

Highlights of the Training



Introduction

The 2020 CSO Anchors Training aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of key ADB staff to engage effectively with CSOs in the pandemic context and using current ADB procedures throughout the project cycle. The target core participants of this 3-day training are the CSO Anchors or ADB social development, gender, economics and external relations specialists or officers who are also appointed as focal persons for civil society engagement (CSE) from both the headquarters and Resident Missions and who comprise the ADB CSO Cooperation Network. Select sessions of the training, particularly the dialogues with the ADB management and with CSO leaders, were opened to the rest of the ADB staff.

83 ADB staff participated in the training, 47 of whom are based in the Headquarters and 36 are based in the Resident Missions. On the average, 34 CSO Anchors consistently joined the entire 3-day training, while the rest of the ADB staff particularly joined the open sessions with the ADB Management/DGs and with CSO leaders. 16 participants had previously completed the online course on Deepening Civil Society Engagement (CSE).

Day 1, November 17, 2020

[Module 1] Visions: Reimagining Civil Society Engagement Post-Pandemic

12:00PM – 1:05PM

The panel of speakers composed of SDCC DG Woochong Um, SARD DG Kenichi Yokoyama and SERD DG Ramesh Subramaniam provided advice to CSO anchors on cooperating with CSOs and shared their own perspectives and experiences on how CSOs are contributing to

ADB's development targets and Strategy 2030. SERD CSO Anchor and economist for regional cooperation Pinsuda Alexander moderated the discussions. 83 participants joined this session.



Prior to the session, the NGOC received a number of questions from participants, which the DGs responded to in their key messages. These questions revolve around the following themes:

- The new roles of CSOs and new ways of collaborating with ADB under the current pandemic contexts.
- How to ensure technology will not alienate CSOs in our processes, particularly community-based organizations which don't have the same access.
- How can ADB procedures and systems be streamlined to facilitate CSO engagement in co-designing of projects and also influence the DMCs on the value addition of CSOs?
- Could ADB's Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund be made available for I/NGO consortiums, as at present it is only disbursed to the DMC governments?
- Due to travel restrictions, what sort of services will be required more of CSOs?

On the question about the APDRF, DG Um responded that at this time, the fund is designed to support DMCs. Nevertheless, support for CSOs particularly on DRRM initiatives could come through various technical assistance (TAs) and through various stages of project design, implementation and monitoring. He also specifically cited about the newly-approved TA on Mitigating the Impacts of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions, which will directly support ongoing response initiatives of CSOs on COVID-19.

The following are some of the key points raised by the DGs to respond to the above cited questions on engaging with advocacy and service provider CSOs in pandemic contexts:

- It is recognized that CSOs are usually the first to respond to community needs during disasters, which they also did in the current COVID-19 contexts.
- CSOs have knowledge of local contexts and can be ADB's eyes and ears on the ground, they can reach remote areas, identify our blind spots and provide neutral oversight. They

can therefore be tapped by ADB for monitoring projects particularly at this time that travel is restricted and ADB staff could not go on missions.

- CSOs have important inputs and perspectives at policy and project levels, and thus should be given space and opportunity to provide feedback on ADB's work. An emerging space for feedback and communication with CSOs is the digital space. ADB should therefore ensure that our digital space for feedback is transparent, inclusive and accountable.
- A challenge, however, is that the relations between governments and civil society are not always easy. ADB can support its DMCs in managing relations with CSOs and other stakeholders and provide a neutral space for dialogues between and among them.
- We should therefore shift our mindsets on civil society engagement (CSE) from 'need' to 'want' – from a ticking-the-box type of exercise because it is a requirement in our own processes to involving CSOs because it is the right thing to do to reach out to the communities impacted by ADB's work.

[Module 2] Stories of Change: Meaningful Civil Society Engagements

1:10 – 2:20PM

Through small group discussions, key CSO anchors from CWRD, EARD, PARD, SARD and SERD reported on their CSE experiences in 2020, citing both challenges and opportunities. Forty (40) participants joined this session.

