

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT¹

Division: Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Social Services Division (SANS)

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| TA No., Country and Name: TA4767-NEP: Capacity Building for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women | | Amount Approved: \$300,000.00 | |
| | | Revised Amount: \$300,000.00 | |
| Executing Agency: Department of Women Development; Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare | | Source of Funding: Gender and Development Cooperation Fund | Amount Undisbursed: \$41,462.59 |
| | | | Amount Utilized: \$258,537.41 |
| TA Approval Date: 28 Feb 2006 | TA Signing Date: 13 Jun 2006 | Fielding of First Consultant: 17 Nov 2006 | TA Completion Date Original: 31 Dec 2007 Actual: 20 Nov 2008 |
| | | | Account Closing Date Original: 31 Dec 2007 Actual: 31 May 2009 |
| Description | | | |
| <p>The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MWCSW) has the mandate to mainstream women's empowerment and gender into all government programs and policies. Programs for empowerment and gender mainstreaming are executed by the Department of Women Development (DWD), which during two decades of experience implementing projects to empower women in rural Nepal has built a national infrastructure and network that reaches every district of Nepal. DWD staff is noted for their dedication and commitment to development principles and generally enjoys strong support of the line agencies, NGOs, and the community at large. DWD has the mandate to improve the quality of life, increase the socio-economic status of women, and bring gender equity in Nepalese society. The Government is implementing the decentralization strategy of the Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA) of 1999 as an effective means to facilitate participation of rural poor in decision-making and development processes. The LSGA envisages therefore a significant change of mandate for line agencies, at the district level and below. As a step towards this devolution, the mandate of DWD has also changed, and in July 2003 a cabinet ruling was issued to define the WDO as the focal agency at the district level for matters relating to women, minors, disabled, aged and NGOs, i.e. representing the full mandate of the MWCSW. Furthermore, in line with this change, in 2004 ADB approved the Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Project (GEEOWP) with DWD facilitating a process of economic, social, legal, and political empowerment among poor rural women and members of other disadvantaged groups, including ethnic and Dalit women.</p> | | | |
| Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs | | | |
| <p>The expected impact of the TA was the changed role of DWD from direct service deliverer of development programs to (i) facilitator and advocate for mainstreaming gender at national and district level, and (ii) gender focal point at district level and lower administrative level. The main expected outcome of the TA was strengthening of the institutional and managerial capabilities of the DWD to efficiently and effectively manage, coordinate, and monitor its development programs, in line with its new role and mandate of gender focal point. The TA was to provide capacity building to DWD to support these changes in DWD, by (i) designing and implementing appropriate institutional strengthening programs for DWD; (ii) increasing DWD capacity in project management, monitoring and evaluation, contracting and procurement, financial management, and accounting; and (iii) assisting in early start-up and implementation of the GEEOW project by helping to develop and institutionalize procedures and establish the project institutional framework and management structures. In particular, the TA was to assist DWD, executing agency (EA) of the GEEOWP, in building new and strengthening existing skills to ensure that the needs of the implementation of the GEEOWP were met.</p> | | | |
| Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities | | | |
| <p>The TA objective was relevant to the need of the Government of Nepal and in line with its 10th Five-Year Plan and Poverty Reduction Strategy, which includes need for reducing poverty through advancement of gender equality and empowerment of poor women, and seeks to address gender, ethnic and caste-related disparities by mainstreaming gender in the implementation of key sectoral programs, empowering women, and mainstreaming the historically excluded communities.</p> | | | |
| <p>The DWD was the EA of the TA and the DWD project manager of the GEEOW Project acted as TA coordinator as well. The TA included the engagement of World Education Australia Limited (WEAL), an international non-governmental organization (NGO), as consultants, with a total inputs of 76 person months (pm), including 4 pm of an international consultant (Institutional Development Specialist) and 72 pm of domestic consultants comprising Institutional Development Specialist (18 pm), Project Management Expert (24pm), Gender Planning Specialist (18pm), and Procurement Specialist</p> | | | |

¹ In preparing any country program or strategy, financing any project, or by making any designation of or reference to a particular territory or geographic area in this document, the Asian Development Bank does not intend to make any judgments as to the legal or other status of any territory or area.

