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Improving Sector and Thematic Reporting

Abstract
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Improving Sector and Thematic Reporting

By Olivier Serrat

Communities of practice have become an accepted part of organizational development. Learning organizations build and leverage them with effect. To reach their potential, much as other bodies, they stand to gain from healthy reporting. Quality of information and its proper presentation enable stakeholders to make sound and reasonable assessments of performance, and take appropriate action.

Background

On 31 July 2009, Haruhiko Kuroda—ADB President and concurrent Chair of ADB's Board of Directors—approved *Enhancing Knowledge Management Under ADB's Strategy 2020*,[1] a plan of action to advance the knowledge management agenda under *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank (2008–2020)*.[2]

Four pillars support the plan: (i) sharpening the knowledge focus in ADB's operations, (ii) empowering the communities of practice (CoPs) hosted by ADB, (iii) strengthening external knowledge partnerships, and (iv) further enhancing staff learning and skills development. The four pillars are closely related: the set of actions/outputs that make up the first focuses on adding value to ADB's operations in its developing member countries; the other three sets deal with how that might be achieved.

These *Knowledge Solutions* showcase the revised guidelines for sector and thematic reporting that ADB then approved on 6 October 2009 to empower the CoPs it hosts. ADB, as a learning organization, must build CoPs and leverage them effectively to improve the quality of its operations, eventually in the interest of its developing member countries. A coherent set of directional documents is a prerequisite to this, and the new guidelines constitute a practical, incremental, and forward-looking move in that direction.

Seeking, Giving, and Using Feedback

Feedback is a circular causal process whereby some portion of a system's output is returned to the input to control dynamic behavior. In ADB, good feedback from CoPs is essential to realize their potential as collaboration mechanisms.

The revised guidelines for sector and thematic reporting by ADB's CoPs forged a new direction. The rationale was to (i) introduce principles of good reporting based on

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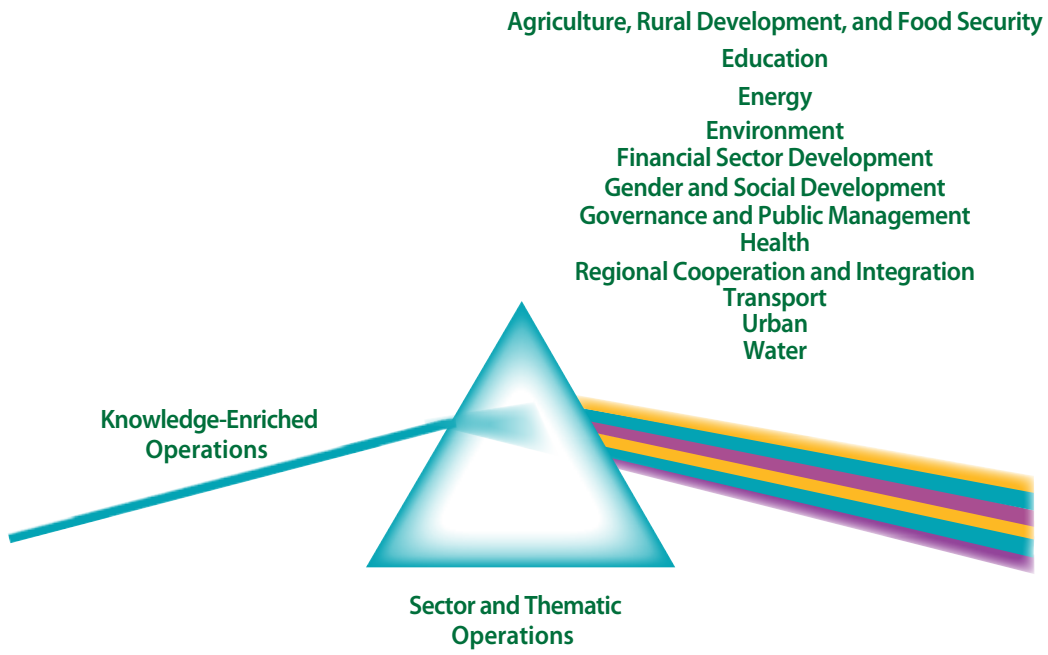
1 ADB. 2009. *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf

2 Available: www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf

accuracy, transparency, and economy of knowledge sharing; (ii) provide guidance on key elements of reporting for organizational performance, including the use of knowledge management metrics; (iii) present, to support coordination, a composite picture of the progress of work on sector and thematic priorities to inform management systems in ADB, including the annual *Development Effectiveness Reviews*[3] and *Work Program and Budget Framework* papers, as well as the *Annual Administrative and Capital Budget* exercises; and (iv) assess the performance of CoPs, without duplicating data reports generated by the operations departments. The guidelines are flexible to the varying needs of each sector and theme.

Figure: Adding Value to ADB's Operations



When you wish to instruct, be brief; that men's minds take in quickly what you say, learn its lesson, and retain it faithfully. Every word that is unnecessary only pours over the side of a brimming mind.

—Cicero

The pen is the tongue of the mind.

—Miguel de Cervantes

If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead, either write things worth reading or do things worth writing.

—Benjamin Franklin

I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil.

—Truman Capote

[3] Available: www.adb.org/documents/reports/development-effectiveness-review/default.asp

Box: Guidelines for Sector and Thematic Reporting

Introduction

Sector and thematic reporting is part of a comprehensive monitoring system at regional, country, program, project, sector, thematic, and institutional levels. Over the years, from 2005, the CoPs hosted by ADB have developed to support the sectoral and thematic effectiveness of ADB's operations.[4]

Exhibit: Archetypal Functions of Communities of Practice

Filtering. Organizing and managing information that is worth paying attention to.

