



October 2024

Independent Evaluation Department Work Program, 2025–2027

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Asian Development Bank

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	– Asian Development Bank
ADF	– Asian Development Fund
AER	– Annual Evaluation Review
DEC	– Development Effectiveness Committee
DMC	– developing member country
IED	– Independent Evaluation Department
NOM	– new operating model

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I. BACKGROUND

1. As specified in the Evaluation Policy of the Asian Development Bank (ADB),¹ the Board of Directors is responsible for approving the rolling 3-year work program of the Independent Evaluation Department (IED) after it is reviewed and endorsed by the Development Effectiveness Committee (DEC). The proposed Work Program for 2025–2027 was discussed and subsequently endorsed by the DEC on 16 September 2024 and is hereby presented for Board approval (Appendix 1).

2. IED consulted ADB Management in developing the Work Program for 2025–2027. The work plan builds on the previous 3-year program and considers recent global and regional trends affecting ADB’s developing member countries (DMCs). It reflects ADB’s institutional context, including focus areas from the Midterm Review of Strategy 2030, priorities under the new operating model (NOM), and other evaluation topics (Table 1).²

Table 1: Proposed 2025–2027 Evaluations by Strategy 2023 Midterm Review Strategic Focus Area

Focus Area	2025	2026	2027
Climate Action	IED evaluations will focus on climate change and integrate climate aspects into all evaluations.		
Private Sector Development	CE: Partner Funds and Cofinancing	CE: Private Equity Fund Operations	TE: Private Sector Development
Regional Cooperation and Public Goods	AER 2025: Support for Regional Initiatives and Public Goods CE: Trade and Supply Chain Finance Program ^a		
Digital Transformation	TP: Digital Technology Support to Developing Member Countries	CE: Digital Initiatives in ADB	
Resilience and Empowerment	SWE: ADB’s Support for Education in Asia and the Pacific TE: ADB’s Support for Health in Asia and the Pacific SWE: OP4: Making Cities More Livable	AER 2026: Sustainable Development Goals Interim Report TE: Disaster Risk Management and Crisis Response	CE: ADF 14, 2024–2028 CE: Engagement with CSOs TE: Natural Capital TE: Public Sector Management and Governance TP: Tourism

ADB = Asian Development Bank, ADF = Asian Development Fund, AER = Annual Evaluation Review, CE = corporate evaluation, CSO = civil society organization, OP = operational priority, SWE = sector-wide evaluation, TE = thematic evaluation, TP = topical paper.

^a Involves aspects of private sector development.

Source: Asian Development Bank (Independent Evaluation Department).

II. INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

A. High-Level Evaluations

3. **2025 Work Program.** The work plan includes evaluations of the education and health sectors, and a country assistance program evaluation of Kazakhstan, which will contribute to the

¹ ADB. 2008. *Review of the Independence and Effectiveness of the Operations Evaluation Department*.

² The IED work program cuts across various dimensions of the Midterm Review of Strategy 2030, while focusing on other key areas essential for achieving ADB’s goals, such as (i) country differentiation, (ii) clients and partners, (iii) subnational efforts, and (iv) organization for delivery.

2026 evaluation of ADB's engagement with upper-middle-income countries (Appendix 1). The theme chapter of the 2025 Annual Evaluation Review (AER) will focus on ADB's support for regional initiatives and public goods, drawing on evaluations of the Greater Mekong Subregion, Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation, and South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation. The program includes cofinancing, trade and supply chain finance, and livable cities, and the first phase of the real-time evaluation of the NOM.

4. **2026 Work Program.** The work plan includes a corporate evaluation of digital initiatives at ADB, assessing how effectively digital technology is integrated to support its strategic goals. The 2026 AER theme chapter will focus on ADB's contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals 2030. Proposed high-level topics include private equity funds, disaster risk management and crisis response, and the second phase of the NOM evaluation. The program will include a regional program evaluation of ADB's small island developing states.

