

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

INDEPENDENT MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK'S MEKONG BUSINESS INITIATIVE

DFAT welcomes the Independent Mid-Term Evaluation's (the Evaluation) assessment that the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Mekong Business Initiative (MBI) is successfully achieving its overall objectives and working well as a regional program leveraging lessons across different subprojects and countries. The Evaluation further found that there was demand, need, and scope for a second iteration of the MBI beyond its current phase of implementation.

DFAT supports the Evaluation's recommendations to the ADB that it enhance the MBI's management systems with clearer alignments of responsibilities; further refine its approach to monitoring and evaluation data collection; and to make more effective use of gender specialist personnel. DFAT will take into consideration the Evaluation's findings and recommendations as a basis for discussions with the ADB on any subsequent phase of the MBI.

The Evaluation of the MBI was commissioned by the ADB and independently conducted by Mr Hetal Patel of Indigo Global Advisors. The Evaluation involved a desktop study of relevant documents and consultations with relevant personnel.

The Evaluation assessed the MBI's relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability. It also took into account MBI's innovative approach of partnering with both the public and private sector directly as well as its ability to include gender mainstreaming in certain activities. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) provided input into the Evaluation's terms of reference, review plan and final report. Evaluation experts Clear Horizon quality assured the final report and found it to be of good quality. Feedback from Clear Horizon was incorporated into the final version.