

Key Points:

- Provision of regional public goods (RPGs) is effective to address transboundary challenges increasingly brought up by deepened globalization and regionalization. Regional Development Banks (RDBs) are important players in providing RPGs, and scaled up efforts in providing RPGs to their DMCs in the process of promoting regional cooperation and integration (RCI).
- Case studies in Asia, Latin America, and Africa indicate multi-stakeholder participation and coordination, strong government engagement, and private sector participation are among the important factors for successful provision of RPGs.
- In more effectively responding to the increased crossborder challenges in Asia and the Pacific, ADB has a bigger role to play through raising lending portfolios for genuine regional projects and speeding up knowledge dissemination on RCI.
- Addressing regional food security and labor migration are the two new priority areas ADB can enhance its engagement.

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Provision of Regional Public Goods: Best Practices and Role of Regional Development Banks

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1. Introduction

Globalization and regionalization are associated with increased cross-border flows of goods, services, financial capital and labor, among others. While some development challenges need to be tackled globally, many can be more effectively addressed at the regional level (Ferroni 2002), such as controlling communicable diseases, facilitating transborder infrastructure, mitigating financial contagion, and addressing environmental concerns. Provision of regional public goods (RPGs) has been recognized as an effective instrument to achieve development goals through facilitating regional cooperation and integration (RCI). The regional development banks (RDBs) have scaled up their assistance to, and partnership with, developing member countries (DMCs) in promoting RCI through provision of RPGs.

Concept of Public Goods. Public goods are featured by two interrelated characteristics: they generate significant externalities and possess “non-excludable” and “non-rivalrous” nature (Ferroni 2002 and Sandler 2006), which applies to RPGs as well. Non-excludable means that once goods/services are provided, they are available to all, and non-payers cannot be excluded for their use; non-rival means the consumption by one agent does not diminish the availability of the goods/services’ benefit for others. This gives rise to the problem of “free-riding”. The rationale for regional cooperation is based on the belief that the right combination of country-based transnational measures leads to outcomes that are superior to those achievable from national measures alone (Ferroni 2002) since regional cooperation encourages regional integration and/or help to shape coordinated actions and responses to developments that affect the region. Todd Sandler (2006) further explored the properties and classified RPGs into four categories:

- pure public goods are goods with the distinctive characteristics of non-rivalry and non-excludability;
- impure public goods can stem from partial rivalry or partial excludability;
- club goods represent impure public goods whose benefits are fully excludable and partially rival; and
- joint products when an activity yields two or more outputs that may vary in their degree of publicness.

These theoretical frameworks have provided a useful basis for the international development community, particularly the RDBs to engage in providing RPGs.

2. Regional Development Banks in Providing Regional Public Goods

The role of RDBs in providing RPGs has been widely recognized and emphasized (Sandler, 2001 and Ferroni, 2002). RDBs' role includes intermediating/coordinating the neighboring countries to minimize the negative effects and maximize the positive contagion of RPGs, as well as acting as catalyst of collective action given their close ties with clients/governments in communication and coordination, and the financial and knowledge resources possessed. As a matter of fact, RDBs are playing an increasingly important role in the provision of RPGs to their DMCs in different regions through their ability to convene, generate and transfer knowledge, assist negotiations, and transfer funding (Ferroni 2002).

The Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) are among the RDBs that promote RCI as mandated by their respective Charters. They started financing and assisting RCI programs and projects at an early stage, and augmented the support more systematically through adopting RCI-related strategies in the 2000s. The RCI programs and projects supported by the three RDBs are similar in nature, focused on promoting regional connectivity through infrastructure development and software building; strengthening crossborder trade and investment through harmonization of regulations and standards, and financial integration; as well as providing RPGs in addressing transboundary challenges such as communicable diseases, environmental concerns and prevention of natural disasters.

A. The Asian Development Bank and the RPGs

The ADB started supporting various regional and subregional cooperation programs since the early 1990s, notable are the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Economic Cooperation program, the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) program, and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program. ADB engaged and enhanced its support to ASEAN+3 regional monetary and financial cooperation following the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis. ADB's support for RCI culminated by an RCI Strategy¹ adopted in 2006, which transformed ADB's support for RCI from several standalone programs to a coherent and strategically focused approach. Strategy 2020—the Long-Term Strategic Framework of the ADB adopted in 2008 has identified RCI as one of three interrelated strategic agendas, with a commitment to increase RCI lending operations to 30% of total operations by 2020.

