country Operations Head
People's Republic of China Resident Mission
East Asia Regional Department
ADB





We tackle inter-agency coordination issues—at the Ministry, the border crossing agency, and the customs clearance agency.

Chandra Mohan Arora
Country Operations Head
Mongolia Resident Mission
East Asia Regional Department
ADB

Regional projects play a vital role in strengthening connectivity, trade, and economic cooperation across countries.

However, they also face a distinctive set of implementation risks that often extend beyond those encountered in national projects.

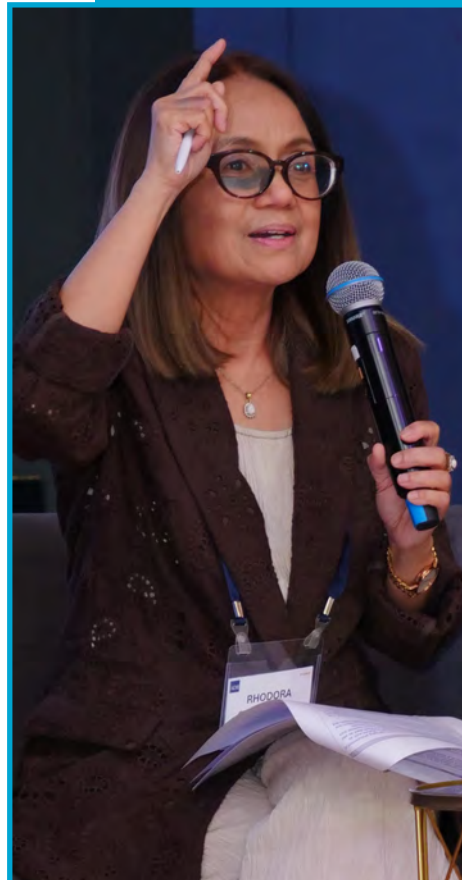
The discussion highlighted that **successful delivery of regional projects depends on effective coordination among multiple governments, agencies, and stakeholders.** Challenges can arise from differences in technical standards, regulations, planning processes, and institutional capacities across participating countries. Border infrastructure and connectivity projects, for example, often require coordination among customs, trade, transport, and infrastructure agencies on both sides of a border, making alignment of policies and implementation schedules critical.

Speakers also noted that **regional projects are more exposed to cross-border risks, including policy and regulatory changes, evolving country priorities, and external shocks that may affect one or more participating countries.** These risks can lead to delays, additional design adjustments, and implementation complexities if not addressed early.

The session underscored the **importance of proactive risk management, strong interagency coordination, continuous policy dialogue, and flexible implementation approaches.** Early identification of risks and sustained collaboration among stakeholders are essential to keeping regional projects on track and maximizing shared development benefits.

Regional projects have a unique set of risks that may not be applicable, or even visible, in national projects.

Rhodora Concepcion
Country Operations Head
Tajikistan Resident Mission
Central and West Asia Regional Department
ADB



11. Sector Risks in Focus [Breakout Sessions]

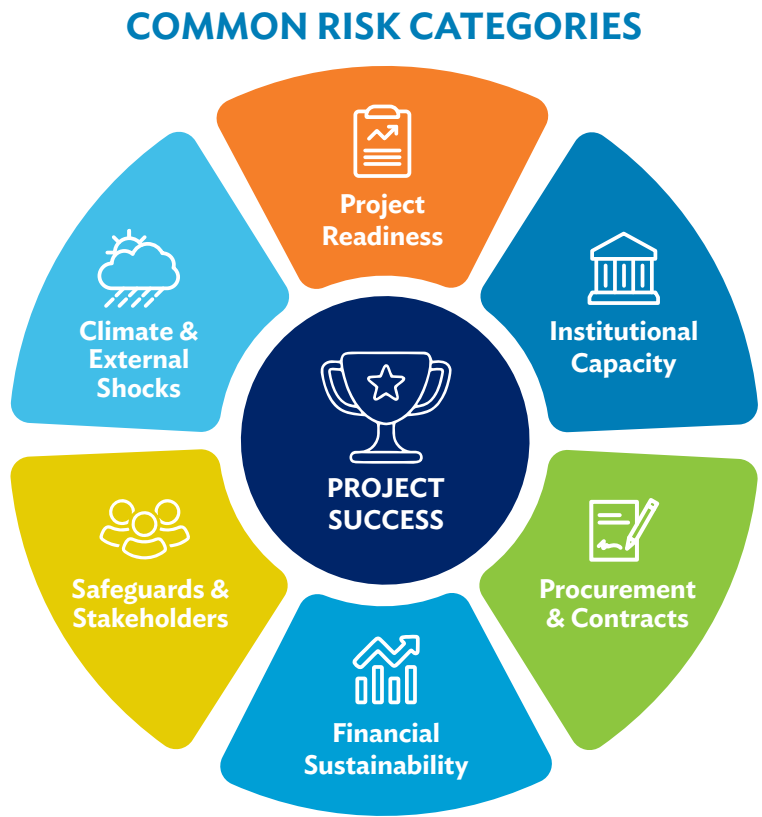
Common Challenges, Sector-Specific Solutions

