

Regional Forum on Successful Project Design and Implementation

7 – 9 July 2026 | Astana, Kazakhstan



Opening Remarks:

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[Introduction & Welcome]

Mr. Akzkol Urazalin, Representative of Ministry of National Economy of Kazakhstan, Mr. Utsav Kumar, Country Director of ADB Kazakhstan Resident Mission, distinguished colleagues and friends. Good morning and welcome to the 2026 SPDI Forum.

We have a powerful cross-section of project implementers and institutional leadership here from various sectors. Thank you for stepping out of the field to join this critical dialogue.

[The Reality Check]

When we look at complex development portfolios, our instinct is to run straight to the data. Timelines. Disbursement curves. Contract award metrics.

But numbers only show us where a project is stalling. They never explain why. The data is just a symptom.

The theme of this forum is "Beyond the Data: Bridging the Gap Between Risk Management Design and Practice." The truth we must confront is that the gap between risk on paper and risk in practice is rarely technical. It is operational. It is institutional. And it is behavioral.

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.**

[Core Message 1: From Silos to Armor]

Our first critical message is this: We must end the era of fragmented risk management. Historically, we have treated risk in silos. Procurement risks belong to procurement officers. Financial risks belong to accountants. Safeguards belong to check-the-box exercises.

But project implementation realities do not respect boundaries. A delayed safeguard approval halts procurement. Weak internal controls disrupt contractor payments. A single breakdown cascades.

Cross-functional collaboration and integrated early warning systems are not administrative burdens. **They are operational armor.** They give us the foresight to act before a delay becomes a disaster.



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[Core Message 2: Look Upstream and Dissect Failure]

Our second message is a call for preventive quality and absolute candor. The foundations of a resilient project are laid early. We must enhance project readiness and "Quality at Entry" through robust due diligence. Fix structural gaps before loan effectiveness—not after.

But looking upstream also means looking backward with honesty. Over the next three days, we will celebrate proactive adaptation. But we will also explicitly dissect failures. We must look at what happens when risks are poorly managed and ownership is weak. **We learn from success, but we avoid disaster by studying failure.**

[Core Message 3: Moving from Frameworks to Practical Tools]

Our third message centers on enablement. Frameworks are useless if they cannot be operationalized in the field. To bridge this gap, ADB is focusing on putting practical, living tools directly into the hands of our executing and implementing agencies.

This is why we are introducing the **Guide to Risk Identification and Planning—the GRIP knowledge product**. GRIP is designed to systematically capture and analyze field data, ensuring that hard-earned institutional knowledge is instantly injected back into your project pipelines.

[Call to Action & Conclusion]

Colleagues, our operating landscape requires agility, regional cooperation, and constant vigilance. **Risks do not sit still. Neither can we.**

Over the next three days, do not treat this as a classroom. Treat this forum as an operational workshop. Share your breakthroughs and voice your struggles. The peer networks built in this room are your greatest assets when you return home to execute your country action plans.

Let us move past generic reporting and check-the-box compliance. Let us embrace real ownership and build projects that are resilient, fully accountable, and truly transformative for our communities.