5. **2027 Work Program.** The work plan includes corporate evaluations of ADB's engagement with civil society organizations and the capital utilization plan and features a special theme chapter on subnational projects and programs in the 2027 AER. It includes a corporate evaluation of Asian Development Fund (ADF) 14, along with thematic evaluations of private sector development, natural capital, and public sector management, as well as a transport sector assistance program evaluation.³

B. All Other Evaluations

6. IED plans to evaluate five projects annually, covering sovereign, nonsovereign, and technical assistance projects. It will validate all country and project completion reports. IED aims to deliver at least one topical or working paper each year and will conduct systematic reviews, produce synthesis papers, and carry out unprogrammed evaluations requested by the DEC, the Board, and Management. In 2025, it will prepare a topical paper on ADB's digital technology support to DMCs. In 2026, it will focus on ADB support for subnational project and programs. In 2027, it will cover tourism-related projects and programs.

III. EVALUATION KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

7. Evaluation knowledge management (EKM), highlighted in ADB's Evaluation Policy and IED's strategic directions, has seen a significant increase in demand from ADB and its DMCs. To meet these needs and align with its focus on new ways of working, IED proposes upgrading its small EKM team in the front office to a formal EKM unit. The unit will enhance evaluation capacity development and knowledge management, while taking responsibility for improving evaluation methods and tools, data architecture, and coordination within IED and ADB and with DMCs and other partners. The new unit will strengthen IED's focus on clients and solutions.

³ In 2027, IED will conduct either a corporate evaluation of ADF 14 or a transport sector assistance program evaluation. The selection will be made once the ADF replenishment timeline becomes clear.

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION DEPARTMENT WORK PROGRAM FOR 2025–2027

	2025	2026	2027
1. High-Level Evaluations			
Annual Evaluation Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AER 2025: Support for Regional Initiatives and Public Goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AER 2026: Sustainable Development Goals Interim Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AER 2027: Subnational Engagement
Corporate Evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner Funds and Cofinancing Trade and Supply Chain Finance Program RTE 1 on Selected Aspects of New Operating Model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with Upper-Middle-Income Countries Private Equity Fund Operations RTE 2 on Selected Aspects of New Operating Model Digital Initiatives in ADB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with Civil Society Organizations Capital Utilization Plan: ADB Approach to Clients Asian Development Fund 14: 2024–2028 (TBC)
Thematic and Sector-Wide Evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADB's Support for Education in Asia and the Pacific ADB's Support for Health in Asia and the Pacific OP4: Making Cities More Livable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaster Risk Management and Crisis Response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Sector Development Natural Capital Public Sector Management and Governance SAPE: Transport (TBC)
Country and Regional Program Evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAPE: Kazakhstan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RPE: Small Island Developing States (TBC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAPE: TBC
2. All Other Evaluations			
Project Evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 PPERs Sovereign 2 PPERs Nonsovereign 1 TPER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 PPERs Sovereign 2 PPERs Nonsovereign 1 TPER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 PPERs Sovereign 2 PPERs Nonsovereign 1 TPER
Validations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of circulated CAPRs^a 100% of circulated PCRs 100% of circulated XARRs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of circulated CAPRs^a 100% of circulated PCRs 100% of circulated XARRs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of circulated CAPRs^a 100% of circulated PCRs 100% of circulated XARRs

	2025	2026	2027
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of eligible TCRs^b 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of eligible TCRs^b 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of eligible TCRs^b
Other Evaluation Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical Paper: Digital Technology Support to Developing Member Countries • Evidence Gap Map and/or Systematic Review (TBC) • Variance Memo • Unprogrammed Evaluations (upon request of the Board or Management) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical Paper: ADB Support for Subnational Projects and Programs • Evidence Gap Map and/or Systematic Review (TBC) • Variance Memo • Unprogrammed Evaluations (upon request of the Board or Management) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical Paper: Tourism • Evidence Gap Map and/or Systematic Review (TBC) • Variance Memo • Unprogrammed Evaluations (upon request of the Board or Management)

ADB = Asian Development Bank, ADF = Asian Development Fund, AER = Annual Evaluation Review, CAPE = country assistance program evaluation, CAPR = country assistance program review, NOM = new operating model, OP = operational priority, PCR = project or program completion report, PPER = project or program performance evaluation report, RPE = regional program evaluation, RTE = real-time evaluation, SAPE = sector assistance program evaluation, TA = technical assistance, TBC = to be confirmed, TCR = TA completion report, TPER = TA performance evaluation report, XARR = extended annual review report.