While technical risks vary by sector, participants identified a consistent set of challenges across projects: **weak readiness, capacity constraints, procurement delays, safeguard issues, financing pressures, and coordination gaps.** The discussions showed that successful risk management depends on understanding how these risks manifest in different sectors and addressing them early through stronger project preparation and implementation practices.

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Project readiness and sound preparation are key to reducing the most serious project risks.

Chandra Mohan Arora
Country Operations Head
Mongolia Resident Mission
East Asia Regional Department
Asian Development Bank



The same risk categories appeared repeatedly across all five sector groups.

Sector Risk Hotspot Matrix

How Risks Manifest Differently by Sector

SECTOR	DISTINCTIVE RISKS	EFFECTIVE PRACTICES
 AFNR	Climate variability, water scarcity, market/ value-chain risks	Climate-informed planning, data sharing, stakeholder engagement
 Energy	Supply-chain disruptions, land acquisition, leadership turnover	Project Readiness Financing, early procurement planning
 Transport	Geotechnical uncertainty, legislative gaps, contract disputes	Early market engagement, design validation, readiness filters
 Water & Urban	Tariff sustainability, utility operations, community acceptance	Community engagement, third-party reviews
 Health & Social Development	Data quality, evolving needs, market fluctuations	PMU self-training, safeguard training, early cost analysis

Practices That Work

-  Readiness Filters

 Early market engagement

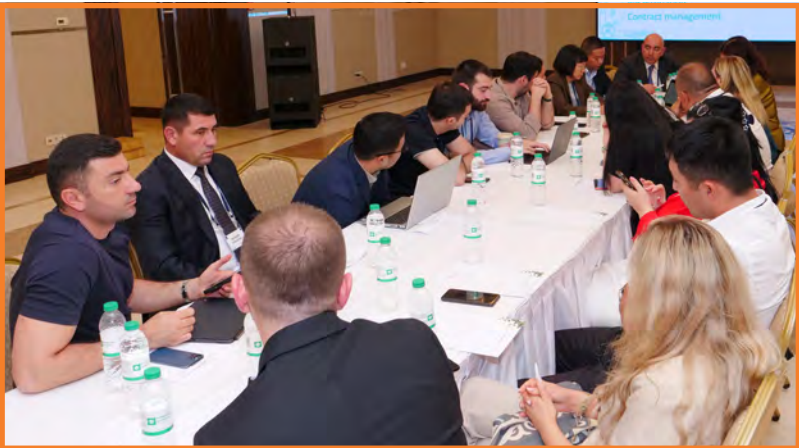
 Climate-informed planning

 Third-party design review
-  Strong project implementation units

 Continuous staff training

 Stakeholder engagement

 Lessons learned and knowledge capture



12. From Lessons to Practice: Forum Insights and the Rollout of Guide to Risk Identification and Planning (GRIP) [Presentation]



GRIP isn't another rulebook—it's a practical companion that helps teams anticipate risks, plan responses, and carry lessons forward.

Sevil Maharramova

Principal Portfolio Management Specialist
Portfolio Management Division
PPFD, ADB

The greatest opportunity to influence project outcomes exists during project preparation.