Using the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach, facilitators Lainie Thomas and Oliver Chapman of NGOC captured the good practices and factors which facilitated involvement of CSOs in their portfolios and projects this year:

- Localizing staff training on CSE at RM level, including translating materials into local language
- Development of database of CSO partners and creating CSO Advisory groups
- Providing training on safeguards monitoring for CSOs
- Contracting CSOs in project implementation/delivery
- Involving CSOs in COVID-19 response in implementation or oversight committees
- Consulting CSOs in FCAS program review and strategy formulation
- CSE orientation for governments
- Outreach to CSO activities (e.g. participation in assemblies or activities of umbrella organizations)
- Finding alignment in objectives between ADB and CSOs
- DMC CSO desks and financial support for umbrella organizations
- Procurement guidelines are increasingly becoming flexible.

At the end of the day's sessions, graphic artist Desiree Dee of Tofu Creatives presented live graphic documentation of the highlights of discussions:



Below are the key points from the dialogue with CSO leaders:

- The COVID-19 pandemic is a game-changer, creating new demands and integrating advocacy, humanitarian and development work for CSOs. We should look at the current pandemic situation as an opportunity for positive and creative disruption or ‘a great reset’ of existing social, economic, political and environmental systems that perpetuate inequality, which have brought us to this situation in the first place.
- Even prior to the pandemic, many countries would not meet the SDGs targets and many governments were using authoritarian approaches that constrict civic space. These conditions were exacerbated with the pandemic.
- ADB as stated in its Strategy 2030 has an important role to usher this creative disruption by supporting its DMCs toward social inclusion and addressing inequalities. The pandemic is not only a health crisis but a multi-dimensional crisis which requires a comprehensive re-setting of the societies’ priorities and response.
- While CSOs and their work have been gravely affected by the pandemic, many were able to respond quickly to the needs of the most vulnerable communities that they are already working with according to the resources and capacities they have. Some had to shift their organizing and communication with communities through online platforms. We should look at communities and CSOs themselves as sources of solutions. However, they would need support in terms of education, capacity development and resources to continue their work on community empowerment. In particular, women’s organizations that are in the forefront of responding to community development needs and even to COVID-19 impacts are not receiving the appropriate support they need.
- Some recommendations from CSOs to ADB:
 - Create instruments that can support community-based and grassroots organizations which are in the frontlines of development work. Provide more flexibility in terms of funding support to CSOs and community-based organizations. Consider the situation and challenges of women in communities when developing projects.

- Support people's vaccine and make sure it is accessible to the most vulnerable countries and sectors and ensure that no one will profiteer from vaccination programs.
- Contribute to resetting the economy – address systemic factors that further exacerbate poverty and inequality from crisis to crisis. A comprehensive response is needed not only to the pandemic but also to climate change issues.
- Help address digital divide and support related locally-led initiatives such as telemedicine centers, online education and decentralized supply chains.
- Help protect civic space, which has now transformed in part into digital space, particularly the participation of the youth who are more adept in the use of information and communication technologies.

[Module 4] Learning Exchange: Special Topics on Civil Society Engagement

1:05 – 2:10PM

In breakout group discussions, participants discussed three (3) approaches on promoting and capturing meaningful civil society engagement (CSE) in ADB operations as below. Forty (40) participants joined this session or an average of fourteen (14) in each breakout group.

1. Youth Engagement for Development Results

Youth for Asia (YfA) Project Manager Joaquim Sanvictores presented YfA initiatives on involving young people in the project design stage with some ADB departments and thematic groups, as well as facilitating intergenerational dialogues between ADB officers/staff and young people on expanding opportunities for the youth in the informal, digital and green economy. Supported by TA9557-REG, the first TA dedicated to youth, the initiative engaged 28 youth consultants in 17 DMCs to leverage the voice, insight and action of the youth for the SDGs. YfA also worked with Plan International and AISEC to produce a publication that presents evidence of the youth's contributions to the SDGs designed to inform future programs and policies. The session also engaged participants to a discussion on how to involve the youth in future projects or activities using YfA's operational approaches Insight, Action, Voice. The YfA team also offered its services to the CSO anchors on designing projects that will integrate meaningful youth engagement (MYE).

