

Workshop Session 4: On ADB's Engagement with CSOs

ADB's engagement with CSOs at policy, country, and project levels

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ADB

Emerging Macroeconomic and Governance Challenges and Opportunities

Workshop | 20–23 April 2026 | Manila, Philippines

ADB and Civil Society Engagement

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Outline

- ADB the Public Institution
- NGOC and our Engagement with CSOs
 - How ADB define CSOs
 - Key policies and intent
- How and Why ADB Engages with CSOs
 - Medium of engagement
 - Project level engagement
 - Areas where we engage
- Challenges Facing CSOs
- Knowledge and Resources

Overview of Our Public Institution

- The **ADB** is a **multilateral development bank (MDB)** established in 1966 under the **Agreement Establishing the Asian Development Bank (the Charter)**.
- **ADB was created to support its developing member countries (DMCs)** in reducing poverty and improving quality of life.
- It channels resources from **global capital markets to DMCs** through both **sovereign (public sector)** and **nonsovereign (private sector) projects**.
- **ADB is owned by 69 member countries (50 regional, 19 nonregional)**.

Strategy and Objectives



- The overarching vision of ADB’s long-term corporate strategy (Strategy 2030) is to achieve a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.
- ADB’s development objectives align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Financing for Development agenda, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction, and the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment
- The annual Development Effectiveness Review reports on ADB’s performance in achieving the goals of Strategy 2030
- A midterm review of Strategy 2030 was conducted in 2024 to adapt to a changing global landscape

Strategy and Objectives

The Strategy 2030 Midterm Review lays out **five strategic focus areas** where ADB can have a bold impact on poverty reduction and economic and social development



Climate Action

More than \$100 billion in cumulative climate finance (2019-2030) and for climate finance to reach 50% of the total committed financing volume, by 2030



Private Sector Development

\$13 billion of ADB's own account financing and all direct mobilization, including a minimum of \$4.5 billion in direct private capital mobilization, and 40% of sovereign operations contributing to private sector development by 2030



Regional Cooperation and Public Goods

30% of operations contributing to regional cooperation and integration, including those supporting public goods by 2030



Digital Transformation

Operations supporting digital transformation expected to grow year over year across sovereign and nonsovereign operations



Resilience and Empowerment

60% gender mainstreaming across sovereign and nonsovereign operations and 75% of operations supporting poverty reduction and inclusiveness by 2030