Early project stages provide the highest degree of flexibility to shape project design, implementation arrangements, procurement strategies, and mitigation measures. Forum discussions highlighted that many implementation challenges originate from weak institutional arrangements, unrealistic assumptions, design shortcomings, and insufficient attention to readiness. Investing effort upfront reduces uncertainty and helps avoid costly corrective actions later.

Successful risk management depends as much on people and institutions as on tools.

Participants repeatedly emphasized that recurring implementation challenges are often linked to weak ownership, limited accountability, staff turnover, and insufficient cross-functional coordination. Risk management works best when project teams, governments, and development partners openly discuss risks, assign clear responsibilities, and work collaboratively to address emerging issues. Building a proactive risk culture requires leadership, trust, and continuous learning.

Risk management must be treated as a continuous process rather than a standalone exercise.

Risks evolve throughout the project cycle, from country programming and project preparation through implementation, completion, and operations. Effective risk management therefore requires early identification, regular reassessment, and adaptation as project conditions change. The strongest outcomes are achieved when risk management becomes an integral part of project management rather than a compliance requirement.



Many project risks are recurrent and can be anticipated.

Sector discussions and case studies demonstrated that procurement delays, staffing challenges, safeguard issues, design deficiencies, and coordination bottlenecks frequently reappear across projects and sectors. While project contexts differ, many implementation challenges are predictable. Systematically capturing and applying lessons learned helps teams identify recurring patterns earlier and improve risk mitigation.

Knowledge management is essential to strengthening risk management practice.

Risks encountered, mitigation measures applied, and implementation experience gained throughout the project cycle create valuable institutional knowledge. Participants emphasized the importance of documenting, analyzing, and reusing this experience to strengthen future project design, implementation, and portfolio management. Effective risk management depends not only on managing current risks, but also on learning from past experience.

GRIP translates risk management principles into practical guidance for project teams.

Developed through 79 focused discussions and 11 workshops across 10 developing member countries, the Guide to Risk Identification and Planning (GRIP) provides practical approaches for identifying and prioritizing risks, designing mitigation measures, preparing and updating Risk Assessment and Management Plans (RAMPs), managing risks during implementation, and capturing lessons learned. Its objective is to strengthen risk-informed decision-making throughout the project cycle.

Digitalization can strengthen how risks are identified, monitored, and shared.

The rollout of GRIP includes plans for an interactive digital platform featuring practical guidance, standardized templates, lessons learned, and AI-enabled support tools. By connecting project experience with institutional knowledge and making guidance more accessible to practitioners, the platform aims to strengthen risk management and support more consistent implementation across countries, sectors, and projects.

13. Leveraging Cost-Recovery Technical Assistance for Peer Learning and Knowledge Exchange [Presentation]



The Knowledge and Experience Exchange Program (KEEP) is a flexible, demand-driven mechanism that enables Kazakhstan's ministries to request knowledge solutions or capacity development whenever needs arise. KEEP is an agile platform for addressing these emerging government priorities.

Joint governance strengthens trust and effectiveness. The program's equal partnership model strengthens coordination and transparency between ADB and the Government of Kazakhstan. Both sides "jointly review" applications and "jointly accept the results." This governance structure reinforces mutual understanding of procedures and constraints.

Knowledge cooperation generates scalable innovations. KEEP's work often evolves into larger thematic programs, such as the digital transformation of Kazakhstan's statistics agency. Earlier collaboration on e-commerce statistics led to a broader, multi-year initiative to improve methodologies and adopt alternative data sources. This demonstrates how targeted knowledge support can catalyze system-wide modernization.



Where there is demand, KEEP is ready to meet it.

Genadiy Rau
Senior Economic Officer
Kazakhstan Resident Mission
Central and West Asia Regional Department
ADB



Our goal is not only to generate knowledge and share it, but to translate this knowledge into tangible development impact.

Yun Zhou
Country Operations Head
People's Republic of China Resident Mission
East Asia Regional Department
ADB

ADB's technical assistance in PRC has shifted towards innovation and knowledge solutions. Over time, TA support evolved from institutional strengthening and socioeconomic transformation to policy research, case studies, and innovative pilots. This follows PRC's macroeconomic development. The shift sets the foundation for understanding why new financing and knowledge-sharing mechanisms have become essential.