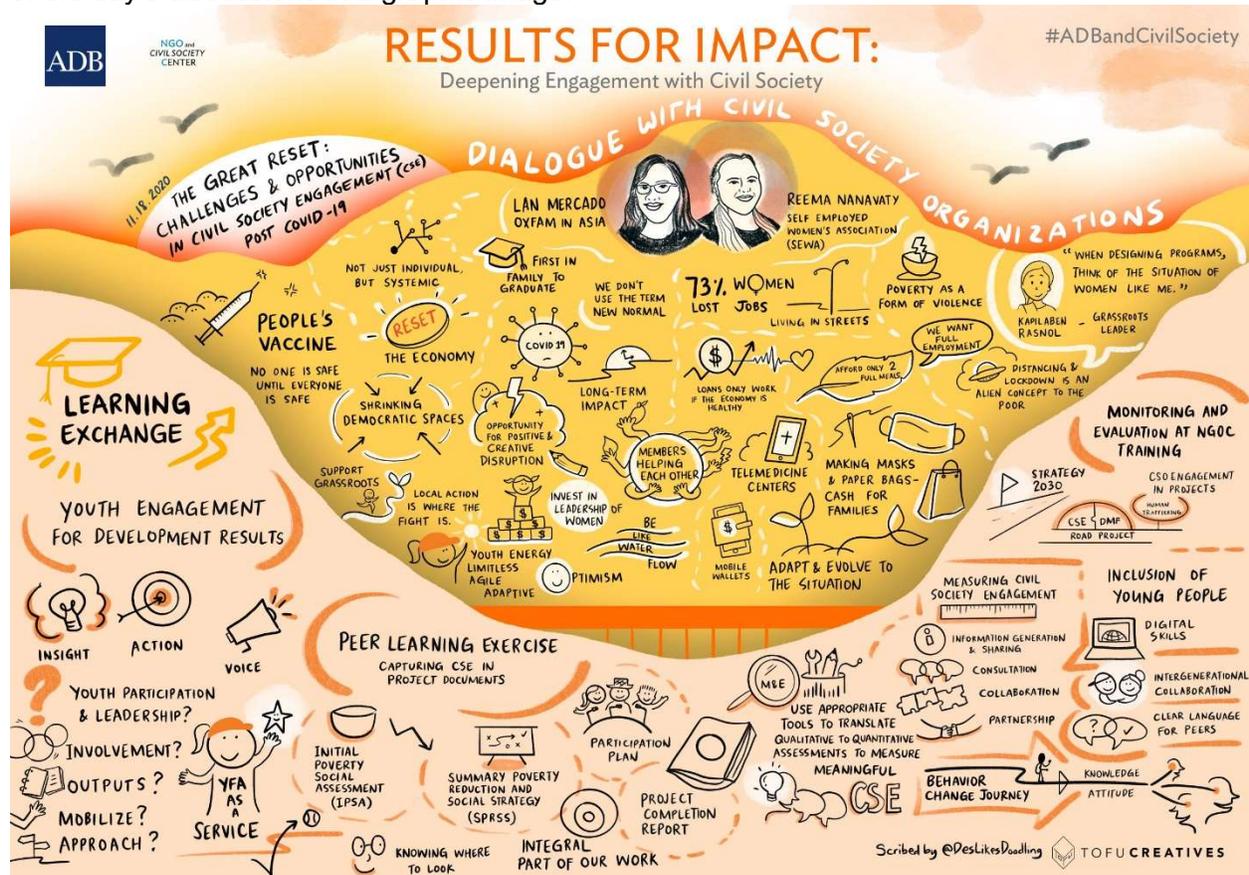
2. Capturing CSE in Project Documents

Lainie Thomas of NGOC facilitated an interactive exercise on how CSO participation is documented in ADB-financed operations. She also updated the participants that ADB is changing the way it captures civil society engagement (CSE) in the following project documents: IPSA, SPRSS, Participation Plan and PCR. In particular, the requirement for participation plan is now aligned with the definition of planned, meaningful CSE: CSE is planned if documented in SPRSS and/or RRP, GAP, safeguards document or PAM. 'Meaningful' is defined as CSE at high level on any approach, or any level of collaboration and partnership. ADB has also changed the way it is tracking CSE in its operations. In the past, CSE is measured as what the SPRSS or RRP reports the project is *planning* to do, which is usually reported in more than 90% of projects. Starting in 2020, the new way of measuring it is if CSE is delivered as reported in PCR. Lainie also discussed how the documents IPSA and SPRSS were being revised/updated to capture this new way of measuring CSE. The participants noted that the project managers and officers should hear of these changes and the process of capturing CSE as they would be directly involved in preparing these documents and planning and implementing actual engagement activities with CSOs.

