

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: SEAE

TA No., Country, and Name			Amount Approved: \$500,000	
TA 4376-CAM: Capacity Building for the Tonle Sap Poverty Reduction Initiative			Revised Amount: N/A	
Executing Agency: ADB through the Tonle Sap Initiative Coordination Unit in the Cambodia Resident Mission		Source of Funding: Poverty Reduction Cooperation Fund	Amount Undisbursed: \$24,306.60	Amount Utilized: \$475,693.40
TA Approval Date:	TA Signing Date:	Fielding of First Consultant:	TA Completion Date Original:	Actual:
16 August 2004	4 November 2004	17 January 2005	30 September 2006	31 December 2007
			Account Closing Date Original:	Actual:
			30 September 2006	14 April 2008
Description				
<p>The Asian Development Bank (ADB) supports poverty reduction and environmental conservation in the Tonle Sap basin within a strategic framework of loan, grant, and technical assistance projects collectively known as the Tonle Sap Initiative (TSI). As expected, the TSI makes demands on the human and social capital of many stakeholders, including line agencies, local government bodies, communities, research institutes, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and other elements of civil society. The technical assistance (TA) was to serve as a multiyear, integrating instrument for building the capacity to generate higher returns from the TSI. This concept was presented and proposed to the Poverty Reduction Cooperation Fund and was endorsed in February 2004.</p>				
Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs				
<p>The TA was designed to build capacity at the national, provincial, and local levels to manage, engage in, and support the TSI in achieving poverty reduction and environmental conservation goals and targets. This outcome was to be achieved by (i) building skills and awareness, (ii) networking knowledge, and (iii) strengthening partnerships.</p>				
<p>(i) Building Skills and Awareness. To accomplish this output, (i) the TSI had to be reviewed; (ii) a reasonable cross-section of the stakeholders involved had to be identified; (iii) deficiencies in skills and awareness that limited the ability to fulfill agreed or potential roles had to be determined; (iv) educational products and services and training for trainers had to be designed and delivered; (v) the efficiency and effectiveness of skills and awareness building had to be monitored against general and specific indicators in an agreed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system; and (vi) the M&E results had to be fed back into the customized educational products and services provided. Skills and awareness had to be developed to strengthen the managerial and leadership capacity of core groups of motivated and competent change agents associated with the TSI, specifically junior and middle government officials and community leaders and representatives.</p>				
<p>(ii) Networking Knowledge. To accomplish this output, there was an identified need to establish and operate a Tonle Sap office to act as a clearinghouse of information about the Tonle Sap basin and, where relevant, the Mekong River basin.</p>				
<p>(iii) Strengthening Partnerships. To accomplish this output, (i) ADB's collaborative arrangements under the TSI had to be reviewed; (ii) opportunities to strengthen current arrangements had to be identified; (iii) channels for structured dialogue informed by the Tonle Sap database had to be improved; (iv) an action plan for partnerships had to be designed; and (v) TA concept papers with practical proposals had to be developed. The scope was to encompass, but not be limited to, bilateral and multilateral institutions and NGOs.</p>				
Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities				
<p>Changes in Implementation Arrangements. During TA fact-finding, an agreement was reached in principle to rely on the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Thailand to build skills and awareness and network knowledge. But when approached in January 2005 to formalize the partnership, AIT appeared less keen to partner with ADB and</p>				

requested changes in implementation arrangements. Despite efforts made to reach a solution satisfactory to both parties, AIT notified ADB in March 2005 that it was opting out of TA implementation. New implementation support partners in Cambodia therefore had to be found.

Building Skills and Awareness. After extensive search, it was agreed that the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Learning Institute, a local NGO, was the most appropriate candidate for the skills and awareness building and that direct selection was still appropriate. Contracting was completed in August 2005 and the CBNRM Learning Institute was mobilized in September 2005. By mid-December 2005 the Learning Institute had assembled a team of facilitators, assessed needs, drawn up a training strategy, and designed course curricula and materials. The courses, 72 in all, were delivered from March 2006 to May 2007. A core group of experienced and skilled facilitators was developed and training materials were produced and made available to government agencies, development partners, and stakeholders.

Networking Knowledge. After AIT withdrew from the TA implementation, alternative options were explored from August to September 2005 and a position paper was submitted to ADB. A decision was made to partner with the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), a well-regarded local institution with a broad range of international links and relationships. Instead of the planned Tonle Sap office at AIT, a TSI Learning Resource Center would be created at CDRI. CDRI prepared technical and financial proposals and contracting was essentially completed by the end of 2005. Implementation began in January 2006 and was completed by September 2006.

