

Asian Development Bank

# Sustainability Report

Spotlight on the Environment,  
Social Development, and  
Governance



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In this report, "\$" refers to US dollars.

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# Asian Development Bank Members



Boundaries are not necessarily authoritative

S O U T H E R N O





# Introduction

Recent experience in most of Asia and the Pacific represents a remarkable success story of rapid economic growth and poverty reduction. In less than a generation, the region's people have transformed their economies, so that today they are among the most vibrant and dynamic in the world.

Rapid development has brought enormous benefits, with 300 million people having been lifted above the \$1 a day poverty line since 1990. But nearly 1.9 billion Asians—half the region's population—still live on \$2 a day or less, and about one third of those on less than \$1 a day. Asia must continue to grow rapidly to help the poor meet their needs and achieve their aspirations for a better quality of life, as reflected by the Millennium Development Goals.

What happens in these countries is important not only for Asia and the Pacific but also for the world. For example, rapid growth requires energy, but the region's reliance on fossil fuels that emit greenhouse gases contributes to global climate change. Other resources in demand by these rapidly growing economies—water, minerals, soils, forests—are under increasing pressure world-wide. Enormous social challenges remain in education, health, and other areas of concern to the global community. And financial, human, and natural resources can only be employed effectively with sound governance systems that respect the rule of law and the vital role of civil society.

This report casts a spotlight on some of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) responses to the key environmental, social, and governance concerns in our region. Our clean energy and environment program, for example, serves as a vehicle to combine our expertise and financing with those of our client countries and many other partners to tackle the massive challenge of global climate change. Our programs in health, education, and

gender balance are responding to such concerns as the spread of HIV/AIDS and female literacy. Our governance programs are helping our client countries develop stronger fiduciary controls and institutions to support rapid and equitable growth. As a leading development institution in Asia and the Pacific, ADB is helping to channel knowledge, technology, and funds to our client countries so that they may develop in ways that are environmentally and socially sustainable.

The report also summarizes how ADB is structured, and how it operates. ADB is keenly aware of the need to lead by example and to minimize our corporate environmental footprint, and is proud to have been the first multilateral development bank to achieve International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14001 certification for our internal environmental management systems. We constantly seek ways to improve this performance.

Preparation of this report was overseen by an interdepartmental working group cochaired by Bindu Lohani, Director General of the Regional and Sustainable Development Department and Amarjit Wasan, Principal Director of the Office of Administrative Services. A subgroup, chaired by Nessim Ahmad, Director of the Environment and Social Safeguard Division, managed the compilation and presentation, with this process led by David McCauley, Senior Environmental Economist, and Eleonora Windisch, Head of the Government Relations Unit in the Office of Administrative Services. Jill Gale de Villa served as project coordinator. A full list of the many contributors is given at the end of the report.

It is our hope that this report will improve understanding of how ADB is organized to address the many pressing challenges to sustainable and equitable growth in our region. Your feedback is welcome as is your partnership in action.

# About the Report

"The goal of sustainable development is to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Source: Global Reporting Initiative. 2006. *Sustainability Reporting Guidelines*. <http://www.globalreporting.org>, p. 2. based on the Brundtland Commission Report.

Sustainability reporting is becoming commonplace in the corporate world as companies respond to demands from shareholders and the public for greater accountability and responsibility for their actions as local and global citizens. Such expectations now extend to multilateral development institutions, and ADB is pleased to present here its first sustainability report.

**Structure.** The content of the report responds to the guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), while adapting to the characteristics of ADB's work and the multiple audiences interested in the report's information.

A coalition of corporations concerned about private sector responsibility for environmental protection launched the GRI in 1997 in cooperation with the United Nations

businesses. Like other multilateral development institutions, ADB has tailored its sustainability reporting to its development work.

**Focus.** The report highlights how ADB's efforts on the environment, social development, and governance aim to help improve the lives of the poor in the Asia and Pacific region in ways that do not "compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs."<sup>2</sup> The report also shows how ADB manages its headquarters facilities to minimize impact on the environment.

This report is intended to serve the interests of a wide audience of stakeholders, including ADB member governments, ADB staff, the international development community, academia, international and national civil society organizations, socially responsible investment organizations and fund managers, public and

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