

## TA COMPLETION REPORT

<b>TA NO./NAME:</b> <b>2744-THA</b> Institutional Strengthening of the Development Evaluation Division (DED) of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB)		<b>TA AMOUNT APPROVED:</b> \$470,000	<b>SOURCE:</b> TASF
<b>EXECUTING AGENCY:</b> DED of NESDB		<b>TA AMOUNT UNDISBURSED:</b> \$129,983.18	<b>TA AMOUNT UTILIZED:</b> \$340,016.82
<b>DATE:</b> 31 May 2000	<b>APPROVAL:</b> 31 December 1996	<b>SIGNING:</b> 8 January 1997	<b>FIELD:</b> <b>CLOSING: Original:</b> 31 March 1999 <b>Actual:</b> 31 August 1999
<p><b>TA DESCRIPTION:</b>                      The Development Evaluation Division was created within NESDB in 1992 to establish, operate and improve monitoring and evaluation systems with regard to the implementation of national plans. With the Eighth Five Year Plan (1997-2001) marking a shift of focus from economic growth and industrial production towards people-centered development or "well-being", DED's institutional capacity had to be strengthened to monitor and evaluate key indicators such as health and nutrition, education, and poverty of the new plan. The technical assistance (TA) intended to operationalize socioeconomic policy planning and analysis and develop progress-oriented indicators as well as a system for annual plan evaluation that allowed the public and policy makers to participate in the assessment and planning of development. The TA was designed to establish a new monitoring and evaluation system through the introduction of processes and indicators encompassing the concept of well-being.</p> <p><b>OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE:</b>                      The main objectives of the TA were to strengthen the evaluation and analytical capabilities of DED, institutionalize the process of monitoring and evaluating national plans through workshops and seminars, and design and operationalize a monitoring and evaluation system for the Eighth and subsequent national plans. The scope consisted of developing an operational framework for the "Well-Being" concept; establish a program and policy monitoring and evaluation system based on a limited number of key social, economic, and environmental indicators including customized subsystems (e.g., for education); identify key priority indicators to be included in the subsystems; review economic indicators and identify any new ones to be included; and assist DED staff in operationalizing the subsystems.</p> <p><b>TA INPUTS EVALUATION:</b>                      The TA had a provision to engage an international consultant for 9 person-months as the Team Leader to primarily responsible for carrying out the TA. The TA also required domestic consultants for 18 person-months to assist the Team Leader, particularly in transferring the know-how passed on to the EA by the Team Leader and maintaining the momentum of the project in the absence of the international consultant. The international consultant was initially engaged for 9 months over a period of 2 years (from June 1997 to May 1999). The EA appreciated the international consultant's expertise in developing a conceptual framework of well-being and monitoring and analyzing social sector indicators, and assessed his inputs as completely new and highly innovative. His expertise was successfully transferred to and operationalized in DED in the form of a computerized data dissemination and analysis system. On the other hand, however, the domestic consultants were not engaged because (1) the EA was not able to find full-time consultants who were capable to deal with the project and (2) the data processing and analytical technique was directly transferred to the staff of DED by the international consultant. Therefore, the contract of the international consultant was extended by 4 months.</p> <p>In addition to administrative assistance, almost all professional staff in DED were assigned to work on the TA. DED Director was fully supportive of and committed to the TA, and provided appropriate guidance and instructions for her staff to actively participate in implementing the TA.</p> <p>Other inputs include training courses and study tours. Training courses were conducted in mid-1999 not only to strengthen DED staff's capacity in analyzing and monitoring well-being indicators but also to involve the local government offices in the process. A two-week study tour was fielded to Australia and New Zealand in August 1999 to learn about social security system and public sector reform from the experience of these two countries.</p> <p>The TA had savings of about \$130,000, 27.7 percent of the total TA fund. Major components which incurred savings are undisbursed contingencies and a provision for local consultants which were not engaged because of the aforementioned reasons.</p>			

**TA OUTPUTS EVALUATION:**

There are four major outputs under the TA: (1) developing a conceptual framework of well-being and establishing a system for collecting, evaluating, analyzing, and monitoring social sector indicators; (2) publishing newsletters reporting the outcome of (1); (3) conducting workshops on the outcome of (1) and participatory evaluation; and (4) capacity building in DED.

A conceptual framework of well-being was developed in line with the objectives of the Eighth Five Year Plan. Key indicators to measure well-being, including poverty and inequality, health and nutrition, utilization of health services and health care coverage, education, housing, working life, family life, and governance, have established and analyzed. Based on the analysis and monitoring of these indicators, the new national poverty lines were established and adopted by the Cabinet in April 1998. This method of compiling, analyzing, and monitoring these indicators established under the TA will certainly contribute to poverty assessment and Partnership Agreement which will be undertaken in 2000 and 2001. Nine periodic newsletters were issued under the TA and widely used by domestic and international agencies. Although the TA was initiated and designed before the East Asian economic crisis broke out in July 1997, the monitoring of these social sector indicators acquired a new urgency to analyze the impact of the crisis on the Thai people's well-being. Thus, a workshop on "the Impact of the Crisis on Employment, Unemployment and Real Income" was jointly sponsored by ADB and NESDB in September 1998, with about 200 participants representing various Government agencies, the academia, and other donor agencies. The workshop was well covered by the local and international media. Also, four regional workshops in the North, Northeast, South, and Central regions were held in 1999 to develop an evaluation system which promotes a wide participatory approach to the assessment of planning of development. The workshops discussed the assessment of the well-being indicators and the impact of the development policies and economic crisis on the people's well-being. The last two training courses mentioned in the previous section were integrated into these regional workshops. Capacity building in DED was successfully implemented. DED staff were trained under supervision and guidance of the Team Leader not only to manage a computerized system of large sample surveys and data dissemination but also to utilize the system to analyze and monitor the well-being indicators.

**TA OVERALL ASSESSMENT/RATING:**

The TA was generally successful. The data dissemination and analysis/monitoring system of well-being indicators developed and operationalized under the TA has been utilized for national development policy formulation. In addition, the TA contributed to the assessment of the impact of the 1997 economic crisis on social sector indicators and people's well-being. The EA not only appreciated the TA but also came to have a strong sense of ownership of the activities supported by the TA. DED staff gained both capability and confidence to continue their task after the completion of the TA, particularly as the newsletters they have published were well received both by domestic and international agencies concerned.

**MAJOR LESSONS LEARNED:**

Since the expertise and techniques transferred by the international consultant are quite innovative, regular monitoring and follow-up after the completion of the TA is essential to maintain the momentum of the project. Both technical and analytical skills acquired under this TA should be maintained as institutional memories and constantly updated.

**FOLLOW UP ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION:**

In 1999, another TA to NESDB was approved for *Preparing a Medium-Term Recovery Strategy* to be incorporated in the Nine Five Year Plan (2002-2006) and is now being implemented. One of the most important issues included in the new TA is poverty reduction and social protection. The system for analyzing and monitoring a number of social indicators already established within DED will certainly provide basic statistics needed for carrying out the new TA and formulating the Nine Five Year Plan.