

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: CWID

TA No., Country and Name		Amount Approved: \$650,000	
TA 6294-REG: Facilitation of Transport Cooperation among Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Countries (Phase I)		Revised Amount: \$650,000	
Executing Agency Asian Development Bank	Source of Funding Japan Special Fund	Amount Undisbursed: \$82,714.79	Amount Utilized: \$567,285.21
TA Approval Date: 21 December 2005	TA Signing Date: Not applicable	Fielding of First Consultant: 22 May 2006	TA Completion Date Original: 31 December 2007 Actual: 30 June 2008 Account Closing Date Original: 31 December 2007 Actual: 16 October 2008
Description			
<p>Transport is one of the priority areas under the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program because regional cooperation in transport is essential to linking the landlocked countries of Central Asia to neighboring countries and facilitating efficient cross-border movement of goods and people. The CAREC Transport Sector Coordinating Committee (TSCC) was established in 2004 to coordinate issues and activities relating to regional cooperation in the transport sector. At the 3rd TSCC meeting in March 2005, the CAREC Regional Transport Sector Road Map (2005–2010) was developed to provide overall guidance on regional cooperation activities in transport. The Road Map aimed to develop an integrated and efficient transport system in the CAREC region.</p> <p>In accordance with ongoing efforts in support for transport cooperation among CAREC countries, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) included this regional technical assistance (RETA) in the 2005 program of the CAREC Strategy and Program Update (2006–2008). The TA proposal was presented at the 4th TSCC meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic on 12–13 October 2005 and received endorsement of the participants.</p>			
Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs			
<p>The expected impact of the RETA was facilitation of transport cooperation among CAREC countries to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic development in the region. The expected outcome of the RETA was (i) the functioning of the TSCC as an effective mechanism for planning, coordination, and monitoring of transport cooperation activities among CAREC countries; and (ii) pre-feasibility studies on developing and improving three regional transport corridors: (a) the Bishkek–Torugart–Kashi road linking the Kyrgyz Republic to the People’s Republic of China (PRC), (b) the Oybek–Pungan road in Tajikistan, and (c) the Angren–Gulistan road in Uzbekistan. The expected outputs of the RETA included (i) a pre-feasibility study report on developing and improving the three transport corridors, and (ii) effective functioning of the TSCC in coordinating transport cooperation activities among CAREC countries during 2006–2007.</p>			
Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities			
<p>The TA was designed in line with the CAREC Regional Transport Road Map (2005–2010) and ADB’s CAREC Regional Cooperation Strategy and Program. The terms of reference for consultants were properly prepared and covered all the required tasks.</p> <p>Pre-feasibility Study. The pre-feasibility study was undertaken by a consulting firm (Dainichi Consultant Inc., Japan). A total of 24.75 person-months of consulting services (12.5 person-months for international and 12.25 person-months for national) were utilized, compared with the estimated 26 person-months (13 person-months for international and 13 person-months for national) in the TA Report. As the Government of Tajikistan changed its priority, the originally proposed Oybek–Pungan road in Tajikistan was replaced by the Dushanbe–Tursunzade road in the pre-feasibility study. The consultant’s performance was satisfactory. The consultants commenced services in May 2006 and completed services in January 2007. The consultants submitted the draft pre-feasibility study report in October 2006 and the final pre-feasibility study report in March 2007. The findings of the pre-feasibility study were presented at the 7th TSCC meeting held in Manila, Philippines on 4–5 July 2007, and the pre-feasibility study report was disclosed to the public on ADB’s CAREC website.</p> <p>Support for the Transport Sector Coordinating Committee. With support of the RETA, four TSCC meetings were successfully conducted. The Fifth and Sixth TSCC meetings were held in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, PRC on 15–16 March and 24–25 August 2006, respectively. The Seventh TSCC meeting was held at ADB</p>			

headquarters in Manila, Philippines on 3–5 July 2007. In addition, the RETA financed the cost of the 3rd Regional Consultation Workshop on CAREC Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on 30–31 January 2008. A national consultant was engaged for 27 person-months (against the estimated 24 person-months) to assist in the TSCC secretariat, including the preparation of the four TSCC meetings.

The performance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as the executing agency was satisfactory in managing the implementation of the RETA. Two missions were fielded: (i) the TA Inception Mission undertaken on 22–24 June 2006 provided overall guidance to the consultants on the undertaking of the pre-feasibility study, and (ii) the TA Review Mission undertaken on 19–25 October 2006 participated in the tripartite meetings and discussed the draft pre-feasibility study report with the consultant team leader and all relevant government agencies in the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

The RETA was originally envisaged to be completed by 31 December 2006, but the closing date was extended to 30 June 2008 to enable continued funding of the national consultant engaged for TSCC secretariat to help prepare and conduct the joint TSCC–Customs Cooperation Committee meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan in June 2008.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome

The expected outcome of the RETA was achieved. The pre-feasibility study report prepared by the consultants was in good quality. It covered the engineering, economic, environmental, social, poverty, and cross-border assessments of the three selected roads: (i) the Bishkek-Torugart road, (ii) the Angren–Gulistan road, and (iii) the Dushanbe–Tursunzade road. The findings of the pre-feasibility study were well received at the 7th TSCC Meeting in July 2007, and provided a good basis for preparing investment projects and formulating ADB's assistance program for the transport sector in CAREC region. ADB has approved a technical assistance grant for preparing the CAREC Corridor III (Dushanbe–Uzbekistan border road) project and is processing a loan for the CAREC Corridor I (Bishkek–Torugart road) Project for approval in 2008. Based on the pre-feasibility study, the Government of Uzbekistan has financed the improvement of the Angren–Gulistan road from its budget.

With support from the RETA, TSCC has become an effective mechanism for planning, coordination, and monitoring of transport cooperation activities among CAREC countries. The three TSCC meetings and the 3rd Regional Consultation Workshop, which were financed from the RETA, achieved the expected results. The most important output achieved by TSCC was the development of the CAREC Regional Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy (TTFS), which was endorsed by the 6th Ministerial Conference in Dushanbe, Tajikistan in November 2007 and the Implementation Action Plan for TTFS that has been submitted for consideration by the 7th Ministerial Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2008. The TTFS identifies six major corridors in the CAREC region and the Implementation Action Plan prioritizes 127 investment and technical assistance projects with a total amount of about \$21 billion for improving the six corridors during 2008–2017.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The RETA was highly successful in facilitating transport cooperation among CAREC countries through effective supporting to the TSCC and financing for the pre-feasibility study on improvement of the three selected regional roads.

Major Lessons

Regional cooperation is a long and complex initiative, so implementation of a regional project usually takes longer time than that of a national project. For example, substantial time was required for organizing TSCC meetings and liquidating the expenses of TSCC meetings under the RETA, since eight CAREC participating countries and concerned resident missions were involved. An adequate implementation period needs to be given for a regional technical assistance project to fulfill its expected outcome and outputs.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

It is recommended that ADB continue to extend financial and technical assistance to the CAREC Transport Sector Coordinating Committee to achieve more tangible results of regional cooperation in the transport sector.