Amplifying. Taking new, little-known, or little-understood ideas, giving them weight, and making them more widely understood.

Investing and Providing. Offering a means to give members the resources they need to carry out their main activities.

Convening. Bringing together different, distinct people or groups of people.

Community Building. Promoting and sustaining the values and standards of individuals or organizations.

Learning and Facilitating. Helping members carry out their activities more efficiently and effectively.

Source: Adapted from Ben Ramalingam, Enrique Mendizabal, and Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop. 2008. Strengthening Humanitarian Networks: Applying the Network Functions Approach. *ODI Background Note*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: www.odi.org.uk/publications/background-notes/2008/humanitarian-network-functions-approach.pdf

Enhancing Knowledge Management under Strategy: Proposed Plan of Action (2009–2011),[5] approved on 31 July 2009, emphasizes the need to empower CoPs explaining that ADB, as a learning organization, must build CoPs and leverage them effectively to improve the quality of its operations. Good reporting by CoPs is essential to make the most of their potential as collaboration mechanisms and thereby maximize ADB's development impact, ultimately to the benefit of its clients, partners, and audiences. First, CoPs should be able to clearly present what in their views are key issues that ADB should focus on in terms of strategic studies and new business initiatives. Second, they should be able to distill and synthesize for wider institutional learning what ADB has learned from its sector and thematic operations. Third, flowing from the above, they should be able to demonstrate how ADB's sector and thematic operations have contributed to achieving development effectiveness. In this sense, reporting by CoPs should be seen as integral to overall reporting on that.

To better accomplish their functions under *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank (2008–2020)*,[6] the guidelines on sector and thematic level reporting are hereby revised to ensure focus on crucial areas and coverage of assessments and results in high-quality, reader-friendly reports that will inform the annual *Development Effectiveness Reviews*[7] and *Work Program and Budget Framework* papers. The following suggests what sector and thematic level reporting is included, yet acknowledges that it should be adapted to the particular needs of each sector and theme. In the guidelines, CoPs are taken to mean the larger communities of interest and practice of which formal sector and thematic committees are a functional subset.

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4 ADB. 2009. *In Focus Series: Communities of Practice*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/media/infocus/2009/communities-practice.asp

5 ADB. 2009. *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf

6 Available: www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf

7 Available: www.adb.org/documents/reports/development-effectiveness-review/default.asp

Strategic Focus of Reports

Sector and thematic reports would track the progress of broader results in terms of outputs and outcomes, and present succinct "value" and "impact" stories that illustrate challenges and accomplishments in the domain of each CoP.[8] Departmental results, aspects of ADB's corporate results framework, and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) results aligning with a particular sector and theme would be considered. Management and staff would use the reports as key internal monitoring and evaluation documents that guide the activities of CoPs to strengthen sector and thematic performance in ADB's operations. They might also be disseminated externally in a form that appeals to the public.

Focal Points for Reports

In consultation with the respective CoP, the lead/principal specialist assigned by the Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department (BPMSD) would be responsible for coordinating and preparing triennial (Section I) sector and thematic reports and participating in monitoring and evaluating progress (Section II). A *community convenor*, chosen by CoP members (and who may not necessarily be the lead/principal specialist assigned by BPMSD), would be responsible, working collaboratively with CoP members and the lead/principal sector specialist, for preparing annual reports focusing on the CoP (Section II).[9]

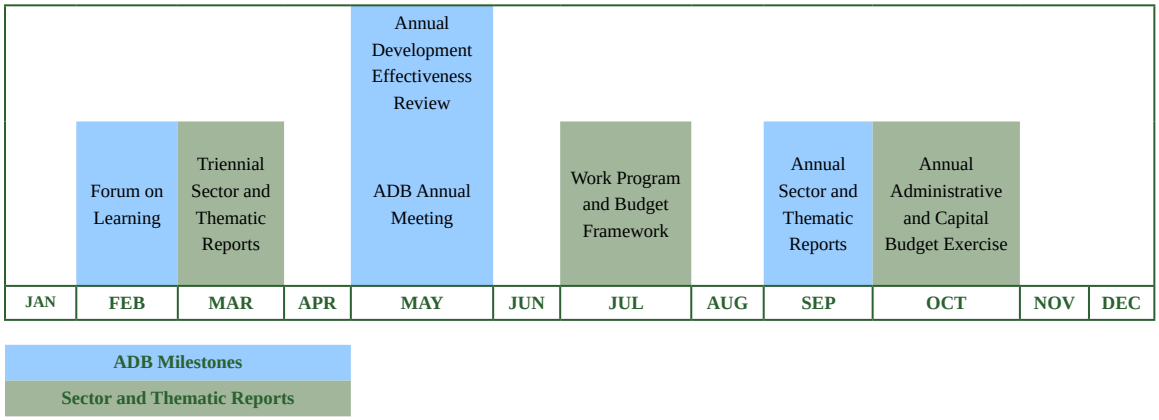
List of Sectors and Themes

The sectors and themes to be monitored and reported on would follow the list in the updated classification system (Annex I). Each sector report would include thematic mainstreaming as an important aspect. Likewise, thematic reports would indicate the progress of sector-wise mainstreaming as appropriate.

