

RETA 6410:
Capacity Development for Monitoring and Evaluation

PROGRESS NOTE
JANUARY – OCTOBER, 2009

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Progress Report: January – October, 2009

Project Title: ADB TA 6410: Capacity Development for Monitoring and Evaluation

Period: January – October, 2009

To: Scott Bayley

From: Arunaselam Rasappan, Team Leader

Copy:

A. INTRODUCTION

This progress report covers the period **January-October, 2009**. The project activities reflect the various actions taken under the ADB TA6410 program covering three major outputs. The work and inputs of the team leader and national consultants from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam are intermittent for the duration of the project.

The ADB TA 6410 Project:

The focus of the project is on the GMS countries of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. The project's overall objective is to improve the range of skills, resources, systems, and attitudes for performance of results based M&E of country partnership strategies, sector strategies, policies, programs, and projects in GMS DMCs.

Three outputs are identified under the project. These are:

- a. Proficiency in M&E will be raised within the GMS DMCs
 - i. Training of Trainers in M&E
 - ii. M&E training for senior policy level officials dealing with M&E in their countries
- b. Research and special studies on ECD
 - i. In-Country Case study
 - ii. ECD Strategy paper
- c. Knowledge sharing and learning for M&E among the GMS DMCs
 - i. Setting up of a M&E CoP
 - ii. Setting up of M&E network/s

The project envisages a number of activities over the life span of the project which is for 24 months from January 2008 to December, 2009.

B. PROGRESS AND STATUS OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The progress with the various activities and outputs to be produced under each of the identified outputs has been generally satisfactory with good results under Output 1 related to capacity-building on M&E. A brief description of the actions taken during the period January-October, 2009 is provided below for each output.

Output 1: Proficiency in M&E raised within the GMS DMCs

- This output is made up of 2 major outputs: a customized Training of Trainers (ToT) project and secondly, M&E training for senior policy level officials from the three countries.
- The ToT project is made up of a series of four M&E workshops which are meant to produce a small group of public sector officials who have the knowledge and basic skills on M&E aspects for the public sector. These officials are expected to play a crucial role in promoting and facilitating M&E aspects for the public sector in their respective countries. They will also be able to conduct basic M&E exposure workshops for government officials in their countries. This is meant to help promote sustainable capacity-building on M&E within the GMS countries. At the end of the four workshops, the trainees will be certified and will be able to conduct downline M&E training for government officials from various agencies in their countries.
- In terms of progress to date, the ToT project has been successfully completed and a group of 16 trainers in M&E have been produced, made up of 6 trainers each in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. However, in the case of Vietnam, two of the trainers dropped out due to health and work reasons.
- This output is considered successful as the ToT trainers from the 3 countries were also able to carry out a 3-day downline M&E workshop for about 20 government officials from their respective countries. The downline in-country M&E workshops were used to determine the capacity and ability of the ToT trainees to deliver an M&E basic course to their government officials. In this respect, the team leader observed these training workshop and was satisfied with the level of knowledge and grasp of the M&E topics and contents that were delivered during such workshops. However, the trainers were advised to work on identifying and building more real life examples for teaching purposes.
- The special M&E exposure training for senior officials at the policy level is meant to help create a small group of senior officials in government who will be involved with and assist with the development and implementation of M&E initiatives in the country. In this respect, a total of 6 senior level officials have been trained on the fundamentals of M&E as well as policy implications for M&E. This is an important output as such senior policy level officials are able to help bring about meaningful changes to the M&E agenda in their countries through their policy level work and inputs.
- Though this output has been completed, it is important to train more of such senior level policy officials. If the budget balances at the end of 2009 are adequate, it is proposed to hold another such workshop for another group of senior level officials from the 3 countries before the project closes.

Output 2: *Research and special studies on ECD*

- This output is linked to and combined with the activities under Output 1. Since Output 2 required country assessments for each country, the team leader combined selected activities under Output 1 and 2. For example, Output 1 required a country assessment of the M&E situation in each country before the training program could be designed and customized. Output 2 also required detailed country-based data collection on the prevailing M&E conditions and developments.
- As such, the country teams worked closely to carry out a detailed country case study using a specially designed set of survey questions. The team members then worked on collecting and compiling the data for their country based on this set of questions. The team then

analysed the data and came up with specific findings related to the M&E environment and challenges in their respective countries.