Note: In 2027, the schedule for the ADF 14 evaluation and the transport SAPE will be finalized once the timeline for the ADF replenishment is determined. If the ADF 14 evaluation is confirmed for 2027, the transport SAPE will be postponed to a later year.

^a The number and timing of CAPR validations are determined by ADB's completion of CAPRs in each year.

^b The process for selecting TA completion reports for validation is set out in ADB. 2020. *Technical Assistance Completion Report Validations Guidelines*.

Source: ADB (Independent Evaluation Department).

INDICATIVE PROFILES OF HIGH-LEVEL EVALUATIONS AND TOPICAL PAPERS PROPOSED FOR 2025–2027

NOTE: Profiles are indicative and may be revised. The objectives, scope, focus, and methodologies for each evaluation will be detailed in the respective evaluation approach papers.

Work Program 2025	
Evaluation	Profile
AER 2025: Support for Regional Initiatives and Public Goods	AERs cover evaluation activities from the previous year, summarize the performance of ADB's sovereign projects, and provide lessons for future operations. They assess progress in implementing IED's evaluation recommendations. The 2025 AER will include a theme chapter on ADB's support for regional initiatives and public goods.
Partner Funds and Cofinancing	The evaluation will examine the effectiveness of ADB's financing partnerships in catalyzing and mobilizing financial resources for development. Cofinancing and trust funds, identified under Strategy 2030 as important elements for resource mobilization, are increasingly used by ADB to achieve its key priorities. The evaluation will build on findings from earlier evaluations, including the 2016 partnerships evaluation and fund-specific evaluations completed in recent years.
Trade and Supply Chain Finance Program (2014–2023)	The evaluation will examine the relevance and effectiveness of ADB's Trade and Supply Chain Finance Program, which aims to make global trade and supply chains green, resilient, inclusive, transparent, and socially responsible while providing financial products that keep trade flowing in Asia. The evaluation will examine the program's performance, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, and build on the findings of a 2014 study of the Trade Finance Program, along with other evaluations.
RTE 1 on Selected Aspects of New Operating Model	Following a major organizational review, ADB is implementing its NOM, encompassing a broad and complex range of reforms. In 2025, the first of two RTEs will assess selected aspects of the early implementation of the reforms and identify where further adjustments may be needed. A key focus of the evaluation will be the extent to which greater collaboration across the organization has been achieved.
ADB's Support for Education in Asia and the Pacific	Investments in education and health are essential for building human capital and ensuring long-term development and prosperity. The impacts of COVID-19 and the protracted recovery from it underscore the need to strengthen human capital development. IED proposes a two-part evaluation series on human capital development. The evaluation will examine ADB's support for education, with a focus on the disruptions and learning loss caused by the pandemic. An evaluation of health is proposed for 2025.
ADB's Support for Health in Asia and the Pacific	Under Strategy 2030, ADB pledged to expand its health sector operations. However, prior to COVID-19, ADB's support to health was limited. During the pandemic, health sector support became a key element of ADB's response. Since the pandemic ended, a growing number of DMCs have requested continued support. The evaluation will take stock of ADB's recent and current strategic and operational support for health to identify issues, lessons, and recommendations for improving outcomes.
OP4: Making Cities More Livable	The evaluation will examine ADB's cross-sector contributions to livable cities and urban resilience outcomes, a key focus of OP4 of Strategy 2030, which aims to help DMCs build livable cities that are green, competitive, inclusive, and resilient. The evaluation will build on the 2022 sector-wide evaluation of ADB's Support for Integrated Water Management and other evaluations.
CAPE: Kazakhstan	IED will resume its practice of conducting major CAPEs, with a focus on a UMIC. The CAPE will contribute to a planned corporate evaluation of engagement with UMICs in 2026. CAPEs evaluate the performance of ADB's support to a country, including its strategy, policy dialogue, projects, and TA.
Topical Paper: Digital Technology Support to DMCs	The paper will examine ADB's experience in supporting the development of digital technology in DMCs, focusing on projects and programs that incorporate digital technology and IT solutions to derive findings and lessons for future support.