The cost-recovery TA mechanism enables continued access to ADB expertise amid a decline in financing. As grant resources for the PRC decreased, ADB and the government adopted a co-financing model—typically 50/50—to sustain demand for global knowledge and technical expertise. This transition highlights the growing importance of knowledge platforms that amplify the value of these investments.

Knowledge sharing through the Regional Knowledge Sharing Initiative (RKSII) is becoming a central pillar for transferring PRC-ADB experience to other developing member countries (DMCs). RKSII organizes seminars, forums, study tours, and publications that disseminate practical lessons—from air quality management to digital innovation—to countries such as Azerbaijan, Mongolia, and Pakistan. Building on this momentum, future efforts aim to translate shared knowledge into tangible development impact across the region.



14. Country Action Plans, Discussions and Reflections

ARMENIA



Strengthen project preparation to ensure future infrastructure investments have a solid foundation. Conduct thorough due diligence, early-stage investigations, and reliable data collection before launching any major initiative. This foundation allows projects to avoid slow progress, reduce uncertainty, and create realistic timelines and designs that match on-the-ground conditions.

Improve risk management and day-to-day monitoring. There should be continuous oversight, adaptive decision-making, and flexibility to adjust plans when conditions change. Strengthening legal frameworks—such as eminent domain legislation for land acquisition—is essential for avoiding delays, especially in large transport projects. Keep implementation teams closely engaged and aligned with project needs.

Prioritize capacity building. Every project ultimately serves people, and success depends on skilled, experienced staff who can manage risks, solve problems, and adapt to evolving requirements. Continuous learning, cross-country exchanges, and collaboration with regional partners are key to long-term project quality.

“

It's very important to understand who the beneficiary is. For all our projects, it's a human being. We need to focus on the person who will ultimately benefit from the project.

The importance of this forum is not to go through the guidance, policies, and manuals, which we do every day anyway. Rather, it is an opportunity to learn from practical experience, exchange knowledge, find solutions, and share what we know.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



Strengthen project design and financial sustainability. In PRC, many projects were canceled due to shifting macroeconomic conditions, high foreign-currency interest rates, and foreign exchange rate risks. The Ministry of Finance now requires more rigorous project preparation and conducts financial sustainability assessments for local governments. Currency-conversion options are also being used to reduce loan-related financial pressure.

Efficient implementation periods. PRC aims to prepare sub-projects early, anticipate scope adjustments, and maintain continuous communication across multiple government departments. This is essential because policy shifts, cost overestimation, and safeguard issues—such as land acquisition delays—often result to changes in project scope and timelines.

Capacity building and institutional strengthening. PRC recognizes that many county- and municipal-level project management offices or PMOs lack experience, so ongoing training for PMO staff and local consultants is prioritized. Personnel requirements can also be included in the PAM to ensure that qualified, professional staff are consistently assigned to ADB-supported projects.

“

We should not fear the risk... we have to embrace it and have a proactive attitude in identifying, monitoring, and managing it.

I have made many new friends, not only in the China team, but also from other countries. I wish you a happy journey back home.

GEORGIA*



Strengthen project design, because it is the foundation that determines how implementation unfolds. A readiness tool can be used to establish clear indicators early and help teams assess risks more accurately and align on realistic goals, scope, and timelines.

At procurement stage, define clear and realistic requirements to select the right contractor. Even with strong design and capable engineers, the project can fail if the contractor lacks the necessary skills and equipment. Choosing the right partner is seen as a decisive factor in ensuring that on-the-ground work proceeds smoothly and responsibly.

During implementation, use realistic timelines, thorough multi-layer design reviews, and clearly defined project scope. Risks vary by location, geology, and project type. Hence, tools like GRIP are valuable for tasking and coordination. Finally, Georgia* will have proactive communication campaigns with residents to understand their concerns, explain project benefits, and reduce community-related delays during construction.

*This was a joint discussion of Azerbaijan and Georgia delegates.



A project may be challenging, but it should nevertheless have realistic timelines and achievable targets for the implementing unit.

We need to communicate with local residents to clearly understand their issues and for us to explain the project and its benefits.