ADB Support for RPGs. The RPG is defined under the RCI Strategy as a public good shared by two or more countries in the region, which includes six key areas: clean energy and energy efficiency, environment, natural disaster response, communicable diseases, governance, and human and drug trafficking. A review of past ADB lending and non-lending activities shows that most RPGs were provided through regional technical assistance (RETA) and grants (or grant-financed projects), while lending for RPGs was limited. All RETAs approved from 1967 to July 2012 were classified into the four pillars of the RCI strategy, and those falling under Pillar 4 were broadly categorized as RETAs supporting RPGs.

As can be seen from **Table 1**, there has been a significant increase in the support of RPGs starting from 2006 with nearly half of the funds allocated to RPGs during 2006 to July 2012. This was mainly due to the adoption of the

Table 1. ADB Support for RPGs

		Number of Projects	Funds Provided (USD million)
1974 to July 2012	Loans and Equities for Regional Projects	80	3,557.1
1967 to July 2012	RETAs	2,057	1,354.8
	RETAs for RPGs	1,535	1,006.5
Oct 2006 to July 2012	RETAs	633	707.3
	RETAs for RPGs	382	465.0
% RETA-RPGs approved from Oct 2006–Jul 2012 to Total RETA-RPGs from 1967–Jul 2012		25	46

Source: ADB Internal Database on Loan, TA and Equity Approvals as of 20 July 2012.

¹ Adopted in 2006 which supports four interrelated pillars: Pillar 1: regional and subregional economic cooperation programs (cross-border infrastructure and related software); Pillar 2: trade and investment cooperation and integration; Pillar 3: monetary and financial cooperation and integration; Pillar 4: cooperation in regional public goods.

RCI strategy in 2006 and the significant number of RETAs approved to support RCI activities in implementing the RCI strategy, particularly with the establishment of three RCI related trust funds² that are targeted for RCI programs.

B. The Inter-American Development Bank and RPGs

The IDB's engagement in regional integration has expanded increasingly during the 1990s and supported Latin American and Caribbean DMCs' trade integration efforts at three sub-regional levels under the global context of negotiations in the World Trade Organization. RCI engagement also includes financial integration and regional infrastructure development covering cross-border transport investment, border crossings, and energy. In July 2010, IDB identified regional and global integration as one of its five strategic priorities, including an annual lending target of 15%.

IDB's RPG Program. In 2004, the IDB created the Regional Public Goods Initiative (RPG Program) to help Latin American and Caribbean countries address the challenges from increased movement of goods, services and people across borders. The Program also promotes regional public goods that facilitate regional collective actions with added value to national interventions. The Program's underlying assumption is that, through cooperation, countries can make greater development gains than they would on their own, or do so at a lower cost. The RPG program is a prime example of IDB's commitment to promote South-South and triangular cooperation as a policy tool to foster sustainable growth in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Table 2 below presents some key figures on IDB Support for RPGs. The figures only cover the period starting 2004 when IDB created the RPG Program. IDB's support to RPGs prior to 2004 is not covered given the unavailability of data.

Table 2. IDB Support of RPG Projects in Latin America and Caribbean Key Figures (2004–2011)

Projects Approved	80
Resources Approved (US\$ million)	66
Amount Disbursed (US\$ million)	32

Source: IDB, Regional Public Goods: An Innovative Approach to South-South Cooperation.

C. The African Development Bank and RPGs

Regional integration has been a part of the AfDB's mandate since its creation in 1963. A more systematic and focused approach to regional integration was developed during the last decade (2000–2010), with a policy on economic

cooperation and regional integration issued in 2000, followed by a regional integration strategy adopted in 2009 (2009–2012). The regional integration strategy underpins two mutually reinforcing pillars: regional infrastructure and institutional capacity building including trade facilitation, reflecting priority areas in which the AfDB has specific competencies, and where it is strategically well-placed to intervene. AfDB maintains a strong partnership with the African Union and the New Partnership for African Development in carrying out regional cooperation programs.

AfDB's RCI Operations. The AfDB's support to regional integration has been undertaken in the form of multinational operations (MOs) through both lending and non-lending projects, covering technical assistance, policy advice, and a range of knowledge products for regional integration and trade initiatives at continental and regional levels. AfDB has developed an increasingly coherent strategic and operational framework to guide assistance towards regional integration, and significantly increased its share of MOs from 6% (2000) to 15% (2010) of total bank approvals. **Table 3** provides AfDB's approvals of MOs from 2000–2010.

