

TA COMPLETION REPORT

Division : ENVD

TA NO./NAME: TA 5878-REG: Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Mountain Development in Central Asia				TA AMOUNT APPROVED: \$380,000	
				REVISED AMOUNT: --	
EXECUTING AGENCY: Asian Development Bank (ADB)		FUND SOURCE: TASF and Government of Switzerland		TA AMOUNT UNDISBURSED: \$172,624.78	TA AMOUNT UTILIZED: \$207,375.22
REPORT DATE: 19 December 2001	APPROVAL DATE: 16 December 1999	SIGNING DATE: 5 June 2000	CONSULTANT FIELDING DATE: 1 July 2000	CLOSING : ORIGINAL: 31 July 2001 ACTUAL: 31 December 2001	

TA DESCRIPTION (Background/Rationale)

In 1998 the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) sponsored a meeting of the national academies of sciences of the five Central Asian Republics (CARs) to discuss issues related to mountain development. Subsequently, through an initiative of the Kyrgyz Republic, the United Nations proclaimed 2002 as the "International Year of the Mountains." This initiative was supported by the CARs and the People's Republic of China (PRC).

A second meeting of the national academies of sciences of the five CARs, organized by the Kyrgyz National Academy of Sciences, was held from 10 to 13 May 1999 to discuss cooperation on issues related to mountain development. An important result of the second was formation of the Central Asian Mountain Information Network (CAMIN) to further regional cooperation on mountain development. Through studying mountain agroecosystems and resource management practices, and assisting in the formulation of regional implementing strategies, the TA was to support the regional cooperation for sustainable mountain development in Central Asia.

TA OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The broad goal of the TA was to stimulate regional cooperation in sustainable development in mountain areas of Central Asia and Xinjiang. The immediate objective was to obtain agreement on a regional approach to sustainable mountain development. The tools to achieve the objective were (i) establishing a mechanism to share data and information on mountain ecosystems and management practices in the CARs and the adjacent region of the PRC, (ii) analyzing existing information on these systems and practices to assess their sustainability, (iii) preparing recommendations on approaches to sustainable management of mountain agroecosystems and natural resources, and (iv) developing a regional approach to promote sustainable mountain resource management practices. The design of the TA appeared appropriate.

The TA had two components. The first was compilation and sharing of data and information on mountain agroecosystems and natural resource management practices. The second was a workshop in which the findings and recommendations of the study were presented and discussed with national policy makers. Recommendations for possible regional cooperative actions were to be prepared.

TA INPUTS EVALUATION

A team of international and domestic consultants implemented the TA from July 2000 to July 2001. The total consultants' input was 7.5 person-months international, and 30 person-months domestic. The consultants' performance was fully satisfactory, and complied with the terms of reference. The TA was completed in schedule, which was important to get the outcome facilitate the preparations for 2002 as a UN year of mountains. ADB performed appropriately as an executing agency.

In each country, a group of experienced scientists was established. They all worked hard, although no compensation was paid to them under the TA. Finally, an important input was given by those government officials and politicians, who attended the final workshops together with the scientists. As there was another ongoing RETA financed by ADB, to establish a regional environmental action plan for Central Asia, the focal persons were regularly invited to attend the meetings of the other team. The projects exchanged some inputs, and remained well coordinated without an overlap. At the end, the equipment purchased for this mountain RETA were surrendered to the Regional Environmental Center (REC). Under that international umbrella organization the achievements may sustain as a permanent activity.

TA OUTPUTS EVALUATION

The approach designed as a regional cooperation for sustainable development of mountain areas was agreed. An information and technology communication system on mountain development was established and shared. For each of the six participating countries, a national plan for sustainable development was prepared. A summary report was prepared, and recommendations agreed, in an international one-week workshop. In addition to the ordinary copies of the final report, a significant number of ROM diskettes were made available to the counterparts and to the involved NGOs and donor organizations.

Institutional capacity of the participating countries to handle the issues related to mountain ecosystems was increased, as well as willingness to share information and technology. As mountain ecosystems are one of the permanent concerns in the CARs, the TA also contributed to the regional environmental planning. By the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, which provided TA office, the TA was taken as a contribution to the national preparations for the 2002 year of mountains. The information system CAMIN and other cooperation arrangements appear sustainable (for example branch office of REC in Bishkek).

TA OVERALL ASSESSMENT/RATING

The TA is considered successful. All items of the TOR were implemented in a professional and timely manner, and in accordance with the budget. For some reason, the cooperation with ICIMOD remained thin. The other organizations that developed strongest commitment and ownership to the activity during the implementation might maintain the important mountain development. Generally, all the main objectives were achieved.

MAJOR LESSONS LEARNED

The main lesson to learn was that there was a huge demand of issues to be addressed, related to the mountain ecosystems, which could not all be covered by the TA. An example is the possible linkage to poverty. There are millions of more or less tribal vulnerable people, who make their living from the sensitive mountain ecosystem. Another area, which might require continuous attention, is the water resources in international context. A positive lesson was the willingness of local scientist to contribute without a compensation.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It may be understandable that further support is needed to help the new information system develop further. The next annual reports, if issued as expected, might verify the viability of the activity. A follow-up is recommended annually for a couple of years.

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