Frequently Asked Questions
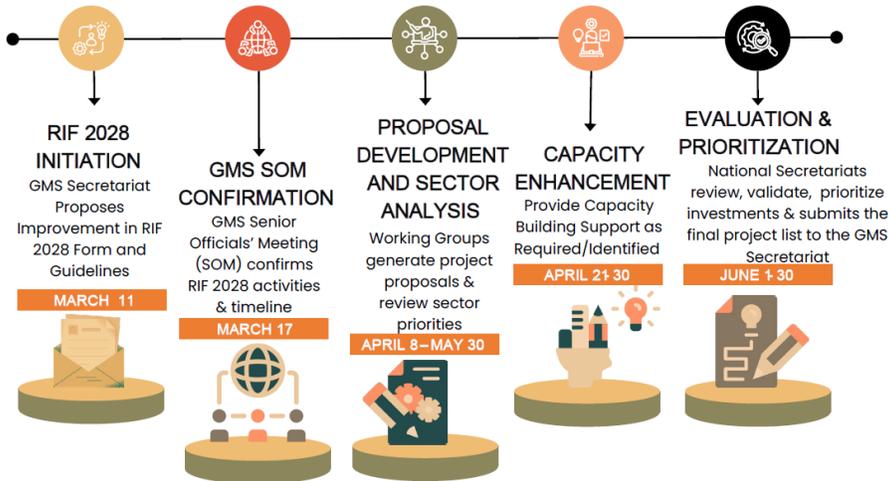
1. Timeline for the Regional Investment Framework (RIF) 2026-2028
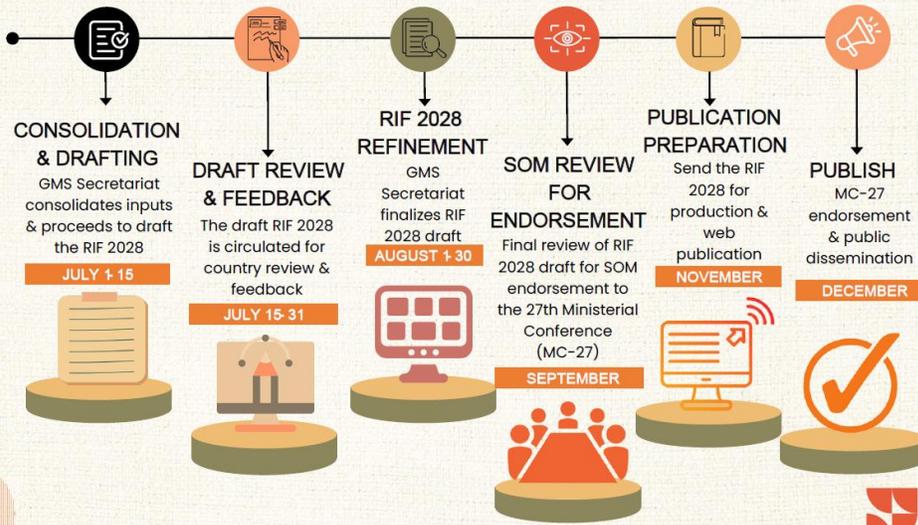
TIMELINE FOR THE GMS REGIONAL INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK 2026 – 2028 (RIF 2028)

RIF 2028 INITIATION — GMS Secretariat Proposes Improvement in RIF 2028 Form and Guidelines — MARCH 11

GMS SOM CONFIRMATION — GMS Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) confirms RIF 2028 activities & timeline — MARCH 17

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AND SECTOR ANALYSIS — Working Groups generate project proposals & review sector priorities — APRIL 8 – MAY 30

CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT — Provide Capacity Building Support as Required/Identified — APRIL 21-30

EVALUATION & PRIORITIZATION — National Secretariats review, validate, prioritize investments & submits the final project list to the GMS Secretariat — JUNE 1-30

TIMELINE FOR THE GMS REGIONAL INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK 2026 – 2028 (RIF 2028)

CONSOLIDATION & DRAFTING — GMS Secretariat consolidates inputs & proceeds to draft the RIF 2028 — JULY 1-15

DRAFT REVIEW & FEEDBACK — The draft RIF 2028 is circulated for country review & feedback — JULY 15-31

RIF 2028 REFINEMENT — GMS Secretariat finalizes RIF 2028 draft — AUGUST 1-30

SOM REVIEW FOR ENDORSEMENT — Final review of RIF 2028 draft for SOM endorsement to the 27th Ministerial Conference (MC-27) — SEPTEMBER

PUBLICATION PREPARATION — Send the RIF 2028 for production & web publication — NOVEMBER

PUBLISH — MC-27 endorsement & public dissemination — DECEMBER

2. Guidelines for Using the New RIF Platform

Designated or authorized users will receive detailed guidelines on how to use the new RIF platform—including instructions on creating and editing project records, and submitting or rejecting project proposals—along with their login credentials.

