

TA COMPLETION REPORT

Division: MKSS

TA No. and Name TA 3560-VIE: Secondary Education Sector Master Plan			Amount Approved : \$600,000.00		
			Revised Amount: –		
Executing Agency Ministry of Education and Training	Source of Funding \$440,000 from the Government of Belgium and \$160,000 from TASF		TA Amount Undisbursed \$71,966.23	TA Amount Utilized \$528,033.77	
Date			TA Completion Date		
Approval	Signing	Fielding of First Consultant	Original 31 July 2001	Actual 31 May 2003	
7 December 2000	17 April 2001	4 June 2001	Account Closing Date		
Original 31 July 2001			Actual 30 June 2003		
Description					
<p>The Government of Viet Nam (the Government) has been tackling poverty through social sector development since the country transitioned to a market economy in 1992. In particular, enhancement and improvement of education has been prioritized, and the Government conducted an initial education sector review in assistance with external donors in 1992 to identify and assess the issues and investment needs of all education levels from pre-primary to tertiary education. One of the priority actions recommended by the review was to establish a solid framework for policy planning for the secondary education subsector (SES). Viet Nam has been achieving universal primary education, so that subsequent expansion of secondary education was set out as a part of the millennium development goals. Also, SES was expected to yield the most immediate returns in meeting the country's critical social and labor market requirements. SES in Viet Nam has faced several challenges including a limited capacity for strategic planning of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), old-fashioned methodology for quality control of schooling, gender and geographical gaps in access to SES, and delayed process of decentralization of educational management and finance. The captioned technical assistance (TA) was formulated to address these issues, enhance access to efficient and quality secondary education, and carry out education reforms by preparing subsector policy framework and investment options (Secondary Education Sector Master Plan [SESMP]). The Executing Agency (EA) was MOET's Department of Planning and Finance and the Project Management Unit (PMU), the Implementing Agency, was set up within MOET to manage day-to-day operations under the supervision and support of MOET.</p>					
Objectives and Scope					
<p>The objective of the TA was to help the Government and MOET prepare the SESMP for the period 2001–2010, which would include analysis of current issues of the SES and proposals for more effective policy frameworks, strategies, investment priorities and an implementation timetable for the action plans. The expected outputs of the TA were to (i) improve efficiency in SES resource allocation and utilization, (ii) enhance equitable access to efficient and quality secondary education, and (iii) strengthen structure capacity of MOET to implement the secondary education reforms. The scope of the TA included the following activities: (a) review of policies, strategies, investment priorities, implementation plans, performance of the past activities in the sector implemented by the Government and donor partners; (b) review and analysis of the sector budgets and expenditures; (c) assessment of the legislative and regulatory framework and measures and preparation of recommendations for improvement; (d) analysis of demarcation of the roles and responsibilities of MOET and local education authorities; (e) analysis of the SES performance indicators pertinent to access, efficiency and quality improvement; (f) assessment of the scopes for introducing information and communication technology in the SES; (g) assessment of the socioeconomic and cultural factors influencing household decision making related to secondary education schooling; and (h) review of education strategies for the ethnic minorities. The TA objectives covered all key areas of the SES. The TA concept was designed to meet the Government's needs, and its inputs were clearly defined. The scope, terms of reference (TORs), implementation arrangements, and schedule of the TA were considered relevant and appropriate. A close attention was paid to ensure the Government's ownership and participation in the TA.</p>					
Evaluation of Inputs					
<p>The TA was financed by a grant of \$440,000 from the Government of Belgium and \$160,000 from the ADB-funded TA program. Major input of the TA was consulting services and the TA provided for 13 person-months of international consultants and 30 person-months of domestic consultants. Apart from the consultants, equipment and seminars and workshop for the sector review were provided to MOET and PMU. The inputs of international consultants were offered in line with the TA paper and detailed TORs, except implementation schedule. The TA started 4 months late due to the delay in the Government's signing of the TA letter. In addition, ADB decided to continue to open the TA account utilizing the TA saving to cover the continued study within the overall scope of the TA when the TA successfully completed its planned activities. The domestic consultants covered the fields of expertise to which the international consultants were not assigned as well as helped the international consultants to provide their advice on</p>					