NGOC Role

- 1** **Connect CSOs to ADB resources and people**

- 2** **Knowledge sharing on civil society in ADB operations**

- 3** **Advocate and promote ADB/CSOs engagement in operations**

- 4** **Advocate for CSOs friendly system and process**

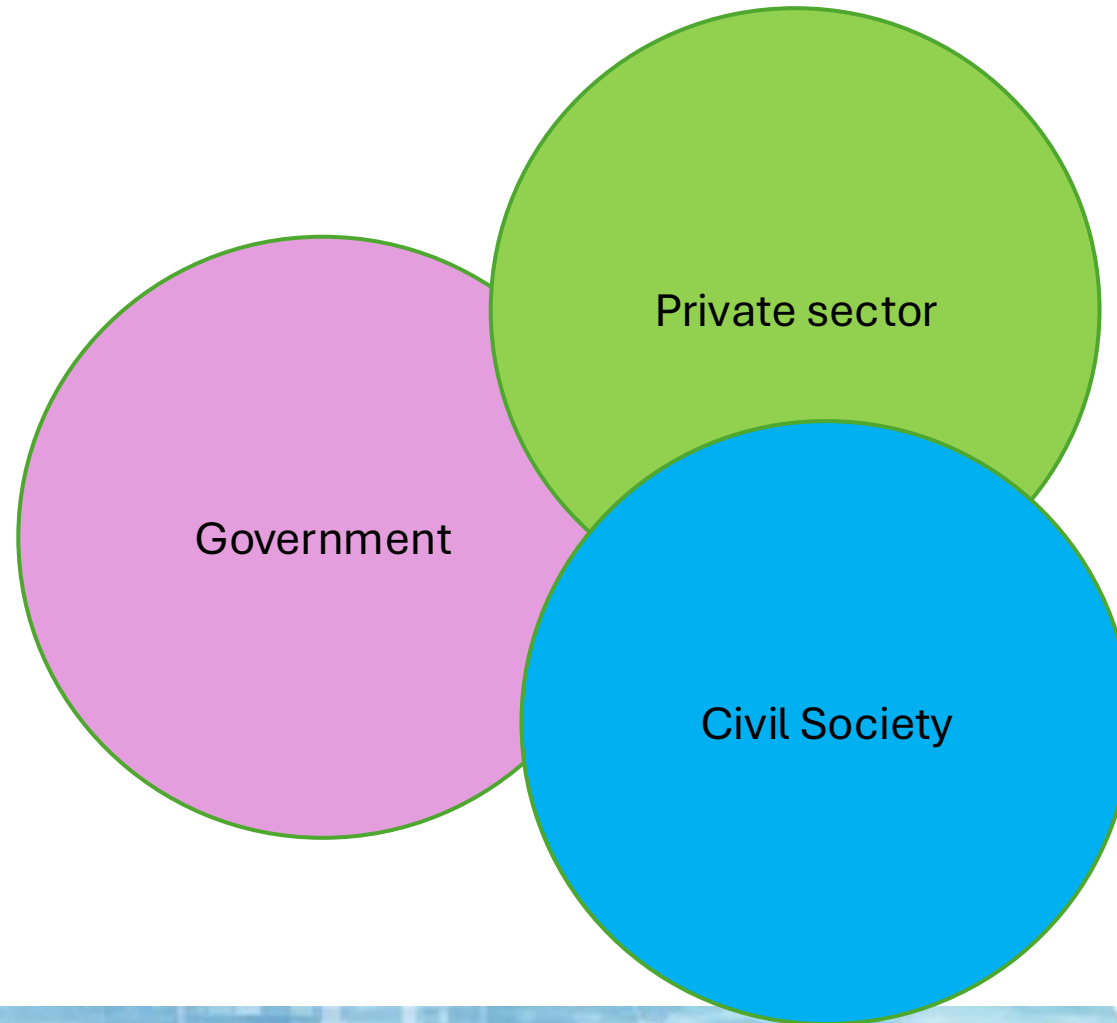
How ADB Defines Civil Society

The term “civil society organization” refers generically to organizations
not based in government, and
not created to earn profit

ADB defines CSOs as nonprofit organizations independent from the government, which operate around common interests. They vary in size, interests, and function, and include nongovernment organizations (NGOs), youth groups, community-based organizations, independent academic and research institutes, professional associations, foundations, faith-based organizations, people’s organizations, and labor unions. CSOs represent interests of their members or others.