Table 3. AfDB Support of Multinational Operations (2000–2010)

Number of Projects	201
Amount Approved (UA* '000)	3,609,683
Percent to Total Amount Approved (%)	12.5

*UA = Unit of Account, equivalent to the IMF's Special Drawing Right (SDR); Rate of 1UA = US\$: 2010 = 1.54; 2009 = 1.57; 2008 = 1.54; 2007 = 1.58; 2006 = 1.50.

Source: AfDB-OED.2012. Fostering Regional Integration in Africa: An Evaluation of the Bank's Multinational Operations, 2000-2010

3. Case Studies in Asia, Latin America, and Africa

Three cases on the provision of RPGs in Asia, Latin America, and Africa are presented, one from each region, which are examples of how RPGs are provided to help DMCs address cross-border challenges. All the three projects are with multi-stakeholder participation where RDBs played important roles with different levels of engagement.

Case 1: ASEAN Response on Transboundary Haze Pollution

The Development Challenge. The recurrence of large forest fires and haze have important environmental and economic impacts, bringing transboundary air pollution, causing transport disruption, and health hazards, adversely affecting social welfare as well (ADB and ASEAN, 2001).

² The three RCI related trust funds are the People's Republic of China Poverty Reduction and Regional Cooperation Fund (PRCF) established by PRC in 2005, the Regional Cooperation and Integration Fund (RCIF) established by ADB in 2007, and the Investment Climate Facilitation Fund (ICFF) established by Japan in 2008.

ASEAN countries which are home to 60% of the world's tropical peatlands, are prone to forest fires that are identified as major causes of fire and transboundary haze pollution. The blaze of 1997–1998 which affected six ASEAN countries, was among the most damaging in recorded history.³

The ASEAN Haze Agreement. Building on the ASEAN's collective response to tackle transboundary haze pollution starting in the 1980s, the ASEAN member states signed on 10 June 2002 an ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (ASEAN Haze Agreement) to collectively address the haze problem. The Agreement was ratified by 9 out of the 10 member states as of today.⁴

Implementation of the ASEAN Haze Agreement.

A holistic approach has been undertaken to implement the Agreement including national, binational, subregional and regional programs and activities, covering prevention, monitoring, and mitigation/fire suppression measures. Public awareness was emphasized through a series of mainstreaming activities reaching to the communities in villages. A panel of ASEAN experts was established in 2005 to provide rapid independent assessment and recommendation for the mobilization of resources during impending critical periods; an ASEAN website, ASEAN Haze Action Online, was created to provide daily updates on fire-and-haze situation and other information. Substantial progress has been made in implementing the Agreement, including the conduct of simulation exercises; implementation of the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS); use of zero burning and controlled-burning practices. The establishment of a regional air quality monitoring network and development and refinement of fire danger rating system are planned.

International Collaboration and Funding Mechanism.

Funds were mobilized through several channels including ASEAN government funding, the ASEAN Haze Fund (with voluntary contribution), and contributions from international and regional development partners. Publicly available data indicates that a broad range of bilateral and multilateral development partners participated in the program. The ADB, AusAid, CIDA, EU, GEF, GTZ, Hanns Seidel Foundation (Germany), IFAD, JICA, UNEP, USAID, WHO, WMO, and the World Bank are among the development partners that supported the ASEAN haze control operations. The ADB has provided US\$1 million in

a RETA project to support ASEAN capacity building in tackling the haze pollution during its early stage.

Case 2: The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency

Development Challenge. Countries in the Caribbean region face a common threat in natural hazards including severe hurricanes, torrential rains, earthquakes, and landslides. Most countries are small and face capacity and resource constraints in handling disasters individually. The global climate change and aggravated impact of El Nino makes the Caribbean countries more vulnerable to these disasters. A stronger joint disaster management mechanism can help them effectively respond to natural disasters and bring shared economic and social development in the region.

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency.

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)—a regional inter-governmental agency for disaster management in the Caribbean was established in 1991 to coordinate emergency response and relief efforts among participating states.⁵ CEDMA advocates a move away from the traditional “response and relief” mode towards a comprehensive approach to include all hazards, all phases of the disaster management continuum.

Implementation of the CDEMA.