GMS National Secretariats (NS) in each country are requested to submit the names and email addresses of representatives who should be granted access to the platform to create and submit project proposals (see **Appendix 2** of kick-off email). Each GMS NS may nominate up to 30 users.

Once the GMS Secretariat receives the list of focal points or designated individuals from each country, it will organize a training session tailored to each country. These sessions will provide a step-by-step walkthrough of the proposal submission process using the new platform and the related guidelines.

The kick-off email also included a blank project proposal form, which provides a screenshot of the online version. This Word format can be used to collect required information—particularly useful when inputs are needed from multiple ministries or stakeholders. Once complete, the information can be entered into the online form and submitted through the platform.

2. Benefits and Core functionalities of the RIF platform

The new RIF online platform is designed to enhance the management of the RIF process for both participating countries and the GMS Secretariat.

For Countries and Ministries:
The platform significantly improves efficiency in several key ways:

1. **Reduces inconsistencies** – It minimizes the need for matching and verifying project details caused by inconsistent submissions from different stakeholders for the same project.

2. **Enables collaboration** – Multiple users, including line ministries and national secretariat staff, can create and edit project records simultaneously, allowing for better distribution of workload.

3. **Prevents loss of submissions** – Proposals are submitted directly through the platform, avoiding the risks associated with email-based submissions.

The platform also helps ensure that proposals meet required standards by including built-in validation checks before a project can be submitted by a GMS National Secretariat to the GMS

Secretariat. Furthermore, it provides filtering tools by country and sector, making it easier for countries and sector working groups to review and discuss proposals with relevant stakeholders (e.g., various ministries or different units within the National Secretariat). In previous cycles, countries often lacked a comprehensive overview of proposals until the final RIF was published.

For the GMS Secretariat:
The platform streamlines project supervision and review, improving the quality and consistency of submissions. It also eliminates the need for manually transferring data from Word documents, PDFs, or scanned forms into a database—reducing errors and saving time.

Project History and Continuity:
The new platform includes a consolidated database of projects from the previous RIF cycle (2024–2026). Users will be able to view these earlier projects and recycle them into the current cycle if these projects are still seeking financing. Please note that proponents may need to update or provide additional information before such projects can be submitted in the current RIF cycle.

A separate database will be maintained for each RIF cycle, allowing for easier tracking and monitoring of project progress over time.

3. Decentralized Process for Generating the RIF Project Pipeline

The process for generating the RIF project pipeline will follow a decentralized approach.

Line ministries are expected to designate users who will be responsible for creating and editing project records. Once all project information is completed, these users will submit the proposals to the ADB GMS Sector Working Group (WG) focal point.

Sector Working Groups may use the submitted proposals on the RIF platform to facilitate their discussions. Alternatively, they may opt to review proposals offline using the Word version of the RIF project profile that has been provided. During these reviews, working groups should assess each project for accuracy, readiness, and alignment with the sector's strategic priorities. The final list of projects for the sector will then be submitted by the sector WG focal point who will submit the project proposals to the GMS National Secretariat (NS) using the RIF platform.

The GMS NS focal point will then review the proposals submitted by sector WG focal points. Following this review, the GMS NS will take one of the following actions:

i. Submit the proposal to the GMS Secretariat (ADB)

ii. Return the proposal, with comments, to the sector WG focal point for revision

iii. Return the proposal, with comments, to the originating line ministry for further clarification or updates

4. Advice Regarding Multiple Users Sharing a Single Password

Each user will be assigned a **unique account and password** based on the list provided by each country, which should include:
(i) Name
(ii) Email address
(iii) User responsibilities (e.g., creating/editing records, submitting proposals to the GMS Working Group focal, submitting final proposals to the GMS Secretariat for inclusion in the RIF).

Since each country can nominate **up to 30 users**, there is no need to share accounts or passwords. However, if countries still choose to do so, password sharing is technically possible—but strongly discouraged due to the risks it poses to data integrity.

The platform tracks all user activity, including who edited, saved, submitted, or rejected project records. If multiple people use the same account, this audit trail is lost, making it impossible to identify who made specific changes.

Users can also reset their passwords at any time if they suspect their account has been compromised. The new password will be sent to their registered email address.

