

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: EASS

TA No. and Name TA 4061 – PRC: Songhua River Water Quality and Pollution Control Management			Amount Approved: \$1,000,000	
			Revised Amount: \$1,005,000	
Executing Agency: Songliao River Basin Water Resources Protection Bureau	Source of Funding: Technical Assistance Special Fund (TASF)		TA Amount Undisbursed \$16,207	TA Amount Utilized \$988,793
Date			Completion Date	
Approval 19 December 2002	Signing 4 November 2003	Fielding of Consultants 30 June 2004 30 September 2005	Original 28 February 2004	Actual 31 March 2006
			Closing Date	
			Original 30 June 2006	Actual 23 November 2006
<p>Description Water pollution has been identified as a major constraint to the sustainable development of the economy of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Songhua River Basin (SRB) is one of the most polluted of the seven major rivers in the PRC. While several ongoing initiatives to control pollution emissions and improve SRB water quality have had some success in recent years, water quality in the Songhua River is continuously deteriorating. The goal of the technical assistance (TA) was to improve water quality in the SRB.</p> <p>Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs The objectives of the TA were to develop synergies of SRB clean-up initiatives and to promote local action through assisting and facilitating the Government in (i) addressing technical knowledge gaps; (ii) strengthening the capacity of the Songliao River Basin Water Resources Protection Bureau (WRPB), the Executing Agency of the TA, and other TA stakeholders for policy analysis and pollution control management in the SRB; and (iii) assisting the WRPB and other TA stakeholders to develop a long-term vision for pollution control in SRB. The TA was designed through extensive consultation with PRC stakeholders to meet the Government's river basin pollution control objectives.</p> <p>Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities Against 20 person-months (pm) of international consultants and 52 pm of national consultants planned, 20.5 pm and 77 pm respectively were actually provided. The quality of inputs was high and they were productively and efficiently converted into outputs. The consultants exhibited a high level of commitment and initiative, and demonstrated professional integrity, expertise and experience. The WRPB exhibited fully satisfactory performance, and a high level of commitment and responsibility, working in tandem with Asian Development Bank (ADB), steadily learning ADB practices, and advising and guiding the consultant.</p> <p>The three provincial project implementation units and three provincial liaison groups, the central level project leading group, academia, nongovernment organizations and external TA experts, all contributed to the work of the TA. Work plans were jointly updated by ADB and WRPB, and consultant personnel schedules were strictly observed. ADB efforts, guidance and performance were appreciated. From the start ADB maintained contact with the senior officials of all three SRB provinces, gathering government bodies and other stakeholders around the same table. That resulted in intense data collection and analysis, rounds of surveys and discussions, focus group meetings, including consultant visits to 20 of the SRB cities in all three provinces allowing for the broadest possible consultation. Innovative methods such as the use of the project web-site were used to sensitize stakeholders. The three ADB review missions each discussed the TA findings through formal workshops at central and interprovincial levels and through meetings with stakeholders.</p> <p>Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome The TA was very efficient in studying the complex issues of SRB water quality and pollution control management in depth, and contributed to the Government goal to develop a suitable river basin approach for managing water quality. The TA developed an innovative strategic action plan (SAP) that combined technical, investment and institutional planning; mapped short-term, medium-term and long-term responses; linked infrastructure investments to river basin management; built capacity; and improved governance. Technical data were collected and used to conduct in-depth analysis of the baseline conditions. The TA developed a geographic information system/database to aid in analysis. The system maps have been accepted as being of an exceptional quality and provide a useful future resource. Based on the existing inter-provincial leading group and river basin and provincial organizations, institutional and regulatory frameworks were improved and strengthened. WRPB was strengthened and realigned, and is functioning effectively. Clear roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders were established. Key actions and milestones were defined for the 11th Five-Year Program (FYP) period to consolidate the undertaken actions. The SRB institutional and regulatory mechanisms provide the blueprint for development of river basin management organizations in PRC.</p>				

The integrated water quality and pollution control plan is well developed and targeted, with achievable short- and long-term targets for SRB, and a horizon extended from 2015 to 2020 in line with Government requests. The TA defined a strategic SRB investment plan with a total estimated cost of about \$3.5 billion. The proposed investments are designed to significantly help to clean up SRB, provide a basis for sustainable growth of the economy in northeast (NE) PRC, and provide safe water supply to the basin's 62 million residents by 2015. This will translate in major health, quality of life and employment opportunity benefits to the region's poor. The immediate action plan (2006–2010) for about \$2 billion includes proposed external lending support of about \$1 billion.

The TA reports were produced efficiently, and within budget, with minor delays in submitting the interim report mainly due to delays in initial data collection. A presentation of initial TA results was made to ADB in Manila in May 2005. The draft final report results were made available to all TA stakeholders on schedule in early June 2005. By Government request, to coincide with the Government's decision-making process and to facilitate stakeholder participation and consultation, the TA completion date was extended from June 2005 to December 2005. Accordingly, two further rounds of discussions on the draft final report were conducted. The final report fully responded to comments and additional outputs requested by the Government during the inception mission, and ongoing water sector developments. The terms of reference were met, with a few minor exceptions. The overall environmental impact of enterprises was successfully identified, but the identification of the impact of specific enterprises was, on the advice of stakeholders, left for the investment stage. Second, the models of water quality and water use were adequately developed but it was agreed that the bench tests and piloting of specific technologies would be carried out at the investment stage. Third, it was agreed that the detailed analysis of the mitigation of risks from upstream pollution would be included in investment plans targeting specific localities.

The client was fully satisfied with the quality and timing of the outputs. The TA results have been widely disseminated and information campaigns initiated, including an international workshop on revitalization of NE PRC held in Harbin in January 2006. The Jilin Water Supply and Sewerage Development Project,¹ which was approved in 2005, and the Jilin Urban Infrastructure Project, which is proposed for inclusion in the forward lending program, are the first outcomes of the TA, being part of the immediate action plan. They are followed by a new project proposed for ADB financing covering Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA is recognized by PRC and the international community as highly relevant to the Government's needs and priorities, and as having produced highly satisfactory results and practical outputs, in line with the priorities of the 11th FYP. The participatory approach adopted proved to be highly successful. By establishing a solid framework for further investment, policy and governance reforms, and capacity building, the TA developed a strategic portfolio as the basis for future investments in NE PRC by ADB and other donors, and the private sector. The SRB strategy developed by the TA will help to stimulate and sustain the economies of the industrial belt of NE PRC, and is replicable in other river basins in the PRC. The TA is rated as highly successful.

Major Lessons Learned

Effective water resources management and pollution control are two critical challenges facing the PRC. Serving as the foundation for the water sector, river basins require appropriate institutional and legal frameworks to ensure that water resources are adequately protected and available for beneficial uses. Apart from the appropriate conceptual approach, TA work benefited from (i) reaching high level Government decision makers early on; (ii) tactful engagement of all stakeholders; (iii) working closely with the Government in identifying actual needs; (iv) solving local issues locally; and (v) hiring first class international and local consultants.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

It is recommended that the Government and ADB build on the outcomes of the TA by developing investment activities for pollution control in SRB, an environmental priority in the 11th FYP. It is also recommended to replicate the TA approach and the lessons learned more broadly for development of river basins in the PRC.

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¹ ADB. 2005. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors on a Proposed Loan to the People's Republic of China for the Jilin Water Supply and Sewerage Development Project*. Manila.