

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: VRM

<b>TA 3652-VIE: Institutional Support to the Office of the Government</b>			<b>Amount Approved: \$ 500,000</b>	
			<b>Revised amount: \$ 500,000</b>	
<b>Executing Agency:</b> Office of the Government		<b>Source of Funding:</b> TASF		<b>TA Amount Undisbursed</b> \$ 25,871
				<b>TA Amount Utilized</b> \$ 474,129
<b>Date</b>			<b>Completion Date</b>	
<b>Approval</b> 02 May 2001	<b>Signing</b> 21 June 2001	<b>Fielding of Consultants</b> 11 July 2001	<b>Original</b> 31 March 2002	<b>Actual</b> 10 April 2004
			<b>Closing Date</b>	
			<b>Original</b> 31 March 2002	<b>Actual</b> 13 December 2004
<b>Description</b>				
<p>Viet Nam's Ten-Year Socio-Economic Development Strategy (2001-2010) outlines the Government's strategic economic goals and the reforms needed for industrializing and modernizing Viet Nam while simultaneously building a fair and equitable society. To achieve its ambitious goals, Viet Nam must first ensure that its Government machinery works effectively. As Viet Nam is moving further towards a socialist-oriented market economy, the state management functions and responsibilities of the public administration system need to be defined clearly and properly. The Government stresses the need to build a new institutional and administrative system to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of public management.</p> <p>The Office of the Government (OOG) is the focal point that provides administrative support and policy advice in the management and supervision of government activities to Government. Hence, OOG is expected to play a pivotal role in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the whole machinery of the Government. Strengthening the institutional framework of OOG as a key source of advice to the Government and Prime Minister (PM) and as one of the first seven key agencies to be reformed was urgently needed.</p>				
<b>Objective and Scope</b>				
<p>The objective of the technical assistance (TA) was to help rationalize the functions, mandates and role of OOG and improve its legal and institutional framework to more effectively undertake its functions and duties. The Scope of the TA comprised six components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Review and make recommendations on the role and functions of OOG, taking into account both its role of managing the Office of the PM and the Cabinet, and its role vis-à-vis the whole government machinery;</li> <li>(ii) Improve its legal framework so that OOG can better define its position, role, authoritative power, functions and duties;</li> <li>(iii) Provide leadership training, mainly for selected senior staff from OOG, other central agencies, and the Provincial governments in order to accelerate implementation of Public Administration Reform (PAR);</li> <li>(iv) Build a strategic framework computerization in public administrative management and e-government and examined the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) implications of modernizing OOG;</li> <li>(v) Support a pilot effort to improve a few selected working procedures that are currently poorly performed; and</li> <li>(vi) Assist OOG in the dissemination of outcomes among OOG departments, within Government, and to the public at large.</li> </ul> <p>To ensure the priority needs and concerns of OOG were well targeted, the TA was formulated through an intensive collaboration process. A high-level OOG team, led by a Vice Minister, dedicated considerable time and effort for ten intensive half-day brainstorming sessions with the Viet Nam Resident Mission team. As OOG also benefited from a Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) funded TA, at the request of ADB, the issue of coordination had been discussed at the highest level within OOG, and the position of OOG leadership was to ask ADB to assist OOG in reviewing and rationalizing OOG's role and mandate and DANIDA to assist on the capacity building and training aspect.</p>				
<b>Evaluation of Inputs</b>				
<p>To implement the TA project, OOG established a Project Management Team (PMT) consisting of eight Director-level officers from OOG. Supporting the PMT was an 11-member working team consisting of experts from various related departments from OOG. As approved by the Chairman/Minister of OOG, the PMT was headed by Mr. Vu Dinh Thuan, Vice Minister of OOG.</p> <p>As per contract provision, the total input of international consultants amounted to 21 person-months and another 41 person-months from local consultants. The consultants, both domestic and international, contributed by bringing to OOG, new thinking and conceptual framework on the roles and mandates of central policy institutions like OOG, together with actual experiences of countries within and outside the region. The consultants undertook reviews and provided recommendations for institutional strengthening of OOG and further decentralization to line ministries and local authorities for decision making.</p> <p>The TA provided opportunity for the representatives of the various departments of OOG, and also those from selected central agencies to exchange ideas on issues being considered by OOG. The TA also provided the opportunity for the OOG to look at various reform and restructuring issues systematically. This was done through the two overseas study tours and through commissioning a series of papers on selected issues.</p> <p>The TA was both relevant and timely in the context of the Government's institutional reform. The Executive Agency (EA) and ADB performance was satisfactory. Through the whole implementation process the EA showed a strong ownership. Vice-Minister of OOG attended almost all consultation meetings and all the three training modules and provided close guidance to the team.</p>				