- The findings from this data collection exercise were then used as the foundation for the background assessment for the ECD country assessment for each country.
- As of October, 2009 the country case studies and assessments have been completed and the ECD strategy paper is being finalized. The paper is expected to be submitted to ADB in early November, 2009 for review, discussion, and approval.
- Once the ECD Strategy paper is approved by ADB, it will then be circulated to the respective countries for consideration by the government. The strategy is then to hold in-country strategic review meetings in each country to discuss the ECD Strategy paper and work with the respective governments to adopt the strategies recommended in the ECD Strategy Paper.
- Through this process, it is hoped that the three countries will be able to adopt a similar set of policy and operational strategies for the M&E in their countries.

Output 3: Knowledge sharing and learning for M&E among the GMS DMCs

- Under this output, the expectation is to establish and to promote increased knowledge-sharing and learning on M&E both within the government and among the GMS DMCs.
- At the beginning of the project, the team leader established an email-based mailing list for all members of the ToT as there was no website or any other form of network-based system in place
- With the direct assistance of the ADB, Manila, a dedicated M&E Community of Practice (CoP) website was then established to provide an avenue for both the ToT members as well as all parties interested in M&E matters to join the grouping.
- The team leader has been working closely with the team members and especially the national consultants to identify and establish a national M&E network or an evaluation society/association. Membership is to be open to government, NGOs, and private sector as well but with government membership initially due to the specific challenges of having evaluation groups in the countries.
- Due to the above challenges, the teams have found it difficult to establish or form a formal network, society, or association on M&E. The Malaysian Evaluation was very helpful in providing technical assistance and advice to the team on the setting up of such a network and even made available its constitution to the team members. However, it is not easy to set up a formal or official evaluation network or society in these countries due to difficulties in getting them officially registered.
- The team leader is working with the national consultants and team members to try and establish the M&E network on an informal basis rather than on a formal basis to avoid the regulatory challenges. The informal network will also be encouraged to use the M&E CoP facility that has been established by the ADB. The downline M&E workshop participants will also be encouraged to join the M&E CoP.
- This output is considered behind schedule due to the in-country regulatory challenges being faced by the team members. There is also a risk that the expected outcome of increased shared knowledge and learning through this network may not be that successful. This is due to several difficulties such as the following:
 - Limited command of English for conversing
 - Time pressure for the members to spend time browsing and chatting
 - Limited access to Internet access at the office
 - Limited or no access to Internet at home
 - Limited access to broadband though dial-up access may be available
 - Apprehension as to expressing personal opinions on issues on M&E and related aspects that may be deemed to be “risky” topics.

- Apprehension as to giving opinions or sharing knowledge and experiences due to specific regulatory or administrative challenges in the respective countries.
- The above reasons were among the factors cited for poor participation in the M&E CoP and including in the other CoPs in Asia and Africa.
- Though initially the team leader managed to get most of the ToT members subscribed to the African and Asian MfDR CoPs, the participation was very limited and over time it became more limited. This situation will likely continue to be a challenge until the above causal factors are addressed.

C. DETAILED ACTIVITIES PROGRESS REPORT

The actual work plan and completed activities for period **January-October, 2009** are as shown in the table below.

D. REMAINING AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

The project is coming to a close by the end of 2009. As mentioned earlier, the progress under each output is good and the planned outputs should be completed in time before the project closes. However, the remaining activities under three outputs are listed below with some strategies for ensuring that the outputs are achieved according to plan. These are identified below.