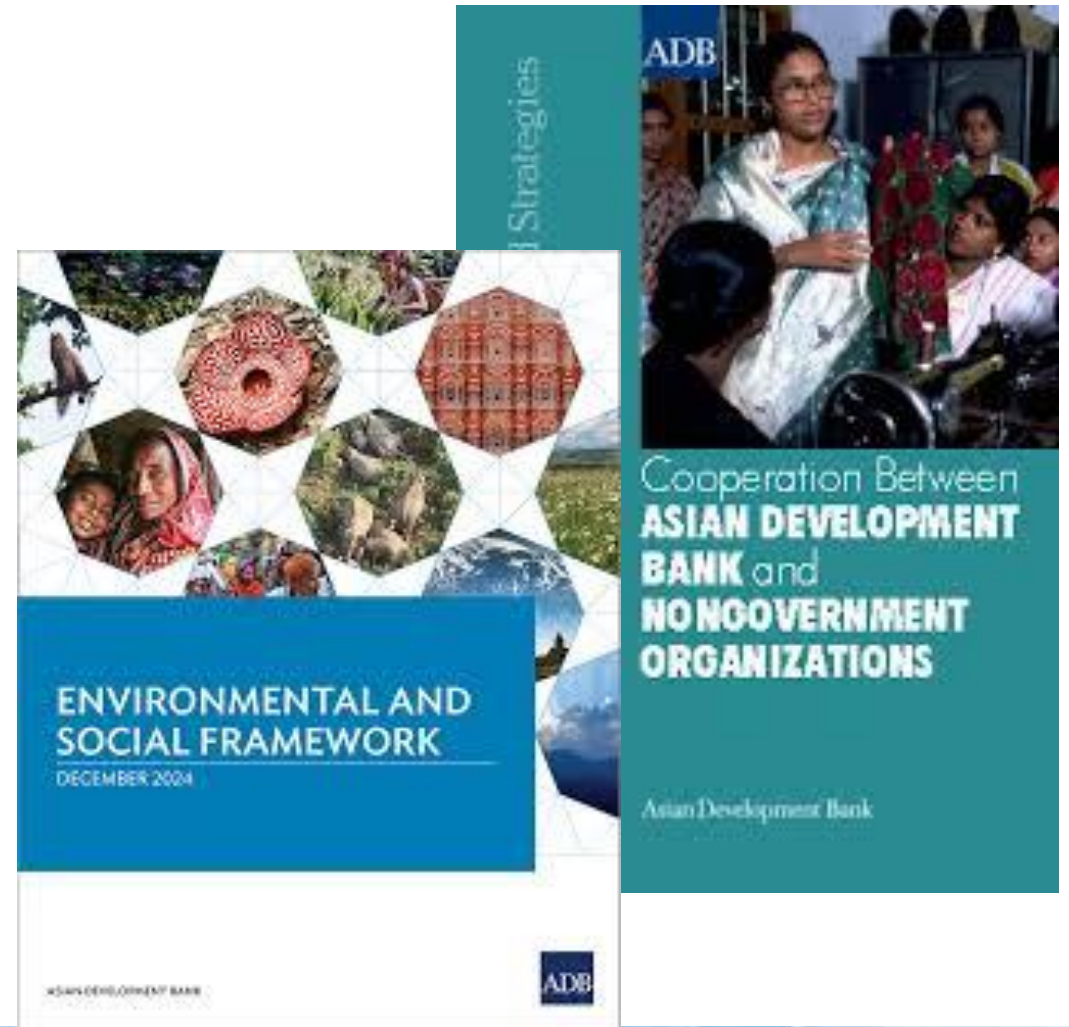


Mutually Reinforcing Each Other

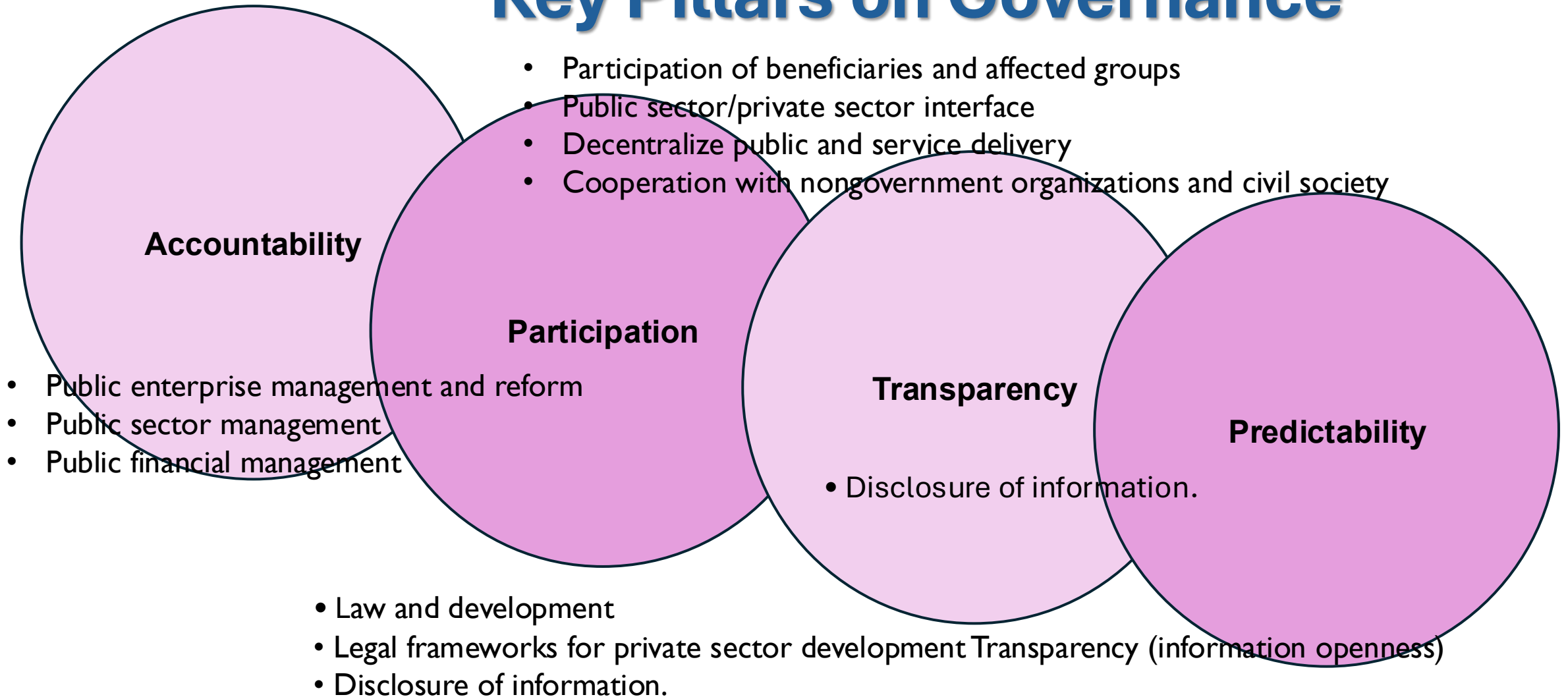


Key ADB Policies and Engagement with CSOs

- 1995 Governance Policy
- 1998 ADB-NGO Cooperation Policy
- 2018 Access to Information Policy