Period and Periodicity

Full reports would be written every 3 years, with an annual update on the progress, activities, and plans of corresponding CoPs prepared collaboratively by the CoPs. Annex I lists the years of the next reports. Annual reports would be due by the end of the third quarter of each year to feed into the *Annual Administrative and Capital Budget* exercises. Triennial reports would be due at the end of the first quarter to feed the annual *Development Effectiveness Reviews* and *Work Program and Budget Framework* papers. They might also inform ADB's annual meeting.

Figure: Coincidence of Sector and Thematic Reports with ADB Milestones



[8] See www.adb.org/mfdr/default.asp. To note, ADB's Managing for Development Results framework requires regional departments to consolidate sector and thematic reporting of outputs and outcomes. However, the executive and operations dashboards allow management and staff access to basic data on performance of sectors/themes by division, country, department, and ADB-wide. Hence, it is no longer necessary to include such data in sector and thematic reports. Notwithstanding, during the preparation process, these sources should be consulted and analyzed to inform content.

[9] Where no CoP exists or functions, the lead/principal specialist prepares both sections. However, Section II would likely be truncated.

Content

Though not prepared together each year, the two sections are mutually supportive. Section I contains priority strategic directions and broad results evaluation, while Section II looks at good practice and lessons more specifically. Planning and budgeting in Section II will be able to draw from analysis and conclusions of Section I.

Section I: Performance of Sector and Theme in ADB's Operations (every 3 years) would be limited to 30 pages of main text. Each report would have a core narrative, as suggested by Section I focusing on strategic directions and results evaluation. It might be usefully informed by discussions at retreats and regular peer gatherings. Apart from this, there could be a focus on special areas of interest that arose during the period reported against, placed in an appendix. Another appendix could contain brief "value" and "impact" stories illustrating the findings of the report with direct experience. Annex II provides a recommended tool, namely, a scorecard to summarize the performance of a sector and theme in ADB's operations.

Section II: Assessing the Performance of CoPs (annual update) would be limited to 15 pages of main text and aim, principally, to demonstrate the contributions of CoPs with good practices and lessons. This section would include a plan of activities with estimated budget figures. It might be usefully informed by annual surveys of the perceptions of CoP members, themselves informed by or building on the results of the *2009 Survey of the CoPs Hosted by ADB*,[10] and those of the annual Most Admired Knowledge Enterprise survey that ADB conducts. Annex III provides a recommended tool, namely, a sample scorecard with which to summarize CoP performance. The CoPs must meaningfully adapt the format of Section II and the scorecard tools to ensure the report is useful to both the CoPs and to Management.

Methods

The reporting process would generally begin by consulting CoP members on the task at hand and seeking performance information about both the sector and theme and the CoP. Rather than limiting the information to descriptive data, eliciting "value" and "impact" stories from CoP members and other interested parties would give Management and staff a better picture of work in the sector and theme. Reviewing key documents and identifying trends across the sector or theme can be useful. Trends and patterns in the quantitative data on sectors and themes from ADB's information management system can be interpreted at different levels of operation. Informal interviews could be conducted with CoP members and with Management. However, the most beneficial approach would be to gather CoP participants together for a planning/evaluation session to interpret findings and discuss lessons around key issues in the sector and theme and what activities the CoP can undertake to support change. This group might also choose a unifying focus for the report as it emerges from deliberation. Many tools and metrics support these processes including Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT), outcome mapping, appreciative inquiry, search conferences, and the like (see scorecards in Annex II and Annex III).[11]

Report Recommendations

Reports will often include recommendations to point to a direction in which positive changes can be made. When a recommendation is made, it should be (i) fully supported by and flow from the associated observations and conclusions, (ii) aimed at correcting the underlying causes of the deficiency, and (iii) directed specifically at the entity or entities with the responsibility to act on it. A recommendation should be clearly stated. It should be (i) succinct, straightforward, and contain enough detail to make sense on its own; (ii) broadly stated (stating what needs to be done while leaving the specifics of how to do it to entity officials); and (iii) positive in tone and content. Crucially, a recommendation should also be action-oriented. It should be (i) practical (able to be implemented in a reasonable time frame, taking into account constraints);

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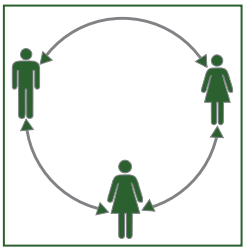
[10] Available: www.adb.org/documents/reports/consultant/strengthening-communities-of-practice.pdf

[11] The *Knowledge Solutions* series offers guidance on many related tools, methods, and approaches. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/default.asp. For guidance on CoPs, for example, see ADB. 2008. *Building Communities of Practice*. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/building-communities-practice.pdf

(ii) cost-effective (the benefits of implementing it will outweigh the costs); (iii) efficient (optimizing the use of resources); (iv) results-oriented (giving some indication of what the intended outcome is, ideally in measurable terms); and (v) able to be followed up (the originating entity will be able to determine whether it has been acted upon).



