

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: PAHQ

TA No. and Name TA 4794-RMI: Pilot Collaborative Public Services Delivery		Amount Approved: \$250,000	
		Revised Amount:	
Executing Agency: RMI Office of the Chief Secretary	Source of Funding: ADB TASF	Amount Undisbursed \$46,698.24	Amount Utilized \$203,301.76
Date of Report: December 2003		TA Completion Date	
Approval 30 May 2006	Signing 07 June 2006	Fielding of Consultants 12 April 2006	Original 31 May 2007
			Actual 31 May 2008
		Account Closing Date Original 31 May 2007	Actual 29 October 2008
<b>Description</b>			
<p>Since 1996, ADB has been helping the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) to improve public sector efficiency and effectiveness. In 2005, two technical assistance (TA) projects were introduced to help in this regard by boosting public ownership of the education system thereby increasing the demand for a more effective education and assessing the feasibility of a youth social service project. Another TA project provided advisory services for policy making related to the amended Compact of Free Association and for medium-term budgeting facilitated by the Economic Policy, Planning and Statistical Office (EPPSO) under the Office of the President. The RMI is also participating in a regional TA project to institutionalize civil-society participation in poverty reduction. In line with the above TA projects, TA 4794 was planned and designed to improve public sector efficiency and effectiveness through public sector personnel audits with community involvement. ADB fact-finding missions visited RMI in May and November 2005 to assess the viability of these TA projects.</p> <p>The missions reconfirmed that the RMI faces high unemployment and population growth as a result of the country's inability to keep pace with the demand for education, social services, and jobs. The rapid shift to a modern economy has weakened traditional support structures and transformed social norms, leaving many youths trapped between cultures, increasing the likelihood of making undesirable choices with respect to lifestyle, sexual behavior, and drug use. Provision of quality education at all levels is one of the key policy options to tackle youth related problems in RMI. The government and ADB reached an understanding on implementing the captioned TA Project: Pilot Collaborative Public Services Delivery in selected schools.</p> <p><b>Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs</b></p> <p>The TA focused on developing and applying the methodology for: (i) personnel performance audits among teachers and school principals, and (ii) youth-at-risk service delivery in coordination with the National Training Council (NTC). The TA was designed to achieve the following impacts: (i) the collaborative design and society-endorsed delivery of initial pilot Ministry of Education (MOE) personnel performance audits leading to improved employee productivity, and (ii) more effective delivery of youth-at-risk welfare services through continued out-sourcing to civil society organizations. The following are the expected outcomes of the TAs: (i) a measurable improvement in the quality and quantity of education and youth service providers, and (ii) the decision by MOE and other government offices to introduce similar performance audit systems.</p> <p><b>Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities</b></p> <p>The TA required a total of 9 person-months of international consulting services. No domestic consultants were hired as the MOE provided all the required services. In consultation with the GRMI and ADB, the international consultants visited RMI nine times and held consultative meetings to collect data on assessments of education sector and training needs of education sector personnel. The following activities were undertaken: (i) development of personnel performance audit methodology in consultation with Public Service Commission (PSC), the Office of Chief Secretary, and MOE, (ii) endorsement of personnel performance audit methodology by the Cabinet, (iii) training of RMI staff in personnel performance audit methodology, (iv) introduction of personnel performance audit in MOE, and (v) revision of additional improved personnel performance audit in MOE.</p> <p><b>Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome</b></p> <p>Major achievements of the activities were outlined as follows: (i) 11 Schools, including 5 elementary schools, 1 middle school and 5 high schools, have introduced performance audit systems and the first performance evaluations were conducted by 56 teachers and school principals, (ii) NTC introduced the youth-at-risk program which provides a special implementation program to vulnerable children and youth, and some 400 people utilized these services, (iii) a public service stakeholder interest group has been formed and meetings have been arranged on a bimonthly basis to develop a strategy on NTC, (iv) NTC offers 35 new training courses to youths, and (v) the NTC strategic planning document has developed and is being used as a reference for the ongoing NTC activities. Above outcomes were rated as satisfactory.</p>			

ADB however noted that PSC did not fully agree to roll out the performance audit document. ADB will continue to engage with SPC and explore the roll out of the system in other government ministries.

### **Overall Assessment and Rating**

The TA is rated as partly successful. As highlighted above, TA helped the GRMI initiate their first performance audit system in the MOE. However, activities envisaged under the TA were not undertaken in a timely manner. Also, it is important to note that other government ministries did not agree to roll out similar performance audit systems primarily due to the general lack of understanding of performance evaluation and appraisal systems. RMI is a small island state with a population of 50,000 and "performance audit" is not yet a widely accepted concept by local culture. ADB will need to negotiate and improve its coordination with the NPC. There were also difficulties in getting hold of some of the information such as school reporting structures in few outer islands due to limited data management capacities in local/municipal MOE offices. Also, it is important to note that all the TA findings may need to be adapted or modified pending the provision of further documentation and comments from the MOE and development partners, which have worked closely with ADB. Nevertheless, the main findings and policy options used in this TA are considered to be broadly valid.

### **Major Lessons**

This project had been challenging to implement due to the broad scope of the pilot and the personnel challenges within the Government. Given that the TA addressed the issues of "Performance" in the public sector, specifically MOE Administration and Majuro schools, it had been a somewhat complex subject to address with considerable time being spent explaining the overall focus of the TA outcomes to stakeholders in MOE, PSC, and other government offices.

Throughout the project, the consultant worked consistently to deliver the TOR tasks and to achieve the goals of the TA. ADB initially engaged with a different consultant whose performance was rated as poor to mediocre. The second consultant who completed this project replaced the above consultant in late 2007 and proved to be very effective and proactive. He managed to gain confidence from the local governments and ADB staff. Engagement of the PSC in the TA to establish the ground for possible roll out into the wider public service was considered particularly important and this was achieved through meetings with relevant government offices and a degree of buy-in from that body.

The likelihood of sustainability of TA gains (with sustainability being a key issue in the Pacific in general and in RMI in particular), was greatly improved by a focus on capacity development. A consistent focus on capacity development efforts with MOE personnel and the Majuro schools achieved a high level of buy-in. Looking forward, it is essential that RMI build on gains achieved under this TA in the near future to ensure the process of reform in the vital area of education in RMI continues to proceed.

### **Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions**

It is recommended that ADB and RMI will pursue the follow-up actions below:

- To organize seminar and other advocacy related activities so the key government officials understand the merit of performance audit systems and its implication to improving government services.
- To expand pilot activities to remaining MOE divisions, all Majuro teachers and outer island schools, with MOE developing a timeline and schedule for expansion of the pilot.
- To coordinate between MOE to work on continued implementation of TA tasks and similar ongoing USA funded projects.
- To continue to update PSC regarding ongoing implementation of MOE performance appraisal.
- PSC to determine the most effective way to use MOE results to expand the performance appraisal process to other government ministries, including developing a timeframe and schedule for the proposed roll-out.
- To determine possible TA to roll-out TA results to other RMI Government Ministries.

RSDD has provided further technical inputs and possible follow-up actions as follows:

- To promote the utilization of the Citizen Report Card (CRC) methodology to conduct social audits of public services.
- To promote the utilization of continuous improvement and benchmarking (CIB) techniques to ensure that capacity, resources and people are managed to deliver effective, efficient public services.
- To provide training and support to DMCs in anticorruption preventive measures.

PARD mission will visit Marujo in December and discuss the above possible actions.