Strengthening Partnerships. The Tonle Sap Initiative Coordination Unit (TSICU) was set up in the Cambodia Resident Mission to strengthen partnerships with government line ministries and institutions, multilateral and bilateral agencies, and NGO and civil society stakeholders, and support project implementation. Coordination with the Government took place through: (i) two high-level consultations on the TSI between ADB and the Government in April 2005 and September 2006; and (ii) the first national forum on the TSI in March 2007, with the Prime Minister presiding. Six working groups produced recommendations on the following crosscutting themes: (i) development issues and challenges; (ii) management structure, institutional arrangements, and coordination; (iii) programming and implementation; (iv) policies and legal framework; (v) communications; and (vi) knowledge sharing. The final report and recommendations of the national forum were endorsed by the Prime Minister and the Government. Coordination was also achieved with multilateral and bilateral agencies through consultations with the following international development partners: Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Danish International Development Agency (Danida), the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID), the European Union, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), German technical cooperation (GTZ), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), Thai cooperation, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Bank. Coordination with NGOs and civil society stakeholders, ADB's implementation support partners referred to as the TSI extended family, was based on the principle that the TSI is a sector-wide approach to poverty reduction and environmental conservation in the Tonle Sap basin. Each project is an integral part of the TSI, with the TSICU facilitating technical coordination on common themes such as capacity development, sustainable livelihoods, environmental protection and biodiversity conservation, community-based management of natural resources, institutional and organizational development, and policy and regulatory framework enhancement—recurrent elements of the key loan and grant projects of the TSI.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome

Outputs were produced efficiently and effectively, and were quite satisfactory.

Building Skills and Awareness. The skill- and awareness-building courses designed and delivered by the CBNRM Learning Institute were of high quality and were well received by participants and provincial and local authorities. Impact assessments indicated that skills and knowledge transfer took place, natural resource management planning improved, and behavior is changing as knowledge and skills are applied in everyday life.

Networking Knowledge. The interactive information and learning provided by the TSI Learning Resource Center at CDRI gave stakeholders a better understanding of issues related to the Tonle Sap basin. The center was also a source of ideas for future research. Over time and in partnership with other local stakeholders, CDRI foresees the establishment of a one-stop shop for development research and policy issues in Cambodia, with library resource collection development and information services, outreach and communication strategies, and a regular program of development research and policy briefings and seminars for policy makers and government officials, development practitioners, the academic community, and civil society. The learning resource center is a major step in this direction.

Strengthening Partnerships. Partnerships were strengthened by the work of the TSICU, which developed and implemented a strategy for coordinating with (i) line ministries and institutions of the Government; (ii) multilateral and bilateral agencies in agriculture and natural resources; and (iii) NGOs and civil society stakeholders, the implementation support partners of the TSI extended family.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA was highly successful. The quality and quantity of its outputs exceeded expectations despite the initial delay in the start of TA implementation. The implementation partners in Cambodia were well suited to the TA and their outputs were of high quality and surpassed the accomplishments targeted.

Major Lessons

TSI projects fulfill basic institution-building targets by training provincial and district government officials. In the communities and villages, however, project activities are limited to creating public awareness of project goals and objectives. Not enough effort is made to create actual capacity in the communities and community organizations, among fisherfolk, farmers, and women, to take ownership of and drive the process of community development, poverty reduction, and environmental conservation themselves. This capacity gap in the communities must be filled. Likewise, community participation, though widely discussed, is yet to be realized through government-led interventions in Cambodia. Involving NGOs and civil society stakeholders in developing the capacity of communities and community organizations will enable the latter to participate effectively in TSI investments and interventions, and maximize the impact of such interventions. Capacity development should be coupled with better coordination among financing agencies and development partners to leverage investments in the Tonle Sap basin for long-term, sustainable poverty reduction and environmental conservation.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

Continuing support is needed for the capacity development of the communities and community organizations that will benefit from or participate in the major poverty reduction projects in the Tonle Sap basin. Specifically, the interventions should support training, demonstration, and knowledge sharing with community leaders, community organizations, and appropriate government staff so that the communities can participate effectively in the loan and grant projects of the TSI and the long-term, sustainable poverty reduction impact of the projects can be maximized. The Grant Building Capacity for Poverty Reduction Initiatives in the Tonle Sap Basin (CAM 41054-01) funded by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, is designed to improve the capacity of communities and community organizations involved in the TSI. In so doing, the grant will also strengthen and expand TSICU coordination and facilitation roles among financing agencies and development partners to leverage investments in the Tonle Sap basin for a sector-wide approach.

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