The governance mechanism⁶ is structured to facilitate broader stakeholder participation. Under the Council and the Technical Advisory Committee, the Coordinating Unit serves as the CDEMA secretariat headquartered in Barbados, which deals with longer-term mitigation issues and centers around four programming areas: (i) education, research and information; (ii) finance and administration; (iii) preparedness and responses; and (iv) mitigation and research. Substantial progress achieved on the CDEMA includes the adoption of the Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy (2007-2012) and the implementation of the CDM Harmonization Implementation Programme (Phase 1)—a five-year programme aimed at enhancing institutional support and community resilience to mitigate and respond to and recover from the adverse affects of climate variability and change, and disasters.

International Collaboration and Funding Mechanism.

Since its inception, CDEMA has pursued a strategy of wide partnerships to ensure more rational use of resources and high quality of technical assistance. So far, a total of

³ The six countries are: Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The fire has resulted with more than 9 million hectares of land burnt, 6.5 million of which were forested areas. The damage was estimated at more than US\$9 billion in terms of economic, social and environmental losses, including the release of an estimated 1–2 billion tonnes of carbon.

⁴ The Agreement recognizes the importance of mitigating the transboundary haze pollution through concerted national and international cooperation, and comprehensively addresses all aspects of fire and haze including prevention, monitoring, and mitigation. An ASEAN Transboundary Haze Pollution Control Fund (ASEAN Haze Fund) has been established to mobilize financial resources, and the ASEAN Secretariat was designated to coordinate operational activities under the Agreement.

⁵ CDEMA currently consists 18 countries: Anguilla, Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Haiti, Monsterrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks & Caicos Islands.

⁶ The CDEMA Council is the highest level where the Heads of Government of the participating states determine the policies. The Technical Advisory Committee provides technical and programmatic support.

176 projects (lending and non-lending) were implemented with total funds amounting to about US\$92 million. More than 20 bilateral and multilateral development partners have participated in the collaboration programs. International agencies such as the UN agencies (IFAD, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO), the World Bank, bilateral development partners such as CIDA, DFID, DIPECHO, JICA, GTZ, USAID, and regional institutions such as the CARICOM, IDB, OAS, PAHO are among the major contributors to the CDEMA. The IDB as a major development partner has provided about US\$23 million in support of eight projects for both lending and non-lending programs.⁷

Case 3: The River Blindness Control Program in Sub-Saharan Africa

Development Challenge. Onchocerciasis or river blindness, is a disease borne by blackflies that breed in fast-flowing rivers, causes blindness in about 10% of its victims and has forced the depopulation of large tracts of arable, river bottom farmland. Studies (World Bank, 2006) indicate that river blindness afflicts approximately 42 million people worldwide, with well over 99% of its victims in sub-Saharan Africa. An estimated 600,000 people are blind, and an additional 2.5 million Africans are visually impaired due to Onchocerciasis.

Addressing the Onchocerciasis Disease. International efforts have started to control the disease in the early 1970. In 1974, the Onchocerciasis Control Programme (OCP) was established with the goal of eliminating Onchocerciasis in 11 West African countries. Under the OCP, weekly aerial spraying with environmentally safe insecticides helped control the disease vector. In 1995, a second program, the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC), was established to control the disease in 19 Central, East, and Southern African countries. Through a broad international partnership and the participation of 115,000 remote rural communities, APOC and OCP distributed a drug donated by Merck & Co., Inc., Mectizan (Ivermectin), to more than 45 million people in sub-Saharan Africa in 2005. The drug prevents and alleviates the symptoms of the disease with one annual dose. OCP produced an impressive change in health between 1974 and 2002, with transmission of the disease-causing parasite halted in 11 West African countries, 600,000 cases of blindness prevented, and 22 million children born in the OCP area free from the risk of contracting river blindness. APOC is expanding this success to Central, East, and Southeast Africa, where 54,000 cases of blindness are expected to be prevented each year.⁸

International Collaboration and Funding Mechanism. OCP was launched in 1974 under the leadership of the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the Food and

Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The World Bank mobilized financing and donor support from multilateral institutions, donor countries and private foundations. Other participating development partners include the AfDB, Belgium, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Canada, France, Germany, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Merck & Co., Inc., the Netherlands, Norway, OPEC Fund, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, and United States of America. OCP operated with a total project cost of US\$600 million in 28 years, from 27 donors. APOC's project cost reached a total of US\$180 million, of which 75% came from donor funding and 25% from African governments and NGOs. Over 80% of the funding is spent on technical and operational activities in endemic countries.