3. M&E in Civil Society and Youth Engagement

Hyun Joo Yun from SPD presented about how meaningful civil society engagement is being measured under our Corporate Results Framework (CRF). In the past, ADB usually reported very high planned CSO engagement or average of 90% of sovereign operations at entry stage viz 62% at completed operations. Starting 2020, CSE indicator as measured in the CRF will focus on results or completed CSE as planned and will capture only High level of Information Sharing and Generation and High level of Consultation and any level of Collaboration and Partnership. Adam Sharpe of 21st Century Workshop, on the other hand, also introduced a new tool KAP Score framework on evidence-based M&E and how qualitative measures can be translated into quantitative measures that can be tracked over time. He also discussed how the Theory of Change framework can be used to capture and apply innovation as we implement projects. These tools are found useful especially in defining and measuring what ‘meaningful’ CSE means.

Towards the end of the day’s sessions, Desiree of Tofu Creatives again presented the highlights of the day’s discussions in a graphic image:



Day 3, November 19, 2020

[Module 5] Power Up: The New Staff Instruction on Engagement with CSOs: A Guide to Involving CSOs in ADB Operations

12:00PM – 1:40PM

NGOC staff consultant on civil society engagement Emma Walters delivered an interactive online session on the salient features of the new draft Staff Instruction (SI) on promoting cooperation with CSOs and facilitated hands-on exercises on cases and examples by which ADB staff/project officers can integrate civil society participation in the design, implementation and review of their portfolios and projects. There were 39 participants for this session, with approximately 33 CSO Anchors and focals from ADB headquarters and resident missions.

Emma discussed about what participants wanted out of the SI, what an SI is and what it is designed to do, how the SI could assist participants in their day-to-day work and a brief introduction of various parts of the SI. This was followed by a Q&A session which included questions such as how the SI will be introduced to the broader ADB audience (particularly project officers) and what is the approval process for the SI.

After the Q&A, the session broke into five breakout groups, each led by a NGOC staff member, to examine in more detail different sections of the SI. Each group was asked to consider the following two questions:

- What are the salient points to note in your section of the draft SI?
- What would your group like to see in the Guidance Note on CSE?

With the support of the ADB staff and consultants, the group work via Zoom breakouts was reasonably successful. All participants were allocated a group (about 5-7 per group), and the groups were able to view the slides and send their report back on what they understood as the key features of the SI.

In addition, the following suggestion and question were recorded:

- Prepare a sample TOR for consultants who are completing the SPRSS.
- On the SPRSS: The overall boxes seem to have two focuses - participation and empowering the poor - as well as civil society organizations (which may not be focused on the poor - such as Chambers and Industry Groups). Why not just change the section to focus on CSOs?

The following were the key takeaways from this module:

For the Staff Instruction:

- Review Policy section, particularly why safeguards is singled out
- Why is just JFPR mentioned – consider inclusion of other funds
- Address projects with no CSE plans
- Consider the use of the word “may” and whether anything that is not mandatory is better included in the Guidance Note
- Consistency and standards – what level of CSE is required, recommended and optimal?

For the Guidance Note:

- Consider a linked document to the CPS template on CSE
- Guidance on when relations between DMC Government and civil society is suboptimal, and how to consult with CSOs, entry points for CSE in these situations

- Roles and responsibilities at the RM level, including establishing civil society advisory groups
- Expand on CSE in relation to other funds other than just JFPR
- Case studies on how CSE has been mainstreamed (including in loan agreements)
- More detail on CSE in private sector operations
- More information on CSO outreach strategies
- Consider training for CSOs on how to monitor projects
- Details on funds allocated for CSE in project
- Consider a CSE monitoring matrix, like the GAP monitoring matrix, which is updated by the project team, attached to AM/MOU, to ensure adherence to CSE plans and report/document outcomes
- Advice on whether a CSE participation plan has the same 'weight' as other plans, like the GAP?
- Advice on how to respond when CSOs want to know 'what's in it for us?' [i.e. payment, per diems, etc.]
- Explain the differences between firms and CSOs
- How to train CSOs on business opportunities
- How to support social enterprises
- Explore avenues for CSE and promoting business opportunities, using the RMs and local experts, such as a portal, videos, EA/IA websites, social media: clear step-by-step guidance on how to bid for business opportunities
- Consistency and standards of CSE – what CSE is required, recommended or optimal (by project type; strategy level [ie yes for CPS, but not for COBP?]; risk level in terms of governance, safeguards etc.; by organization type e.g. corporate foundations, social enterprises which run like business – guidance on which of these are CSOs).

