

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: ECSS

TA No. and Name: 3939-KAZ: Education Sector Development Strategy			Amount Approved: \$600,000	
			Revised Amount: n/a	
Executing Agency: Ministry of Education and Science (MOES)	Source of Funding: JSF		TA Amount Undisbursed¹ \$164,204	TA Amount Utilized¹ \$435,796
Date			Completion Date	
Approval 16 Oct 2002	Signing 22 Jan 2003	Fielding of Consultants 23 Apr 2003	Original 31 Jan 2004	Actual 30 May 2005
			Closing Date	
			Original 31 Jul 2004	Actual¹
<p>Description</p> <p>The TA was intended to support the Government's stated priority of strengthening the education sector. The TA was to support the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) to address short-term problems caused by transitional challenges following independence, build on the high level of social development achieved under the former Soviet Union, and respond to the severe economic downturn following independence which squeezed public financing for education. The TA came at a time when the Government had just introduced longer-term goals, objectives, and strategies for socio-economic development. The TA was consistent with ADB's strategy in Kazakhstan to support human resource development and benefited from TA 3988-KAZ: Social Sector Expenditure Review, which was highly appreciated by MOES.</p> <p>Objectives and Scope</p> <p>The main objective of the TA was to update the comprehensive education and training sector review completed in 1995-1996, to identify key sector issues and priorities, and to contribute to strengthening the Government's education sector development strategy. The TA was intended to incorporate developments and lessons from recent interventions, firm up the reform framework of the Government up to 2010 for sustainable development of the education sector, and build on the sector work and projects supported by ADB and reform initiatives of the Government. The TA was intended to assist the MOES in diagnosing the weaknesses in the education system and preparing a strategy that would include a sector reform program, organization plan, and financing plan. The TA also intended to assist the Government in developing a policy framework and a prioritized sector strategy to help articulate its priorities and strategies for the education sector for the medium and long term. The TA was well designed at a time when the MOES was preparing to develop its concept paper on educational development, as a major initiative to align the education system with the emerging market economy.</p> <p>Evaluation of Inputs</p> <p>MOES was the Executing Agency and its performance was generally satisfactory. However, the strong technical expert of the deputy team leader was not fully utilized due to his heavy involvement in the overall management of the TA. MOES was assisted in TA implementation by 13 person-months of international (against 12 planned) and 40.5 person-months of domestic (against 40 planned) consultants engaged by the British Council. The terms of reference were formulated well, and were adhered to by the consultants. The TA analyzed five thematic areas: (i) financing, (ii) pedagogical renewal, (iii), management and institutional reform, (iv) tertiary education and technical and vocational education, and (v) preschool education. The TA followed a highly consultative process, involving two provinces (South Kazakhstan and Pavlodar) and consultation with province and central level stakeholders, experts, NGOs, and development partners. The TA generated consensus among key stakeholders of the need to work together with the Government under a more coherent policy framework. A midterm workshop and a national conference discussed the TA findings and received useful feedback and endorsement of the key findings and recommendations by MOES and other key stakeholders.</p> <p>Two months after the launching of the TA, MOES initiated the preparation of its own education concept note to develop a medium- to long-term education strategy. The resulting concept paper provides a comprehensive review of the education sector, including goals and necessary measures to transform the sector up to 2015. The TA working group comprising senior officials from MOES and other Government agencies overlapped with the working group formed by the Government to develop the concept paper. A set of comprehensive comments and analytical inputs from the TA greatly benefited the concept paper. The overall performance of ADB was satisfactory. ADB provided comprehensive comments on the consultants' reports and participated in tripartite meetings to review the inception, mid-term, and draft final reports.</p>				

¹ Pending payment of final claim of the consultant.

Evaluation of Outputs

The TA delivered its outputs as envisaged. The consultants prepared inception, mid-term, draft final, and final reports. An important achievement was that the analyses presented on different sub-sectors and themes helped MOES to prepare its own concept paper, which the Minister of MOES appreciated at the national conference. The analyses from the TA also provide a comprehensive picture of the challenges that the Government faces at a time when Kazakhstan's education system is transforming from central planning to a market-oriented system, with the Government encouraging non-government provision of education and increasingly private sector driven employment opportunities.

The TA also achieved its outcomes as envisaged. A comprehensive set of subsector analyses and studies was completed as a major outcome of the TA, and served as the basis for formulating a sector development strategy. The strategy paper largely fulfilled the objectives of the TA. The strategy paper draws from the reports produced by the TA, from discussions held at the national conference, and from the costing of additional inputs and activities in the education sector reform proposed. It also provides an overview of the national and economic context of education sector reform and outlines a number of key issues and priorities for action. The concept paper prepared by the Government, with inputs provided from the TA, outlines a reform program that (i) has strong ownership of the Government; (ii) is technically sound; and (iii) draws from reforms in other countries. The process of preparing the education strategy paper under the TA supported the Government's own initiative. The TA findings were presented in the national conference chaired by the MOES Minister and participated in by key stakeholders, including senior Government officials from the central and provincial levels, NGOs, and development partners. The conference endorsed the findings and the MOES Minister expressed his appreciation to the ADB and the TA team for supporting the Government's concept paper. The TA reports were generally of a good professional standard and well received by the Government, with the exception of the final strategy note, which was of an acceptable standard but did not present strategic options.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA is rated as successful. The TA achieved its major objective, by producing a comprehensive strategy paper, which captures the essence of the issues and challenges faced by the education sector in Kazakhstan, and served as a key input to the Government's education sector planning process. The person-month inputs were slightly increased but were within the original budget.

Major Lessons Learned

A major lesson learned from the TA was the importance of strong Government ownership and close cooperation between the TA and key stakeholders at the outset of the TA implementation. A comprehensive TA like this requires a deputy team leader with strong technical and administrative skills. This was envisaged, but did not materialize. As a result, the team leader was over burdened by management responsibilities. It is also important to agree with the consultant team at an early stage on a broad outline of the strategy paper in order to organize the TA along that line. The timing of the TA coincided with the MOES' efforts to prepare the sector concept paper. The TA took advantage of this opportunity to align TA inputs with Government planning.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

The recommendations from the TA provide a set of time-bound and detailed actions in key policy areas, with implications on financing to complement the Government's concept paper. The Government needs to establish a reform task force to implement the proposed actions. In doing this, the process and sequencing of reforms need special focus. Concurrently, the findings should be disseminated widely in order to ensure a participatory process of reform in line with the decentralization policy being pursued by the Government. The Government has indicated that it does not plan to borrow further for education. Other options for development partners to build on the outcomes of the TA should be explored.