

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: ECSS

TA No. and Name: 3399-UZB: Interim Review of Senior Secondary Education			Amount Approved: \$1,000,000		
			Revised Amount: -		
Executing Agency: Ministry of Higher and Senior Secondary Education (MOHSSE) and Ministry of Macroeconomics and Statistics (MOMES)	Source of Funding: JSF		TA Amount Undisbursed: \$94,562	TA Amount Utilized: \$905,438	
Date			Closing Date		
Approval		Signing	Original		Actual
8 Feb 2000		21 Feb 2000	31 Jul 2002		31 Jul 2002
Description					
<p>The Government of Uzbekistan is undertaking education reforms to reorient the education system to support the social and economic transition. The Law on Education and the National Program for Personnel Training (NPPT) adopted in 1997 set the legal framework and reform priorities. One of the key areas is reorganizing and developing the system of senior secondary education (SSE). The Government is rationalizing and streamlining the existing SSE programs, which are being consolidated under management of the Center for Senior Secondary Education (CSSE) under the Ministry of Higher and Senior Secondary Education (MOHSSE). The development of the new SSE system needs to be supported by effective policies and reliable monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms to ensure the system's progress toward achievement of the NPPT goals. The major challenge in SSE development is to move away from the supply-driven management practices and policies of an education system in a planned economy to a demand-driven system aligned to the social and economic context of a market-oriented economy. The technical assistance (TA) was formulated to assist the Government in achieving these goals and to support activities under Loan 1737-UZB: Senior Secondary Education Project (SSEP).</p>					
Objectives and Scope					
<p>The objectives of the TA were to support (i) a review of the early status of the development of SSE schools and system (1998 and 2001), and (ii) the initial establishment and operationalization of M&E functions within CSSE. The review was intended to focus on the assessment of external and internal efficiency as well as adequacy of the recurrent budget in a sample of new SSE schools. The results were to be used to explore and identify options for maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of SSE, for presentation and dissemination at the NPPT review in 2001, hence permitting their integration into the NPPT strategies for 2002 and beyond. The review was intended to be concurrent with the development of M&E functions and tools for SSE, to pave the way for the provision of timely and reliable management information of the outputs and impacts of the SSE program. The TA scope included reviewing and analyzing (i) SSE management and M&E; (ii) SSE programs, outcomes and external efficiency; and (iii) internal efficiency and educational finance. The TA design covered key areas of relevance for building the capacity and improving the management of CSSE. The scope, terms of reference (TOR), and implementation arrangements were considered appropriate.</p>					
Evaluation of Inputs					
<p>The TA was designed to meet the government's needs and the inputs were clearly defined. The TA was jointly implemented by CSSE and the Social Sectors Department of MOMES. The performance of the two executing agencies was satisfactory, but participation of CSSE staff was constrained by the fact that CSSE was newly established and had limited staff resources available.</p>					
<p>The TA provided for 29.5 person-months of international consultants, 46.5 person-months of domestic consultants, and three groups of field researchers. The international consulting services were provided in line with the TA paper and detailed TOR, which covered major issues of the SSE subsector. The domestic consulting services covered the same areas, and helped provide a local context for activities of the international consultants. International and domestic consultants performed well and were receptive to client needs and ADB's guidance. The consultants' inputs were appreciated particularly by colleges in rural areas. ADB closely monitored the implementation of TA, reviewed reports carefully, and provided technical advice and guidance, and its performance was considered satisfactory.</p>					

Evaluation of Outputs

TA outputs included an inception report, quarterly reports, a midterm report, research reports, workshops for data collection, dissemination of findings of research studies and recommendations for action plans, and a final report. The first quarterly report focused on describing activities and achievements, without sufficient focus on analysis. However, subsequent reports analyzed issues in depth, and made strategic recommendations for CSSE management and college directors.

The TA was implemented using three methodologies: (i) baseline data collection and analysis from all target technical colleges of SSEP, (ii) case studies from four colleges from different regions, and (iii) small-scale commissioned research projects ranging from sector-level issues to college-based initiatives. The baseline survey (a) provided benchmark data for monitoring Loan 1737-UZB, (b) clarified issues and definitions for a more comprehensive Educational Management Information System (EMIS), and (c) identified key performance indicators. Case studies were conducted by reviewing four colleges' curricula and testing to determine the relevance of on-going college programs. Research studies were commissioned to (a) provide data on selected priority issues, (b) bring issues to the attention of the M&E department of CSSE, (c) give managers at local levels experience of project management, and (d) examine the concerns raised by colleges. Research methodologies were appropriate and innovative, could also be applied to the Loan 1737-UZB research component, and helped to familiarize the M&E department with research methodologies in line with international standards for educational evaluation. The volume of work was slightly beyond the capacity of CSSE, which did not have sufficient technical staff to carry out or manage the numerous studies. Prioritization of the research studies to reduce their numbers would have facilitated TA implementation.

TA research and workshops contributed to (i) identifying implementation bottlenecks at the initial stage of NPPT, (ii) recognizing management structure problems and the necessity of decentralizing educational administration and budget allocations from CSSE to regional (oblast) governments, (iii) establishing an initial M&E function in CSSE and assessing its training needs, (iv) providing a basic model for EMIS, and (v) preparing recommendations for further policy dialogue and discussion. They also provided SSEP with educational statistics and indicators for planning and organizing project activities. The TA's recommendations were generally appropriate and constructive. However, it would have been helpful if the consultants had phased the recommendations and provided a time-bound action plan for policy options, as some suggestions require a major change in management and take time to be realized.

A midterm review of NPPT was conducted based on the TA analysis, and resulted in a partial amendment of NPPT and the adoption of a new decree (No. 338) which allows colleges to adjust the implementation arrangements and schedules of NPPT in line with local needs. These are clear indicators of the usefulness and relevance of the TA.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA addressed the Government's needs and accomplished its objectives. Implementation generally followed the NPPT schedule, all envisaged activities were fully completed, and all planned outputs produced. TA outcomes supported and complemented the SSEP. The TA is rated as successful.

Major Lessons Learned

A major lesson learned was the importance of the EA's commitment to the TA. Although the TA was designed to address the MOHSSE's needs and the consultants performed well, one of the major implementation constraint was the difficulty in generating ownership and establishing a framework for CSSE to work with the TA consultants. The TA analysis included some criticism of current SSE policies, which elicited a defensive response from the MOHSSE. The TA demonstrated that it is essential at an early stage of implementation to establish a solid system for all stakeholders (the ministries concerned, local governments, and college directors) get fully involved in the TA. It is also important for ADB to play a role in building a collaborative working relationship between the stakeholders and the consultants.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

The TA highlighted a number of constraints on effective management of the SSE sub-sector and offered recommendations for short- and longer-term solutions. The short-term measures, including the capacity building of education sector policy makers and strengthening the M&E function within CSSE, will be implemented under sub-sector planning and management component of Loan 1737-UZB. The longer-term recommendations, including decentralization of curriculum development and budget allocations and improvement of management effectiveness, will be taken up through further policy dialogue under Loan 1737-UZB, and reflected in a time-bound action plan as a Loan output. They will also be followed up under Loan 1960/61-UZB: Education Sector Development Program.

Prepared by

Eiko Izawa

Designation

Education Specialist