KAZAKHSTAN



We share the same issues and the same problems. And that is reassuring in a way, because we can all learn from each other.

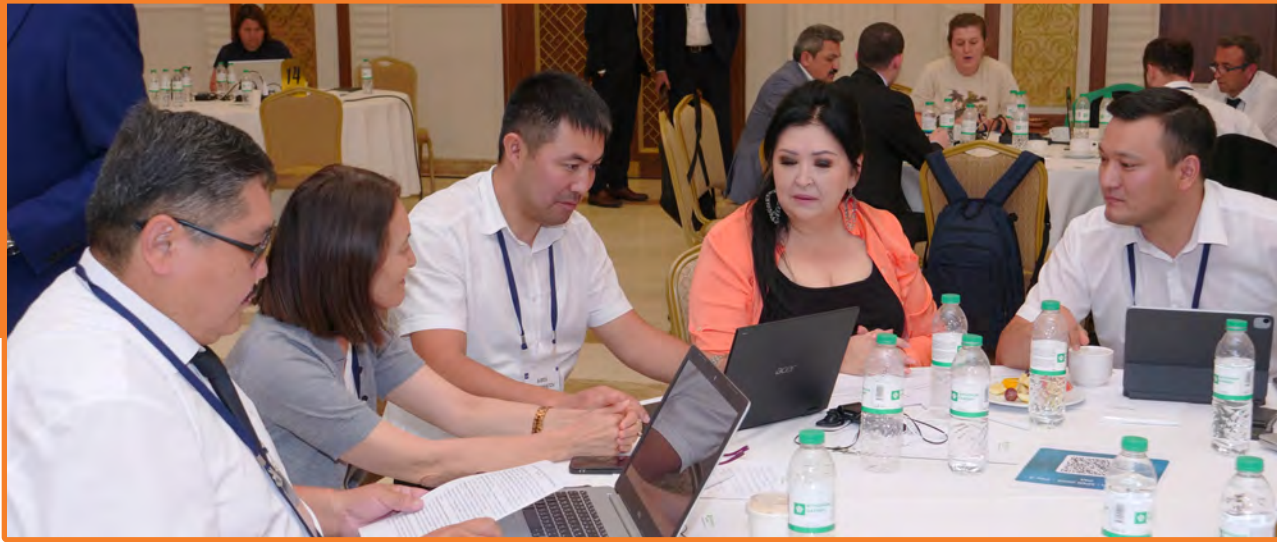
I'm really grateful that this Forum is hosted in Kazakhstan this year. I hope you enjoyed it, and I'm very grateful for you all for coming.

Shared challenges. The risks and problems in Kazakhstan's water-infrastructure projects are similar to those in other countries. Managerial issues, political and institutional shifts, and changes in leadership are common across countries.

Shared learning. Because these challenges are common, participants can learn from one another's experiences and approaches.

Collective problem-solving. Realizing that no one is alone in facing these obstacles opens the door to solving them together.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC



Note: This summary is based on an AI-generated English translation of the original presentation in Russian; it may contain some inaccuracies.

The Kyrgyz Republic faces significant infrastructure challenges primarily due to its mountainous geography and exposure to seasonal natural hazards. Because more than 90 percent of the country is mountainous, projects encounter high logistical costs for transporting materials and personnel. This terrain also subjects construction to environmental risks such as heavy snowfall, avalanches, and mudflows, which can cause major disruptions to project delivery.

Technical and administrative issues, plus the impact of climate change, further complicate the planning and execution of infrastructure projects. Melting glaciers pose long-term risks, and standard engineering designs must be adapted to local geological conditions for them to work effectively. Furthermore, legal processes like land acquisition and compensation payments require close coordination between government agencies to prevent schedule delays.

Financial volatility and institutional limitations are major categories of risk that necessitate stronger management and regional cooperation. Inflation and rising material costs have led to budget increases of approximately 30 percent for some projects, including in one large-scale road project. While these risks cannot be entirely eliminated, they can be managed through improved procurement practices, better planning, and the exchange of practical experiences with neighboring countries.



Our experience has shown that some risks cannot be eliminated completely, but they can be managed more effectively through better planning, stronger institutions, and knowledge exchange between neighboring countries.