Work Program 2025	
Evaluation	Profile
Evidence Gap Map and/or Systematic Review (TBC)	The paper aims to appraise and synthesize available high-quality evidence on topics relevant to ADB operations, using scientifically recognized review methods that are peer reviewed and quality assured according to internationally accepted standards.

Work Program 2026	
Evaluation	Profile
AER 2026: Sustainable Development Goals Interim Report	AERs cover evaluation activities from the previous year, summarize the performance of ADB's sovereign projects, and provide lessons for future operations. They assess progress in implementing IED's evaluation recommendations. The 2026 AER will include a theme chapter on ADB's midterm progress in contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, considering the evolving development context and risks.
Engagement with Upper-Middle-Income Countries	Countries entering upper-middle-income status have experienced steady development progress and improved living standards but continue to face complex challenges. Strategy 2030 acknowledges the unique circumstances and needs of UMICs and commits to focusing efforts where ADB can add the most value. The evaluation will assess how ADB has engaged with UMICs and supported their transitions, building on a similar evaluation conducted by IED in 2016 on ADB's engagement with middle-income countries.
Private Equity Fund Operations	The evaluation will assess the role and effectiveness of ADB's PEF operations in delivering ADB's Strategy 2030 operational priorities. Following on IED evaluations of private sector equity (2019), nonsovereign additionality (2022), and finance sector operations (2022), the evaluation will focus on ADB's experience and results with PEFs. Given significant changes in the market context for PEFs in Asia and the Pacific, as well as ADB's evolving strategic approach, the study aims to determine the extent to which PEFs have helped achieve ADB's operational priorities.
RTE 2 on Selected Aspects of New Operating Model	A follow-up RTE of the NOM in 2026 will assess other aspects of the early implementation of the NOM reforms (not covered by the earlier RTE) and identify where further adjustments may be needed. The extent of collaboration across the organization will remain a key focus of the evaluation.
Digital Initiatives in ADB	The evaluation will consider how well ADB's IT strategy is aligned with ADB's overall business model and processes to achieve its strategic objectives, such as the NOM and its four shifts: (i) solutions, (ii) new ways of working, (iii) private sector development, and (iv) climate. Special attention will be given to the extent to which ADB's IT and digital platforms incorporate innovative technologies to enhance operations, service delivery, knowledge, learning, and operational quality. The evaluation may also consider services' ease of use, data management, integration of data across platforms, and cybersecurity.
Disaster Risk Management and Crisis Response	Given the Asia and Pacific region's high vulnerability to climate and disaster risks, ADB's strategic and operational focus on disaster risk management and crisis response has intensified and is likely to continue, considering the climate change outlook. ADB has responded by scaling up resources and modalities to support disaster risk management and crisis response. The evaluation will take a broad look at ADB's efforts in these areas.
Regional Program Evaluation: Small Island Developing States	The evaluation, focusing on ADB's small island DMCs, will assess the totality of ADB support to a country, including its strategy, policy dialogue, projects, and TA. It will provide ADB and the country with a basis for deciding on future adjustments to country assistance programs.
Topical Paper: ADB Support for Subnational Projects and Programs	The paper will examine ADB's experience with subnational engagement, focusing on provincial and district support. It will contribute to the planned theme chapter in AER 2027.

