

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: MKOC

TA No. and Name: 5693 – REG: Promoting Subregional Cooperation Among Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam (Phase III)		Amount Approved: \$3, 000,000.00 Revised Amount:											
Executing Agency: ADB	Source of Funding: Japan Special Fund	TA Amount Undisbursed \$534.27	TA Amount Utilized \$2,999,465.73										
Date <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Approval</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Signing</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Fielding of Consultants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23 July 1996</td> <td>23 July 1996</td> <td>August 1996</td> </tr> </table>		Approval	Signing	Fielding of Consultants	23 July 1996	23 July 1996	August 1996	Completion Date <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Original</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Actual</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31 August 1999</td> <td>15 May 2005</td> </tr> </table>		Original	Actual	31 August 1999	15 May 2005
Approval	Signing	Fielding of Consultants											
23 July 1996	23 July 1996	August 1996											
Original	Actual												
31 August 1999	15 May 2005												
		Closing Date <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Original</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Actual</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31 August 1999</td> <td>3 November 2005</td> </tr> </table>		Original	Actual	31 August 1999	3 November 2005						
Original	Actual												
31 August 1999	3 November 2005												
<p>Description: The RETA was to strengthen the basis for sustained subregional economic cooperation. It also sought to strengthen institutional arrangements and capacities to promote, facilitate, and support mutually beneficial economic cooperation among Cambodia, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam.</p> <p>Objectives and Scope: To assist the participating countries in: (i) preparing and coordinating the implementation of priority subregional projects; (ii) building the necessary subregional institutional capacity for effective project implementation and for sustaining subregional cooperation in the long term; (iii) mobilizing external resources for subregional development, including the structuring of subregional projects to facilitate public-private partnerships; (iv) building intersectoral linkages to help address broader development concerns; and (v) developing effective linkages between subregional cooperation and domestic policies and programs. Its scope included support to subregional consultative mechanisms at the ministerial and sectoral levels, organization of regional workshops and conferences, identification and preparation of subregional programs/projects, and policy analysis and programs/project assessment.</p> <p>Evaluation of Inputs: The RETA provided the resources critical to supporting the GMS institutional mechanism. The designation of National Coordinators under the previous RETA (Phase II) had provided an effective means for program coordination by the GMS countries, through increasing their capacity to coordinate, monitor, and conduct GMS activities. The RETA provided support to enable the offices of the GMS National Coordinators to function more effectively. The consultants that were recruited had the required experience and expertise to support the GMS forums and meetings. The sector experts engaged to conduct the sector studies also performed well and assisted in defining the strategic initiatives that spurred the GMS Program from planning/conceptualization to implementation. The GMS Program secretariat facilitated coordination among the various departments and offices of the Bank and with the GMS countries. The GMS countries were extensively consulted in the planning and implementation of the various GMS forums and other activities.</p> <p>Evaluation of Outputs: The outputs were strategically important in the process of building the momentum for the implementation phase of the GMS Program, which was the major focus of the RETA. Another major output was the preparation of a draft long-term strategic framework for the GMS Program. As a result, the GMS countries agreed to: (i) pursue high priority subregional projects identified for early implementation; (ii) consider the draft of the framework agreement on the Cross-Border Transport Agreement on the Movement of Goods and People in the GMS; and (iii) adopt clearer directions for subregional power trade, including establishment of a power trade framework. Furthermore, the RETA facilitated the identification of new high priority projects/initiatives in the GMS working groups and these were subsequently followed by project preparatory work. Innovations were introduced at the 7th GMS Ministerial Conference organized under this RETA to initiate the coordination process with the donor community and to discuss mechanisms for private sector participation in the GMS Program. The RETA also funded a study on telecommunications sector reform. Meetings were effectively organized including: (i) ministerial level subregional conferences, (ii) sector working groups/fora; (iii) country consultations and training activities in the 9 GMS priority sectors; and (iv) special studies covering subregional intersectoral linkages.</p> <p>The delay in the TA completion was due to the scope and complexity of the activities covered by the TA and because of the delayed submission of final claims and documentation required to close the TA account.</p>													

Overall Assessment and Rating: Overall, the TA is assessed to have been successful. The RETA's objectives have been achieved and the envisioned outputs were delivered. The RETA was a major factor in the strengthening of the process of subregional cooperation in the GMS. This is reflected in the substantial agreements reached among the member countries and in the progress of work in the priority sectors of cooperation.

Major Lessons Learned. Among the significant lessons learned are: (i) the importance of strong ownership by member country governments and close coordination with them in advancing regional cooperation initiatives; (ii) the importance of the active participation of other donor agencies, civil society, and the private sector in the subregional cooperation process and its implementation; (iii) the need for strong secretariat support for designing, organizing and coordinating subregional cooperation activities; and (iv) the need for effective coordination within ADB so that ADB can effectively perform its role as lead development partner and facilitator of the GMS program.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions: The key follow-up actions required include the need to: (i) continue to strengthen the GMS institutional mechanisms; and (ii) continue to secure the participation of a broader range of development partners in the GMS Program to help accelerate its implementation.

Prepared by Jacques M. Ferreira

Designation Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, MKOC