

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division : ERM

TA No., Country and Name		Amount Approved:\$1,000,000	
TA 8141-REG: Asian Development Outlook 2013		Revised Amount: \$1,000,000	
Executing Agency Asian Development Bank	Source of Funding TASF-IV	Amount Undisbursed: \$100,520.02	Amount Utilized: \$899,479.98
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<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>The research and development technical assistance (RDTA) project supported the production of the Asian Development Outlook (ADO), a flagship publication of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), showcasing the institution's knowledge of the region's macroeconomic environment and challenges. The ADO provides insights into the economic challenges faced by Asia and the Pacific, and recommends appropriate policy responses. Its content informs ADB Management opinion and guides institutional views about the region's macroeconomic prospects and important development issues. As such, high-quality analysis is continuously needed to ensure that the report remains a relevant, credible, and independent source of information for policy dialogues and policy formulation in ADB's developing member countries (DMCs). This objective has been the rationale of the annual ADO TAs since 2004.</p> <p><b>Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs</b></p> <p>The RDTA was expected to influence the environment within which policy formulation in selected DMCs occurs. The anticipated outcome was that the ADO is cited by the media and economic researchers within and outside ADB. The expected outputs under the TA were disseminated: <i>ADO 2013</i>, <i>ADO 2013 Update</i>, and two ADO Supplement reports.</p> <p><b>Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities</b></p> <p>The Terms of Reference of the consultants provided adequate indicators and operational guidelines for the implementation of the TA. A total of about 45 person-months of international individual consultants and about 14 months of local individual consultants were engaged in accordance with the guidelines on consulting services. Of these, 13 economic consultants (about 22 person-months of international consulting) were engaged to provide background papers on the theme topics to strengthen the analysis of the <i>ADO</i> and its <i>Update</i>. Experts delivered quality outputs under tight delivery schedules. The equipment purchased under the RDTA—a desktop computer—was turned over to the succeeding TA 8444 REG: Asian Development Outlook 2014 as it is still being used as a dedicated terminal for the CEIC database.</p> <p>A writers' workshop was conducted to guide the authors and help improve the content and quality of the country chapters. Two theme chapter workshops were also arranged where the background papers for the reports' theme chapters were presented and discussed. Overall, ADB's performance as the executing agency was satisfactory.</p> <p><b>Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome</b></p> <p>The RDTA produced two flagship publications that provided comprehensive assessments of developing Asia's macroeconomic performance. These reports offered projections on key macroeconomic indicators for ADB's DMCs for the years 2013 and 2014.</p> <p>Moreover, the publications featured timely topics that have important implications for developing Asia's sustained growth. The theme chapter of the <i>ADO 2013</i> focused on Asia's energy challenge. It was prepared in close coordination with the ADB Energy Community of Practice. The report points out that developing Asia faces a threefold energy challenge: (i) the region's energy needs will expand in tandem with its growing economic growth but its endowment is insufficient; (ii) further scaling up its current energy mix would do much harm to the environment; and (iii) access to affordable energy should be made available to the poor for growth to be truly inclusive. Part of the solution is to formulate policies to restrain demand. Expanded supply must also draw from renewable sources, such as wind and solar. At the same time, the region needs to invest in making conventional power cleaner and more efficient. Asia must also aspire to the degree of regional cooperation and integration in energy that currently prevails in Europe to expedite its benefits. The <i>ADO 2013 Update</i> theme discussed governance and public service delivery. The report emphasizes that strengthening governance is key among reform priorities. As most Asians' impression of</p>			

governance come from their experience with public services, improving public service delivery is therefore an effective entry point toward wider governance reform that can provide immediate benefits in making growth more inclusive.

The *ADO 2013* and *ADO 2013 Update* were finished in time for their launches on 9 April 2013 and 2 October 2013, respectively. The main launches for both publications were held in Hong Kong, China, with several resident missions holding simultaneous press conferences to present the *ADO* in their countries. Dissemination activities were also conducted in Japan, North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Malaysia to expand the reach of these reports. The activities included panel discussions and seminars with academic institutions and think-tanks to disseminate the results and key messages of the publications. Presentations were held in various government and non-government offices, including the Hong Kong Securities and Investment Institute, Fung Global Institute, US State Department, Australian Treasury, European Institute of Asian Studies, the Malaysia Institute for Economic Research, among others.

The launches of these flagship publications generated significant coverage from both global and regional top-tier media. DER monitored around 2,000 news articles covering the *ADO*, including major print media like the International Herald Tribune, Financial Times, and the Wall Street Journal. In 2013, *ADO 2013* was the number one knowledge product accessed in the ADB website with 46,407 pageviews and 35,542 downloads. *ADO 2013 Update* was also in the top 10 at seventh place with 11,535 pageviews and 6,947 downloads. Two *ADO* Supplement reports were also posted in July and December 2013 on the ADB website. These reports aim to provide quarterly updates of macroeconomic forecasts between *ADO* and *ADO Update* releases.

In addition to these, the TA also produced the book entitled *Asia's Energy Challenge: Key Issues and Policy Options*, which was co-published with Routledge, an international publisher of academic books and journals. The book is a collection of the background papers of the *ADO 2013* theme chapter and provides a more detailed and comprehensive discussion of the key issues and policy options in the development of Asia's energy security.

The *ADO* and its *Update* have been used within ADB as a source of information on DMCs, and as inputs to for the ADB Annual Meeting country briefs and the Basic Statistics. The information and analysis drawn from these publications have also informed ADB Management, guided institutional views about prospective developments in the region, and been used in the preparation of Management briefing notes and speeches. The publications have also served as references for external researchers. A search in Google Scholar produced around 90 articles citing *ADO 2013* and *ADO 2013 Update* as one of the references.

#### **Overall Assessment and Rating**

The RDTA was rated successful. It has achieved its desired outcome, which is for the *ADO* to be cited by the media and economic researchers within and outside ADB. The *ADO* has become one of the main vehicles for promoting ADB's knowledge and expertise about the region and is one of the more prominent publications carrying ADB's name.

#### **Major Lessons**

The introduction of a two-year cycle for background research on issues relevant to the theme topic proved useful in advance planning, in-depth research, and wider consultations on the theme chapter topics. Also, by collaborating with an ADB Community of Practice (i.e., Energy CoP), the *ADO* has greatly benefited from the stock of knowledge already existing within ADB, while at the same time being contributing to the continuous enhancement of the CoPs, through internal and external learning for CoP members, ADB, and its DMCs.

#### **Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions**

If applicable, collaboration with other CoPs (now called Thematic and Sector Groups) on the *ADO* theme chapters is suggested as this could significantly benefit the analytical content and operational relevance of the theme chapters. To avoid delays in the *ADO* process, continuous review to identify bottlenecks and improve the *ADO* production process.

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