



Regional: Addressing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in ADB Operations

Project Name	Addressing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in ADB Operations	
Project Number	56076-001	
Country / Economy	Regional Mongolia Nepal Philippines Solomon Islands Tajikistan	
Project Status	Active	
Project Type / Modality of Assistance	Technical Assistance	
Source of Funding / Amount	TA 10004-REG: Addressing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in ADB Operations	
	Technical Assistance Special Fund	US\$ 2.00 million
Strategic Agendas	Inclusive economic growth	
Drivers of Change	Gender Equity and Mainstreaming Governance and capacity development Knowledge solutions	
Sector / Subsector	Energy / Energy sector development and institutional reform Transport / Transport policies and institutional development	
Gender Equity and Mainstreaming	Gender equity	
Description	<p>1.The knowledge and support technical assistance (TA) will help ADB and executing and implementing agencies in selected developing member countries (DMCs) to develop and enhance systems, policies, and protocols to prevent, mitigate and respond to risks of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) in ADB financed sovereign projects with civil works. The TA will contribute to collection of evidence and data, and preparation of qualitative assessment of gaps and issues to be filled and addressed to effectively support ADB operations in addressing SEAH risks and raising awareness and strengthening the capacities of government agencies as well as non-government organizations and service providers in SEAH prevention, risk mitigation, and response following good practices and principles of a survivor-centered approach. The TA will be implemented in five DMCs which will be identified in close consultation with ADB regional departments and government stakeholders.</p> <p>2.The TA is included in the 2022 Management-approved results-based workplan of the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department.</p>	

Project Rationale and Linkage to Country/Regional Strategy

3. Prevalence of gender based and sexual violence, but limited country level data on sexual violence. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies the elimination of violence against women and girls as a crucial priority for achieving gender equality and sustainable development. Violence takes many forms, including not only physical, but also sexual, emotional, and economic violence in private and public spheres. Gender-based and sexual violence remains unacceptably high in Asia and the Pacific Region. Over 37% of women in South Asia, 40% of women in South-East Asia and up to 68% of women in the Pacific have experienced violence at the hands of their partners. Across Asia, studies show that 30% to 40% of women suffer sexual harassment in the workplace. In 2018, for every 10 victims of human trafficking detected globally, about five were adult women and two were girls. Most of the detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (92%) are females. At the same time in order to inform policy makers and assist the design and implementation of effective policies to combat gender-based violence, it is first necessary to understand the nature and prevalence of the phenomenon. Data collected by National Statistical Offices usually rely on surveys and/or administrative sources. However, these capture only a fraction of the actual prevalence and incidence of violence against women.

4. Country legal frameworks and institutional systems to address SEAH. ADB recognizes that DMCs are currently at different stages in their journeys to prevent, mitigate and respond to gender-based and sexual violence and that long-term efforts are needed to effectively address SEAH across the Asia and the Pacific region. Globally about 155 countries have passed laws on domestic violence, and 140 have legislation on sexual harassment in the workplace. 19 countries have set the legal age of marriage for girls under the age of 18, but many more have exceptions that allow marriage under the age of 18, including with the consent of parents, judicial and religious authorities. Most countries set the age of consent to sex at 15-16 or above, and many countries also have close-in-age exceptions while banning sex between adults and minors. Challenges also remain in enforcing laws and policies, limiting women and girls access to safety and justice. While the existence of more and better laws is a critical step towards addressing SEAH, better enforcement of laws, including operationalization of institutional systems and protocols for reporting and responding, provision of sufficient resources to support such systems, and addressing underlying gender and social norms against wider gender inequality are necessary to ensure protection for women and children.

5. Lack of available services or limited capacity of service providers to address SEAH. Survivor-centered approaches and support to victims/survivors need to be prioritized so survivors feel safe and confident in reporting SEAH incidents. Reporting mechanisms, in particular, need to be adapted to local contexts to ensure they are accessible and appropriate. Various studies highlight that reporting SEAH allegations remain low due to various factors. Many victims and survivors are discouraged from reporting because they lack the belief that it will help or change anything. Ineffective governance structures have often left a situation with no clear responsibilities and/or accountability mechanism, and no specific measures included to address barriers to reporting by the most marginalized and vulnerable communities. While it may be relatively simple to design mechanisms for confidential reporting and investigations, implementation relies on political will, funding for services, staff training (at local and international levels), survivor and community participation, access to appropriate reporting channels, including available technology, and responding services. Access to services that are more survivor-centered, culturally appropriate and trauma-informed with specific attention to survivors belonging to underserved groups need to be included as an integral part of the policies, protocols and practices.

6. SEAH risk factors in ADB operations. In many of ADB's countries of operations, efforts to address gender-based and sexual violence facing various challenges such as prevailing patriarchy, inadequate legal protection for survivors, limited welfare and social protection systems, and lack of response services and trusted reporting mechanisms. This inhibits women's participation, voice, trust and confidence in reporting incidences of SEAH. At the same time, large infrastructure projects often cause disruptions and changes to the fabric of communities from an influx of workers, which further increases the risk of SEAH. The risks are exacerbated if local institutions are weak and unable to effectively protect women and girls, womens organizations and service providers are not present or not supported and if there is a high level of poverty in the project community. Various studies also suggest that risks of SEAH in large infrastructure works do not only result from the influx of male workers but are also directly linked to pre-existing gender inequalities.