Table 1: Progress report by Outputs

Output Ref.	Progress as of Oct., 2009	Remaining Actions Nov-Dec., 2009	Recommendations
Output 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Training of Trainers (ToT) project completed (four courses) b. Six trainers in M&E from each country certified (total of 16 trainers) c. Training materials for the M&E downline workshop translated into local language, validated and compiled for use by ToT country trainers. d. Country trainers successfully completed in-country downline M&E workshops for twenty Ministry officials involved with M&E, using their local language. e. Indicative Action Plan for follow-up actions in each country drawn up by team members. These will be incorporated into the project final report. f. Six senior policy level officials from three countries trained on M&E aspects with special focus on M&E policy and implementation. g. Senior officials able to selectively apply the M&E knowledge and issues learnt for M&E policy issues (Cambodia and Laos participants are actually responsible for M&E 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The planned output for the ToT and the policy level officials have been completed and there is no further action required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Since there has been only one downline workshop conducted by the in-country trainers, it would be useful to sponsor another similar workshop for another group of M&E officials in each country. The budget balances are enough for this purpose. b. There should be a follow-up meeting after six months to review and discuss the outcomes and impact of the training carried out and the follow-up actions being taken by both the in-country trainers as well as the government. c. The follow up review should also include the senior level officials who attended the M&E course in KL.

Output Ref.	Progress as of Oct., 2009	Remaining Actions Nov-Dec., 2009	Recommendations
	<p>issues and are already applying the principles learnt in the M&E course)</p>		
Output 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Country case study completed b. Data collection for assessing M&E situation and challenges in the three countries completed c. Preliminary discussions on the ECD strategies held with country teams d. Preliminary discussions on the ECD strategies held with senior officials attending the M&E Course in KL e. Draft ECD Strategy Paper will be ready early November. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Draft ECD Strategy paper to be submitted to ADB for review b. Focused meeting among key officials in ADB (including the program managers from other M&E related projects in ADB) to review and endorse the ECD strategies c. ECD Strategy paper endorsed by ADB to be submitted to the three governments concerned for consideration and adoption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Though the planned output of the ECD Strategy Paper is expected to be completed by December, 2009, it may be useful to consider a number of extension activities beyond the project closing date. d. Though the planned output was to prepare an ECD Strategic Plan or Paper, it would be useful to carry out follow-up actions after the paper is prepared. e. Specifically, it would be useful to use the budget balances to hold ECD Strategic review meetings in each country with key stakeholders from the country b. It would also be useful to support such meetings to ensure that the ECD Strategy paper can be endorsed and adopted by the three countries. c. The project budget balances are sufficient to support the extension actions and activities proposed above.
Output 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The initial networking and discussion forum was set up by the team leader using an email-based discussion forum. However, this was limited to the members of the Training of Trainers (TOT) output. b. The ToT team members from three countries joined as members of the MfDR Communities of Practice (CoP) in Asia as well as in Africa. Members participated in the discussions on the IRBM and M&E aspects in 2008 and in early 2009. Participation was however limited due to several factors. c. The ADB set up a dedicated M&E CoP website and the ToT members were all subscribed to this network. d. Apart from the above, the team leader and ToT members have been working on establishing a country based evaluation society or network. The proposed evaluation society or network has not been established. This has been a challenge due to the regulatory situation and requirements in each country. e. Efforts are underway to try and establish informal networks instead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The proposed informal evaluation network is being worked on and should be established by end of November. b. Members of the informal network will also remain subscribed to the M&E CoP set up and conduct their communication and information sharing through the M&E CoP c. The remaining budget for the above activities is about USD\$1000 per country and is sufficient to cover the expenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Once the planned actions have been completed by end of December, 2009 it would be useful to continue support to the informal evaluation networks that are going to be set up. b. The continued support can be both financial and non-financial. The financial support can be to help the informal networks try to get themselves registered as a formal society. The non-financial support can be in the form of legal and regulatory documents and materials as well as some form of training on managing networks. c. The Malaysian Evaluation Society has promised to support any initiative towards forming national evaluation societies or networks.