We have learned a great deal over the past three days, and we look forward to applying these lessons in our own projects and continue sharing our experience with our partners.

MONGOLIA



Strengthen capacity for sector-specific risk management, especially at the project preparation stage, so that major risks are identified early and mitigation measures are built into project design rather than added reactively. This includes closer collaboration with ADB and development partners for practical guidance and knowledge sharing.

Strengthen institutional ownership. It is crucial to boost the capacity of project implementation units, but Mongolia will at the same time aim to progressively integrate project management functions into executing agencies. This ensures long-term institutional capacity, continuity from formulation to implementation, and stronger government leadership over development projects.

Adopt a fully life-cycle approach to risk management—from preparation to implementation and beyond project completion. For example, there will be particular focus on post-completion risks such as asset transfer, operation and maintenance, and clarity of institutional responsibilities, in order to ensure that project benefits are sustained well into the future.



Good risk management starts long before project implementation. It requires strong institutional partnership and continuous collaboration.

It's been a great honor for Mongolia to participate in this regional forum. Not only to share what we achieved and what we are doing to strengthen project risk management, but also to learn from the experience of other countries in the region.

PAKISTAN



Set up a national and provincial risk memory bank, which is a centralized dashboard that records, tracks, and updates project risks throughout the project cycle—from concept and design to implementation and completion. This system will integrate with RAMP and risk registers to ensure that lessons learned are not lost and that recurring issues such as weak project readiness, institutional capacity gaps, climate vulnerabilities, and coordination challenges are systematically addressed.

Strengthen institutional capacity. This includes introducing pre-negotiation risk clinics, dedicated sessions for risk identification at early design stages, and practical RAMP training for all EAs and IAs. By learning from past projects and embedding structured risk discussions into routine processes, institutions can better anticipate challenges and respond proactively.

Create specialized roles and tools for risk management, supported by multilateral development banks (MDBs). Forming a dedicated pool of risk management experts and developing tailored modules will help agencies design more resilient projects. Together, these actions aim to build a culture where risk management is continuous, collaborative, and deeply embedded in institutional memory.



Risk should be identified at an early stage, even before loan negotiation and approval.

I would like to thank ADB for organizing these three days of extensive and knowledge-oriented exercise for all of us, and we have learned, really, a lot of things from this exercise.

TAJIKISTAN



Strengthen risk governance at national government level. This includes conducting thorough TA evaluations, developing sector-specific project concept cases, and establishing a structural project database. A cross-functional coordination matrix will help ensure alignment across technical, operational, and institutional work streams, so that risks are addressed at the earliest stages of project design.

Ensure clarity and ownership of project plan and indicators at implementing agency level. Preliminary design presentations for ministers and deputy ministers will ensure that targets, indicators, and expectations are understood from day one. The country can formalize agreements through memoranda of understanding (MOUs) during missions to ensure common understanding between sector ministries and ADB.

Focus on risk-based action at the project implementation level. A comprehensive risk-management and mitigation matrix can be developed, which will utilize digital tools—including AI—to strengthen monitoring and decision-making. The project implementation unit can also recruit a dedicated risk-management specialist and strengthen capacity across procurement, financial management, safeguards, climate, and other cross-cutting domains.



Risk mitigation measures should be clear, the timeline defined and integrated in project activities and indicators. They should not be generic.

Our main task as human beings is getting knowledge, and the second task is sharing it.

TÜRKIYE



Prepare a pre-readiness checklist, described as ensuring that “your car should be ready to start”. The checklist is intended to help gain time and avoid entering the traffic with an unprepared project.

Focus on risk management, framed through the analogy of driving a car: knowing the road, the air conditions, the traffic rules, and wearing a seatbelt. Türkiye highlights that risks must be taken into account carefully to avoid too many accidents or cause some accidents on the way.

Strengthen knowledge transfer and governance, which emphasizes the need for a very talented driver and the co-pilot, representing institutions and partners. Türkiye stresses the importance of transferring your experience to others in the system, ensuring that co-pilots and partners are prepared to support the journey when needed.

“

A pre-readiness checklist is not only about being ready for project approval, but about being ready for successful implementation.

I would like to thank the ADB team and all participants on behalf of my country.

