

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT¹

Division: CWRD/TJRM

TA 4267-TAJ: Strengthening Planning and Policy Dialogue for Education Sector Reform			Amount Approved: \$300,000		
Executing Agency: Office of the President		Source of Funding: TASF	Amount Undisbursed: \$113,215	Amount Utilized: \$186,785	
TA Approval:	TA Signing:	Fielding of First Consultant:	TA Completion Date		
			Original: 31 July 2005	Actual: 30 July 2008	
17 December 2003	08 April 2004	29 January 2007	Account Closing Date		
			Original: 31 July 2005	Actual: 27 January 2009	
Description (Background and Rationale)					
<p>The technical assistance (TA)'s purpose was to build education management information systems (EMIS) for informed policy dialogue and decision making. In order to establish an effective EMIS, it was important to resolve the following issues. Firstly, the Ministry of Education (MOE) did not have access to detailed information on education institutions, as the information was consolidated at the district level and then oblast (province) and region (rayon) levels before being submitted to the MOE. As a result, MOE had access only to broad averages and totals and could not monitor equity in education and use the data for planning purposes. Secondly, there was almost exclusive emphasis on quantitative information, such as learner numbers per grade. There was little or no information on important factors such as quality of education management, or quality of teaching or learner performance. Thirdly, effective use of data for planning was poor. Finally, data existed in diverse locations within different levels of the system and the MOE. This data was not integrated to support the formulation of coherent strategies and plans.</p> <p>The TA Project involved the study, assessment and development of the following major components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Modernization/rationalization of EMIS in the MOE, oblast and rayon levels; (ii) Establishment of EMIS structure in five pilot districts where ADB's Loan 2053-TAJ: Education Sector Reform Project was being implemented; (iii) Support to National School Census of all primary and secondary schools in the country; (iv) Improving the process of decision making; and (v) Support to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in the MOE. <p>The TA was consistent with the country's priorities and complimented ADB's other sector activities in Tajikistan.</p>					
Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs					
<p>The expected impact of the TA was improved system efficiency and management through the construction of a sound EMIS that would (i) provide a basis for improved planning systems, (ii) help quantify inequities pertaining to gender and poverty, and (iii) ensure that analyzed information is fed back into planning processes and system improvement.</p> <p>The expected outcome of the TA was (i) better school and schooling data gathering and analysis through development of special software be used by the Department of Education nation-wide, and, (ii) improved institutional capacity building at the MOE to allow effective implementation of technical and program support for the automated EMIS.</p>					
Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities					
<p>The original completion date of 31 July 2005 was extended to 31 July 2006. However, due to delays in the start-up of the Loan 2053, to which the TA was piggy-backed, the TA started its activities in 2007 only after a second extension was granted on 6 December 2006, and the first consultant was hired on 22 January 2007.</p> <p>The consultants provided satisfactory reports on a timely basis. The TA was conducted by 3 international consultants, and 3 local consultants. Use of consulting services and procurement under the TA was carried out in accordance with ADB's guidelines. The design of the TA including terms of reference for consultants proved to be adequate. A project office was set up within the MOE for an effective coordination with both international and</p>					

¹ In preparing any country program or strategy, financing any project, or by making any designation of or reference to a particular territory or geographic area in this document, the Asian Development Bank does not intend to make any judgments as to the legal or other status of any territory or area.

national consultants. The quality of the consultants' and the technical guidance and supervision provided by ADB through the consultants to the Government and stakeholders were found to be satisfactory.

In May 2008 the administration of the TA was delegated to TJRM. The close monitoring of TA activities and close collaboration with other donors resulted in the development of a five-year implementation Master Plan with the description of milestones, indicators and responsible departments/agencies within the MOE and secured funding from donor agencies. ADB's performance in administering and executing the TA is considered as satisfactory.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome

The TA is considered as satisfactory in terms of efficiency, and effectiveness in the timely production and quality of outputs. The TA produced the following outputs: (i) modernization and rationalization of the EMIS and the M&E at the MOE and pilot districts, and (ii) supporting the national schools census both at primary and secondary school levels. As a result of the TA, (i) the Government issued a decree for adoption of a conceptual framework for EMIS for Tajikistan which provided general directions, priorities, guidelines, indicators, and strategies for the EMIS; (ii) a National School Census of all primary and secondary schools in the country was carried out and a manual for data analysis was prepared; and (iii) an initial census data analysis report was issued.

An important output of the TA was the new software developed and piloted for gathering important information such as gender and schooling-level disaggregated annual school data on students' attendance, drop-out and graduation rates. This software was installed at a national level and personnel at the District Educational Departments responsible for the data collection were trained in using the software.

Throughout the implementation of the TA, extensive consultations with stakeholders were made to discuss the TA activities and gain their support, especially from related Government agencies, which facilitated the smooth implementation of the TA. Furthermore, ADB was the lead agency in building capacity for the EMIS; ADB led a donors' task force on EMIS where other donors such as the World Bank, UNICEF and GTZ were participating and investing additional funds. Based on the results of the TA, World Bank financed project assisted with the scaling-up at the national level of the automation process for data collection.

The MOE appointed the Deputy Minister as an EMIS Senior Manager who is responsible for EMIS operations. The MOE established an EMIS department which is currently responsible for information collection and preparation of various reports.

The Government was satisfied with the TA's results. The capacity of the Government for policy formulation in the education sector has been significantly improved due to the access to better collection, analysis, and monitoring of statistical data which was made possible through the tools and training provided by the TA.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA was successful. It produced the expected outputs and outcome.

Major Lessons

The experience of this project suggests that policy reform, which requires management style change and involvement of new business processes needs a significant investment of time and resources. Such types of interventions require joint donor efforts and coordination to achieve the expected results at a reasonable cost. This TA was a good example of "informal Sector-Wide Approach (SWAP)", where the pool of consultancy support among donors, sharing of TORs and joint actions resulted in coordinated and cost efficient support to the MOE.

Among the significant lessons learned were: the TA has proved that improvements in the education sector can be achieved through a strong commitment from the Government to (i) make informed policy decisions supported by adequate and timely data, and (ii) invest in improving the institutional arrangements and technical skills of the staff in charge of EMIS and M&E at the MOE.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

The EMIS will only become sustainable when its information becomes an indispensable factor in the decision-making process at the MOE. There is also still the need to build up the capacity in the Tajik education sector to ensure that the information is accurate, valid, timely, and utilized. Since the collection of information is now automated and streamlined through the software provided under the TA, it is important to concentrate efforts on the analysis of the information and ensure that decision making process is carried out based on accurate data.

It is recommended to ensure that the MOE's EMIS Department continues to have properly qualified staff for operation of the EMIS and M&E. For that purpose, the Government may need further support from donors working in the sector to enhance the results obtained through the ADB's TA.