

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: SASS

TA No. and Name TA 4065-BAN: Strengthening Primary Education Development Program			Amount Approved: \$250,000		
			Revised Amount: n/a		
Executing Agency Ministry of Primary and Mass Education		Source of Funding TASF	TA Amount Undisbursed \$29,343.40	TA Amount Utilized \$220,656.60	
Date			Completion Date		
Approval 19 Dec 2002	Signing 04 April 2003	Fielding of Consultants 15 March 2003	Original 30 June 2003	Actual 31 May 04	
			Closing Date		
			Original 30 Sept 2003	Actual 27 Aug 2004	
Description					
<p>In 2002–2003 the Asian Development Bank (ADB) assisted the Government of Bangladesh in preparing a comprehensive sector plan for primary education. In addition to the lead agency ADB, 10 other development partners participated in the process, which resulted to the Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP II), based on a sectorwide program design. The PEDP II is large scale in terms of beneficiaries, participants, and funding. It is a holistic plan with proposed interventions affecting all sections of the primary education at all levels of the system. It brought together a wide range of general and specific interests, especially those of the Government, development partners, and other stakeholders. While in 2002 ADB's project preparatory technical assistance (PPTA) assisted in undertaking feasibility study and design of the PEDP II, after the PPTA period in 2003 there was a need to assist the Government and development partners in transition from the old Primary Education Development Program (PEDP I) (which consisted of various separate projects), to one integrated and coordinated sector program, PEDP II. To strengthen the capacity to undertake operational planning for the transition, the Government requested the lead agency ADB to provide technical assistance (TA 4065) for continuation of the joint operational planning process, involving the Government, other stakeholders and development partners.</p>					
Objectives and Scope					
The TA assisted in the following areas:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Education planning and policy, with focus on strengthening linkages between the PEDP II policy framework and the operational plans being prepared for the PEDP II interventions. (ii) Program coordination and management, with focus on moving from the fragmented project management structures in place under the PEDP I to an integrated subsector program coordination unit structure for PEDP II; developing operational guidelines for coordinating and managing PEDP II, and for disseminating information to other levels of the system; determining mechanisms for aid agency and systemic coordination; and preparing a procurement manual and other operation manuals necessary for efficient implementation of PEDP II. (iii) Organizational and institutional capacity analysis, with focus on procedures and interventions needed for improving organizational and institutional structure and capacity to support the improvement of the quality of primary education; and based on the recommendations of the analysis, developing an reform agenda—short-term and longer-term—along with an action plan to ensure that the best possible organizational structures and procedures are in place for ensuring coordinated improvement of the quality of primary education under PEDP II. (iv) Developing Education Management Information System (EMIS), monitoring and evaluation, school audit and other baseline surveys with indicators; strengthening monitoring and evaluation of the quality of primary education, poverty reduction impact, and the benefits of PEDP II implementation to disadvantaged groups. 					
<p>The demand for the TA arose from the need to continue the joint planning process. The TA was prepared in close consultation with the Government, development partners, and other stakeholders in the sector. The demand-driven TA formulation ensured high relevance of the TA design in terms of appropriateness of objectives, terms of reference, executing arrangements, and implementation schedule. Also adequate flexibility was built in the design and schedule. The close stakeholder consultation ensured ownership of the TA by all parties.</p>					
Evaluation of Inputs					
<p>Since the TA was designed to support the continuation of a delicate and evolving joint planning process, there was a need to provide enough flexibility to meet any unforeseen needs during TA implementation. Therefore, the amount of contingency was higher than the usual in TA financing plans. This arrangement proved useful during implementation. Through the TA, 5.8 person-months of international consultancy inputs and 15.5 person-months of domestic consultancy inputs were provided. The terms of reference provided adequate flexibility facilitating efficient and effective TA implementation. The inputs were very satisfactory from the perspective of the client and reflected very well the need to adjust the work plan from time to time to meet the TA objectives in the evolving context. The following is a summary of concrete inputs provided:</p>					

The TA assisted the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) and Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) in coordinating and facilitating the joint planning, interministerial and stakeholder consultation, necessary for preparation of Government documentation for PEDP II, and in implementation of other preparatory activities required for the transition from the PEDP I to PEDP II. Planning seminars and workshops were held as necessary. Within the agreed subsector program framework and design (prepared earlier with the assistance of ADB PPTA), the TA assisted in data analysis for final prioritizing of policies and development interventions, and in finalizing and operationalizing the program plan as a sectorwide plan for primary education. Advice and technical inputs were provided in aspects of harmonizing the implementation of various PEDP II interventions. The TA provided advice and data analysis for preparation of Government's documents for the program approval by the Government and subsequent implementation. Given that the program is very comprehensive covering the whole formal primary education sector and was designed to facilitate a shift from traditional separate projects to a one unified, harmonized program for primary education, the standard Government's project documents required adjustments and modifications in many aspects to accommodate adequately the sectorwide program approach. The performance of the ADB and the executing agency of the TA are considered as highly satisfactory.

Evaluation of Outputs

Accordingly, with the advice of the TA, Government's program concept paper was prepared, as required, for the approval of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council, chaired by the Prime Minister. Preparation of a detailed program proforma followed, requiring extensive financial data, for approval of the Planning Commission to secure adequate counterpart funding for the program and provide the line ministry adequate implementation authority of the program as an integrated sectorwide program. A detailed plan for coordinated transition of the activities from the PEDP I (project mode of working) to PEDP II (sectorwide program mode of working) were finalized and agreed with the line ministry and development partners funding PEDP I and PEDP II. As required, a draft first year annual operation plan and a 3-year rolling plan with costed activities were prepared to facilitate commencement of the implementation. Given that the program has extensive procurement activities, a draft procurement plan and manual were prepared for the program. Terms of reference and action plan for organizational and institutional analysis to be carried out during first year PEDP II was prepared. Also a plan for further strengthening operational activities of EMIS, monitoring and evaluation, school audits and base line data collection under PEDP II, was prepared. The outputs were produced in an efficient manner both in terms of cost and process: the outputs were timely and of good quality effectively supporting the continuation of the joint operational planning process and resulting to high client satisfaction.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA was successful based on the very good performance of the consultants and collaboration of the MOPME, DPE, other stakeholders, ADB and other participating development partners. The TA efficiently supported the continuation of the operational planning process and timely commencement of the PEDP II implementation, as completion of several key outputs of the operational planning process were conditions agreed at appraisal for the program effectiveness. PEDP II was declared effective in April 2004. The commencement of the implementation clearly benefited from the outputs of the TA.

Major Lessons Learned

When preparing sectorwide programs in a sector where a conventional project mode of working has been dominating associated with the usual problems arising from poor coordination and lack of harmonized approach, there is a need to assist and build capacity of the executing agency and other key stakeholders for phased transition from projects to the sector program implementation. The fact that donor-funded projects in a sector are at different stages in their cycles necessitates careful coordination and planning for phasing the activities from various projects into one program in a step-by-step manner and concurrently maintaining a harmonized approach in program implementation.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

After PEDP II implementation commenced, the operational planning has continued as a regular embedded program management activity undertaken with the support from the program coordination unit (PCU) in consultation with stakeholders. The outputs of the TA are being utilized in program implementation, and are from time to time further improved with the support from the PCU as necessary as the implementation of the program progresses. Particular review and follow up of the coordination, operational plans, procedures and manuals will be undertaken during joint annual reviews of the program.