

East Asia and Pacific

Regional findings from the 2024 Listening to Leaders Survey

Leaders in government, the private sector, civil society, media, and universities in East Asia and Pacific (EAP) share their views on priorities and progress, as well as the agenda-setting influence and helpfulness in implementation of the development partners with whom they work.

520

EAP leaders responded to our 2024 Listening to Leaders (LTL) Survey

Education

The top development goal for EAP leaders

World Bank

Development partner with the largest footprint across the region

New Zealand

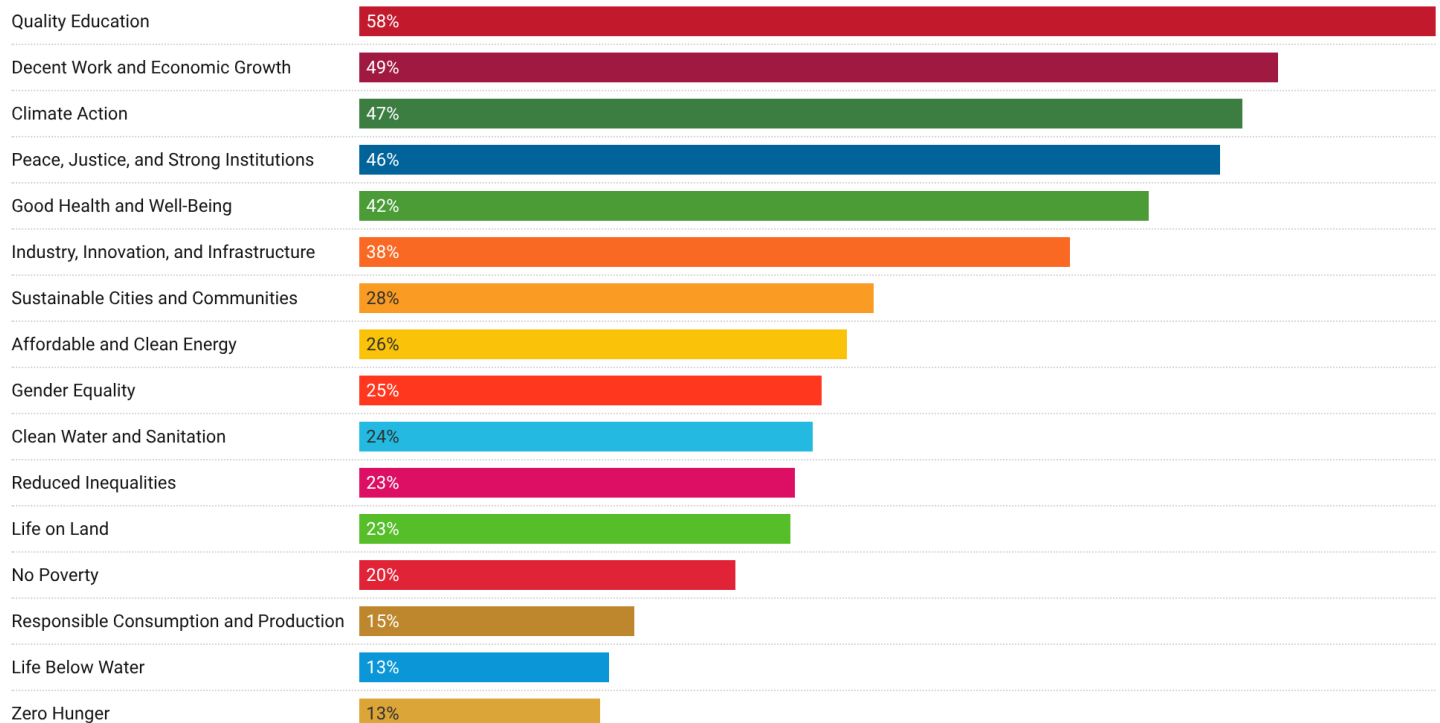
Most influential development partner across the region

South Korea

Most helpful development partner across the region

SDG Priorities

Percentage of respondents



What leaders want

Leader priorities and the Global Goals

When asked to identify their top six development priorities of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), EAP respondents were most likely to identify Quality Education (58%), Decent Work (49%), and Climate Action (47%). But these priorities aren't the same around the world. Of all regions in the world, EAP leaders were more likely to identify Climate Action (47%), Responsible Consumption (15%), Life Below Water (13%), and Life on Land (23%) as a priority for them than in any other region, reflecting a stronger focus on environmental issues.

Partner Rankings

Respondents indicated how helpful and influential they found the partners they worked with

Influence		Helpfulness		Footprint	
Development Partner	Percent of Respondents	Development Partner	Percent of Respondents	Development Partner	Percent of Respondents
1. NZL	93%	1. KOR	96.8%	1. WB	55.8%
2. GEF	87.4%	2. NZL	94.8%	2. ADB	52.1%
3. JPN	86.2%	3. GEF	91.9%	3. AUS	49%
4. UNAIDS	85.7%	4. JPN	89.8%	4. UNDP	48.7%
5. USA	85.5%	5. UNDP	88.5%	5. USA	40.9%
6. IMF	85.3%	6. AUS	88.3%	6. JPN	39.3%
7. WB	84.9%	7. EU	88.2%	7. UNICEF	37.7%
8. ADB	84.9%	8. UNAIDS	87.1%	8. WHO	36%
9. AUS	84.3%	9. DEU	87%	9. EU	31.3%
10. CHN	84.3%	10. WHO	87%	10. FAO	28%

Influence, Helpfulness and Footprint

Three survey metrics that provide insights on the perceived regional impact of partners

Footprint reflects the percentage of leaders who worked with a given partner. Influence is a measure of the partner's impact on policy decisions that leaders make. Helpfulness indicates whether or not leaders found a partner's assistance to be useful in project implementation. Notably, the average partner was considered more helpful than influential.

Sources

Custer, S., Horigoshi, A., Boer, B., and K. Marshall. (2025). *Listening to Leaders 2025: Development cooperation over a decade of disruption*. Williamsburg, VA: AidData at William & Mary.

Horigoshi, A., Custer, S., Marshall, K., and B. Burgess. (2025). *Prioritizing Agenda 2030: How do Global South leaders navigate trade-offs and assess relevance?* Analytical Brief. Williamsburg, VA: AidData at William & Mary. September 2025.

About AidData

AidData (<https://aiddata.org/>) is a research lab at William & Mary's Global Research Institute in Williamsburg, Virginia, USA. AidData helps governments and organizations make better-informed decisions on the reach, influence, and outcomes of overseas investments. We use rigorous methods, cutting-edge tools, and granular data to answer the question: who is doing what, where, for whom, and to what effect? The Listening to Leaders project surveys global leaders every 2–3 years, gathering insights on priorities,

experiences with development partners, and more across sectors like government, NGOs, civil society, and academia

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