Management Forum and Responses

Feedback is a circular causal process whereby some portion of a system's output is returned to the input to control dynamic behavior. Good feedback by the CoPs hosted by ADB is essential to make the most of their potential as collaboration mechanisms and thereby maximize ADB's development impact, ultimately to the benefit of its clients, partners, and audiences. Management responses to reports are likewise necessary. Upon release of triennial reports the lead/principal specialist should schedule an informal session with Management to discuss the report's findings and recommendations. Members of the relevant CoP should be invited to participate. Such interaction can help clarify understanding and motivate CoP members to move forward with action. Similarly, the annual reports (Section II) should be discussed with relevant managers in a constructive CoP-led open forum upon release. All reports would be coursed to the Vice Presidency for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development (VP-KM&SD) through the Director General, Regional and Sustainable Development Department (DG, RSDD) or, as the case may be, through Head, Office of Regional Economic Integration. (New CoPs, hosted by other offices and departments, would course their reports to VP-KM&SD through relevant heads.) Management would meet the initiating CoP and/or relevant offices and departments, consider the highlights of reports, and provide guidance on recommendations. Beyond Management, the reports should be made available to all staff on the intranet and announced in *ADB Today*. The reports may lead to additional discussions, brown-bag seminars, or other interactive means to explore issues raised.

Resource Implications

Resource requirements of up to two-and-a-half (2.5) person-months of professional staff and two-and-a-half (2.5) person-months of consulting services would be required to prepare a full report for each sector and theme, as the guidelines propose, every 3 years. Annual updates could be completed with 2 weeks of consulting services through a facilitated retreat for CoP members, with the results consolidated in a report. Based on these estimates and the current number of sectors and themes, the total revised resource needs for implementing this reporting program is about 22 person-months of professional staff[12] and 22 months of consulting services per year.

Others

Annex IV articulates ways to empower the CoPs hosted by ADB for better knowledge generation and sharing.

[12] This level of staff effort may not be uniform. A large CoP, such as the Water Group, may involve many more professional staff hours in participatory consultation than a smaller, less active CoP. This is not a problem if we assume the investment to deliver a commensurately higher benefit in return in terms of ownership and participation in the sector or theme.

Sector and Thematic Reports: Suggested[13] Outline of Contents for
***Section I: Performance of Sectors and Themes in ADB's Operations* (every 3 years)**

Subject and Guiding Questions	Indicator/Method of Assessment	Source of Data/Method of Feedback
Executive Summary and Key Messages to Management		
Introduction		
Period covered Relevant background information Target audience Structure of the report	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Regional Trends in the Concerned Sector and Thematic Area		
Status and outlook of the sector and thematic area How has ADB's work in this sector and theme contributed to (i) achieving related MDGs? (where applicable) (ii) achieving Level 1 regional outcomes in ADB's Corporate Results Framework? (iii) supporting Strategy 2020?	CoP deliberations; MDG indicators (as applicable); proxy indicators (for CPSs); RSDD assessments; Portfolio analysis for impact and outcome contributions of sector and thematic activities to Strategy 2020, particularly on (i) vision (an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty); (ii) strategic agenda (inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, regional integration); and (iii) drivers of change (private sector development and private sector operations, good governance and capacity development, gender equity, knowledge solutions, partnerships).	Regional MDG reports, Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, RCPS documents, reports of bilateral and multilateral agencies, data from country sources, CPSs, etc.

[13] Both format and content are flexible and need to be adapted (and specified) to each sector or theme.

Subject and Guiding Questions	Indicator/Method of Assessment	Source of Data/Method of Feedback
Contributions to Sector and Thematic Policy and Strategy[1]		
Contribution to key elements of sector and thematic policy or strategy (specify examples), action plans and their achievements, and determining whether review is necessary Role of ADB knowledge products in the sector and theme Crosscutting efforts with other sectors and themes Mainstreaming themes in sectors	RSDD / Committee / CoP assessments	ADB strategy and policy updates, TA reports, TCRs, RRPs, PCRs, PERs, CPS completion reports, CAPEs, special evaluation studies, etc.
Contributions to Regional and Subregional CooperationContributions to Regional and Subregional Cooperation		
Contribution of sector and theme to RCPS Regional activities conducted per sector and thematic area	CoP deliberations Contribution to RCPS outcomes Assessment of regional activities	Regional MDG reports, Asia Economic Monitor reports, RCPS documents, MIS data, reports from regional departments on regional activities, RSDD, etc.
Contributions to Country-Level Operations (Inclusive Economic Growth, Environmentally Sustainable Growth, Regional Integration)		
How has ADB's work in this sector and theme contributed to (i) outcomes in ADB's Corporate Results Framework [country outcomes]; (ii) quality of sector and thematic assessments and road maps in CPSs finalized during the review period • conformity with sector and thematic policies; • linkage to CPS outcomes and the three pillars of the PRS; • consistency with sector and thematic assessments; • depth, comprehensiveness, and data quality; • partnerships and work of other stakeholders; (iii) sector and thematic implementation record • contribution to CPS outcomes; • strengthening borrowers capacity in the sector and theme; and • portfolio performance issues, implementation.	CoP deliberations Assessment of CPS documents by RSDD Stories of innovations (particularly in project/program design)	National MDG reports, CPSs, COSO data, MIS data, country performance assessments (poverty, economic, thematic, and sector assessments), RRPs, IED reports, reports from regional departments, etc.