- 2024 Environment and Social Framework
- Accountability Mechanism (update ongoing in 2026)



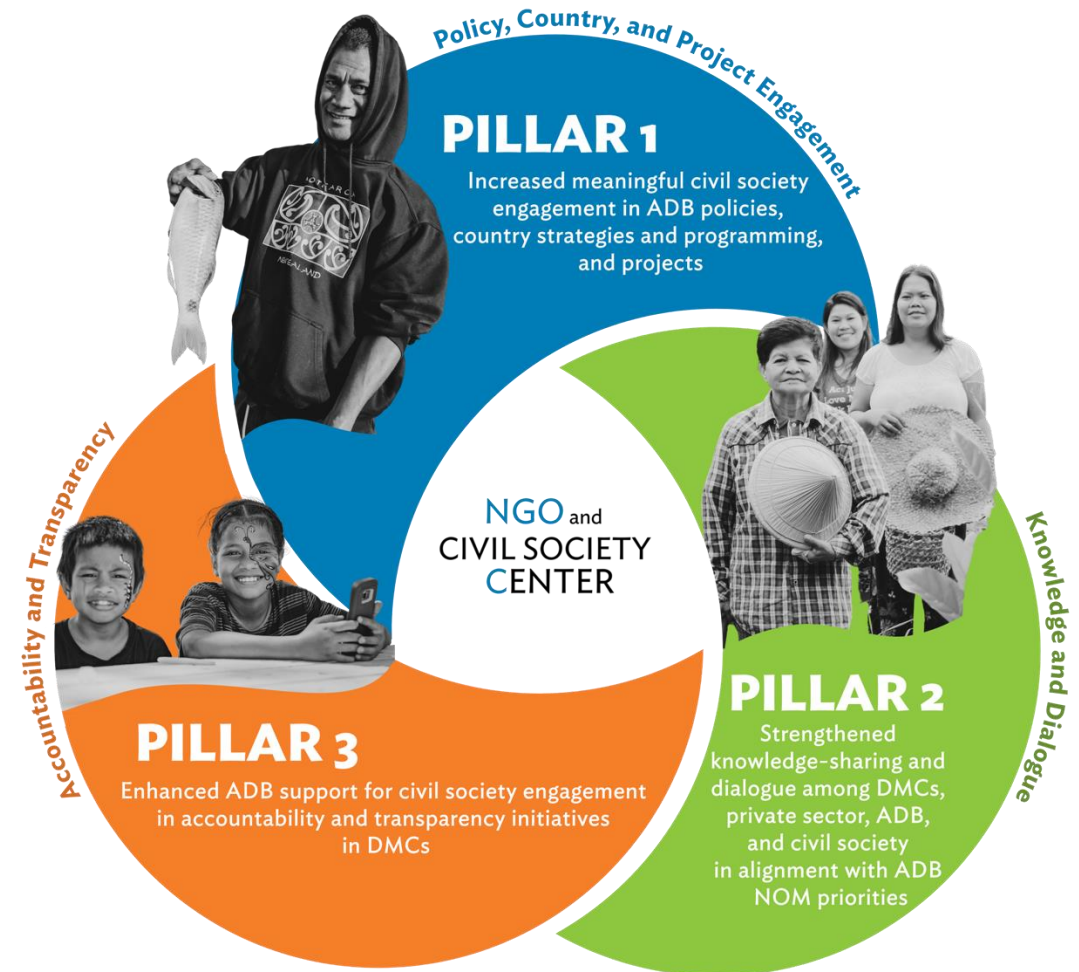
Key Pillars on Governance



How We Work: ADB Civil Society Approach

Civil Society Approach (CSA) focuses on enhancing:

