

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: EASS

TA No., Country and Name		Amount Approved: \$300,000	
TA 4694-PRC: Urban Poverty Strategy Study II		Revised Amount: -	
Executing Agency: Development Research Center (DRC) of the State Council	Source of Funding: Poverty Reduction Cooperation Fund	Amount Undisbursed: \$51,228.52	Amount Utilized: \$248,771.48
TA Approval Date: 23 Nov 2005	TA Signing Date: 7 Feb 2006	Fielding of First Consultant(s): 2 September 2006	TA Completion Date Original: 30 Sep 2007 Actual: 31 Dec 2007 Account Closing Date Original: 30 Sep 2007 Actual: 21 May 2008

Description. This TA was a follow-up to TA 3377: Urban Poverty Study which calculated a poverty line for each province in the PRC and analyzed poverty from the perspective of inadequate resources in the form of income and expenditures. The TA built upon that research and focused on the multidimensionality of poverty for urban migrants and the forms of deprivation they face such as lack of access to education, health, housing, and employment. The TA was intended to facilitate the establishment of an urban antipoverty system focused on ensuring access to basic social services for migrant poor by: (i) collecting case study data and encouraging cross-ministerial collaboration to formulate government level responses, and (ii) producing a series of actionable recommendations to be submitted to the State Council by DRC on addressing the problem of access to basic public services by urban poor migrants.

Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs. The expected impact of the TA was to enhance access to social services by urban poor migrants and reduce urban poverty. The findings were to contribute to the creation of a national system of urban poverty alleviation and an integrated approach to resolving some of the systemic difficulties caused by large-scale rural-urban migrant flows.

The expected outcome of the TA was to produce a comprehensive set of policy and administrative reform recommendations that were to be submitted by the DRC to the State Council to enable the Government to further contribute to urban poverty alleviation. The policy recommendations report (PRR) was to reflect consensus among key ministries on actions to enhance access to public goods (education, health care, housing, and employment services) by poor urban migrants. Other related outcomes were to update the urban poverty situation and provide an innovative and practical methodology to identify poverty cities in the PRC. Two outputs were envisioned: a field studies report (FSR) and the PRR.

Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities It was planned that the TA would require 4 person-months of international and 19 person-months of national consultants. A slight reduction (.25 month) in national consultant time was made and agreed to in the inception report. An additional researcher/team administrative assistant was added to the team. The Director of Development Strategy and Regional Economy at DRC, the executing agency (EA), provided guidance throughout and participated in all activities.

The terms of reference (TOR) were clear, including detailed inputs and outputs. There was a slight revision in the methodology, including carrying out the field studies in three cities (Guangzhou, Xi'an, and Bozhou) instead of the two originally proposed, and the addition of a structured survey in six cities (Beijing, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Lanzhou, Xi'an, and Bozhou) covering 5,054 individuals. A qualitative methodology interviewing migrants on their informal coping strategies and views on access to services was dropped because of difficulties integrating the information. An inception and mid-term workshop were held with the team, select participants, and ADB to discuss the methodology and initial findings to ensure the expected TA outcome would be achieved.

Due to delays encountered by the team during implementation, the TA was extended by 3 months from September 2007 to 31 December 2007. Many of the delays in fielding the team were caused by poor communication and coordination. ADB and the EA attempted to address the situation during finalization of the TA by calling team meetings to promote collaboration, adding the executive summary document for the final workshop and an integrative overview with policy recommendations as a final output. The performance of the ADB and EA was satisfactory. The performance of the experts was generally satisfactory.