Table 2: Progress Details by Outputs and Months: January- October, 2009

		Output 1: Proficiency in M&E Raised		Output 2	Output 3
Month	Dates	1.1 ToT Course for Country M&E Trainers	1.2 M&E Capacity-Building for Policy Level Officials	2.1 ECD Strategy	3.1 Knowledge Sharing & Learning on M&E
January – February, 2009		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two participants were changed for Vietnam and Cambodia. For Vietnam, one of the earlier five participants was replaced by a more senior official from MPI upon the request of the GMS national coordinator. Review of the project's upcoming plans for Course # 3 in Siem Reap, Cambodia Continuation of country case study for each country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of criteria for selection of policy level officials for participation in the policy level course. Ongoing work on developing and designing the customized M&E course for senior policy level officials from the GMS DMCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the country case studies Review discussions with country team members on the country assessment Preparation of preliminary findings and identification of remedial actions required for each country case study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preliminary work with the country ToT members on the setting up of in-country evaluation network. Content design development work on the M&E CoP website with ADB, Manila Preparation of materials for M&E CoP Website Preparation work on identifying and establishing M&E networks with regional and international M&E entities.
March, 2009		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team leader and national consultant from Cambodia (also the main organizer for the Course #3 in Siem Reap) visited Siem Reap to select and arrange for suitable hotel and course related logistics. Arrangements were also finalized with suitable transport providers for the airport pickup and transfers for the course participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparatory work on course work for policy level senior officials The schedule M&E course for senior officials had to be postponed as the nominations received were not suitable and also due to late nominations from one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group discussions on the issues identified in the respective country case study Application of the country case study initial findings during the Course #3 in Siem Reap by the trainers and ToT members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions with team members on their participation and inputs into the CoPs Discussions on the issues and problems faced by the team members in forming national evaluation network/

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of logistics in Siem Reap and finalization of course venue and related logistics arrangements with hotel and other service providers 	<p>country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The M&E workshop was postponed to July, 2009 instead to ensure that only the right level of officials attend this course. 		<p>societies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of draft regulatory documents/materials for supporting formation of national evaluation network in the three countries.
April-June, 2009		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country ToT teams prepare translation of training materials Identification & development of local case examples for use in the scheduled downline M&E workshops for Ministry officials Validation of training materials in the local language Planned downline workshops for June had to be postponed to July as team members requested additional time for the translation and validation Some difficulties were faced with the translation of M&E materials into the local languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparatory work on course work for policy level senior officials Identification of senior officials to participate in the policy level M&E course. Discussions with GMS coordinators and national consultants on the identification and selection of the right candidates for the M&E course in KL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team members continue to collect additional data for specific issue areas. Review of the legislations and regulations regarding M&E aspects in each country. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ToT members continue to remain members of the Asian CoP and the African CoPs Participation is poor due to a range of factors Internal exchange of ideas and issues between members is good through the e-mail based discussion forum
July, 2009		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and preparations by country ToT teams for in- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> M&E Course for senior policy level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The M&E Course for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ToT members present their

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		<p>country downline M&E workshops scheduled for August, 2009.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation of downline M&E workshop teaching materials by national consultants from each country were carried out by the national consultants. • Review and validation of teaching materials by team members • Review and discussion with team leader on issues related to translations and integrity checks on the teaching materials 	<p>officials was held in Kuala Lumpur in July</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two senior level officials from each country attend the M&E Course in Kuala Lumpur. • 	<p>senior officials held in Kuala Lumpur was also used to review and validate the country case studies and the findings under them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused discussions with the senior officials and the national consultants on the country case study were held during the week of the course. • While the senior officials were on agency visits, the national consultants and the resource persons spent time to review the case study materials • The focus group approach helped to review and validate the initial set of findings on the country M&E situation prepared by the ToT members. • 	<p>difficulties and challenges with forming official networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange of ideas and discussions on the participation of the members in the CoPs. • Members are faced with a range of challenges in terms of active participation on the CoPs. • However, they remain members of the CoPs and are still following the discussions and debates though they don't contribute actively.