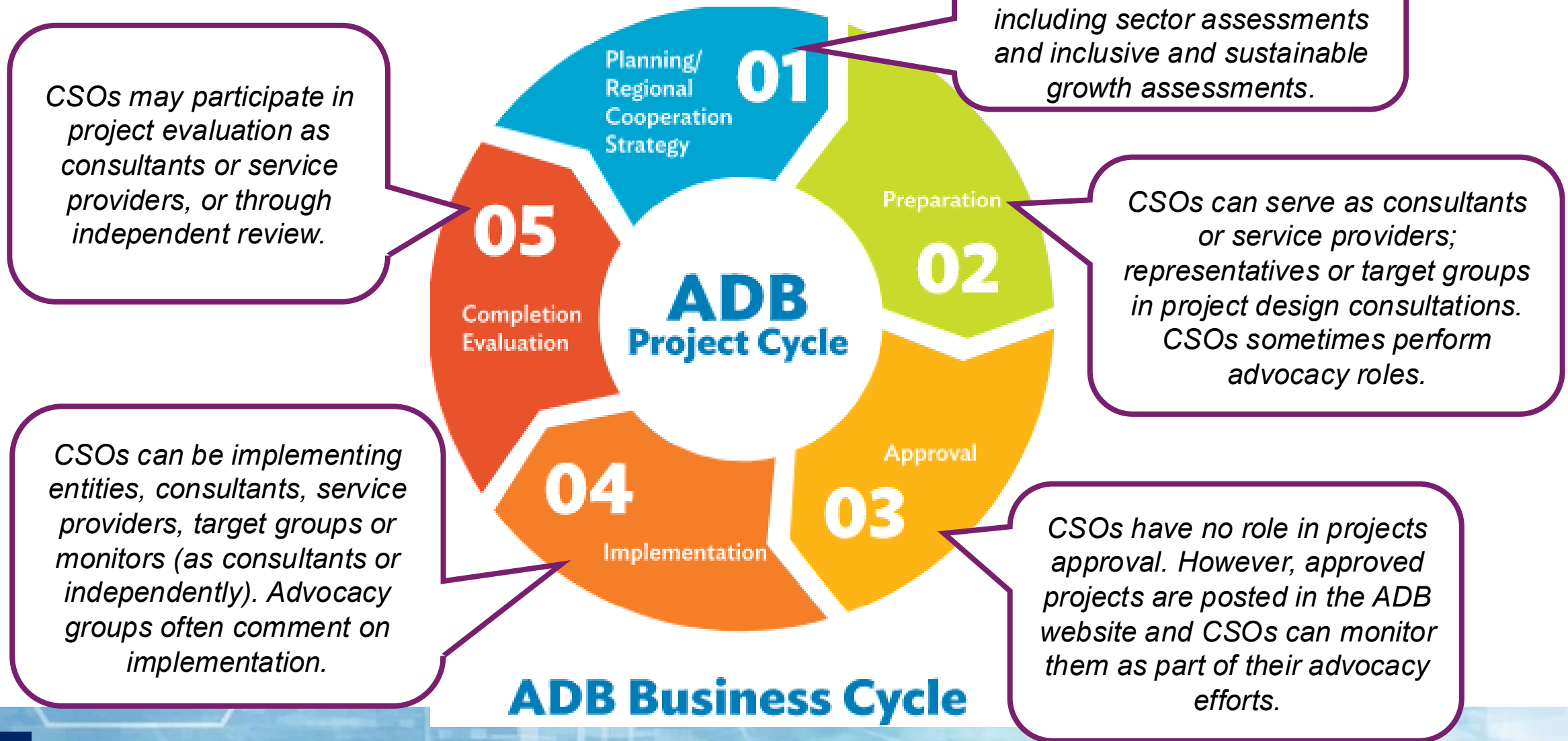
- Engagement
- Knowledge
- Governance



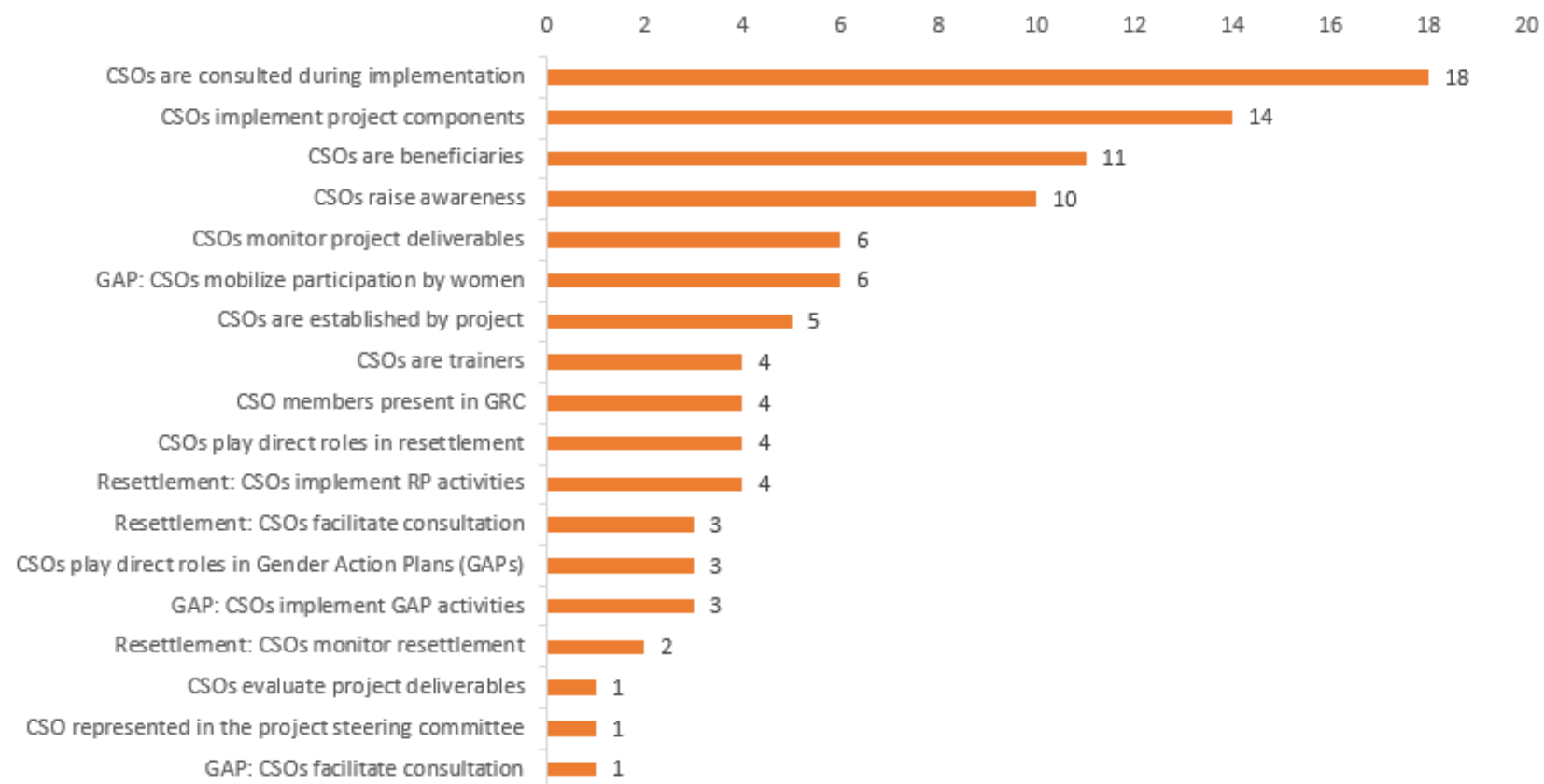
How We Engage

- **Policy:** Just Transition support – Countries engagement process
- ADB Safeguard Policy Review, Energy Policy Review, Gender Policy Review
- **Country:** country partnership strategy and portfolio and sector engagement
- **Projects:** Environmental and Social Framework (*ESS1 – Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, ESS 10-Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure*)
- **Public events:** CSO Program at Annual Meeting, CSO Listening Session, Asia and Pacific Youth Symposium, International Day of the Girl, Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative Global Conference
- **Knowledge products:** Annual Report, CSOs country briefs

CSOs in the Project Lifecycle



Roles of CSOs in 18 Completed Projects with Planned and Delivered Meaningful Engagement, 2024 (Number of PCRs)



