



Technical Assistance Report

Project Number: 55125-001
Knowledge and Support Technical Assistance (KSTA)
June 2021

Advancing the Transformative Gender Equality Agenda in a Post-COVID-19 Asia and the Pacific

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Asian Development Bank

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
COVID-19	–	coronavirus disease
DMC	–	developing member country
GRB	–	gender-responsive budget
ILO	–	International Labour Organization
SDCC	–	Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department
SDG	–	Sustainable Development Goal
TA	–	technical assistance
TASF	–	Technical Assistance Special Fund

NOTE

In this report, “\$” refers to United States dollars.

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KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AT A GLANCE

1. Basic Data		Project Number: 55125-001
Project Name	Advancing the Transformative Gender Equality Agenda in a Post-COVID-19 Asia and the Pacific	Department/Division SDCC/SDTC-GEN
Nature of Activity	Capacity Development, Policy Advice, Research and Development	Executing Agency Asian Development Bank
Modality	Regular	
Country	Regional	
2. Sector		ADB Financing (\$ million)
✓ Industry and trade	Small and medium enterprise development	0.43
Education	Education sector development	0.28
Public sector management	Social protection initiatives	0.28
Total		0.99
3. Operational Priorities		Climate Change Information
✓ Addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequalities		GHG Reductions (tons per annum) 0.000
✓ Accelerating progress in gender equality		Climate Change impact on the Project Low
✓ Strengthening governance and institutional capacity		
		ADB Financing
		Adaptation (\$ million) 0.00
		Mitigation (\$ million) 0.00
		Cofinancing
		Adaptation (\$ million) 0.00
		Mitigation (\$ million) 0.00
Sustainable Development Goals		Gender Equity and Mainstreaming
SDG 5.2, 5.5, 5.b		Gender Equity (GEN) ✓
SDG 9.3		
		Poverty Targeting
		General Intervention on Poverty ✓
4. Risk Categorization Low		
5. Safeguard Categorization Safeguard Policy Statement does not apply		
6. Financing		
Modality and Sources		Amount (\$ million)
ADB		1.00
Knowledge and Support technical assistance: Technical Assistance Special Fund		1.00
Cofinancing		0.00
None		0.00
Counterpart		0.00
None		0.00
Total		1.00
Currency of ADB Financing: US Dollar		

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has had significant negative impacts for women and girls in Asia and the Pacific, with implications for progress on gender equality and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The knowledge and support technical assistance (TA) will support the development of knowledge solutions, foster technical capacity in developing member countries (DMCs), and strengthen the evidence base to ensure that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and DMCs can prioritize gender equality and the transformative gender agenda in COVID-19 recovery.

2. The TA is aligned with the development priorities of DMCs; Strategy 2030 operational priorities 1 (addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequalities), 2 (accelerating progress in gender equality and women's empowerment), and 6 (strengthening governance and institutional capacity); SDG 5; and SDG 9.3 (increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises). The TA is included in the 2021 Management-approved results-based work plan of the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (SDCC). It is also included in the 2021–2022 work plan of the Gender Equality Thematic Group approved by Management and supports the implementation of the Strategy 2030 Operational Plan for Priority 2: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality, 2019–2024.¹

II. ISSUES

3. Despite COVID-19's higher morbidity risk for men, the pandemic's socio-economic impacts have been disproportionately negative for women and girls in Asia and the Pacific, exacerbating pre-pandemic gender inequalities and threatening gender gains.² Before the pandemic, Asia and the Pacific was the only global region with declining female labor force participation; the pandemic has worsened this trend. Women experienced relatively higher job losses because of their concentration in vulnerable occupations in hard-hit sectors.³ Women-owned businesses were also negatively affected: over three-quarters of surveyed women-owned businesses in Mongolia and Viet Nam reported significant decline in revenue and concern for business survival.⁴ Unpaid care work has increased because lockdown measures, with the burden falling more heavily on women; pre-pandemic, women were already performing four times more than men in the region.⁵ Rates of intimate-partner violence have also increased. Across the region, domestic violence hotline call volume increased from 33% pre-pandemic to 50%.⁶

4. Growing evidence highlights that COVID-19 recovery strategies should pursue gender transformative approaches to directly address these wide-ranging adverse impacts and to ensure that women are integral to “build back better” strategies. The transformative gender agenda refers

¹ The TA first appeared in the business opportunities section of ADB's website on 18 May 2021. ADB. *Strategy 2030 Operational Plan for Priority 2: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality, 2019–2024*. Manila.

