

ADB

ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS

Asian Development Bank



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FOREWORD

Environment Program: Progress and Prospects is a snapshot of the Asian Development Bank's (ADB's) strategies and programs, loans and technical assistance projects with environmental sustainability as a theme. It also highlights partnerships and actions that ADB is supporting to promote environmentally sustainable economic growth in Asia and the Pacific. It informs our stakeholders of ADB's support for its developing member countries (DMCs) during 2003–2008, and its future actions to address the environmental challenges affecting our region.

ADB's *Environment Policy (2002)*, and recently its long-term strategic framework for 2008–2020, *Strategy 2020*, emphasize the importance of environmentally sustainable growth in its mission to help its DMCs reduce poverty and improve living conditions and quality of life. ADB's earlier emphasis on building environmental safeguard capacity of its DMCs has been broadened, and now includes support for improved policies, strengthened institutions and projects with environmental sustainability as a theme.

Support for ADB projects with environmental sustainability as a theme has shown a marked upward trend in recent years. The proportion of ADB-financed projects supporting environmental sustainability during 2006–2008 reached 24%. This is a significant increase from the 1996–1998 rolling average of 14%. Worth noting is also the fact that the 2008 environmental lending was ADB's highest by far, as 26 projects with environmental sustainability as a theme were approved for \$2.6 billion, representing 30% in number and 25% in loan value.

Considerable progress was also achieved on other fronts. Putting into operation its clean energy initiatives, ADB surpassed in 2008 the \$1 billion annual lending target set in 2005. Transport and urban investments began to shift to low-carbon alternatives. Financing schemes that mobilized concessional funds, catalyzed private sector capital, and maximized the use of market mechanisms (such as carbon financing) to support energy efficiency improvement, and use clean energy and renewable energy sources were established. In its climate change adaptation program, ADB also made headway, as assistance was extended to countries to design climate change risk-reduction projects and implement adaptation interventions. Climate change implementation plans prepared by regional departments paved the way for incorporating mitigation and adaptation interventions into country partnership strategies and subregional programs.

ADB continued to provide complementary support towards environment sustainability through policy dialogue, institutional reform, capacity development, and knowledge generation and transfer. Close working relationships also continued with our development partners, who play a vital role in our development efforts, as they complement our core competencies and allow for stronger responses to our DMCs' needs. To improve the relevance and strengthen the effectiveness of its environmental and social safeguard policies, ADB has updated these policies. ADB's Board of Directors approved the Safeguard Policy Statement on 20 July 2009.

A look at our 2009 lending pipeline indicates that our 2008 environmental lending volume is likely to be surpassed. This is an indicator that our DMCs' investments in the energy, water supply, sanitation and waste management, and agriculture and natural resource sectors have indeed been making quantitative and qualitative shifts towards improved environmental outcomes. With Strategy 2020 in place, supported by various programs, such as the Climate Change Program, the Poverty and Environment Program, the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities, the Cities Development Initiative for Asia, the Sustainable Transport Initiative, the Water Financing Program, and subregional programs, such as the Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management, the Greater Mekong Subregion Core Environment Program, and the Coral Triangle Initiative, ADB is effectively contributing to environmentally sustainable growth in Asia and the Pacific.

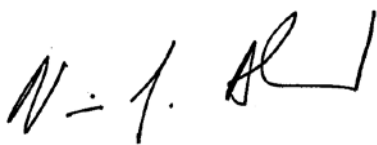
Looking ahead, to deal with the environmental challenges affecting Asia and the Pacific, we will undertake the following actions: We will enhance the mainstreaming of environmental considerations—including climate change—into our country partnership strategies, subregional economic cooperation programs, sector strategies, programs, and projects. We will continue to promote investments in sound environmental and natural resource management while promoting low-carbon growth and adaptation to climate change impacts. We will continue to help our DMCs mainstream environmental considerations into their policies, plans, and programs, and help strengthen their legal and institutional frameworks.

In addition, we will enhance the capacities of environmental agencies and cells of key executing agencies. Recognizing the enduring results of sustained policy dialogues, we will actively engage with our borrowers to strengthen their policies and institutions. Support for regional cooperation on shared environmental public goods will continue, as will knowledge transfer on environmental management and new sustainable technologies. ADB's Safeguard Policy Statement will enhance the development impact of its projects, as well as strengthen DMCs' own safeguard systems and capacity to manage environmental risks of development projects.


There are many challenges ahead. The region is changing, and ADB will respond to remain relevant and effective. During this time of financial and economic crisis, while we help stimulate the economies in Asia and the Pacific with our financial resources, we will also extend policy and technical advice as we encourage our DMCs to make use of this opportunity to strengthen their policies and institutions, build their capacities, and thus more rapidly move towards sustainable development. ADB will be vigilant and remain responsive to our DMCs' new needs and demands. It will continue to be a stimulus for environmental change and remain a strong partner to its DMCs in their pursuit of environmentally sustainable growth.

This report was prepared at the request of the Environment Community of Practice to give an overview of ADB's actions to assist its DMCs achieve environmentally sustainable growth. The report was prepared by staff from the Environment and Safeguards Division (RSES) of the Regional and Sustainable Development Department led by Helen B. Cruda, RSES. Overall guidance and support were received from the Environment Community of Practice. Daniele Ponzi, Yue-Lang Feng, and Javed Mir gave useful suggestions. Marie Antoinette Virtucio and Christopher Tabungar compiled and synthesized information and prepared parts of the report, while Ma. Charina Munda provided research assistance.

We hope that the information presented in this report will increase awareness among our stakeholders regarding the measures ADB is taking to help address the environmental challenges faced by our region, and underscore the need for combined and concerted efforts of all development partners to promote sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.



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