activities in a local context. Both international and domestic consultants performed well and were productive. MOET and PMU performed satisfactorily as the EA and IA, respectively. MOET provided necessary data and statistics and the TA office accommodation set up within MOET in a timely manner, while PMU has closely worked with the consultant teams and actively learned skills and practice of effective policy planning. ADB regularly fielded administration missions for inception, mid-term review, final review and dissemination. Each mission closely monitored the progress and issues of the TA, reviewed reports and relevant documents carefully and provided advice on technical and management problems timely. Corroboration and communication among ADB, the EA and consultants were maintained through the TA implementation. The performance of ADB was considered satisfactory.

Evaluation of Outputs

TA outputs included an inception report, quarterly reports, a mid-term report, research reports, workshops and seminars for data collection, consultations, dissemination of findings from research studies and recommendations for action plans, and a final report. Consultant inputs effectively produced all the reports and research studies with a high quality under the TORs. These outputs were translated into Vietnamese and disseminated to both relevant ministries and local education authorities to share. Methodologies used for policy review, socioeconomic analysis of household decision making in secondary education schooling, and targeted assistance to the ethnic minorities were well prepared and suited to the context of geographical and cultural dimensions and labor market of the country. Qualitative analysis of data for introducing the ICT in education and fiscal review of budgets and expenditures met the international standard. The Mission observed technical transfer of the analytical skills to PMU staff. TA outputs including the policy recommendations and investment priority satisfied the Government's needs. The SESMP was produced on time to contribute to formulating other inter-linked activities such as TA 4122-VIE: Capacity Building for Upper Secondary Education¹ and the preparatory work for the Second Lower Secondary Education Development Project² by providing the policy directions and base-line data for need-assessments. TA outputs were, therefore, considered highly satisfactory in terms of efficacy, effectiveness, quality, client orientation and timeliness of delivery.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA is rated as successful. The TA addressed the Government's needs and achieved its objective. Implementation generally followed the schedule and progress of the Government's overarching education sector strategy. All envisaged activities were fully completed and all planned outputs were produced. TA outcomes played an important role in successful preparation of a comprehensive sub-sector project of Loan 1979-VIE: Upper Secondary Education Development Project.³

Major Lessons Learned

A major lesson learned from the TA was that it benefited by focusing on a core initiative to produce a sub-sector master plan together with a line ministry. This increased efficiency and simplified delivery of TA outputs. One weakness in some of ADB's past advisory TAs to the education sector was that TAs often aimed at both policy planning and capacity building in education ministries. This was undertaken through various activities that were not directly linked such as small-scale action studies, overseas training, and development of policy reform without legislative frameworks. However, under this TA, its simple and clear objective, TORs, and implementation arrangements enabled the Government's active involvement from early stage. PMU was involved in planning and organizing the workshop and seminars for the dissemination of the TA outputs, and advice and guidance provided by the consultants were well appreciated and reflected in the actual policy implications.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

The SESMP has been regarded as the overarching legal framework of SES. Challenges and policy recommendations for effective policy reforms highlighted by the TA have been addressed by the Government. ADB should continue policy dialogue with the Government, and is expected to formulate more policy reform-oriented assistance. This would help to achieve policy targets set in the SESMP as follow-up actions. Also, it is recommended that ADB start reviewing the progress of the SESMP as a new technical assistance pipelined for 2005 and initiate the Government to update SESMP in close coordination with ADB and other donor partners.

Prepared by E. Izawa Designation Education Specialist

¹ ADB. 2003. *Technical Assistance to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for the Capacity Building for Upper Secondary Education*. Manila.

² RRP-VIE:33304: *Second Lower Secondary Education Development Project*, proposed in 2004 for \$55 million.

³ ADB. 2002. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors on a Proposed Loan to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for the Upper Secondary Education Development Project*. Manila.