² S. Bhopal and R. Bhopal. 2020. “Sex differential in COVID-19 mortality varies markedly by age.” *The Lancet*. 396 (10250), pp. 532–533. and ADB. 2020. *COVID-19 Is No Excuse to Regress on Gender Equality*. Manila.

³ International Labour Organization (ILO). 2020. *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work*. Fifth edition. Geneva. The ILO defines the hard-hit sectors as accommodation and food services; wholesale and retail trade; real estate, business and administrative activities; and manufacturing.

⁴ ADB. 2020. *Sustainable Recovery Options for Mongolia's Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises*. Manila.

⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and Women Count. 2020. *Unlocking the Lockdown: The Gendered Effects of COVID-19 on Achieving the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok; and ILO. 2018. *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work*. Geneva.

⁶ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. 2020. *The COVID-19 Pandemic and Violence Against Women in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok.

to approaches that directly tackle the discriminatory social norms that underpin and drive gender inequalities in development outcomes; SDG 5 targets address these social norm issues which include, among other things, unpaid care work, gender-based violence, women's participation in decision-making and leadership, and access to productive resources (including land and assets). However, because of low awareness of the potential development gains and limited institutional experience, DMCs have deprioritized the transformative gender agenda in favor of short-term, gender-neutral solutions, which risks worsening gender gaps. For example, COVID-19 policy responses have largely neglected to account for unpaid care work, despite evidence correlating levels of women's unpaid care work with female labor force participation.⁷

5. Limited budgets, resources, and technical capacity within DMCs are additional challenges to advancing the transformative gender equality agenda in COVID-19 recovery. Domestic resources dedicated to gender equality remain inadequate to meet the growing critical need, and few countries in the region implement gender-responsive budgeting to enhance their accountability on gender commitments. There is also a need to broaden the institutional capacity to design and implement gender-transformative policies and programs beyond gender ministries through dedicated skills and leadership training, to promote stronger intersectoral interest in furthering the transformative gender agenda across different sector ministries.

6. ADB has identified the transformative gender agenda as an effective strategy to accelerate progress in gender equality, but recognized its own limited experience in implementing solutions to address social norms. The new challenges to gender equality triggered by COVID-19 increase the relevance of ADB investing further in building operational experience on the transformative gender approach in conjunction with traditional gender mainstreaming in its support to DMC recovery efforts.

III. THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A. Impact and Outcome

7. The TA is aligned with the following impact: Gender-responsive COVID-19 recovery in DMCs fostered.⁸ The TA will have the following outcome: ADB projects integrating the gender transformative agenda in their COVID-19 response increased.⁹

B. Outputs, Methods, and Activities

8. The TA will support the following outputs.

9. **Output 1: Evidence and tools on the transformative gender agenda for COVID-19 pandemic response in operations developed.** This output will focus on building operational experience in integrating the gender transformative agenda in COVID-19 responses as a means of fostering more equitable recovery. Following consultations with operations departments, the activities will address the following areas: (i) eliminating violence against women and girls; (ii) undertaking reforms to ensure women's access to economic and productive resources; and (iii) supporting women's participation in decision-making and leadership. Activity selection is based on geographic diversity, DMC demand, relevance for operations departments, coordination with

⁷ United Nations Development Programme and UN Women. 2020. [COVID-19 Gender Policy Response and Tracker](#).

⁸ ADB. 2020. *ADB's Comprehensive Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Manila.

⁹ The design and monitoring framework is in Appendix 1.

departmental pipelines, alignment with Technical Assistance Special Fund 7 (TASF 7) priorities, and potential for scalability into ADB operations.