Subject and Guiding Questions	Indicator/Method of Assessment	Source of Data/Method of Feedback
Partnerships		
Funding generated, including bilateral funds Participation of NGOs/civil society organizations Harmonization	CoP deliberations Generation of cofinancing Generation of bilateral grants/funds Approval of SWAps Projects with NGO/civil society participation Joint projects/conferences	MIS data, OCO data, PSOD data, reports from regional departments, NGO Center, reports from regional departments
Operational and Organizational Effectiveness		
How has ADB's work in this sector and theme performed against (i) portfolio performance (ii) ADB's Corporate Results Framework targets for operational effectiveness [Level 3]; and (ii) budgetary resources and business processes (efficiency) [Level 4].	CoP deliberations Specific particular investment tools and modalities that are significantly affecting the sector and theme Strategic alignment of sector and theme in pipelines	ADB Annual Reports, Development Effectiveness Reviews, etc.
Human Resources		
Skills mix and adequacy (use competency framework if available) How has ADB's work in this sector and theme performed against ADB's Corporate Results Framework for use of human resources [Level 4]?	CoP deliberations Gaps/surpluses of specialist positions in departments[2] Unfilled vacancies Percentage of specialists who completed training requirements	BPMSD data, CoPs, reports from regional departments, etc.

Subject and Guiding Questions	Indicator/Method of Assessment	Source of Data/Method of Feedback
Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Activities		
What are the conclusions? What changes are required for more effective sector and thematic outcomes in the future, including (i) key issues and considerations? (ii) recommendations about future programs? (iii) suggestions on project quality, and quality of sector and thematic assessments and road maps? (iv) analysis of existing policy and strategy and determining whether review is necessary? (v) human resources and other suggestions?	CoP deliberations Overall RSDD recommendations	Annual and triennial reports from CoPs, consultations with partners, RSDD, etc.
Appendixes: Value Stories, Impact Stories, Special Topics		

[1] The Independent Evaluation Department has developed a framework for assessing the soundness of a strategy: (i) adequacy of strategic gap analysis through baseline indicators and targets; (ii) quality of sector analysis; (iii) adequacy of option identification; (iv) internal integrity of strategy; (v) partnership and external consistency; (vi) positioning for organizational competence and comparative advantage; (vii) acceptability to key stakeholders; (viii) feasibility of strategy; (ix) basis for strategy selection.

[2] Assessment of gaps may require collecting information on the actual number of specialists working in the specialist positions as opposed to the number of specialists recruited.

BPMSD = Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department, CAPE = country assistance program evaluation, CoP = community of practice, COSO = Central Operations Services Office CPS = country partnership strategy, IED = Independent Evaluation Department, MIS = ,management information system, MDG = millennium development goal, NGO = nongovernment organization, OCO = Office of Cofinancing Operations, PCR = project completion report, PER = project/program evaluation report, PRS = poverty reduction strategy, RCPS = Regional Cooperation Partnership Strategy, RRP = report and recommendation of the President, RSDD = Regional and Sustainable Development Department, SPD = Strategy and Policy Department, SWAps = sector wide approaches, TA = technical assistance, TCR = technical assistance completion report, UN = United Nations.

Sector and Thematic Reports: Suggested[14] Outline of Contents for *Section II: Assessing the Performance of CoPs* (annual update)

Subject and Guiding Questions	Indicator/Method of Assessment	Source of Data/Method of Feedback
Executive Summary and Key Messages to Management		
Introduction		
Period covered Relevant background information Target audience Structure of the report	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Performance Score and Critical Success Factors		
Customize indicators and evidence for a scorecard summarizing CoPs' performance (see Annex III). (i) Where has your CoP come from? Where is it now? Where would you like to bring it? Illustrate. (ii) How does your CoP filter, organize, and manage information? What should the group pay attention to? lllustrate. (iii) How does your CoP take new or unfamiliar ideas and help participants understand them? Illustrate. (iv) How does your CoP help participants locate or successfully acquire resources to work in their sector and theme more effectively? Illustrate. (v) How does your CoP bring together people with different experiences or perspectives to share ideas and practice? Illustrate. (vi) How does your CoP build a sense of community based on shared values and professional standards? Illustrate. (vii) How does your CoP help participants work better and do things that are more effective? Illustrate.	Specific to the plans of the CoP, minutes of meetings, records of activities, CoP deliberations	Projects, knowledge products and services, innovative activities in the sector or thematic area over the past year, surveys of CoPs, etc.
Knowledge in Practice[1]		
How does your CoP engage its members in reflection on practice? Illustrate. Do you use any ways of helping staff share their practical tacit knowledge[1] with one another? Illustrate.	CoP deliberations, staff interviews	Peer assists, after-action reviews, retrospects, coaching and mentoring, exit interviews, etc.

[14] Both format and content are flexible and need to be adapted (and specified) to each sector or theme.

Subject and Guiding Questions	Indicator/Method of Assessment	Source of Data/Method of Feedback
Contributions to Knowledge Management and Good Practices		
Is your CoP contributing to the spread of good practices in its sector and thematic area through (i) knowledge generation? (ii) knowledge sharing? Illustrate.	Assessments of all knowledge products and services including economic and sector work, guidelines, tool kits, etc.	CoP deliberations, brownbag seminars, Knowledge Showcases, K-Hub presentations, Learning Curves, sector and thematic newsletters, etc.
Plans and Recommendations for CoP Focus and Activities		
In light of past performance and based on the analysis of the aspects highlighted above and the assessment framework, what changes are required for more effective sector and thematic CoP outcomes in the future, including (i) recommendations about your CoP's future program? (ii) suggestions regarding knowledge management?	CoP deliberations, guidance of committee and sector and thematic lead/principal specialist	Projects, knowledge products and services, innovative activities in the sector or thematic area over the past year, surveys of CoPs, etc.
Appendix: Value Stories, Impact Stories		
Highlight key stories that illustrate the knowledge generation and sharing activities that occurred in your CoP this past year	CoP deliberations, staff interviews	ADB Annual Reports, stories of change, etc.