7. ADB's commitment to address SEAH in operations: On 21 April 2018 at a Heads of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) Meeting, 10 International Financial Institutions (IFIs) (including ADB) confirmed their commitment to prevent SEAH, both within their own institutions and in their operations. The commitment was to ensure creation of an environment in which SEAH is not only rejected, but active steps are also taken to address the challenges faced by IFIs in this regard following seven common principles: i) foster a culture of respect and high standards of ethical behavior across institutions; ii) establish and maintain standards aimed at preventing SEAH and other forms of misconduct; iii) provide a safe and trusted environment for those affected by SEAH to step forward to report incidents and concerns; iv) provide protection for those affected, as well as whistleblowers and/or witnesses within their institutions, and to take appropriate measures against any form of retaliation; v) maintain robust policy frameworks and clear institutional mechanisms that address how incidents and allegations will be handled; vi) provide effective training programs so all staff understand the requirements and standards of behavior; and vii) support clients to develop and implement policies and mechanisms that address SEAH.

8. ADB's approach to address SEAH in ADB-financed projects with civil works contracts. Projects with infrastructure development components may present a high-risk environment for incidents of SEAH, especially where project related activities and influx of workers may further exacerbate pre-existing gender inequalities and power dynamics in communities and households. ADB has developed a Good Practice Note (GPN) on addressing SEAH in ADB-Financed Projects with civil works contracts. The GPN was developed with the intent to support ADB staff, borrowers, executing and implementing and staff and contractors in designing and implementing measures to address SEAH in ADB-financed sovereign projects with civil works. The GPN is not ADB policy and the recommendations it provides are advisory in nature and will be piloted in selected ADB DMCs in new sovereign projects with civil works contracts. These TA-financed activities will support piloting of the GPN in five selected DMCs in close collaboration with executing and implementing agencies of ADB projects.

9. The TA builds on the experience and lessons learned of previous ADB projects on domestic violence and capacity building efforts for national women's machineries, and existing national programs to address gender-based violence (GBV). Through this proposed TA, ADB will work closely with key stakeholders in selected DMCs across all five regional departments to develop a shared analysis of what changes and support are needed in the long term, to ensure that DMCs can effectively address SEAH concerns and risks and ensure that response and reporting follow the best global practices, embodying a survivor-centered approach.

10. The TA is aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 (on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls), and SDG 16 (on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels). It is also in line with ADB's commitments to address SEAH, including those reflected in Operational Plan for Strategy 2030 Priority 2 on Accelerating Gender Equality (OP2), which calls for assessing project risks of SEAH and human trafficking in the context of measures for eliminating GBV. It supports OP1 Addressing Remaining Poverty and Reducing Inequalities in the effort to reduce vulnerability, improve working conditions and address inequality of opportunities. The TA is in line with OP6 Strengthening governance and institutional capacity to strengthen social safeguards in infrastructure governance following G20 Principles for Promoting Quality Infrastructure Investment and will support DMCs executing and implementing agencies in strengthening their systems and standards, with the aim of improving project readiness and implementation, ensuring adherence to ADB standards, and mitigating project risks. The TA will be further aligned with and reinforce national gender equality strategies and national gender and GBV prevention action plans, as well as ADB country partnership strategies in selected DMCs.

Impact Access to justice and protection for survivors of sexual violence in the context of ADB-financed projects with civil works in selected DMCs enhanced (ADB Strategy 2030 and Operational Plans for Priority 1, 2 and 6)

Project Outcome

Description of Outcome Institutional systems to prevent, mitigate, and respond to risks of SEAH in ADB-financed projects in selected DMCs strengthened

Progress Toward Outcome

Implementation Progress

Description of Project Outputs Capacity of country stakeholders to address SEAH enhanced
Evidence, data, and tools to inform and support measures to address SEAH in ADB operations generated
Design of ADB projects and activities to address SEAH risks strengthened

Status of Implementation Progress (Outputs, Activities, and Issues)

Geographical Location Mongolia - Nation-wide; Nepal - Nation-wide; Philippines - Nation-wide; Solomon Islands - Nation-wide; Tajikistan - Nation-wide

Summary of Environmental and Social Aspects

Environmental Aspects

Involuntary Resettlement

Indigenous Peoples

Stakeholder Communication, Participation, and Consultation

During Project Design

During Project Implementation

Responsible ADB Officer	Shagzatova, Malika
Responsible ADB Department	Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department
Responsible ADB Division	SDTC-GEN
Executing Agencies	Asian Development Bank

Timetable

Concept Clearance	17 Aug 2022
Fact Finding	-
MRM	-
Approval	01 Dec 2022
Last Review Mission	-
Last PDS Update	02 Dec 2022

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Financing Plan/TA Utilization						Cumulative Disbursements		
ADB	Cofinancing	Counterpart				Total	Date	Amount
		Gov	Beneficiaries	Project Sponsor	Others			
2,000,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000,000.00	-	0.00

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