

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: ECSS

TA No. and Name: 2947-UZB: Monitoring Implementation of Education Reform			Amount Approved: \$900,000	
			Revised Amount: n/a	
Executing Agency: Social Sector Department of the Cabinet of Ministers (COM)	Source of Funding: TASF		TA Amount Undisbursed¹ \$293,515	TA Amount Utilized¹ \$606,485
Date			Completion Date	
Approval 17 Dec 1997	Signing 20 Jan 1998	Fielding of Consultants 18 Oct 1998	Original 30 Sep 2003	Actual 31 May 2004
			Closing Date	
			Original 30 Jun 2004	Actual¹
<p>Description</p> <p>Early after independence, Uzbekistan realized the need to adapt its education system to the changing social and economic environment. ADB has supported Uzbekistan's education development since it started operations in the country in 1996. In August 1997, the Parliament of Uzbekistan endorsed the National Program for Personnel Training aimed at providing guidance and directions for reform in the education sector. The Social Sector Department of the Cabinet of Ministers, (COM) requested technical assistance (TA) to strengthen central-level capacity to monitor the implementation of education reforms and to provide advice on strategies for coordination of external assistance.</p> <p>Objectives and Scope</p> <p>The general aim of the TA was to facilitate the implementation of education reform by strengthening data collection and policy analysis capacities of the Social Sector Department of the COM. The specific objectives were to (i) identify the key monitoring indicators for education reform, (ii) design a system for collecting and analyzing the necessary data, (iii) develop a means of reporting the status of education reform in a manner and at frequency required by policymakers, and (iv) strengthen the capacity of the Social Sector Department of COM to coordinate external assistance in education. The TA anticipated the establishment of an Education Reform Implementation Monitoring Unit (ERIMU) tasked with (i) collecting data on key indicators, (ii) reporting on reform implementation to policy-makers, (iii) delivering training, data processing and analysis at national and local levels, and (iv) undertaking special evaluation studies on sector reform issues and recommending actions to policymakers.</p> <p>Evaluation of Inputs</p> <p>Initial TA inputs comprised (i) 17 person-months of international consultancy (three experts), (ii) 120 person-months of domestic consultancy (two long-term positions of 5 years), (iii) two study visits for 6 persons each, and (iv) funds for research, seminars and surveys. Seven contract variations were processed to adjust TA inputs to achieve the desired outcomes, including splitting a domestic consultant position into several specialized consultancies of shorter duration. Problems in initial input evaluation pertained to the need for specialized skills to design and manage a comprehensive information system, difficulties in obtaining government counterpart funding to the TA, and inappropriate budgeting (several budget categories were missing). The external assistance component was dropped because of changing views of the COM on the priority to be given to this component. The TA implementation period, originally estimated at 5 years, was shortened to 4 years during contract negotiations at the request of the Government, and re-extended to the initial 5 years during the implementation. The TA was extended mainly to assist COM in monitoring the implementation of the Education Sector Development Program (Loans 1960/61-UZB approved in December 2002 for \$108.5 million) and transferring knowledge to ERIMU. However, delays in the start of the ESDP did not allow the TA team to fully support the COM in this respect. The consultant's services and level of inputs exceeded the terms of reference, primarily because of the extensive work conducted at the local level, in particular the constitution and training of regional working groups. The TA team, throughout the five years of implementation, also played a critical liaison role on education policy matters with the Government and supported all ADB loan processing missions. Thanks to this role played by the TA, the supervision and support role exercised by ADB went far beyond the requirements of the usual project administration missions.</p>				

¹ To be determined after ADB's receipt and payment of the final claim of the consultant.

Evaluation of Outputs

The TA produced outputs as planned under all components, except external assistance which was dropped at an early stage. TA-supported achievements include (i) establishment and staffing of the ERIMU (albeit much later than expected), (ii) constitution of an education database, Information System for Monitoring Education Reform (ISMER), comprising key indicators related to reform decrees, (iii) training of staff, both at the central and local levels through the constitution of regional working groups at a much higher scale than initially envisaged, (iv) in-depth analytical reports on five reform areas (teachers, students, textbooks, facilities, and expenditure). The quality of outputs and reports was generally good and clearly helped to prompt positive policy changes. In particular, the TA team was closely associated with the preparation of the ESDP (initiated in May 2000) and effectively contributed to facilitate sector policy dialogue between the ADB and the Government. The ISMER however, is probably an excessively sophisticated tool with insufficient policy relevance as its main purpose for the COM was to monitor the implementation of a series of Government decrees and resolutions.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA contributed to changing the attitude of senior officials regarding sector planning and monitoring. The need for reliable data for sound analysis and policy-making is acknowledged. In practice, the TA contributed to an improved formulation of government decrees (relevance to identified policy issues, specification of responsibilities and resources required, etc.). However, it is doubtful that a strong education policy advisory capacity was built through the TA, in part because of the late establishment of the ERIMU and the continued lack of familiarity with modern planning techniques and policy development processes. The ERIMU will also need to demonstrate its capacity to maintain the sophisticated information systems established with the TA support. Staff resources provided by the Government are clearly sufficient, as the responsibilities of the unit were recently expanded to include monitoring of other government programs in the social sectors. It is also the view of the TA team that regional working groups (tasked with data collection and processing at the local level) should undergo regular training/retraining as assigned members change frequently. Transparency of information and analysis remains a major challenge that could not be fully addressed through the TA. Confidentiality of data produced by the monitoring system has been a constraint impeding dissemination of information, policy advocacy, and donor coordination. The TA is rated as partly successful.

Major Lessons Learned

Institutional constraints, particularly those pertaining to information sharing and transparency, are difficult to address at the sector level. The TA effectively highlighted deficiencies in existing information systems, including lack of information sharing and cooperation between government agencies, input- rather than output- and outcome-orientation of data, weak analyses of information collected, excessive workload associated with data collection and processing tasks, monopolies in the production of 'official statistics', restricted access to information, etc. However, no decisive actions could be taken at the sector level to fundamentally reform information collection and dissemination processes. It is also important to acknowledge that Government resources are scarce, and that commitments to support TA implementation may not result in staff or budget allocations at the anticipated time and volume. Long-term support of the ADB is required to achieve institutional change and lasting impact. Limited TA resources, which provide a necessary platform for policy dialogue and capacity development, constrain ADB's lead policy advisory in the education sector.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

Several actions can be recommended to consolidate TA achievement, including the redefinition of the terms of reference of the ERIMU, follow-up discussions with the State Committee for Statistics regarding the dissemination of ISMER data, further training of regional working groups, and additional support to monitor ESDP implementation. Additional support is necessary to follow-up on such actions and assist in developing a full-fledged education management information system.