[1] Tacit knowledge is personalized knowledge that people carry in their heads. It is more difficult to formalize and communicate than explicit knowledge, but can be shared through discussion, storytelling, and personal interactions.

CoP = community of practice, RSDD = Regional and Sustainable Development Department.

Annex I: Updated Sector and Theme Classification System

	Sector Reports, Section I: Sector Performance in ADB's Operations	Next Triennial Report (Q1)	Sector Reports, Section II (annually Q3): Assessing the Performance of CoPs
1.	Agriculture and Natural Resources	2009	Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food Security CoP
2.	Education	2010	Education CoP
3.	Energy	2011	Energy CoP
4.	Finance[1]	2009	–
5.	Health and Social Protection	2010	Health CoP
6.	Industry and Trade[2]	2011	–
7.	Public Sector Management	2009	Financial Management CoP
8.	Transport and ICT	2010	Transport CoP ICT CoP
9.	Water Supply, Sanitation and Waste Management	2011	Water CoP Urban Development CoP

ICT = information and communication technology, NGO = nongovernment organization.

	Thematic Reports, Section I: Thematic Performance in ADB's Operations	Next Triennial Report (Q1)	Thematic Reports, Section II (annually Q3): Assessing the Performance of CoPs
1.	Capacity Development[3]	2009	-
2.	Economic Growth	2010	Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth CoP
3.	Environmental Sustainability	2011	Environment CoP
4.	Gender Equity	2009	Gender CoP
5.	Governance	2010	Governance CoP NGO and Civil Society CoP
6.	Social Development	2011	Social Development CoP Resettlement CoP
7.	Private Sector Development[4]	2009	-
8.	Regional Cooperation and Integration[5]	2010	-

[1] No CoP.
[2] No CoP.
[3] Reports only. No CoP or committee.
[4] Reports only. No CoP or committee.
[5] No CoP.

CoP = community of practice. NGO = nongovernment organization.

Annex II: Summary of Sector and Thematic Performance in ADB's Operations[15]

Criteria	Indicator (illustrative)	Evidence (illustrative)	Score
Asia and the Pacific Development Outcomes (Board of Governors Perspective)	• MDG indicator(s) • Corporate Results Framework and other indicators • Regional cooperation • Policy and strategy	• Sector and theme contribution to the MDGs and poverty reduction in the region and subregions • Strategic objectives, including client and audience, well defined and linked to relevant corporate, country, sector, and thematic strategies, and core business processes. • Clear purpose for programs and activities	G A R G A R G A R G A R
Contribution to Country Development Outcomes (DMC Client Perspective)	• Strategic focus in operations • CPS • By particular subsector and subtheme	• Contributions to country outcomes against stated objectives • By particular subsector and subtheme satisfaction of DMC clients • Harmonization	G A R G A R G A R
Effectiveness of Projects (Beneficiary Perspective)	• Operational quality • Partnership • By particular key activity area of sector and theme • Mainstreaming	• Successful attainment of objectives through tangible "value" and "impact" stories • Jointly funded projects • By particular key activity area of sector and theme • Participation of NGOs and civil society organizations • Satisfaction of project beneficiaries	G A R G A R G A R G A R
Organizational Effectiveness (Management Perspective)	• Human resources • Budget adequacy • Business processes and practices • Portfolio performance • Finance mobilization	• Adequate skills mix • Adequate and well-tracked resources for innovation • Quality of support and administrative services • Adequacy of operational tools	G A R G A R G A R G A R G A R
Learning and Growth (Staff Perspective)	• Knowledge management • Professional development • Technology	• Views of staff on knowledge products and services as responsive, state-of-the-art, and future-oriented • Integration of knowledge products and services into staff and client (team) learning activities • Ready access of staff to up-to-date sector and thematic knowledge enabling them to do their jobs • Lessons learned and good practices captured and shared to ADB and clients • Applies appropriate technology	G A R G A R G A R

G Green: "On track" (More than 50% of the indicators in the group have shown improvements over baselines or previous periods)

A Amber: "Potential regression" (Results are mixed: equal number of indicators improving or beginning to stagnate or regress)

R Red: "Stagnated or regressed" (More than half of indicators in the group stagnating or regressing over 2 or more years)

CPS = country partnership strategy, DMC = developing member country, MDG = millennium development goal, NGO = nongovernment organization

[15] Scorecard categories and content are flexible and must be adapted (and specified) to each sector or theme.

Annex III: Summary of Community of Practice Performance[16]

