

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT¹

Division: CWRD/TJRM

TA No., Country and Name			Amount Approved: \$900,000	
TA 4860-TAJ: Strengthening Results Management in Support of Poverty Reduction			Revised Amount: NA.	
Executing Agency	Source of Funding		Amount Undisbursed:	Amount Utilized:
Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT)	(1) ADB's Cooperation Fund in Support of Managing for Development Results (\$400,000), and (2) The Government of Sweden (\$500,000)		\$214,730	\$685,270
TA Approval Date:	TA Signing Date:	Fielding of First Consultants:	TA Completion Date	
30 Oct 2006	13 Nov 2006	26 Mar 2007	Original: 31 Mar 2009 Actual: 31 Mar 2009	
			Account Closing Date	
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Description				
Tajikistan has developed a 10-year national development strategy (NDS) and a medium-term poverty reduction strategy (PRS). This process provided a unique entry point for strengthening the results management capacities of the Government. Developing and implementing a realistic, useful, and coherent results management system is a major priority of the Government, and is of paramount importance in guiding the formulation of policies and focused investment programs to respond to the country's development needs. At the request of the Government, a technical assistance (TA) for results management capacity development in support of poverty reduction in Tajikistan was included in the 2006 TA program of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). With ADB assistance, a consortium of donors—including ADB, and Swedish International Development Agency (Sida)—was formed to design the TA and help the Government to build its capacity for monitoring and evaluation at central, sectoral, and local levels.				
Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs				
The TA aimed to improve results management capacity in central parts of the Government, specifically at the President's Office, Ministry of Economy Development and Trade (MEDT), and Ministry of Finance (MOF). The main intended outcome of the TA was that the Government, donors, and other stakeholder would perceive as useful the adopted PRS results and monitoring framework, and the results management systems related to the framework. The expected outputs of the TA included: (i) assessment of the results management capacity of the central Government, (ii) design of a complete PRS results and monitoring framework, (iii) application and testing of the PRS results framework in central parts of the Government, and (iv) assessment of the initial application of the framework and proposal of refinements based on the assessment. To sustain the capacity developed, the TA also included appropriate training programs and related workshops and seminars to improve the results management capacity (data collection, processing, and analysis) of concerned government officials from the Executive Office of the President, MEDT, PRSP Monitoring Unit, MOF, Aid Coordination Unit, and line ministries. The following benefits were expected from the TA: (i) clarifying objectives and priorities; (ii) creating feedback loops to policy formulation, resource allocation, and operations; (iii) achieving greater efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in the socioeconomic development of Tajikistan; and (iv) making the PRS a powerful tool for planning and monitoring development assistance to Tajikistan through greater country ownership and donor coordination.				
Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities				
The TA, started in April 2007 and completed in March 2009, and financed 2 international and 4 national consultants for 24 person-months and 78 person-months respectively. The TA design was adequate, and the objectives and terms of reference were relevant and appropriately formulated. The quality of inputs into various activities and the technical guidance and supervision provided by ADB through the consultants to the Government and stakeholders were found to be satisfactory. The TA consultants were engaged on an individual basis in accordance with ADB Guidelines on the Use of Consultants. However, the TA cost was overestimated at the design stage. The actual TA cost was lower than expected by 24% due to over-budgeting for consulting services, equipment, trainings & seminars, and miscellaneous administration costs.				

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.

Although the review missions were intermittent, they were output-oriented and technical guidance was provided continuously to the Consultants and implementing agency. A consultative and skills transfer approach was adopted in each activity to ensure the ownership of key stakeholders of the outputs and outcomes. The performance of the implementing agency is considered as satisfactory.

Among the activities carried out under the TA, six inter-ministerial workshops and three consultation sessions were conducted, together with the preparation of a glossary of results-based management terms in Russian language which was circulated among key stakeholders and posted in relevant websites. Also, a series of training sessions on results-based management, performance measurement, monitoring indicators, data collection, basic statistics and poverty analysis were held throughout the TA implementation. Finally, a study tour to Malaysia for Government officials was organized to familiarize the participants with the Malaysian experience on results management in support of poverty reduction at national, state and district level.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome

Phase 1. Assessment of the results management capacity of the central Government: All expected results for the Phase were achieved. Results management capacity assessment was conducted and comprised two main elements: (i) an overall readiness assessment for the Government of Tajikistan at the national level; and (ii) an assessment of the monitoring capacity of MEDT. The TA's overall assessment was that the Government of Tajikistan at the national level was somewhat ready for results-based management approach, but needed further strengthening. Capacity for results-based management at the national level was limited, but was being strengthened through a significant level of capacity development technical assistances from ADB and other donors like Sida, EC, UNDP, DFID and the World Bank. The TA team assessed a capacity of MEDT's Department of Implementation Monitoring of National and Regional Development Programs: the personnel were found to have a low capacity for result-based monitoring and evaluation (M&E), as only the senior manager had any knowledge in this area and no personnel had experience with monitoring systems. The TA supported capacity development in the division from May 2007 onwards through several series of training programs.

The TA (i) increased results-based monitoring capacity through trained staff of MEDT and other ministries, (ii) raised awareness of results-based monitoring through distribution of the capacity assessment report, the glossary and presentations made at workshops, and (iii) prioritized PRS monitoring indicators.