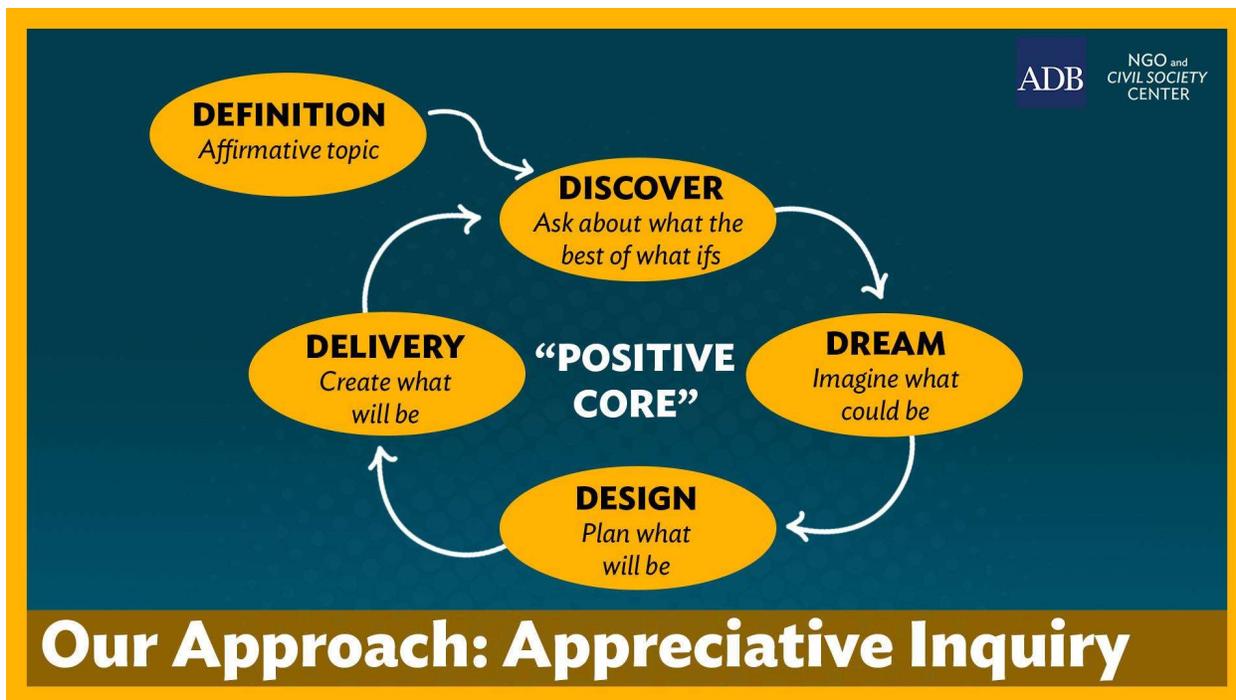
For the SPRSS:

- Prepare a sample TOR for consultants who are completing the SPRSS.
- The overall boxes seem to have two focuses - participation and empowering the poor - as well as civil society organizations (which may not be focused on the poor - such as Chambers and Industry Groups). Consider changing this section to focus on CSOs.

[Module 6] Level-up: Way Forward on Civil Society Engagement

1:40PM – 2:10PM

Overall facilitator Roselle Rasay of the NGOC provided a synthesis of the 3-day training using the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) framework and sought inputs from participants on upcoming opportunities by which they can apply insights and lessons from the training into their work.