Criteria	Indicator (Illustrative)	Evidence (Illustrative)	Score
Relevance and Focus	• Programs and activities help strengthen ADB's work in sector and theme advancing corporate and country priorities. • CoP participants are committed to improvement.	• CoP strategic objectives, including client and audience, well defined and linked to relevant corporate, country, sector, and thematic strategies, and core business processes • Clear purpose for programs and activities • Level of participation is strong across activities.	G A R G A R
Quality and Timeliness of Knowledge Products and Services	• Aggregated knowledge is tailored and timed to needs, and are clearly presented, technically sound, and state-of-the-art. • CoP has realistic timetable for delivery.	• Demand for knowledge products and services • Staff, CoP member, client, and expert reviews and surveys • ADB/CoP content management processes • Staff view knowledge products and services as responsive and future-oriented	G A R G A R
Access to Practical Knowledge and Reach in ADB	• CoP members demonstrate trust, respect, mutual support. • CoP is widely inclusive across departments and seniority. • CoP members have ready access to up-to-date knowledge to do their jobs.	• Dissemination tracking, usability testing, usage monitoring of published and online knowledge, and information and knowledge services • Staff, CoP member, client, and expert participation in knowledge sharing events and feedback • CoP application of appropriate technology to support activities and communicate	G A R G A R G A R
Utility	• Shared knowledge are adopted and applied in policies, strategies, partnerships, programs, and projects. • Lessons learned and good practices are captured and shared to ADB and clients. • CoP knowledge products and services are part of staff work plans and performance reviews, and supported by management.	• Knowledge management strategy articulated in sector and thematic strategies and sector road maps in country partnership strategies (CPS) • Knowledge products and services built into staff and client (team) learning activities • Staff, CoP member, client, and expert surveys and activity self-assessments • Self- and independent assessments of knowledge-sharing process in CPSs, and lending and nonlending services • CoP members actively seeking and giving support	G A R G A R G A R
Likely Impact	• ADB and client knowledge bases and capacities are enhanced. • Improvements are targeted in ADB development results. • Staff development is enhanced with greater work engagement.	• Ongoing knowledge assessments • Successful attainment of objectives is demonstrated through tangible "value" and "impact" stories • Sector and thematic reports demonstrate improved outcomes against stated objectives	G A R G A R G A R
Cost Effectiveness	• Programs and activities are carried out without the right amount of resources to achieve objectives.	• Tracking and benchmarking costs of activities • Resources are adequate for innovation	G A R

G Green: "On track" (More than 50% of the indicators in the group have shown improvements over baselines or previous periods).

A Amber: "Potential regression" (Results are mixed: equal number of indicators improving or beginning to stagnate or regress).

R Red: "Stagnated or regressed" (More than half of indicators in the group stagnating or regressing over 2 or more years).

[16] Scorecard categories and content are flexible and must be adapted (and specified) to each sector/theme.

Annex IV: Empowering Communities of Practice to Generate and Share Knowledge

The communities of practice (CoPs) hosted by ADB encompass both formal sector and thematic committees and what were previously called "informal networks." Any staff can join as a member of one or more CoPs. Each CoP is proposed to have a *community convenor*, chosen by CoP members, normally an expert in the concerned sector and theme, and active in managing funds designated for the CoP, sharing articles and newsletters, driving informal dialogues with other staff to share information, leading annual reporting (including preparation of annual two-pagers for broad circulation specifying the domain, community, and function and achievements of the CoP, as well as its plans for the future, e.g., finance, clients, internal processes, and innovation and learning, and external knowledge partnerships), and updating websites, among other things. The *community convenor* need not be the sector and thematic committee chairs or co-chairs. The duration of any CoP depends on continuing interest from CoP members (but also demand from staff); thus, some may serve their purpose over the span of only a couple years and then choose to disband. He or she would confer with the relevant sector and thematic committee and be responsible to the CoP.

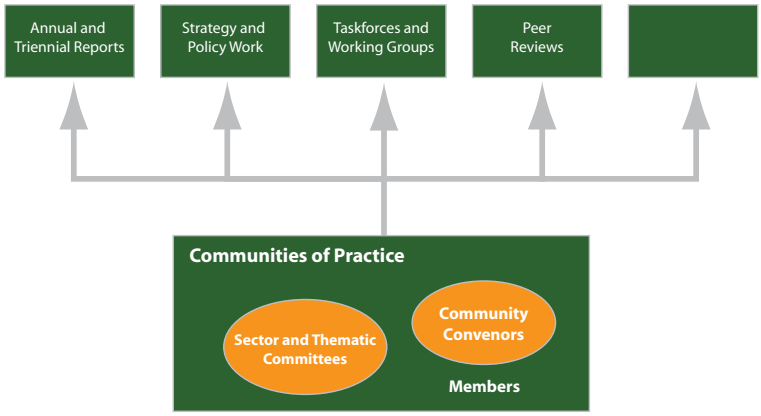
The committees reside within CoP's (where corresponding CoPs exist), each having at least five to eight members holding at least level 5 positions. Committee chairs and co-chairs would be appointed by VP-KM&SD. Chairs and co-chairs would appoint members of their respective committees while keeping DG, RSDD and VP-KM&SD (through RSDD-KM) informed. The committee chairs or co-chairs have no formal authority over the CoP at-large but function as members of the CoP.

ADB's sector and thematic committees would continue to be tapped as advisors on policies and strategies for sectors and themes. They would (i) provide advice on formulation of sector and thematic policies and strategies; (ii) propose actions to address implementation issues associated with sector and thematic policies and strategies, for instance, through the annual and triennial reports prepared by the lead/principal specialist; (iii) represent the interests of their respective sector and thematic areas at management level at annual meetings with VP-KM&SD; and (iv) act as advocates of CoP operations and achievements. While CoPs are formed at the initiative of staff, *Strategy 2020*, or ADB's current and changing priorities would drive the formation of committees as they are accountable to VP-KM&SD through DG, RSDD.