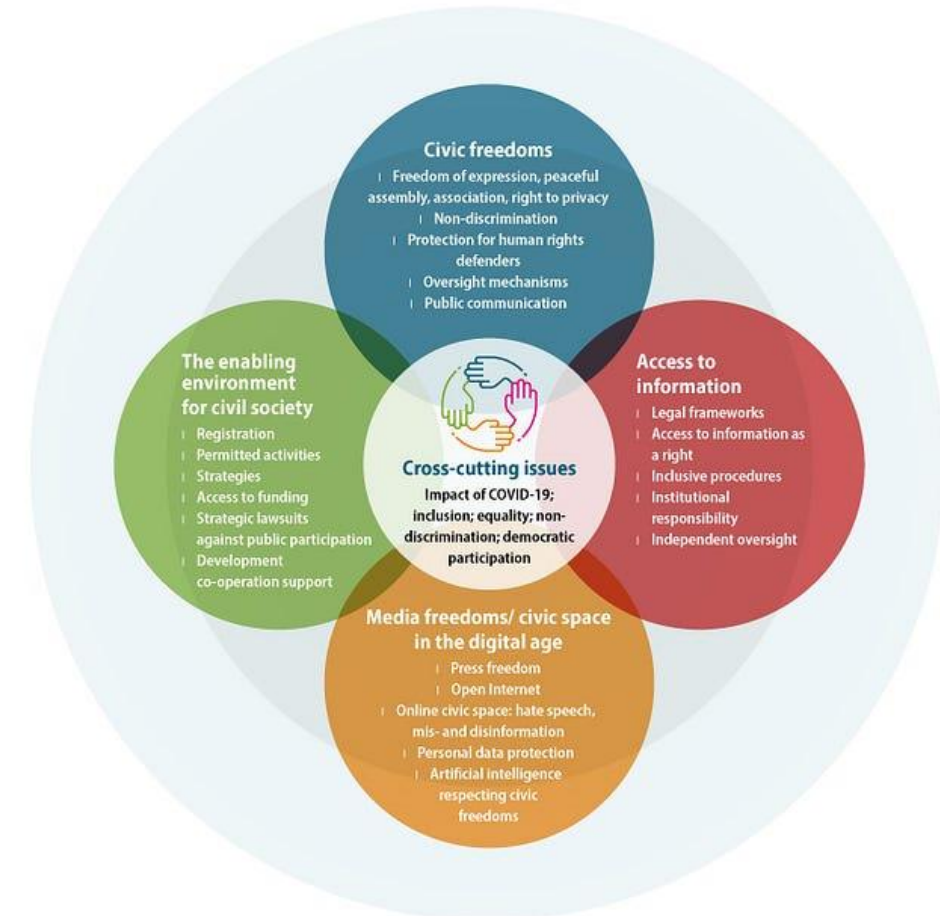
CSO = civil society organization, GAP = gender action plan, GRC = grievance redress committee, PCR = project completion report, RP = resettlement plan.
Source: Asian Development Bank.



The protection & promotion of **civic space**

Overview of the dimensions of civic space

CSOs Function within a Limited Civic Space and Limited Financing



Source: *The Protection and Promotion of Civic Space*, OECD, 2022



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Enabling Environment that Supports Engagement

- The legal, policy and practical conditions that allow civil society organizations to operate, participate in public life, and secure funding without undue restriction.
 - **Legal Registration:** Fair and transparent processes for CSOs to establish themselves.
 - **Access to Funding:** Ensuring organizations have the financial resources necessary to remain independent.
 - **Protection from SLAPPs:** Preventing "Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation" that aim to silence advocates through legal intimidation.

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT



ADB
STRONGER. BETTER. FASTER.

K4KOC

BMP

SANKAKAS

PMCJ

PMCJ

PMCA

HARMFUL PROJECTS

ADB LEAVING POOR PEOPLE BEHIND

NG TLE NIVE

SOLIMAN

Share to share?

SOURCE

GO

Access to Information as a Right

- The legal and institutional frameworks that ensure citizens can access public information, a core component of accountability and transparency.
 - Legal frameworks establishing access to information as a **fundamental right**.
 - Institutional mechanisms that facilitate timely and inclusive procedures for the public to obtain government data

Media Freedoms and Civic Space in the Digital Age

- The safety of journalists, the independence of media, and the protection of online civic space, particularly against challenges like hate speech and disinformation.
 - **Press Freedom:** Protecting journalists and ensuring a pluralistic media landscape.
 - **Digital Rights:** Countering online hate speech and disinformation while maintaining an **open internet**.
 - **Data Protection:** Safeguarding personal data as artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies evolve.

