

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT**

**Division: MKOC**

<b>TA No. and Name:</b> 5886 – REG: Technical Assistance for Promoting Subregional Cooperation Among Cambodia, People’s Republic of China, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam (Phase IV-1)			<b>Amount Approved:</b> \$800,000	
			<b>Revised Amount:</b>	
<b>Executing Agency:</b> Asian Development Bank	<b>Source of Funding:</b> Japan Special Fund		<b>TA Amount Undisbursed</b> \$19,971.20	<b>TA Amount Utilized</b> \$780,028.80
<b>Approval</b>  22 Dec 1999	<b>Date Signing</b>  N/A	<b>Fielding of Consultants</b>  Feb 2000	<b>Completion Date</b>	
			<b>Original</b> 31 Dec 2000	<b>Actual</b> 31 Oct 2003
			<b>Original</b> 30 Jun 2000	<b>Actual</b> 14 Jun 2005
<p><b>Description:</b> The regional technical assistance (RETA) aimed at contributing to the GMS Program’s overall goal of promoting, facilitating, and supporting mutually beneficial economic cooperation among Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, and PRC.</p>				
<p><b>Objectives and Scope:</b> The RETA’s specific objectives were to: (i) provide support to the GMS countries to accelerate the implementation of priority subregional projects and activities; and (ii) help the GMS countries to participate more effectively in subregional cooperation by strengthening institutional mechanisms for program management and national capacity for subregional planning, coordination, and implementation. The TA provided the mechanism and the required technical support to various GMS forums and working groups to accelerate the implementation of priority subregional projects and activities consistent with their work program.</p>				
<p><b>Evaluation of Inputs:</b> The RETA provided the technical and logistical inputs to help the GMS countries plan and accelerate the implementation of priority projects, including the preparation of a work program and the continuation of the work on the GMS Strategic Framework initiated previously. Consultants engaged to support the GMS working groups, forums and major meetings and to prepare the proposed work plans and strategy had the necessary expertise and experience. Consultations and coordination were conducted efficiently with the GMS country National Coordinators and with the various departments/offices within ADB.</p>				
<p><b>Evaluation of Outputs:</b> The RETA facilitated required coordination and planning work in the GMS working groups and forums toward the implementation of priority sector projects, including: (i) the Pre-Investment study on the East West Economic Corridor; (ii) detailed aspects of the agreement for the facilitation of the cross-border movement of goods and people; (iii) the preparation of the regional indicative master plan for the power sector, the conduct of discussions on technical issues and a possible agreement on power trade; (iv) project preparation work for a package of subregional tourism projects; (v) project development for HIV/AIDS prevention and control; and (vi) coming to an agreement on a strategic environmental framework (most of these projects were covered by separate TAs or PPTAs, but the subject RETA was the instrument by which they were identified and initiated). Another undertaking under the RETA which helped provide clearer</p>				

directions for the GMS Program was the formulation of a proposed GMS Assistance Program (AP) for the Bank, which set down the subregional, as distinguished from national, projects and activities that the Bank would help finance . In addition, and to form the basis for the GMS AP, a long term Strategic Framework for the GMS Program was also prepared. The key issues and challenges facing the Program as well as its strategic thrusts were identified in close consultation with the governments of the GMS countries, the donor community, the private sector, and other stakeholders. The RETA also facilitated efforts toward closer engagement of the private sector in GMS Program activities, particularly with the launching of the GMS Business Forum in October 2000.

**Overall Assessment and Rating:** Overall, the RETA is assessed to have been successful as its objectives were achieved and the envisioned outputs were delivered. It contributed to significantly strengthening the process of subregional cooperation in the GMS. The substantive work in the various GMS sector working groups and forums has significantly progressed and the formulation and preparatory work toward the implementation of various agreements have proceeded at a satisfactory pace. However, RETA closing was delayed because (i) emerging needs within the objectives of the RETA had to be addressed; and (ii) because of delayed submission of final claims and documentation by some of the consultants.

**Major Lessons Learned.** Significant lessons learned are: (i) the importance of having clear strategic directions to guide the Program's activities in the medium-to-long term and to ensure its sustainability; (ii) the importance of focusing the Program on a manageable number of priority projects and activities to ensure that limited technical and financial resources are used efficiently and effectively; and (iii) the need for stronger linkages and coordination between country programs and the subregional programs. The RETA acted as a facility to address the emerging needs of an evolving GMS structure. The built-in flexibility in the design of this RETA was critical in ensuring that the GMS program remained relevant and responsive as it was able to provide timely and appropriate interventions according to new demands. However, this delayed closing of the RETA. In this regard, assignment of a GMS Analyst was requested to allow better monitoring and accomplishment of TA administration requirements.

**Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions:** The following follow-up action are therefore recommended: (i) accelerate the implementation of the priority undertakings identified under previous RETAs and the sector studies; (ii) identify additional specific projects to carry out the strategic thrusts of the Program; (iii) review and strengthen the GMS institutional mechanisms; and (v) broaden the involvement of the donor community and the private sector in the GMS Program.

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