

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

TA 1991-BAN : Institutional Strengthening of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education				TA AMOUNT APPROVED: \$490,000.00	
				REVISED AMOUNT : -	
EXECUTIVE AGENCY : Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education		FUND SOURCE: Technical Assistance Special Fund		TA AMOUNT UNDISBURSED : \$12,005.93	TA AMOUNT UTILIZED : \$477,994.07
REPORT DATE: -	APPROVAL DATE : 23 Nov 1993	SIGNING DATE: 17 Dec 1993	CONSULATNT FIELDING DATE : 4 July 1994	TA Completion Date Original: May 1995 Account Closing Date Original:	Actual: July 1995 Actual: May 1999

TA Description

In November 1993, ADB approved a loan for Secondary Education Development Project (Loan No. 1268-BAN(SF)) to support Government's plans to strengthen secondary education by expanding access and improving quality of education through teacher training and curriculum revision, and strengthening management and planning capacity of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE). This technical assistance project (TA), which is piggybacked to the loan project, was also approved.

TA Objectives and Scope

The objective of the TA was to strengthen DSHE's capabilities for policy analysis and planning of the secondary education subsector. The TA scope included (i) establishing services for strategic planning and policy oriented management covering the fields of organization and management, monitoring and evaluation, teacher training, curriculum development, instructional materials development, and educational facilities planning; and (ii) training for DSHE staff at central, zonal and district levels.

TA Inputs Evaluation

The original TA inputs comprised 20 person-months of international consulting services. A total of four individual consultants were engaged, namely, an organization and management of education specialist (team leader), a curriculum development specialist, a teacher-training specialist, and an education facilities management specialist. However, the services of the team leader were extended by two months to (i) allow an overlap of services with the consultants to be fielded under the loan project for orientation and briefing; and (ii) makeup loss of working days due to frequent general strikes in the country which adversely affected implementation schedule of the consultants. The inputs provided by the consultants were considered appropriate. The consultants held discussion with various stakeholders in a participatory manner to formulate recommendations, which could be implemented under the prevailing conditions and constraints. The TA design was relevant in terms of its objectives and terms of reference were appropriately formulated.

DSHE had adequately provided administrative and logistical supports to the consultant team. Consulting services commenced on 4 July 1994, and completed in July 1995. The TA consultants commenced their services seven months after the TA signing date due to delay in loan effectiveness, and procedural delays to replace the originally selected team leader. Transfer of the main counterpart staff, Director Planning and Development, who was the most knowledgeable person on the TA activities, temporarily hindered the TA implementation process. This happened during a critical time in the implementation of the consultants' recommendations in midterm report.

Performance of the consultants both in terms of conduct of services and quality of work was satisfactory. The consultants in general complied with their TOR and had established working relationship with the counterpart agencies. ADB intensively monitored the TA implementation progress in conjunction with review of the loan project. ADB had provided timely and relevant comments to achieve the TA objectives. Final report was submitted in October 1995 after incorporating comments from the ADB.

TA Outputs Evaluation

The TA made substantial output in line with the TA objectives. Reports prepared by the consultant offered important recommendations on institutional and policy-related matters. The midterm report formed the basis for many recommended actions including (i) documentation of organization and position charters for monitoring and evaluation of performance, (ii) formation of an executive management committee to effectively monitor and manage the functions of the DSHE, (iii) bifurcation of DSHE into the Directorate of Secondary Education and the Directorate of Higher Education, (iv) development of teacher training colleges as a main source of quality teacher training, etc.

In the management strengthening area, the consultant's recommendation focused on (i) refining the definition of goals and objectives of the DSHE in the long term; (ii) appropriateness of its organization structure in relation to the Ministry of Education (MOE) and actual practice in the field; and (iii) realignment of organizational, functional and individual responsibilities of the DSHE. Implementation of the recommendations in the management strengthening area, however, had been limited due partly to changes in senior counterpart staff, lengthy bureaucratic approval process requiring inter-ministerial decision, and lack of follow-up from the DSHE.

In respect of curriculum strengthening, the curriculum development specialist assisted in preparing the framework and guidelines for curriculum and textbook revision. There were seven recommendations on curriculum strengthening, most of which had been implemented. This had provided a good foundation for subsequent improvement in curriculum and syllabi by the consultants engaged under the loan project.

The consultants also developed a self-assessment quality education questionnaire (QEQ) to quantitatively measure the quality of education at school level. This was followed by eight training programs on QEQ, the objectives of which were to (i) help participants measure the quality of education in a school, (ii) identify areas for quality education improvement, (iii) establish priorities for school level quality education improvement programs, and (iv) develop action plans at the school level. Participants at the training programs included 54 headmasters and headmistresses, 8 district education officers, and 14 secondary education Thana project officers. The program commenced with 40 schools in Dhaka, and later expanded to more than 200 schools in several districts.

A short-term overseas study tour were arranged under the TA for five senior government officials from MOE, DSHE, and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board to familiarize them with appropriate secondary education operation in the regions. The field visits were made to India, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines, which have similar development characteristics to Bangladesh. The participants gained considerable knowledge through the study tour which contributed to their professional development, particularly in the areas of decentralized nature of operation, monitoring and evaluation system, professionalism of teacher training and development, and institutionalization of administrative and managerial training.

The TA consultants had adequately responded to their terms of reference. The consultants produced an inception report, a midterm report and final report on time. The consultants analyzed information in a satisfactory manner, and performed advisory and training functions satisfactorily.

TA Overall Assessment and Rating

The consultants had been successful in identifying and recommending necessary changes to strengthen DSHE's capabilities for policy analysis, planning, and management of the secondary education. Despite the good achievement by the consultants, the outcome of the TA in terms of strengthening DSHE's capabilities was less than satisfactory in absence of the Government's approval and implementation of the consultants' recommendations. The TA is, therefore, rated partly satisfactory.

Major Lessons Learned

Institutional strengthening is a long-term process requiring comprehensive support, training and monitoring which is difficult to accomplish within the short span of a single TA duration. More effective results could be obtained from sustained long-term inputs. Secondly, the strong commitment and full support of the highest level of the Government is required to effect any change in DSHE with over 31,000 staff, having very complex relationship with several government agencies. Thirdly, the discontinuity of a senior counterpart staff for the TA had disrupted implementation of the TA activities. Hence, avoiding heavy reliance on a single officer could have mitigated this unfavorable outcome.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

ADB approved in 1999 a new project Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (Loan No. 1690-BAN (SF)) for overall improvement of the secondary education including capacity strengthening of DSHE as envisaged under this TA. In order not to repeat an unfavorable outcome, it is recommended that both MOE and ADB work closely to develop a strategy to enable the Government to systematically address inter-related issues and to ensure successful implementation of consultants' recommendations.