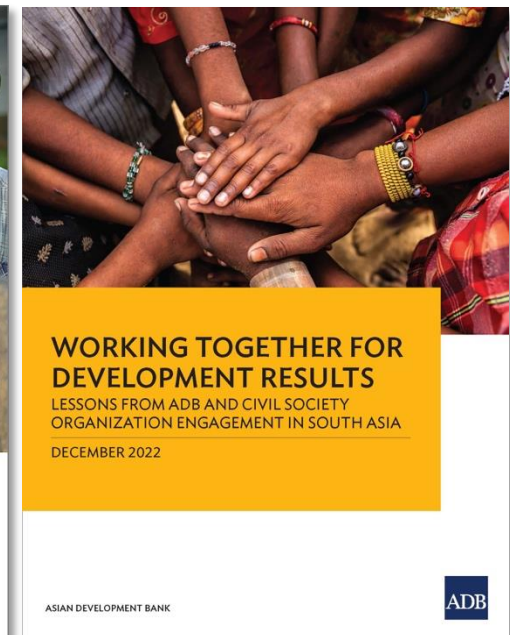
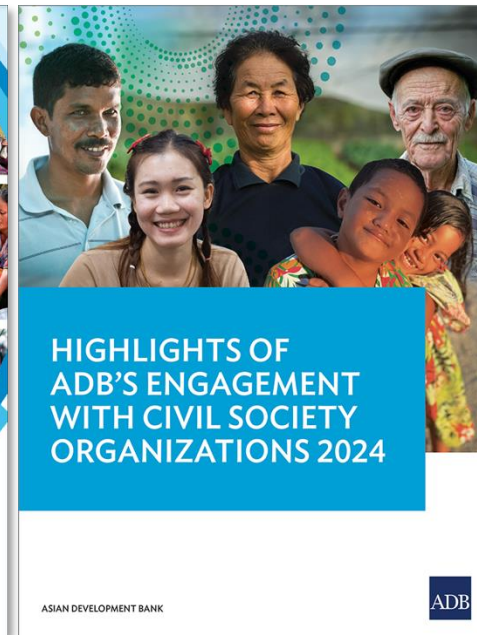
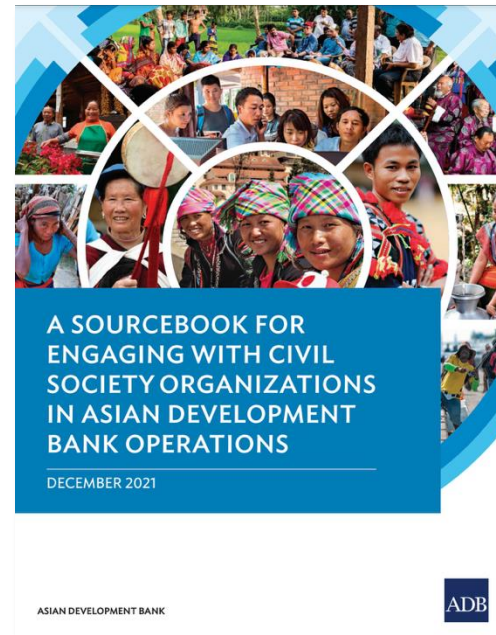
The Protection of Civic Freedoms

- The legal and practical protection of the fundamental rights of association, expression, and peaceful assembly.
 - Freedom of Expression—Right to voice opinion without censorship
 - Freedom of Peaceful Assembly—Right to gather for protests or meetings
 - Freedom of Association—the right to form and join groups or organizations
 - Rights to Privacy—protecting individuals from arbitrary interference.

NGO and CIVIL SOCIETY CENTER

- Operational support to ADB teams
- Knowledge work on CSO engagement
- Advisory on advocacy
- Mainstreams civil society engagement in operations
- Civil Society Program at ADB's Annual Meeting
- Prepares the ADB corporate indicator on CSO engagement
- ADB CSO Anchors Network
- Youth engagement

*NGOC seeks to provide ADB outstanding and timely **support in managing CSO advocacy**, serves as a source of **high-quality technical expertise** on civil society engagement in operations, and operates as a **trusted interlocutor and first point-of-contact** at headquarters for CSOs seeking to engage with ADB.*



Group Discussion Questions

1. In what sector (area of government services) is engagement of civil society yielding a positive impact on good governance in your country, and why?
2. Given the challenges (funding and dialogue space) civil society in certain country context face, what are some of the solutions to maintain or create a robust government and civil society relationship?

NGO and Civil Society Center

Thank you!

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