4. Way Forward for ADB

Forest fires, natural disasters and communicable diseases are typical development challenges that require joint actions for effective solution (see **Table 4** for examples of RPGs). The three cases demonstrated some common features of RPGs

Table 4. Examples of Regional Public Goods by Sector

Sector	Examples of Regional Public Goods
<i>Health</i> (capacity concerns)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vaccines for region-specific diseases monitoring disease outbreaks developing best practices for treating region-specific diseases maintaining sterilization in hospitals
<i>Environment</i> (need for information)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> curbing acid rain reducing transboundary haze preserving rain forests preventing floods
<i>Knowledge</i> (pooling efforts; leadership)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> agriculture extension services network of data and information exchange geoclimatic-specific research findings mapping spillovers of public goods
<i>Governance</i> (coordination needed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adopting sound financial practices monitoring economic and financial practices harmonizing transport conventions eliminating trade barriers
<i>Infrastructure</i> (coordination and capacity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> river development energy grids trans high way and railway air traffic control

Source: "Regional Public Goods, Aid and Development", Todd Sandler (2007).

³ Data are obtained from the CDMEA's website: <http://cdm.cdema.org/database/index.php>

⁴ Data in this case are obtained from the Center for Global Development. 2004. Millions Saved. *Case 7: Controlling Onchocerciasis (River Blindness) in Sub-Saharan Africa.* http://www.cgdev.org/doc/millions/MS_case_7.pdf

and their successes involve holistic factors, including multi-stakeholder participation and coordination, appropriate legal framework to guide activities and operations, where applicable, and financial and knowledge resources transfer, with active participation of the private sector, particularly in the African river blindness case. In both the ASEAN and Caribbean cases, the intergovernmental agreements provided a legal ground for the Contracting Parties to cooperate and coordinate, with the ASEAN Haze Agreement hailed by the United Nations as a global role model for tackling transboundary problems. The successes of the three cases, to a certain extent, were attributed to the peculiar nature of the transboundary challenges each represented and the consensus reached among the governments involved in jointly addressing them, complemented by the large scale participation of bilateral, multilateral development partners (including RDBs), as well as private sectors (particularly in the African river blindness case).

Notwithstanding the successes of RPGs represented by the three cases, as a matter of fact, RPGs pose many more challenges than the national public goods (NPGs) and the global public goods (GPGs) (Sandler 2007), given the free riding problem RPGs entail, which leads to the lack of incentive measures for all the countries involved to take responsibilities to address joint challenges. And this may explain the relatively slow progress of RDBs in providing RPGs, even though the ADB and IDB have significantly increased their support to RPGs in the recent years.

With the deepening of globalization and regional integration, Asia and the Pacific faces new challenges that require enhanced joint actions. Notable among these are the frequently occurring natural disasters, environmental concerns, and demands for knowledge dissemination. ADB needs to scale up efforts and resources in pursuing the unfinished agenda of RCI through more effectively providing RPGs.

First, increasing the project portfolios for RPGs is most desirable for enhanced support to address transboundary challenges. ADB's lending operations for regional projects are very limited. Improvement on the classification of RCI projects is necessary to ensure good designing, financing and implementing of genuine regional projects. The experiences gained and lessons learned from the project, "Establishment of a Pacific Aviation Safety Office" which is considered as the first genuine regional project that ADB has delivered, can be beneficial for other regional projects.

Second, there is increasing need to augment awareness and disseminate knowledge about RCI. Knowledge has been identified as one type of RPGs (Sandler 2007) and RCI issues need to reach out to policy makers, think tanks and the general public more broadly and profoundly region-wide. ADB has a bigger role to play as a knowledge provider. Knowledge dissemination is also important to facilitate the operationalization of RCI knowledge to serve DMCs' specific needs in furthering economic growth and poverty reduction.

Third, addressing regional food security and labor migration can be identified as two RPGs that ADB can enhance its engagement, given these are the emerging issues that DMCS are confronting and difficult to address on individual basis. Food security has increasingly become a major concern for DMCS as a result of frequently occurring natural disasters and climate change, thus, a region-wide food reserve mechanism can be explored. Labor migration in Asia and the Pacific has been increasing rapidly, efforts are required to coordinate not only labor policies but also social protection measures to guarantee welfare of the labor forces in the region.

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About Us

OREI traces its roots to the Regional Economic Monitoring Unit (REMU)—established in the aftermath of the 1997/98 Asian financial crisis. It was upgraded and renamed OREI in April 2005, as ADB expanded its role in promoting regional cooperation and integration (RCI) throughout Asia and the Pacific.

OREI assists its developing member countries in pursuing open regionalism that serves as a building block to global integration.