CoPs can play a critical role in generating and sharing knowledge that enriches ADB's operations. Complementing sector and thematic committees, the typical CoP member may have more current and direct field experience to draw from than those at the director level and above. Their practical knowledge may be tapped as sources of information during preparation of country partnership strategies (CPS), project/program design, policy review, operational guidance, or as members of a workgroup or task force on crosscutting issues, e.g., members of energy and transport CoPs collaborating in the area of clean energy. To take advantage of their potential to strengthen ADB, new CoPs would be encouraged and supported as much as possible across diverse areas, not limited to ADB's priority sectors and themes.[17]

[17] A CoP can be formed simply by sending an electronic mail to RSDD-KM indicating the title of the CoP, the name of the *community convenor*, and initial group members.

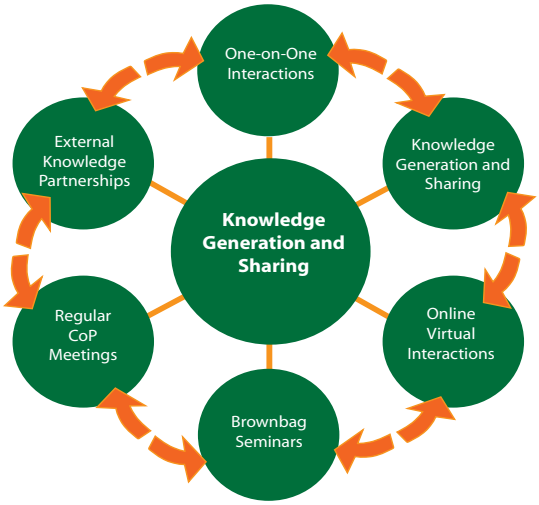
Figure 1. Communities of Practice for Quality, Knowledge, and Innovation



Source: Author

The CoPs hosted by ADB would also help drive individual and collective learning and development to improve performance at both levels by providing an environment for continuous learning, solving common problems, pursuing joint solutions, and facilitating decision making. This environment includes activities to (i) produce and disseminate knowledge, information, and best practices; (ii) facilitate access to community resources, including the latest trends, developments, and innovations related to their areas of expertise; (iii) provide diverse avenues for interaction, dialogue, and collaboration between and among CoP members; and (iv) provide informal learning opportunities to help build the capacity and strengthen the skills of CoP members. The *community convenor* would be accountable to the members of a CoP and to ADB or external donors when a CoP receives grant, technical assistance, or project funds.

Figure 2. Communities of Practice for Knowledge Generation and Sharing

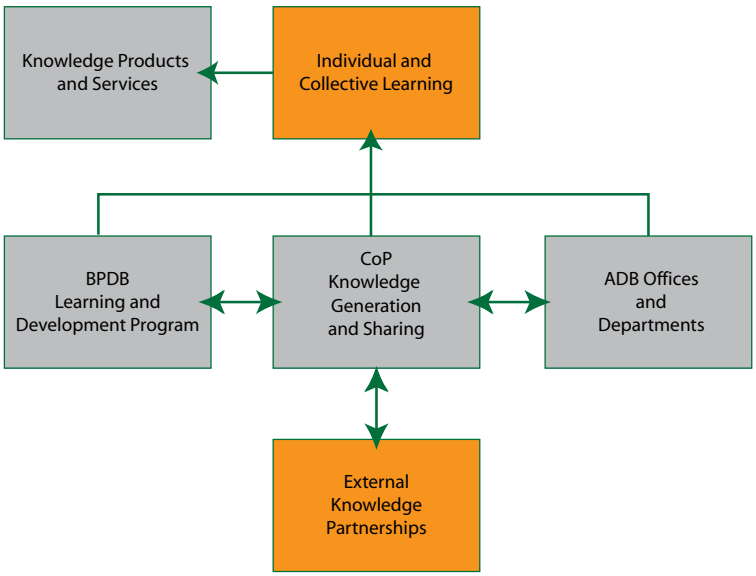


Source: Author

From experience to date, a strength of CoPs is likely to be the hosting of learning events, e.g., brown bags, talks, presentations, etc., in collaboration with other CoPs, regional departments, knowledge departments, and relevant offices and departments. To ensure the relevance of topics and a high quality of content in learning events, CoPs would be consulted on events organized by offices and departments. All events would support interactive learning toward identified learning outcomes. This means that events would not only entail more than the delivery of a talk or presentation but would also involve specific learning processes that allow discussion on the relevance and applicability of the topic to staff work, issues, and concerns. If necessary, support to apply learning through follow-up activities would be made available. Good collaboration between CoPs and relevant departments would translate key learning into high-quality knowledge products and services that support *Strategy 2020*.

BPMSD and other departments would continue to support training. CoPs would work with the Staff Development and Benefits Division (BPDB) to develop specific learning and development programs, engage speakers, and address opportunities related to staff's professional development. CoPs and relevant departments would collaborate to translate learning into knowledge products and services.

Figure 3. Communities of Practice for Individual and Collective Learning



Source: Author

Further Reading

ADB. 2008. *Building Communities of Practice*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/building-communities-practice.pdf

———. 2009a. *Monthly Progress Notes*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/monthly-progress-notes.pdf

———. 2009b. *Building Networks of Practice*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/building-networks-of-practice.pdf

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For further information

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Asian Development Bank

ADB's vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region's many successes, it remains home to two thirds of the world's poor: 1.8 billion people who live on less than $2 a day, with 903 million struggling on less than $1.25 a day. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

Knowledge Solutions are handy, quick reference guides to tools, methods, and approaches that propel development forward and enhance its effects. They are offered as resources to ADB staff. They may also appeal to the development community and people having interest in knowledge and learning.

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