10. The following indicative policy advice, knowledge support, and capacity development activities will address COVID-19's regressive effect on gender equality through SDG 5's gender transformative agenda:

- (i) **Eliminating violence against women and girls.** National sexual harassment policy or guidelines for civil service and state-owned enterprises will be developed for Nauru, while in Tonga operationalization of the new Sexual Harassment Policy for public service will be supported to foster safer workplaces for women.¹⁰ In Mongolia, a public transportation app will be enhanced with gender-responsive design features to enable reporting of sexual harassment. This data will allow public authorities to track and analyze trends and integrate additional safety features where necessary along bus routes. Women in *ger* areas rely heavily on public transport to access their workplaces and for undertaking domestic chores; reliable and efficient public transport is critical for both their livelihoods and well-being.¹¹
- (ii) **Access to economic and productive resources.** Digital and fintech solutions will be supported to strengthen women's access to finance in Pakistan.¹² This will include a digital needs assessment and regulatory environment review of microfinance institutions, and development of a platform to facilitate collaborations between microfinance institutions and digital solution providers.
- (iii) **Supporting women's participation in decision-making and leadership.** Design guidelines with focus on gender-responsive and socially inclusive features for urban spaces will be developed for two towns in Bangladesh to ensure that designs respond to women's needs and priorities, including the need for urban spaces during COVID-19 pandemic when women are largely confined to their home.¹³ This will be complemented by a leadership program, which will increase women's involvement in the city.¹⁴

11. Lessons learned from these activities will be captured in knowledge products and events disseminated in DMCs.¹⁵ Civil society organizations will be consulted on activities and knowledge products and involved in dissemination and implementation where relevant. A report analyzing developmental impacts and implications for ADB will be prepared for replicability and scalability of activities in the future.

¹⁰ This activity in Nauru will be linked with the proposed Improving Fiscal Sustainability and Social Protection Program (indicative title) and Tonga with Strengthen Macroeconomic Resilience Program (indicative title).

¹¹ The *ger* areas of Ulaanbaatar are unplanned traditional tent communities on the city periphery where the majority of the capital city's poor residents live. This activity will be linked to the proposed project Improving Transport Services in *Ger* Areas in Mongolia.

¹² This activity will be linked with proposed project Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Financial Access, Inclusivity, and Resilience Project in Pakistan.

¹³ This activity will be linked with proposed Second Coastal Towns Environmental Infrastructure Improvement Sector Project in Bangladesh due for processing later in 2021.

¹⁴ This will build on the Strengthen Local Institutions to Plan and Design Gender Responsive and Inclusive Urban Development (Future Cities Future Women Phase 2) in Georgia, subproject under the regional project Strengthening Institutions for Localizing Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. ADB. [Strengthening Institutions for Localizing Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#).

¹⁵ No objection letters will be sought before implementation of TA activities. In case these letters are not obtained, the country activities will be changed and new DMCs will be identified in consultation with regional departments.

12. **Output 2: New knowledge and capacity of developing member countries on gender-responsive pandemic recovery fostered.** This output will focus on broadening expertise to strengthen DMC capacity to design and deliver gender-responsive pandemic recovery policies. Under the TA, ADB's Asia Women Leaders Program will be adapted to focus on prioritizing gender equality in green and resilient COVID-19 recovery.¹⁶ The Asia Women Leaders Program targets senior female government officials from ADB priority sectors to build up their leadership skills. Two programs will be carried out, with the curriculum tailored to strengthening leadership on COVID-19 policy development.

13. In addition, ADB will identify new entry points for DMCs to invest in gender equality by mobilizing domestic resources to increase available resources for gender equality. Two new knowledge products will include: (i) a gender-responsive budget (GRB) toolkit and tip sheet to effectively integrate GRB aspects into programming along with training for DMC officials; the toolkit will focus on elaborating principles of GRB specific to ADB context, and when and how to apply GRB within ADB operations illustrated with relevant case studies; and (ii) a regional benchmarking report on gender and taxation, which will assess implicit and explicit gender biases in taxation systems as well as opportunities to create fiscal incentives in favor of gender equality.

14. This TA will build on the lessons learned from the ongoing regional TA Promoting Transformative Gender Equality Agenda in Asia and the Pacific, which include the need for more activities across a diversity of sectors which directly address the transformative gender agenda.¹⁷ The ongoing TA has supported knowledge products and activities in operations departments, expanded DMC capacity on the transformative gender agenda, and fostered women's entrepreneurship. The combination of knowledge, training, and activities has proven to be an effective approach with the capacity to scale and adapt to combat the emerging gender challenges of COVID-19 in DMCs, which would not have been feasible without this ADB targeted support. For example, supported activities have integrated digital health solutions for women, promoted gender lens investing to support women's businesses, and strengthened leadership capacity of female government officials, critical for gender-responsive COVID-19 policy-making.

