

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: EATC

TA No. Country and Name			Amount Approved: \$1,000,000.00	
TA 4322-PRC : Poverty Impact of Area-Wide Road Networks			Revised Amount:	
Executing Agency Ministry of Communications		Source of Funding Poverty Reduction Cooperation Fund	Amount Undisbursed: \$51,292.94	Amount Utilized: \$948,707.06
TA Approval 26 Mar 2004	TA Signing 31 May 2004	Fielding of First Consultant: 15 Nov 2004	TA Completion Date Original: 31 May 2005 Actual: 11 May 2007	
			Account Closing Date Original: 31 May 2005 Actual: 11 May 2007	
Description				
<p>In the People's Republic of China (PRC), key limitations in the planning system have slowed the improvement of physical access for the rural poor to economic opportunities and social services. These include (i) concentration on a single-project approach in planning national trunk highway development, with insufficient attention given to the overall development of an integrated road network; (ii) allocation of insufficient resources for the development and maintenance of rural roads; and, (iii) poor coordination between the agencies responsible for different parts of the road network. The TA sought to develop a new approach with the aim of optimizing the economic and poverty reduction benefits of road investments. The TA was directed at road planners, engineers and policy makers with responsibility for the identification and implementation of road projects within the Ministry of Communications (MOC), the executing agency (EA) of the TA and the key agency for ADB financed road projects.</p>				
Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs				
<p>The TA aims were to (i) improve the planning and operation of road network investments and operations in the PRC to benefit the poor and increase overall economic benefits through better linkage between expressways and local roads; (ii) help the Government prepare a road network strategy that promotes integrated network development; and (iii) provide road agencies with the cross-disciplinary skills and tools to incorporate all related issues in various stages of road project planning, implementation and operation. The TA was expected to (i) develop an integrated expressway and local road strategy, including recommendations on a funding mechanism for local roads; (ii) develop an improved feasibility study methodology and guidelines to improve the planning and selection of road network projects; (iii) develop a monitoring system and create a Transport Planning Unit (TPU) to strengthen interagency cooperation and coordination; and, (iv) pilot test the TA outputs in the context of a project proposed for ADB financing. The overall TA design was adequate for the intended purpose of helping decision makers and practitioners. The terms of reference (TOR) for the consultants reflected lessons learned from previous ADB involvement in the road sector.</p>				
Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities				
<p>The consultants showed strong commitment to meet the requirements of the TOR and to provide timely output. The MOC provided timely inputs to the consultants and participated efficiently in the organization of the TA activities. MOC has expressed satisfaction with the work of the consultants. The TA completion date was extended to support additional work that was requested by the Government to enhance the value of the TA. The TA work was completed within the available budget envelope. Regular review missions were fielded by ADB. Performance of both ADB and MOC, the EA, was satisfactory.</p>				
Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome¹				
<p>The TA sought to address key issues which were consistent with the PRC's priority needs and with ADB's country and sector strategies through promoting the construction of road networks that connect major growth centers and improve access for local communities. The TA took into account past lessons in the PRC and was adequately designed to achieve the intended objectives. However, the TOR included several elements that were not central to the main thrust of the TA and could probably have been omitted. The TA is rated as relevant.</p>				
<p>The TA involved a range of Government stakeholders, including (i) a project steering committee chaired by the Director General of the Comprehensive Planning Department of MOC and comprising members from other key Government agencies; (ii) a national experts committee formed to provide guidance to the consultants; and, (iii) a</p>				

¹ The performance of this TA was reviewed in the course of the preparation by OED of the Sector Assistance Program Evaluation of ADB Assistance for Roads and Railways in PRC (April 2007). This TCR draws extensively OED's earlier review.

project implementation unit. A Transport Planning Unit was also established comprising members from MOC and Guangxi Communications Department. The TA output was well received at several the levels of Government.

The TA was successful in developing a new feasibility study methodology, including an Area Wide Road Network Model (ANRM) and a computerized Integrated Information System (IIS), and a project monitoring system. The output of the TA was pilot tested on a project in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (Guangxi). This pilot test confirmed that the methodology developed under the TA can be applied in an operational context and is user-friendly. However, feedback from several provincial communication departments (PCDs) suggests a reluctance to adopt the methodology, given its requirements for the development of computerized information and project monitoring systems that may duplicate systems that already exist. ADB did not adopt the model for a subsequent PPTA for a road project in the same area as the pilot project under the TA. It seems unlikely that this TA will result in a wide-spread or lasting change in the methods adopted for road planning in PRC.

ADB was efficient in positioning the consultant effectively in the EA and in facilitating the completion of the TA. The consultant was efficient in delivering the outputs required under the TOR. However, the consultant has noted that efficiency would have been greater if some of the peripheral tasks included in the TOR had been omitted as these detracted from work on the main tasks. The TA is rated less efficient.

The output of the TA has received strong support from MOC and has been shown to be operationally useful. It has been promoted at a high profile workshop in Manila and at a Ministerial Conference in Beijing, and has been demonstrated to a wide audience of PCDs. However take-up by PCDs of the output for use in planning studies has been disappointing and ADB is not actively promoting its use in ongoing PPTAs. The sustainability of the TA is rated less likely.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA is rated as partly successful. The TA sought to address key issues which are relevant to the PRC's priority needs in road sector development. The TA was successful in promoting the need for integrated planning of the overall road network and for heightening awareness of the need for greater inter-agency coordination. The approaches developed under the TA are workable, user-friendly and supported at the level of MOC. However, ownership at the provincial level is limited and the TA outputs are not being actively promoted by ADB.

Major Lessons

Key lessons from the TA include: (i) the need to ensure that the TOR are clearly focused and do not include peripheral elements that might distract consultants from their primary tasks; (ii) the need to ensure that ownership of TA objectives and expected outputs is established among the full range of stakeholders at an early stage of TA design; and, (iii) closer, and more critical, monitoring within ADB of TA progress and outputs during TA implementation.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

The TA originated at a time when the prevailing thinking in ADB, and elsewhere, was that all road development projects should be shown to have a direct link to poverty reduction. Given this, the TA represented a credible attempt to strengthen the link between road investment and poverty reduction. Changes in thinking over the period since the TA was designed have now reduced the pressure for such direct links to be shown. Accordingly, follow-up action to promote the specific output of this TA is not recommended. However, ADB should continue to promote awareness of the need for road developments to be planned on a network basis and should continue to pursue efforts to become directly involved in providing support for the development of local roads in PRC.