TURKMENISTAN



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Even if you have a very nicely designed project, you still need someone to implement it. No matter how well-designed a project is, it can fail if you don't have the right person to implement it.

I would like to thank ADB for organizing this wonderful forum. It has been very useful for me personally, especially in the light of an ongoing ADB mission in our country.

Strengthen capacity to implement ADB projects effectively. Even well-designed initiatives can fail without a capable project implementation unit, and current institutional readiness remains limited. There is a need for training in procurement and safeguards, as well as harmonization between national procurement rules and ADB's policies.

Develop readiness filters that will help assess whether institutions are prepared to manage ADB-supported projects. This tool will guide decision-making, determine capacity needs, and ultimately reduce delays. Stronger technical guidance from international experts should be sought, especially on procurement and equipment specifications.

Continue the discussion with ADB on project challenges and constraints. Compile a comprehensive risk list and discuss this with ADB. Explore alternative operational models—such as using external implementing partners—to facilitate smoother and more timely project execution.

UZBEKISTAN



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*A successful project
does not start with
the signing of an
agreement.
It starts with high
quality preparation.*

Strengthen project preparation, make it the core requirement before any financing agreement is signed. There should be robust technical analysis, clear institutional arrangements, strong procurement systems, and link with environmental and social safeguards. This approach aims to prevent delays, cost overruns, and weak results by ensuring every project begins with an evidence-based foundation.

Adopt a dynamic risk-based approach across the entire project life cycle. Risks will be identified early, regularly updated, and paired with concrete mitigation measures, responsible agencies, and deadlines. ADB’s risk tools such as RAMP and GRIP will be used to improve monitoring, coordination, and timely corrective actions—especially in sectors with complex land, social, or contractor-related issues.

Apply these lessons in ongoing and upcoming projects, including major ecological and social initiatives such as the solid waste management program. Focus on assessing agency readiness, evaluating financial sustainability, improving procurement discipline, and strengthening environmental and social safeguards. This practical, risk-based approach is intended to ensure more effective use of public funds, better project outcomes, and stronger long-term cooperation with ADB and other partners.



15. Closing Remarks



Appreciation and recognition.

Gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan, ADB colleagues, and all participants whose engagement made the forum meaningful. Collective contribution reinforces the value of shared commitment and collaboration across the region, and active participation during the forum contributes to regional cooperation.

Risk management is an investment.

Managing risks is a way to ensure smoother, more predictable delivery. By designing projects for real-world implementation—not just approval—teams can better anticipate challenges and integrate realistic planning into their work. This interplay between appreciation and practice underpins the link between mindset and execution.

Be enablers of culture change. Talk about risks at the workplace, get staff to pay attention. Spotting risks early allows us to better steer a project towards development impact.

“

As an organizer, it's so satisfying to see how you digest, reflect, and translate what you learned into your daily work, and I really appreciate all the active participation. It's a great crowd.

Guoliang Wu

Director
Portfolio Management Division
PPFD, ADB

Strengthening a proactive risk culture is essential for project success. Across the discussions, one clear message emerged: projects rarely fail because risks exist—they fail when risks are identified too late or treated as criticism rather than leadership. Embracing early identification as a positive, professional practice builds a healthier project environment and reinforces a stronger risk culture.

Investing in preparation and institutional capacity leads to more resilient projects.

Building skills, leadership, and systems that treat risk management as a living, continuous process—from preparation to completion and beyond—helps ensure that lessons learned become known risks for future projects. This transition from reactive to proactive management strengthens credibility and protects the communities who depend on timely project delivery.

Effective risk management is ultimately a development effectiveness issue.

When risks are managed well, projects deliver real benefits to people, improve lives, and fulfill their development purpose. Carrying this renewed commitment forward—from Astana to our next assignment—means designing better projects, managing risks more effectively, and achieving stronger development results for those we serve.

“

We remain committed to supporting our developing member countries—not only through financing, but also through knowledge sharing, capacity building, and working together to identify, mitigate, and address risks.

Utsav Kumar

Country Director
Kazakhstan Resident Mission
Central and West Asia Regional Department
ADB



Thank You for Being Part of

#SuccessfulProjects 2026