The opportunity for designing cross-institutional and coordinated policy recommendations, one of the envisioned outputs from the inception report, was partially compromised. The multi-sectoral steering committee outlined in the concept paper and TOR was not set up. Therefore a validated and integrated action plan for strategy and reform was not achieved and the stakeholder workshop was not held. Limited communication in the team and changes in the ADB task managers (a total of 4 during the TA) may have contributed to the delays and lack of prompt follow-up on deviations from the TOR. During the review mission in November 2007 it was agreed to design the final workshop so that some of the integration and verification of action plans could take place with stakeholders. The workshop was well received by all participants including Government stakeholders. A strong emphasis was made on the need for clear policy recommendations in the final report.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome. Two field reports were submitted and one was published by DRC in its internal publications. A summary report of key findings, policy recommendations, and presentations from each of the researchers were prepared in English and Chinese for the workshop which was held with simultaneous translation. DRC has prepared a Chinese version of the final report for internal circulation to decision makers and a summary article has been published in the Chinese journal REFORM (vol. 7, 2008). Several donors including UK Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and International Labor Organization (ILO) participated in the workshop and felt that the findings were useful and timely. Several requests for the report and survey methodology have been received. Participants in the three workshops included middle and senior level officials from ministries, academia, bilateral, and multilateral aid agencies. With the exception of the delays outlined in the previous section, the TA was conducted efficiently with use of local experts and costs kept to a minimum for the fieldwork and workshops.

The final report covers a wide range of information and has nine chapters addressing: (i) history of migration policy in the PRC, (ii) analysis of migrants and migration patterns, (iii) proposed framework for social profiling of cities, (iv) migrant workers and the urban labor market, (v) schooling of migrant children, (vi) migrant's housing, (vii) migrants' health and their health care, (viii) patterns of poverty and deprivation among migrants, and (ix) policy perspectives on migration. Some of the individual chapters are weaker than others due to lack of discussion and agreement within the consultant team on the key themes to be emphasized. The client was satisfied with the research findings and would like to make a series of policy notes from the individual chapters or publish the entire report. ADB is discussing with the EA how to achieve either option.

Overall Assessment and Rating. The TA is rated as partly successful. The final report contributes to the growing research on migrant workers and sources of vulnerability for urban poor in the PRC, identifies constraints in access to and use of services, and provides policy recommendations for each of the relevant sectors. The case studies from the fieldwork identify good practices at city and provincial government levels and the survey of 5,000+ migrants administered by the research team provides new and detailed information that can be further analyzed. The final workshop was well attended. The format of having key experts from government and academia evaluate the inputs from the individual researchers was extremely useful and added information regarding new research findings and stakeholder plans. However, the consultant team did not produce one of the main outputs of the TA, namely the PRR which was meant to present a consensus on a comprehensive framework for strategy and reform. The failure to translate the research findings into solid policy recommendations validated in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and build an integrated response to the identified needs and specific action plans for reform, as envisioned in the original TA paper and TOR for the team, reduced the direct impact of the research effort.

Major Lessons

Responding to policy shifts. This TA built on the findings of TA 3377: Urban Poverty Study. Several of the researchers had participated in the first study, and were able to bring a rich background of knowledge and contacts to this TA. At the same time, the pace of policy reform in the PRC on these issues has been very rapid and important changes in the labor market have come about. Even during the time of research and writing, many policy changes addressing issues such as minimum wages and access to education for migrants were enacted. It was a challenge for the team to identify and keep up with all of the shifts, especially those happening within local governments.

Coordination of stakeholders. Carrying out the ambitious process designed in the TA paper of multisectoral consultation and integration of strategy and reform required an effective coordination mechanism for the steering committee and leadership. The specific mechanism and responsible parties for leadership were not outlined in the inception report.

Coordination with other relevant TA. At the same time as this TA, EASS has been managing Employment Services for Rural Migrants (TA-4858). Consultants from the two teams participated in the workshops of the other although coordination between the TA's in sharing national data could have been improved.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions. There was strong interest in having the results of the report available as a publication in Chinese and English. The report published under TA 3377-PRC has proven to be a basic resource for urban poverty issues in the PRC and this TA adds a great deal of information to migration issues which are at the top of the policy agenda for both national and local governments. Other smaller knowledge products such as short policy notes could be written by EASS from the chapters of the report and published in collaboration with DRC. A round-table discussion bringing together some of the donors currently funding other research and programs on migrants and policy makers in the PRC could be organized. EASS is in the final stages of preparing another project—Improvement of Public Employment Service System in the Western Region. It will be important to have suitable materials from both TA 4694 and TA 4858 disseminated to ensure that future efforts by ADB in this area build on the work and knowledge that has already been accomplished.

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