C. Cost and Financing

15. The TA is estimated to cost \$1.0 million, which will be financed on a grant basis by ADB's TASF (\$0.5 million from TASF 7 and \$0.5 million from TASF-other sources). The key expenditure items are listed in Appendix 2.

D. Implementation Arrangements

16. ADB will administer the TA. SDCC's Gender Equality Thematic Group will lead the overall implementation and coordinate closely with the ADB operations departments that will implement the activities in output 1 and with other relevant sector and thematic groups and knowledge departments for output 2 activities. The TA implementation period will be 24 months, starting in July 2021. ADB will select, supervise, and evaluate consultants; organize workshops; and provide staff to act as resource persons in trainings, seminars, conferences, and workshops. The implementation arrangements are summarized in the table.

¹⁶ ADB. *Strategy 2030 Operational Plan for Priority 2: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality, 2019–2024*. Manila. para. 37.

¹⁷ ADB. [Regional: Promoting Transformative Gender Equality Agenda in Asia and the Pacific](#).

Implementation Arrangements

Aspects	Arrangements		
Indicative implementation period	July 2021–June 2023 (24 months)		
Executing agency	ADB Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department: Gender Equality Thematic Group		
Implementing agencies	ADB: Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department, Central and West Asia Department, East Asia Department, Pacific Department, and South Asia Department		
Consultants	To be selected and engaged by ADB		
	Firm, civil society organization, and training institute: SSS	International	\$50,000
	Firm: FBS	National	\$70,000
	Individual experts: ICS	International expertise (39 person-months)	\$407,000
	Individual experts: ICS	National expertise (50 person-months)	\$160,000
Disbursement	Disbursement of TA resources will follow ADB's <i>Technical Assistance Disbursement Handbook</i> (2020, as amended from time to time)		

ADB = Asian Development Bank, FBS = fixed budget selection, ICS = individual consultant selection, SSS = single-source selection, TA = technical assistance.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

17. **Consulting services.** The TA will engage international and national consulting services from firms and individuals with relevant expertise to support the implementation of activities. The TA will require a minimum of 48 person-months of international and 55 person-months of national consulting services. Resource persons will be engaged, as needed, to provide inputs as required by the TA. Detailed terms of reference for consultants will be developed once tasks, activities, and outputs are clearly defined during activities preparation and TA implementation. ADB will engage the consultants following the ADB Procurement Policy (2017, as amended from time to time) and its associated project administration instructions and/or staff instructions.¹⁸ ADB will consider output-based and/or lump-sum contracts for consulting services, where appropriate, in consultation with ADB's Procurement, Portfolio, and Financial Management Department.

IV. THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION

18. The President, acting under the authority delegated by the Board, has approved the provision of technical assistance not exceeding the equivalent of \$1,000,000 on a grant basis for Advancing the Transformative Gender Equality Agenda in a Post-COVID-19 Asia and the Pacific, and hereby reports this action to the Board.

¹⁸ Terms of Reference for Consultants (accessible from the list of linked documents in Appendix 3).

DESIGN AND MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Impact the TA is Aligned with Gender responsive COVID-19 recovery in DMCs fostered (ADB's Comprehensive Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic) ^a			
Results Chain	Performance Indicators	Data Sources and Reporting Mechanisms	Risks and Critical Assumptions
Outcome ADB projects integrating the gender transformative agenda in their COVID-19 response increased	a. By 2023, the gender transformative agenda integrated in at least two ADB projects addressing COVID-19 response (2020 baseline: 0)	a. Development Effectiveness Review 2024; RRP	R: Decrease in ADB and DMC prioritization of gender equality in COVID-19 response may impede integration efforts.
Outputs 1. Evidence and tools on the transformative gender agenda for COVID-19 pandemic response in operations developed 2. New knowledge and capacity of DMCs on gender-responsive pandemic recovery fostered	1a. By 2023, at least two country-specific measures aligned with SDG 5's gender-transformative agenda supported ^b (OP 2.3.2) (2020 baseline: 0) 1b. By 2023, at least two new gender-responsive digital solutions developed and implemented (OP 1.3.3, 2.4.1) (2020 baseline: 0) 2a. By 2023, at least 90% of 60 AWLP participants reporting increased confidence and knowledge on leadership skills on COVID-19 response and recovery (OP 2.3.1, 6.1.1) (2020 baseline: 0) 2b. By 2023, at least two knowledge products on domestic resource mobilization for gender equality produced and disseminated online (2020 baseline: 0)	1a. Quarterly project monitoring reports, news on DMC measures, policies, or regulations 1b. Quarterly project monitoring reports, digital tools 2a. AWLP event report and participants' evaluation 2b. Knowledge products	R: Uncertainty because of COVID-19 outbreak restricts DMCs ability to support TA activities.