Below are the inputs from participants following the AI steps:

- 1) *Our Affirmative Topic:* How to deepen civil society engagement in ADB portfolios and projects?
- 2) *Discovery: What works? What factors facilitate CSE in our work?*
 - Innovations: incentive fund to promote green farming practice
 - Staff training
 - CSO advisory groups
 - Training on safeguards monitoring for CSOs
 - CSO roster/database
 - CSOs in project delivery (DRRM training)
 - CSO involvement in COVID-19 response (oversight committee, implementation)
 - Consultations in FCAS strategy formulation
 - CSE orientation for governments (ARM)
 - CSO outreach (attend umbrella organizations' assemblies)
 - Alignment of objectives between ADB and CSOs
 - DMC CSO desks and financial support for umbrella orgs
 - Procurement guidelines are increasingly becoming flexible
- 3) *Dream: Imagine a future where CSE is perfectly achieved in ADB. What does it look like?*
 - Strategy 2030 is made concrete – asocial inclusion, poverty and inequality re addressed
 - There is a shift in our mindset on CSE from 'need' to 'want' – from a requirement to do CSE to desire to do CSE
 - We work with empowered civil society
 - ADB projects contribute to empowerment of community, especially of the women
 - Civil society groups are engaged in all projects

- 4) *Design: How to make this Dream a reality? Your ideas for action, system and process:*
- CSO Engagement Plan for RMs
 - Outsource to CSOs consultation processes, independent assessments
 - Involve CSOs as third-party monitors of ADB-supported projects
 - How to translate consultation results into concrete collaboration and projects?
 - Capacity assessments, training and targeted support for CSOs
 - More support for CSOs so they can apply for TA, consulting opportunities and projects
 - New modalities of CSE? Staff consultant, resource person, TA grants.
 - Manage/support better relations between DMCs and CSOs; ADB as advocate/bridge between DMCs and CSOs
 - Reset/disrupt existing social systems that perpetuates poverty and inequality
 - People's vaccine; protect against COVID-19 profiteering
 - COVID-19 response to support CSOs, MSMEs doing livelihood, employment, the same way that private sector is supported
 - Regional level operations framework including CSE, e.g. in SARD
 - CSO anchors inputting into the draft new SI on promoting CSO cooperation
 - Open the space for feedback from CSOs
- 5) *Deliver: Concrete steps you can personally make to make our vision of CSE a reality.*
- At this stage, CSO anchors were asked to identify opportunities or immediate steps they can do in the next 6 months where they can apply their key insights and takeaways from this training. The following are their commitments:
- Familiarize myself with the new SI.
 - Brief RM staff about this training.
 - Collate information from this training, particularly on further information needed on the guidance notes.
 - Help governments understand the importance of CSE and encourage them to involve CSOs in projects. ADB can be a bridge between DMCs and CSOs and offer to provide neutral spaces for dialogues.
 - Involve youth CSOs in our projects (will need support of ADB/NGOC on this).
 - Learning from the experiences of other RMs, renew conversations with CSO networks or umbrella organizations and map out CSO competencies in the country. Organize annual outreach events with CSOs.
 - Review relationships of new focal points with civil society.
 - Make sure to align our CSE engagement initiatives with Strategy 2030 and SDGs so it will get institutional support.
 - Continue consultations with CSOs on CPS as scheduled next year.
 - Consider allocating budgets for activities that help strengthen the relationship between anchors and CSOs in RMs. This can be through projects or through TAs.
 - Orient CSOs on ADB business opportunities and project cycle.
 - Expand the audience of this training to project managers and officers who have more direct engagement with CSOs.
 - Share the information with Development Service Exchange on how CSOs can be involved in ADB projects.

Closing Message

2:10PM – 2:20PM

Principal Social Development Specialist and Head of NGOC Chris Morris gave his synthesis of the 3-day events and his closing message. He acknowledged the speakers and facilitators we

had for the past 3 days for facilitating learning and discussions on promoting CSE in ADB. He also thanked the regional CSO anchors Pinsuda, Francesco, Cindy, Aida, Veronica and Beatrice for contributing to the design and delivery of the training program. He noted that we had the most number of participants this year for this training and thanked the CSO anchors for their active engagement in the discussions for the last 3 days. He also acknowledged some YfA team members who provided technical support at the backend which allowed NGOC to deliver this training online. Chris also mentioned of ongoing and upcoming activities in ADB where CSO involvement and the role of CSO anchors in promoting it will also be crucial such as on the Energy Policy Review, Safeguards Policy Review, FCAS program review and strategy formulation, and the newly-approved TA on Mitigating the Impacts of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions. He further acknowledged the important contributions of the participants in the providing inputs to the draft new SI on promoting cooperation with CSOs.

The following graphics by Tofu Creatives summarizes the key insights on how ADB can promote civil society engagement (CSE) in its operations from the 3-day training:

