

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: AFRM

<b>TA Number, Country, and Name</b>			<b>Amount Approved:</b> \$ 400,000	
TA 4758-AFG: Capacity Building for Regional Cooperation			<b>Revised Amount:</b> \$ 400,000	
<b>Executing Agency:</b>	<b>Source of Funding:</b>	<b>Amount Utilized:</b>	<b>Amount Undisbursed:</b>	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	TASF	\$ 221,953	\$ 178,047	
<b>TA Approval Date:</b>	<b>TA Signing Date:</b>	<b>Fielding of First Consultant:</b>	<b>TA Completion Date</b>	<b>Actual:</b>
22-Dec-05	15-Feb-06	August 06	Original: 28-Feb-07	29-Feb-08
			<b>Account Closing Date</b>	<b>Actual:</b>
			Original: 28-Feb-07	26-Nov-08
<b>Description:</b>				
<p>In 2005 the Afghanistan Government requested ADB for technical assistance in developing regional cooperation to realize the country's potential as a "land bridge" between Central Asia, South Asia, and the Persian Gulf region.</p> <p>The purpose of the TA was to strengthen capacity for regional cooperation within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs so that it can assume a greater role and responsibilities in planning, implementing, and coordinating regional coordination activities within the rest of the Government.</p>				
<b>Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs (as per TA Design and Monitoring Framework)</b>				
<p><b>Impact</b> – Improved economic growth and rising incomes through enhanced regional cooperation.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b> – Strengthened capacity for regional cooperation, as well as improved coordination of Government regional coordination efforts/activities.</p> <p><b>Outputs</b> – The TA's planned main outputs were: (i) a capacity-building assessment plan, (ii) establishment and functioning of a regional cooperation unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (iii) training of national officers involved in regional cooperation activities, and (iv) the creation of technical working groups to pursue the goals of the 2005 Kabul Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation (with focus on electricity trade and development, water resources management, transport, tourism, and transit trade and trade facilitation).</p>				
<b>Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities</b>				
<p><b>Adequacy of Formulation:</b> While the TA was adequately formulated, it underestimated the lack of understanding on the part of concerned officials on "regional cooperation" as well as the degree to which responsibility for the array of regional cooperation issues was fragmented among various sector ministries, all of which suffered weak human and institutional capacities. The TA also underestimated the time, effort, and technical assistance resources required to establish, run, and sustain inter-ministerial regional cooperation technical working groups.</p> <p><b>Performance of Consultants:</b> The TA envisaged six person-months of international consultant support, 38 person-months of domestic consultant support (5 consultants), and an unspecified amount of international and domestic training resources. The TA ultimately utilized the services of one international consultant and three domestic consultants. The overall performance of the consultants, as per the COSO "Performance Evaluation for Individual Consultant" reports was rated as satisfactory to excellent.</p> <p>In addition to difficulty in identifying suitable international experts, Afghanistan's difficult security environment</p>				

delayed the appointment of TA consultants. In February 2007 both of the domestic consultants terminated their contracts, one to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as staff, and another leaving the country. A replacement domestic consultant was recruited in February 2007. While an international Training Specialist was identified, with some difficulty, the candidate ultimately refused the position. As a result, the TA Team Leader and Capacity Building Specialist assumed full responsibility for the TA's training and capacity building component.

### **Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome**

The TA helped MoFA articulate the regional cooperation component of the Ministry's overall strategy. The TA also assisted in the launch of a designated regional cooperation site on the MoFA website to explain Government regional cooperation policy and to provide documents and other materials concerning regional cooperation: [www.mfa.gov.af/regional-cooperation.asp](http://www.mfa.gov.af/regional-cooperation.asp)

Another key TA aim was to undertake an assessment of MoFA's existing regional cooperation capacity and training needs, with identification of target participants and the provision of training to MoFA officials responsible for regional cooperation issues. To fulfil this objective, the TA organized a two-week training workshop for 17 Afghan Government officials in Delhi from 11-23 June 2007. The training was provided in collaboration with the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). The workshop provided training on economic diplomacy, the impact of security on regional cooperation, trade negotiations, and evolution and institutional frameworks of different regional organizations (SAARC, SCO, ECO, CAREC, EU, ASEAN, etc). Workshop participants also were familiarised with regional cooperation in energy, infrastructure and labor issues. The summary workshop report is available at <http://www.mfa.gov.af/rctp.asp>.

Another key TA output was support for the establishment of a six-person Regional Cooperation Directorate within the Ministry's Economic Division. As few of the Directorate's staff had much regional cooperation experience, and little knowledge of the various regional cooperation bodies they were responsible for, TA staff provided assistance on the Directorate's day-to-day work, including input into regional cooperation-related speeches by senior MoFA officials.

The TA also provided MoFA's Economic Division with necessary office equipment and supplies. As the need for translation of key documents presented a constraint to MoFA's ability to coordinate the Government's regional cooperation efforts, the TA financed professional translation of key documents, e.g. key SAARC documents (also initially posted to MoFA's regional cooperation website). With support from the TA, MoFA established a Steering Committee on Regional Cooperation. The TA also assisted in the organization of regional cooperation meetings undertaken by MoFA, such as the August 2007 Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Council of Ministers Meeting in Herat and various regional cooperation Cross Cutting Thematic Group meetings held as part of the elaboration of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). The TA also assisted in the Government's preparation for the Second Regional Economic Cooperation Conference (RECC) on Afghanistan, held in Delhi, India, in 2007 and for the Third RECC planned for 2008 in Islamabad, Pakistan. In view of such support, the TA closing date was extended to 29 February 2008.

### **Overall Assessment and Rating**

Although the TA, and the TA consultants, made a useful contribution, TA 4758-AFG is rated as only **partly successful** for the following reasons:

- It did not produce an overall capacity development plan as per the TA design (although, as with other ADB capacity development activities in Afghanistan, it is recognized that capacity development is a long-term goal requiring sustained efforts).
- The Regional Cooperation Directorate requires additional TA support to undertake its work (as evidenced by MoFA's request for further TA support to help the Government prepare for the Third RECC and the regional cooperation website that requires updating).
- MoFA does not play a lead role in the various inter-ministerial technical sector working groups or other fora established to promote regional cooperation.

**Major Lessons**

As noted above, capacity development efforts have to take a long-term and staged approach, in that a single training or workshop is unlikely to build sustainable capacity.

As “regional cooperation” includes many sectors and activities, including quite specialized areas (e.g. trade and transit facilitation), a “broad brush” approach is inadequate. Hence, TA support should be more narrowly targeted.

**Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions**

Any further ADB TA support for regional cooperation in Afghanistan should be closely linked with the CAREC program. With a strengthened CWRD CAREC Unit, regional cooperation support to Afghanistan is now better coordinated.

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