Work Program 2026	
Evaluation	Profile
Evidence Gap Map and/or Systematic Review (TBC)	The paper aims to appraise and synthesize available high-quality evidence on topics relevant to ADB operations, using scientifically recognized review methods that are peer reviewed and quality assured according to internationally accepted standards.

Work Program 2027	
Evaluation	Profile
AER 2027: Subnational Engagement	AERs cover evaluation activities from the previous year, summarize the performance of ADB's sovereign projects, and provide lessons for future operations. They assess progress in implementing IED's evaluation recommendations. The 2027 AER will include a theme chapter on subnational engagement, examining ADB's work with subnational (mostly provincial and district) governments. It will assess past projects and programs, offering insights and lessons to improve ADB's future support and engagement.
Engagement with Civil Society Organizations	ADB engages with CSOs to advance sustainable development and reduce poverty in Asia and the Pacific. The evaluation will assess how CSO involvement throughout the project cycle adds value in capacity building, implementation support, policy dialogue, advocacy, knowledge sharing, and grassroot engagement. It will assess institutional policies, engagement mechanisms, and interactions that contribute to these outcomes.
Capital Utilization Plan: ADB Approach to Clients	The evaluation will assess ADB's capital utilization plan and its client-focused approach to adding value and creating demand for additional lending, including for public goods. It will review how ADB has allocated and utilized its resources, and whether they are aligned with its capital utilization objectives and targeted priorities, such as expanding private sector operations and climate finance. ADB's capital allocation and client relationship management will be benchmarked against those of multilateral development bank peers and comparable financial institutions.
Asian Development Fund 14: 2024–2028 (TBC)	IED routinely conducts corporate evaluations of ADF in alignment with the fund's 4-year replenishment cycle. The evaluation will assess how ADB has used concessional resources and how the resources have contributed to results in ADF-eligible countries. It will recommend ways to better use the resources to ensure sustainable development in the most vulnerable countries, considering the evolving development context and risks to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.
Private Sector Development	The evaluation will assess the relevance and effectiveness of ADB's nonsovereign interventions upstream (policy reform, creation of an enabling environment), midstream (advisory services), and downstream in support of private sector development.
Natural Capital	Natural capital provides goods and services that directly or indirectly contribute to a country's economic output and human well-being. In Asia and the Pacific, natural resources and biodiversity have suffered degradation, impairing their functions and services. The evaluation will examine ADB's support for the region's environment through its investments and mainstreaming activities. It will contribute to ADB's environmental sustainability objectives under Strategy 2030 and ongoing support for climate action, and the region's commitments under the global biodiversity framework.
Public Sector Management and Governance	The evaluation will review how ADB has supported public sector management, with a focus on transparency, accountability, and alignment with development goals. It will assess ADB's contributions to strengthening institutions, improving service delivery, and combating corruption.
SAPE: Transport (TBC)	The evaluation will review ADB's strategies, policies, projects, TA, and overall performance in transport across countries.
CAPE (TBC)	The evaluation will review the totality of ADB's support to a country, including its strategy, policy dialogue, projects, and TA.
Topical Paper: Tourism	The paper will assess tourism-related projects and programs and extract lessons to improve future support in the area.

Work Program 2027	
Evaluation	Profile
Evidence Gap Map and/or Systematic Review	The paper aims to appraise and synthesize available high-quality evidence on topics relevant to ADB operations, using scientifically recognized review methods that are peer reviewed and quality assured according to internationally accepted standards.

ADB = Asian Development Bank, ADF = Asian Development Fund, AER = Annual Evaluation Review, CAPE = country assistance program evaluation, COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, CSO = civil society organization, DMC = developing member country, IED = Independent Evaluation Department, NOM = new operating model, PEF = private equity fund, RTE = real-time evaluation, TA = technical assistance, TBC = to be confirmed, UMIC = upper-middle-income country.
Source: ADB (Independent Evaluation Department).