Key Activities with Milestones
<p>1. Evidence and tools on the transformative gender agenda for COVID-19 pandemic response in operations developed</p> <p>1.1 Identify and implement country-specific measures integrating gender transformative design features (Q1 2023).</p> <p>1.2 Develop at least one gender-responsive digital solution in the finance sector (Q1 2023).</p> <p>1.3 Develop gender-responsive features for a digital solution in the transport sector (Q1 2022).</p> <p>1.4 Develop design guidelines with focus on gender-responsive and socially inclusive features for urban spaces (Q1 2023).</p> <p>1.5 Organize training for operationalizing new sexual harassment policy for public service (Q1 2023).</p> <p>2. New knowledge and capacity of DMCs on gender-responsive pandemic recovery fostered</p> <p>2.1 Organize at least two in-country AWLP events (Q1 2022–Q1 2023).</p> <p>2.2 Develop knowledge products and reports on domestic resource mobilization for gender equality (Q3 2021–Q2 2023).</p> <p>2.3 Conduct online dissemination and training workshops for knowledge products (Q2 2023).</p> <p>2.4 Conduct survey of dissemination workshop participants (Q2 2023).</p> <p>TA Management Activities</p> <p>Mobilize national TA coordinator (Q4 2021).</p> <p>Mobilize international consultants (Q2 2022).</p> <p>Submit TA final report (Q2 2023).</p>
<p>Inputs</p> <p>ADB: \$1.0 million</p>

A = assumption, ADB = Asian Development Bank, AWLP = Asia Women Leaders Program, COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, DMCs = developing member countries, OP = operational priority, Q = quarter, R = risk, RRP = report and recommendation of the President, SDG = Sustainable Development Goal, TA = technical assistance.

^a ADB. 2020. *ADB's Comprehensive Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Manila.

^b Measures include policies and regulations, including (i) national sexual harassment policy or guidelines for civil service and state-owned enterprises; and (ii) gender-responsive design guidelines for urban spaces.

Contribution to Strategy 2030 Operational Priorities:

The expected values and methodological details for all OP indicators to which this TA will contribute results are detailed in Contribution to Strategy 2030 Operational Priorities (accessible from the list of linked documents in Appendix 3 of the TA report).

Source: Asian Development Bank.

COST ESTIMATES AND FINANCING PLAN
(\$'000)

Item	Amount
Asian Development Bank ^a	
1. Consultants	
a. Remuneration and per diem	
i. International consultants	457.0
ii. National consultants	230.0
b. Out-of-pocket expenditures	
i. International and local travel	35.0
ii. Surveys	10.0
iii. Training, seminars, and conferences	45.0
iv. Reports and communications ^b	1.0
2. Surveys	4.0
3. Training, seminars, workshops, forum, and conferences ^c	
a. Facilitators	100.0
b. Resource persons	7.0
c. Venue rental and related facilities	25.0
d. Participants ^d	15.0
4. Miscellaneous technical assistance administration ^e	21.0
5. Contingencies	50.0
Total	1,000.0

^a Financed by the Asian Development Bank's Technical Assistance Special Fund (\$500,000 from TASF 7 and \$500,000 from TASF-other sources).

^b Includes translation costs.

^c Includes event venue rentals, airfares, hotel accommodations, daily subsistence allowances, miscellaneous travel expenses, and land transport for workshop and/or training participants and resource persons. It may also include event documents and materials, workshop kits, and miscellaneous items such as uniforms, bags, and flash drives.

^d Includes airfare, hotel accommodation, daily subsistence allowance, and miscellaneous travel expenses of event participants.

^e Includes editing, translation, engineering design, graphic design, other administrative support costs, and Microsoft 365 license for individual TA consultants.

Source: Asian Development Bank estimates.

LIST OF LINKED DOCUMENTS

<http://www.adb.org/Documents/LinkedDocs/?id=55125-001-TARreport>

1. Terms of Reference for Consultants
2. Contribution to Strategy 2030 Operational Priorities