Action Required:
GMS National Secretariats are requested to submit an initial list of users (with email addresses) **by May 16th**. While additional users can be added later, it is important that by this date, each country has at least a few users ready to begin entering project proposals into the platform.

5. Responsibilities of Stakeholders in the RIF Process

The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders remain unchanged from the previous RIF process.

The new RIF platform was introduced to **streamline** and **enhance the efficiency** of project proposal preparation and submission—but **not** to alter existing responsibilities.

National Secretariats (NS) and Working Groups (WGs) continue to be responsible for:

- Ensuring that project proposals meet the required quality standards

- Verifying that all necessary information is accurately completed in the designated fields

Sector Working Groups (WGs) are responsible for:

- Ensuring the **quality** of project proposals

- Verifying **alignment** with the relevant GMS sector strategies

- Assessing the **feasibility** of proposals

- Submitting reviewed proposals to the respective NS of each country for further consideration

GMS National Secretariats (NS) are responsible for:

- Verifying the **quality** of all submitted proposals

- **Prioritizing** proposals based on national priorities

- Exercising their **oversight** role to ensure proposals reflect the country's development agenda

The NS plays a key role in both **quality assurance** and **strategic alignment**, given its understanding of national priorities and its coordinating function within the RIF process.

6. What's New?

The main change lies in the operational role of designated users or focal points, who are now responsible for inputting and editing proposals directly through the online platform. These users have two options:

- Enter proposal information directly into the online form

- Use the provided Word version (which mirrors the online form) to gather input from multiple stakeholders and then transfer the information into the platform

Additionally, a new requirement is that:

- Sector WG focal points must now submit the list of projects for their sector to the GMS National Coordinators (NCs) via the RIF platform for review

- GMS NCs will, in turn, submit the final list of country-level RIF projects to the GMS Secretariat using the same platform

These changes aim to improve coordination, data accuracy, and transparency across all levels of the RIF process.

7. Available support for generating the RIF project pipeline

Support is available in different forms, depending on the type of assistance needed:

- **Support for using the new RIF platform:**
  Live training sessions will be organized to walk users through how the platform works. These sessions are intended to ensure that focal points and other designated users are comfortable navigating and completing the online proposal form. Anyone interested in learning more about the platform is welcome to attend.
  Additionally, the platform will include a dedicated help page where users can submit questions directly to the site administrator.

- **Support for preparing project proposals:**
  The **BIG program** continues to offer training on project preparation and formulation. Please ensure that the relevant focal points involved in the RIF process are nominated to participate in the appropriate BIG training sessions.

- **Additional guidance:**
  If there are specific questions about how to complete particular fields in the project form, the GMS Secretariat is available and happy to provide direct support and clarification.

8. Access and Submission Workflow in the RIF Platform

Each country has access to its **own project proposals** through the RIF platform. A dedicated page provides an overview of all project proposals at various stages of preparation and endorsement. On this page, users can see which user (identified by email address) last saved, submitted/rejected or deleted a project proposal.

The **GMS Central Secretariat**, as the platform administrator, has access to all proposals across all countries and at all stages of preparation. The system will automatically **notify the GMS Secretariat** whenever a project is submitted by a National Secretariat for inclusion in the final RIF pipeline.

Submission Roles and Notifications:

- Only **one designated GMS Working Group (WG) sector focal point** per sector will have the authority to submit final project proposals for that sector.

- The platform is being updated to ensure that the **designated WG focal point receives an email alert** when a proposal is submitted to them for endorsement.

- Similarly, only **one designated National Secretariat (NS) user per country** will have the authority to submit final RIF proposals to the GMS Secretariat. The platform is being

updated to ensure that the **designated National Secretariat (NS) user receives an email alert** when a proposal is submitted to them for review.

National Secretariats will retain **full control over the final proposals** submitted for review and consolidation by the GMS Secretariat.

9. Advice regarding Multiple Users using the Same Password

Each user of the RIF platform will be provided with a **unique account and password**. If a user forgets their password, they can easily request a reset, and a new password will be sent to their registered email address.

If a ministry chooses to use **a single user account shared among multiple people**, this is technically allowed. However, **this approach is not recommended**, as it poses risks to the **integrity of the process and the database**. When accounts are shared, the system cannot accurately track who made specific changes, submitted proposals, or updated project records—undermining transparency and accountability.

Each country can have up to 30 users who have access to the RIF platform. Each GMS NS will decide how many users will be granted access in each ministry. If the GMS NS requires more than 30 users for the RIF platform, they can request additional accounts from the GMS Secretariat.