
1st ADB-Asia Think Tank Development Forum “Innovation and Inclusion for a Prosperous Asia”

Beijing, People’s Republic of China
30-31 October 2013

Concept Note

1. Background

Recent development experiences have highlighted the importance of “south-south cooperation”—economic cooperation among developing countries—a key form of which is knowledge sharing. Developing countries have a great deal to learn from each other on good development practices and policy lessons, and such learning is particularly useful since they face similar challenges and circumstances. Think tanks play a critical role in knowledge sharing and learning as many are involved in supporting governments in preparing medium- and long-term development plans and addressing emerging policy issues. In Asia, think tanks have substantial knowledge on development issues in their respective countries and many are actively involved in cross-country knowledge-sharing activities. However, due to a lack of clear channels and processes, the potential for knowledge networking and sharing among Asian think tanks is far from being fully exploited.

Against this background and in consultation with several think tanks in Asia, the Asian Development Bank approved a regional technical assistance (TA) in May 2013, *TA-8392 REG: Provision of Knowledge Products and Services to Developing Member Countries through Systematic Knowledge Sharing*, funded under the Peoples’ Republic of China Poverty Reduction and Regional Cooperation Fund. The objective of the TA is to support networking of Asian think tanks for sharing knowledge on development experiences and policy lessons in a sustainable and systematic way. This is to be achieved through organizing knowledge sharing events under a platform named “ADB-Asia Think Tank Development Forum,” among others.

The TA is intended to provide initial support for knowledge sharing among Asian think tanks that are closely involved in supporting governments in medium- and long-term development planning. It is hoped that this initial support will lead to strong interest among the participating think tanks in self-sustaining knowledge sharing.

2. The 1st ADB-Asia Think Tank Development Forum

“Innovation and Inclusion for a Prosperous Asia” is the theme of the 1st ADB-Asia Think Tank Development Forum to be organized under the ADB TA. This will be in partnership with the Asia-Pacific Finance and Development Center (Beijing Office)—a think tank of the Ministry of Finance of the People’s Republic of China. The forum will focus on two development issues that are of high significance to developing Asia: innovation and inclusion. At the forum, resource persons will present these issues to provide analytical context as well as latest policy developments globally and regionally, and participating think tanks will present country-specific experiences and policy issues. Interactions and networking among the participants will be encouraged during and outside the sessions. On the basis of the presentations and discussions, a policy document and forum proceedings will be prepared for information by policy makers in the region. A tentative agenda of the forum is attached.

The forum will also discuss possible topics of knowledge sharing for future ADB-Asia Think Tank Development Forums within three broad strategic areas promoted by ADB: inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustained growth, and regional economic integration. Possible organizational structures of the knowledge sharing among Asian development think tanks will also be discussed.

3. Participants

Senior level officials/staff of about 30 think tanks from 15 developing member countries (DMCs) of ADB will be invited to participate in the first forum. The participating think tanks are likely to have close links with central ministries of finance, economy, planning; and closely involved in supporting governments in preparing medium- or long-term development plans and in responding to emerging policy issues. Particular attention will be paid to the needs of low-income DMCs. Selected think tanks from developed member countries may also be invited to participate on a self-financing basis.

4. Time and Venue

The 1st ADB-Asia Think Tank Development Forum will be held on 30-31 October 2013, in Beijing, People’s Republic of China.