Phase 2: Design of a complete PRS results and monitoring framework: As the strategy and overall framework for the PRS results management system was determined in Chapter 8 of the PRS itself, the TA was not required to develop it, as such. However the TA articulated the strategy and framework in workshops, presentations and training in this Phase. Also, the following outputs were achieved: (i) decrees and regulations for establishment of institutional arrangements were issued by the Government based on drafts prepared by MEDT², (ii) monitoring indicators, which were specified in Appendix 2 of the PRS 2007-2009 prior to the commencement of the TA were assessed against the SMART criteria and prioritized in a June 2007 workshop, (iii) a database module design was drafted to manage information flow to MEDT for PRS monitoring of indicators data and PRS matrix measures implementation, (iv) enhanced technical capacity of MEDT's staff which included an increased use of computers and computerized M&E systems. The PRS results framework was applied and tested on a pilot basis in the central Government. The initial application of the framework was assessed to identify further refinements for the framework.

ADB TJRM disseminated TA reports, findings and recommendations via e-mail and through workshops to the donor community and their projects.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA is rated as partially satisfactory. The following TA activities had positive results: (i) capacity development through training and direct assistance (although its impact was lessened by staff turnover and lack of staff availability at times); (ii) awareness raising for results-based management through a series of six workshops throughout the TA; (iii) capacity development through provision of computers, network and software, and a PRS monitoring data management database; and (iv) coordination between donors. The TA's expected outputs were achieved. However, capacity development was partly successful. It should be noted, however, that the ability of the implementing agency's counterpart department, Department of Implementation Monitoring of National and Regional Development Programs (DMNRDP) to absorb capacity development assistance was limited. With limited staff numbers in DMNRDP, it was often difficult for TA consultants to gain sufficient access to staff to carry out a full program of

² The monitoring system institutional framework is shaped under three main government regulations: (i) the decree and regulation #355 of 19th December 2007 for creation of the National Development Council (NDC); (ii) regulation #703 of 28 June 2007 on adoption of the Poverty Reduction Strategy 2007-2009 by Parliament; and (iii) decree and regulation #216 of 2 May 2008 for Poverty Reduction Strategy monitoring procedures.

capacity development activities, as the staff's other activities had a higher priority.

Major Lessons

Demand from the Government for the products of the PRS monitoring system remained weak. In the initial assessment of Tajikistan's readiness for results-based monitoring and evaluation, during Phase 1 of the TA, several clear weaknesses were identified. However, given that the TA had been designed and agreed between the Government and ADB, the TA had to proceed on the assumption that there was a high level of interest by the Government in the establishment of a results-based PRS monitoring system. This assumption was not borne out by experience. It should be noted that MEDT, through the Deputy Minister, worked very hard to raise the level of interest on the part of the Government, but their low level of responsiveness on institutional issues indicated the low priority accorded to PRS monitoring. Because the planned institutional structures were not put in place during the TA, there was no "demand side" organization with authority and responsibility to get the system working fully, especially to follow up production and dissemination of reports to ensure their use in policy and program planning (although the regulation for the National Development Council (NDC) had been approved in December 2007, the NDC and NDC Secretariat were created in March 2009, the last month of the TA's operation). The starting point for improvement of the M&E system has to be the demand side. As long as the Government has only a secondary interest in managing and monitoring the implementation of the PRS, the system will remain weak. The Government needs to be convinced of the value of results-based monitoring to its own policy-making and planning processes.

There was some confusion on the part of MEDT Monitoring Department about the scope of the system design task. While the TA terms of reference took a holistic view of what was meant by "system", some staff at the implementing agency were focused mainly on the computer-based data management element. This was compounded by the fact that the PRS monitoring system framework itself had already been specified in the PRS 2007-2009 itself, so the TA's task was concentrated on implementing the framework, not coming up with a new design for the framework. This led to some misunderstanding about the TA's role and activities during Phase 2. These issues were not helped by the fact that when the TA organized its Users' Requirement Workshop to assist design of the monitoring system, the demand side structure (NDC and NDC Secretariat) was not in place. The creation of a system is about defining relations among the different actors and it is incomplete if the demand side is missing.

Need to set realistic capacity building goals and simplify PRS monitoring indicators. The Government and donors should focus on how a phased increase in monitoring and evaluation capacity can be achieved in practice, as donors' expectations currently exceed the civil service's capabilities. The monitoring system for the next PRS should be also kept simple and flexible, and be built progressively. This will require simplifying parts of the PRS itself, in particular the lists of development measures and monitoring indicators in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of PRS 2007-2009, which contains 189 monitoring indicators and around 800 development measures / activities.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

Further dialogue with the Government: It is recommended that the development agencies supporting the results-based management and monitoring continue the dialogue with the Government to increase the level of awareness on the value of results-based monitoring in policy-making and planning processes and raise the level of interest of the Government in managing and monitoring the implementation of the PRS.

Institutional framework: The National Development Council (NDC) and its Secretariat, which have been recently established to coordinate the Government's development efforts, need to be actively engaged in managing and monitoring the PRS implementation, to create a clear feedback loop for the system, strengthen the mechanisms for acceptance of the reports and feeding back results into policy making and the program and project budgeting cycle. Also, resource budgets for monitoring units in line ministries and agencies should be established in the annual budgeting process of those ministries and agencies. The budgets should match the size of the monitoring task.

Capacity building: It is recommended that further technical assistance should be considered by development agencies. The TA team's training focused mostly on basic concepts of poverty, result-based monitoring and basic analysis methods, as the capacity building had to cater mostly for newly recruited staff with little background in results-based management. Further assistance in training is required on causal and secondary analysis, including inequality analysis that would enable staff of the NDC to analyze the extent to which the Government policy is giving results in pro-poor growth, and to provide evidence for evidence-based policy-making.