(12pm). In the original Arrangements, all consultants were to be recruited on an individual basis. However, the TA when first listed in ADB Business Opportunities in May 2005 had no expression of interests (EOI), despite the active search for interested consultants. To avoid further delays, ADB approved a change in the selection method of consultants from individual to firm using the single source selection procedure.

The approval of the TA had to be put on hold for several months due to the conflict and political instability in the country and, once it was approved, the TA became effective 3 months later. The consultants were at the end mobilized with 9-month delay as it was difficult to identify the consultants to engage. This delayed the completion of the TA by 11 months. Because the country situation delayed also the start up of the GEEOWP, the timing of the TA in relation to the GEEOWP was not disrupted.

The TA design and the Terms of Reference (TOR) were in general adequate. TORs were meant to be flexible and had to be refined during implementation, in particular in view of the results of the first activity of the TA, i.e. the institutional audit (IA) of DWD. In fact, the findings of the IA regarding the training required by the DWD staff (to change their mandate and to be able to implement the ADB GEEOW Project) made it necessary to modify the TOR for the TA team so that they could conduct new training activities which were identified during the IA process.

A total of 3 review missions (inception, mid-term, and final missions) were carried out, jointly with the review missions of the GEEOW Project. This was considered adequate and complemented by regular contacts with the team leader through email and phone.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome

The first activity of the TA was the external IA of DWD, a process by which the institutional development specialists checked that procedures were in place across DWD, to ensure that (i) quality, integrity and standards of provision and outcomes are in place, and (ii) capabilities (skills and training) match the new roles and responsibilities expected from the DWD all levels of activity, from VDC level up to central government. Given the importance of the findings of the IA and the changes under way in the social and political environment of Nepal, the DWD, the MWCSW and the sector development partners believed that the IA would play a crucial role for advocating for gender equality and mainstreaming. For this reason, ADB approved a minor change in implementation to support the printing of the IA for a wide distribution. DWD organized a full day workshop to share the IA findings with sector stakeholders.

Based on the IA, with the strategic intent of enhancing institutional capabilities, the TA facilitated DWD to develop a Human Resource Development Strategy, Human Resource Development Plan (HRDP), Professional Development Plan, and a Five-Year Training plan for the period of 2007-2011 for all levels of staff within DWD. Some training activities foreseen in the 5-year professional development plans that could not be carried out under the TA were to be carried over to the GEEOWP. Furthermore, the consultants submitted regularly quarterly progress reports, in addition to inception and final reports.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA was partially successful as it achieved the expected outcomes as per its TOR; however, the timeframe and resources were too short to build capacity sufficiently for the expected change by the TA means alone. DWD is still in need of building capacity activities to be able to carry out its new mandate. Despite the TA, DWD has continued to be the implementing arm of the MOWCSW, as this is the nature of the organization, rather than started acting as gender focal agency, reinforcing the skills built by the TA for the implementation of the GEEOWP. Furthermore, ADB approved another TA project with DWD as implementer, sending a conflicting message to DWD that ADB do not see the new mandate of gender focal agency as the way forward for DWD.

Major Lessons

The single most constraining factor to the full implementation of the TA was the fact that the TA had not funds under its control to conduct capacity building activities, as the training budget was largely relying on either DWD or GEEOWP funds. The approval processes for those funds made it difficult for the TA to carry activities out according to the original plan.

As for any appointment, counterpart technical staff assigned to a TA should have a clear job descriptions and TORs to avoid inefficiencies. Officially recognized TORs would give the counterpart staff the right authority on behalf of the EA to timely implement the project.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

The MWCSW and DWD need to develop a plan of action for implementing the recommendations of the IA with clear timelines and responsibilities. Such plan will not only provide a guide for accountability, but also will provide a means for seeking other development partners' support, as appropriate.