

Questioning Development Finance:

What to ask your government about how development decisions are made

Right now, your government is likely making important decisions related to development finance. Whether it's the establishment of new institutions like the BRICS New Development Bank and the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, or policy developments like the revision of the World Bank's Safeguards or priorities for your national development bank, governments are making decisions that will impact how development activities are designed and implemented, and whether they actually benefit communities and the environment, or instead, cause harm and increase poverty.

What will these banks look like? What rules will govern them? What projects will they support? How will they engage with civil society? What will your government decide, and will you be consulted?

This questionnaire is designed to assist civil society groups in investigating how their governments make decisions regarding development finance, and to ensure that these processes are open and accountable, and respect human rights.

Who to Ask:

Because national decisionmaking processes related to development finance often suffer from a lack of transparency, it may not be clear who actually is making these decisions. So it may not be obvious which decisionmakers or public officials to contact. A good place to start, however, is with your finance ministry, treasury, or ministry of foreign affairs. Usually these are the agencies that have jurisdiction over development finance decisions. You might also copy your correspondence to other government agencies with whom you have a good relationship or who might be sympathetic, such as your national human rights commission, your national development agency, or the ministries of labor, justice, or environment.

How to Use the Questionnaire:

The questions below use as a hook timely global policy processes, including the World Bank safeguards review, the development of the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB), and the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). However, you can adapt the questions to any policy process that is relevant for your country and context, including reform processes involving other multilateral banks, or your national development bank or development agency. The questions can be used during face-to-face meetings, or through formal correspondence or a combination of both.

Sharing the Responses you Receive:

Once you use the questionnaire, please let us know how your government responds. By sharing any responses you receive we can exchange information among civil society groups working in different countries and develop coordinated strategies and best practices. You'll note that we have included below some positive examples of country practices that you might refer to when arguing for your national process to be more transparent or rights-respecting. Responses can be sent to contact@rightsindevelopment.org.

Questions for Member-States of the World Bank, BRICS, AIIB and other banks:

1) What agencies or ministries are involved in formulating [X country]'s position on international development finance? What office and individual is ultimately responsible and provides oversight to [X government]'s Director at the World Bank, BRICS, AIIB and other development finance institutions?

Note: South Africa and many other countries have an interagency process.

2) Will [X country] make public, for example through a position paper, its position on these institutions' safeguards and standards?

Note: the US currently does this.

3) What is [X government]'s process for soliciting citizen input on questions of development finance policy?

Note: The Philippines convened sectoral consultations with civil society re: World Bank safeguards.

4) In [X country]'s decisions and activities through the World Bank, BRICS, AIIB and other development finance institutions, does it commit to promote adherence with relevant human rights norms and to not support activities that would cause, contribute to or exacerbate human rights violations? *Note: Germany has a policy requiring human rights in its development finance.*

5) What is [X Country]'s process for consulting with civil society and local communities regarding development priorities and proposals?

Additional Questions for NDB Member-States (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa):

6) Will there be a process of national public consultation on the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) and the positions [X country] will promote within the bank?

7) Has [X country's] representative to the NDB Board of Directors been chosen? What does that selection process entail, and what qualities/skills will be sought for the position?

8) What is [X country or your agency]'s position on what type of infrastructure and development the NDB should finance? Will you push for inclusive, rights-responsive, social infrastructure, such as hospitals and schools?

9) What is [X country or your agency]'s position on what social and environmental standards should govern NDB lending? Will [X country] promote a policy framework for the NDB that is consistent with international legal standards, including human rights norms?

10) The NDB Articles of Agreement state that it must be transparent in its activities and that rules will be drafted on access to information. What will be the process for the drafting of these rules? What kinds of mechanisms and policies will [X country] promote within NDB to ensure transparency and access for civil society and affected communities?

11) Will [X country] promote the establishment of accountability mechanisms within NDB whereby civil society organizations and communities may bring complaints if they or the environment have been harmed by an NDB-financed project?

Additional Questions for AIIB Member-States (see [www. aiibank.org](http://www.aiibank.org) for list):

- 6) The Articles of Agreement of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will need to be ratified by [X country] and the other AIIB members. What will be the process for review and discussion of the Articles? What government agencies and ministries will be involved? Will parliament be engaged?
- 7) Will there be a national process of public consultation on the AIIB, its Articles, and the positions [X country] will promote within the bank?
- 8) What is [X country or your agency]'s position on what type of infrastructure and development AIIB should finance? Will you push for inclusive, rights-responsive social infrastructure, such as hospitals and schools?
- 9) China has committed to strong standards for the AIIB and to promoting sustainable development. What is [X country]'s position on what social and environmental standards should govern AIIB lending? Will [X country] promote a policy framework for the AIIB that is consistent with international legal standards, including human rights norms?
- 10) What kinds of mechanisms and policies will [X country] promote within AIIB to ensure transparency and access for civil society and affected communities?
- 11) Will [X country] promote the establishment of accountability mechanisms within AIIB whereby civil society organizations and communities may bring complaints if they or the environment have been harmed by an AIIB-financed project?