

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: Social Sectors Division, Central and West Asia Department

TA No., Country and Name		Amount Approved: \$ 350,000.00	
TA 6177-REG : Mainstreaming Gender into Poverty Reduction Strategies in Four Central Asian Republics		Revised Amount: \$350,000.00	
Executing Agency Asian Development Bank	Source of Funding Netherland National Poverty Reduction Fund (NPRS)	Amount Undisbursed: \$ 34,086.17	Amount Utilized: \$ 315,913.83
TA Approval Date: 14 July 2004	TA Signing Date: N/A	Fielding of First Consultant(s): September 2004	TA Completion Date Original: 31 March 2005 Actual: 30 September 2006 Account Closing Date Original: 30 September 2005 Actual: 31 January 2007
Description			
<p>The transition from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) to the independence generated in the Central Asian Republics (CARs) a significant fall in living standards for most of the population. The transition has affected both men and women with impacts on growing rates of poverty, unemployment and weakening of social support and social services. The economic and social costs of the transition, however, weighed more heavily on women. To prevent further deterioration of women's social and economic status, protect families, and promote gender equity, the governments of the CARs have developed national Gender and Development (GAD) policies in line with the Millennium Development Goals and National Poverty Reduction Strategies (NPRSs). In support, and to help strengthen GAD policies at the local level, ADB has been integrating gender issues into its policy dialogue, projects, and programs. This approach has increased ADB's responsiveness to country gender conditions and commitments, improving the alignment of ADB policies, processes, and resources to forward GAD objectives. The TA covered four countries: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan.</p>			
Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs			
<p>The TA aimed at contributing to the goal of poverty reduction in four selected CARs by helping governments identify key gender issues related to poverty reduction, and to strengthen their capacity to implement GAD policies. Key outputs of the TA included: (i) country level assessments of the gender dimensions of poverty; (ii) development of strategic interventions including those for potential ADB financing; (iii) improved capacity of participating governments to monitor and evaluate gender impacts and poverty reduction strategies, and (iv) strategic papers on gender.</p>			
Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities:			
<p>The TA covered the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Country Gender Assessment (CGA) paper was prepared in a participatory manner in each country, focusing on understanding and documenting the differences in gender roles, activities, needs, and opportunities. The GA (i) assessed policies, priorities, legal and regulatory frameworks, institutional arrangements for implementing gender and development goals at the country level; (ii) reviewed gender dimensions of ADB's portfolio of ongoing projects in the country; and (iii) recommended a set of gender-responsive priority policy and operational interventions that are important for poverty reduction. • National and regional workshops were held, which provided opportunities for dialogue, cross-country sharing of experiences and lessons, and exchange of strategies in integrating gender in the NPRS and the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS). • The national women's committee in each country was identified as the focal point for the TA during fact-finding in April/May 2004. 			
<p>Consultants were engaged to implement the TA in partnership with focal points in each country. International gender and poverty reduction specialists and domestic consultants in gender and participatory development were individually selected. The total inputs of consulting services were adequate for achieving the TA objectives. The international consultants had extensive experiences in gender and poverty while the domestic consultants had in-depth knowledge of gender and participatory development in each country. Overall performance of the international consultants was rated as excellent while the domestic consultants were rated satisfactory. The consultants began field work on 1 September 2004 and the TA was completed on 30 September 2006.</p>			

The original timeframe for TA implementation was of 9 months from July 2004 to March 2005. However, the implementation period was underestimated and required the extension of the TA due to: (i) the time required to find experienced international and domestic consultants and finalize their recruitment; (ii) the review of documents and the collection of data to draft the country report at a satisfactory level; (iii) the demand from the stakeholder to translate the four CGAs in local language; and (iv) the time required to complete and edit the synthesis report. These factors could have been taken into consideration already during project design, leading to better management of TA and greater impact. Focal points in each country were highly active in the TA design and implementation. Focal points provided overall 8 counterpart staff during the TA implementation. Under the TA, one set of computer and printer was provided to each focal point, based on a need assessment conducted by the consultants and the counterpart staff.

The performance of four focal points was highly satisfactory. ADB, with a team approach including headquarters and resident missions staff, provided guidance and carried out a review mission to participate in the regional workshop and discuss preparation of draft country gender assessment and synthesis reports. Funds from the Multi Donor GAD Fund were provided to invite stakeholders from other East and Central Asian countries, Mongolia, the People Republic of China, and Uzbekistan to attend the required workshop. This enabled them to share similar challenges and opportunities for gender mainstreaming in poverty reduction programming.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome

The TA achieved its stated outputs. It produced four reports (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan), each summarizing (i) outcomes achieved at country level, and (ii) recommendations for mainstreaming gender in planning, implementing, and monitoring the NPRS and national development programs. The results summarized in the report derived both from the national consultation process and the regional workshop, which increased awareness and capacity at national and regional levels. The impact of the RETA varies among countries. In Kazakhstan the TA failed to achieve the expected quality and hence didn't lead to a substantial contribution to the policy work in the sector. In the other countries the governments appreciated the RETA results and those were considered for further work in gender. Reports were distributed to ADB management and staff.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA was generally successful. It produced the outputs described in the TA report at an acceptable level of quality. The TA proved to be an excellent mechanism for mainstreaming gender into poverty reduction strategy in the CARs. It also contributed to developing gender capacity in each focal point and mainstreaming ADB policy on gender and development in developing member countries (DMCs). Impact would have been greater if the RETA would have been delivered within the original timeframe. Savings could have been used to advertise and promote findings and recommendations at country, regional and international levels, and to strengthen activities under the TA.

Major Lessons

The high level of involvement of the national focal points was one of the key factors ensuring smooth implementation of the TA. The participation of local focal points in TA activities directly and indirectly built and enhanced capacity at the local level. Greater impact could have been achieved with a more attentive project design, especially in relation to time and resources allocation.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

The absence of reliable information on baseline gender differentials and on the gender impacts of policies and reforms emerged as a key obstacle to carrying out the TA and has been recognized as a problem by participating DMCs. The CARs lack both adequate information and the capacity for its evaluation. The effectiveness of any attempt to reduce gender inequalities and to mainstream gender analysis in national development strategies will depend on strengthening the data and analytical capacity of governments. Systematic attempts, therefore, should be made to build local capacity for collecting and assessing information on gender issues, monitoring trends in the country and region, and feeding the results into policy making. The CGAs will support the preparation of CPSs and projects in the participating countries, in particular it is recommended that CWRD projects include (i) detailed social and gender analysis, (ii) development of a gender action plan or gender strategy, (iii) capacity building related to gender, (iv) involvement of women nongovernment organizations, and (v) monitoring key gender gaps. It is recommended to undertake actions to promote the use of information available in the CGAs at CWRD level.