## Evaluation of Outputs

OOG, through the PMT was able to make use of the findings and recommendations of the TA well before its completion. Several issues, worked out under the TA, were submitted to the Chairman of OOG and higher authorities for decisions and actions, for example, the distinction between policy advisory services provided to the Government with the administrative services and accordingly the structure of OOG. Outputs and activities undertaken to achieve them are as summarized below:

**Component I: Roles and mandates of OOG.** This was one of the most important components of the TA. Recommendations included refining and streamlining of the roles and mandates of OOG, with special emphasis on efficiency in its work and responsiveness to the needs. Activities under this component provided very helpful inputs for amending related legal documents and were highly appreciated by OOG and by the PAR Steering Committee, particularly the issues related to the advisory role of OOG in policy formulation, to the function of monitoring, assessing the implementation of Government and PM's policies.

**Component II: Legal framework.** The principal activity in this component was to make recommendations for revising related legal normative documents, Decrees 50/CP, 156/CP, and the regulations associated with Decree 11/CP. Based on the results of studies and review, a draft amending Decree 50/CP was developed on 6 August 1993 and was widely discussed at the seminars. The Decree 50-CP had been replaced with the issuance of the Decree No 18/2003/ND-CP dated 2 February 2003 providing functions, mandates, authorities and organization of OOG. Amendments were also proposed on Decree 156 on relationship between OOG and the offices of the Provincial People's Councils and Committees.

**Component III: Leadership training.** The training was to focus on strengthening leadership and performance management in the context of PAR implementation. The leadership and performance-management oriented training program was delivered in three modules, covering intellectual, managerial and behavioral agenda, including management of change in organization for thirty senior and middle level officials from central agencies and selected provinces participated. The modules were evaluated very highly by participants. OOG raised the possibility of expanding the program to other participants within the Government.

**Component IV: Computerization in public administrative management.** The project was to build a strategic framework for computerizing the government administration. The project also outlined some of the internal changes required for OOG to effectively use ICT. Two seminars were held on (i) legal framework on computerization and e-Government, and (ii) itinerary of implementing computerization program.

**Component V: Pilot implementation of new procedures.** Some diagnostic work had been undertaken. However, actual implementation of the pilot activities was not completed.

**Component VI: Information dissemination.** The outputs of the TA have been disseminated to the related parties. In particular, the project proceedings were compiled and published. The full 500-page Vietnamese version and summarized 160-page English version were provided to Leaders and relevant government agencies. The final workshop of TA 3652 was held in Hanoi on 6 April 2004 with around 60 attendees from various international and local agencies.

## Overall Assessment and Rating

Overall, the intended objective of the TA has been achieved. The recommendations brought by the TA had provided helpful and timely inputs for amending number of important legal documents, particularly the issuance of the Decree No. 18 to replace the Decree No. 50 on the roles, functions and organization of OOG. This Decree provides, among other provisions, more concretely that OOG is in charge of "organizing all general activities of the Government and Prime Minister; advising Prime Minister in managing general activities of the national administrative apparatus; assisting the Prime Minister in coordinating of Ministries, Provincial People's Councils and People's Committees to implement Government's and Prime Minister's working plans and programs" (Section 2, Article 1).

Of the six components, five components were successfully completed. The leadership skills of senior officials of ministries and local governments had been strengthened through the effective delivery of the three training modules. The only component that was not completed was the piloting of the implementation of new work procedures. However, as agreed with OOG, this component will be undertaken under the ongoing TA for policy coordination support to OOG (TA-4082). In addition to the achievement of outputs defined in the TA framework, the TA project laid a ground for formulation of the Program Loan (1992-VIE) to support implementation of the PAR Master Program. Overall, the Project was rated "successful" as it achieved its defined objectives.

## Major Lessons Learned

Several important lessons were learned: (i) Timely formulation and government ownership of TA is a key factor to its success as misunderstanding on the ownership issue caused some delay at the start-up; (ii) Since the amendment of legal documents is usually a lengthy consensus building process, a strong ownership and active participation of the EA is critical; and (iii) Consultative workshops with stakeholders during TA design and implementation are useful.

## Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

Further efforts on developing detailed guidance and on capacity building for policy coordination and improved work procedures are desirable for ensuring the TA's sustainability. The unaccomplished component on piloting implementation of new procedures, should be followed up under the TA 4082 on policy coordination to support OOG.