		Output 1: Proficiency in M&E Raised		Output 2	Output 3
Month	Dates	1.1 ToT Course for Country M&E Trainers	1.2 M&E Capacity-Building for Policy Level Officials	2. 1 ECD Strategy	3.1 Knowledge Sharing & Learning on M&E
August 2009	5-7 Aug 17-19 Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparations for in-country downline training for Cambodia and Vietnam • Conduct of the downline M&E workshop by ToT Trainers for Cambodian government officials in Siem Reap from 5-7 August, 2009 • Conduct of the downline M&E workshop by ToT trainers for Vietnamese government officials in Ha Long Bay from 17-19 August, 2009. • Review and discussions with ToT trainers on the downline workshop <p>Issues & Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The downline workshop for Vietnam faced some challenges which also affects the whole program • The downline workshop was conducted by only 3 of the six trainers. • The following trainers did not participate due to various reasons: • Ms. Van – she was medically unwell due to high blood pressure and she has dropped out of the program. • Mr. Vinh – he has been posted to Lao PDR to the Vietnam Embassy. Though he was supposed to attend, he did not make it • Mr. Nang – he did not turn up at the last minute with the excuse that he was not well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The senior policy level officials who attended the course in Kuala Lumpur were invited to officiate and address the downline M&E workshop participants. • Discussions were held with these senior officials (except in Vietnam) on the progress and follow-up actions in each country pursuant to the July M&E course in KL. • The policy level officials from Cambodia and Laos seem to have followed up with relevant actions on the M&E issues upon return to their countries. In both Laos and Cambodia, these 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with ToT members from Cambodia and Vietnam on the country case study and issues identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with national consultants and ToT members on the possible actions to be taken for the identification and set up of national M&E network and activities. • National consultants are asked to draw up a draft framework for the network

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Month	Dates	1.1 ToT Course for Country M&E Trainers	1.2 M&E Capacity-Building for Policy Level Officials	2.1 ECD Strategy	3.1 Knowledge Sharing & Learning on M&E
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GMS Coordinator for Vietnam is aware of the above issues and challenges Attendance and participation for downline workshops for Cambodia and Lao PDR were very good with full attendance and good participation from both ToT trainers and government officials. Attendance by government officials for downline workshop was not satisfactory with only 13 participants attending though 20 officials were expected to attend. This lack of seriousness on the part of government officials from Vietnam needs to be addressed in future similar programs. 	<p>officials have brought up the M&E issues in their respective agencies and tabled them for discussions in higher level meetings and/or forum.</p>		
Sept. 2009	9-11 Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparations for downline training by ToT Trainers from Laos Arrangement of logistics for downline M&E workshop Conduct of the downline workshop in Laos by the Laos ToT team members from 9-11 Sept., 2009 Post-workshop review with trainers team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting on national M&E issues and challenges with key officials from Lao PDR on country M&E issues. Officials from Ministry of Planning. Meeting with key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review with country national consultants and country teams on work in progress on the initiative to form evaluation networks in the countries Discussions with the national teams on actions to be taken to address legal and regulatory issues for forming evaluation networks.

		Output 1: Proficiency in M&E Raised		Output 2	Output 3
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				<p>Vietnamese officials from MPI, UNDP, and ADB VRM on M&E issues and challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with key officials from MoF, Finance Institute, and ODA Coordination office on M&E issues and challenges 	
October, 2009	<p>7-9 Oct., 2009</p> <p>10 Oct</p> <p>11-20 Oct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparations of materials for Course # 4 in Shanghai, PRC from 7-9 October, 2009 • Finalization of all logistics arrangements for Course #4 • Preparation of teaching and testing materials for course #4 by resource persons • Conduct of the Course #4 from 7-9 Oct at AFDC Shanghai • ADB one-day conference on impact evaluation attended by all ToT trainers, team leader and resource persons • ToT Trainers attend the SHIPDET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This output was completed as of July, 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on this was slowed down due to the team being busy with the Course #4 held in Shanghai. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country teams met a few times to discuss the regulatory requirements and documentations • Cambodia was the only one which showed some progress with the paperwork but faced constraints in getting it registered. • Vietnam and Laos were having difficulties with their paperwork and meeting requirements for the setting up of the national M&E network. • It is unlikely that the national level networks can be set up.

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Month	Dates	1.1 ToT Course for Country M&E Trainers	1.2 M&E Capacity-Building for Policy Level Officials	2. 1 ECD Strategy	3.1 Knowledge Sharing & Learning on M&E
		program for 10 days			The team leader has urged the members to focus on setting up of informal networks instead and making use of the M&E CoP instead. Work is in progress on this.

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Team Leader
ADB TA 6410

3 November, 2009