

Guidelines
February 2020

Technical Assistance Completion Report Validation Guidelines

Asian Development Bank

Independent
Evaluation  ADB

Abbreviations

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
COBP	–	country operations business plan
DMC	–	developing member country
DMF	–	design and monitoring framework
IED	–	Independent Evaluation Department
KSTA	–	knowledge and support technical assistance
PCR	–	project completion report
PPTA	–	project preparatory technical assistance
TA	–	technical assistance
TCR	–	technical assistance completion report
TCRV	–	technical assistance completion report validation
TRTA	–	transaction technical assistance

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

1. The Board of Directors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) assigned the Independent Evaluation Department (IED) to establish a technical assistance completion report validation (TCRV) system by mid-2019. These guidelines specify the framework for validating technical assistance completion reports (TCRs) to capture lessons learned from completed technical assistance (TA) operations and to improve accountability for achieving results, the quality of completion reports, and the independence of project ratings.¹ The validation of TCRs follows the principles, processes, and criteria for the validation of project ratings and for rating the quality of a project completion report.² These guidelines apply to both core and non-core evaluation criterion for assessing public and private sector TA operations. Assessments using the core criteria of *relevance*, *effectiveness*, and *efficiency* provide insights into development results and TA performance. The non-core criterion of *sustainability* considers the likelihood that TA results will be sustained over time.

2. IED has prepared these guidelines in consultation with a technical working group drawn from various departments.³ The guidelines are designed to ensure harmonized assessments and ratings standards between the departments administering the TA and IED. The guidelines aim to provide the basis for updating ADB's project administration instructions, which guide the preparation of self-evaluated TCRs by the TAs' administering offices.⁴ The guidelines are in line with ADB's Updated Design and Monitoring Framework (DMF) Guidelines, 2019.⁵ The approach incorporates good practices from comparator institutions.⁶

B. Role of Technical Assistance in Asian Development Bank Operations

3. Initially, TA in ADB focused on project preparation and implementation support. However, a growing proportion of TA work began to move beyond the project level to address wider development constraints and opportunities. As countries in the Asia and the Pacific region move toward middle and upper middle-income status,⁷ they start to face challenges (e.g., institutional constraints) that need to be addressed in a phased and targeted manner, for example via TA operations. Also, the type of support needed by ADB developing member countries (DMCs) has evolved from basic infrastructure investments and capacity development to more technical or specialized knowledge transfer. ADB has responded to this trend by placing greater emphasis on support for reforms, policy development, research, regional priorities, and knowledge management. The TA modality has become an increasingly important instrument in supporting this transition.

¹ "TA Project" in these guidelines refers to both public and private TA operations approved by ADB.

² ADB. 2016. *Guidelines for the Evaluation of Public Sector Operations*. Manila. These are underpinned by evaluation criteria, based on the 1991 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development–Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) principles for evaluation of development assistance.

³ The initial consultation was with Procurement, Portfolio and Financial Management Department and the Strategy, Policy and Review Department. Representatives of the South Asia Department and the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department were added at the succeeding technical working group meetings.

⁴ Project Administration Instructions No. 6.08. Available at: <http://www.adb.org/documents/project-administration-instructions>.

⁵ ADB. 2019. *Guidelines for Preparing A Design and Monitoring Framework*. Manila.

⁶ Department for International Development, International Finance Corporation, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, African Development Bank, and International Fund for Agricultural Development.

⁷ All except Afghanistan and Nepal are expected to become middle-income countries by 2020.

C. Strategy 2030 Focus on Technical Assistance

4. The ADB Strategy 2030 states that ADB will strengthen its role as a knowledge provider by working closely with its DMCs to identify their needs and to produce the most relevant knowledge products and services. It also specifies that ADB will reinforce its One ADB approach, bringing together expertise and knowledge from a range of areas across the institution.⁸ This has intensified the focus on TA and the need to capitalize on investment in TA as a contribution to institutional and partnership knowledge building. A robust process of TCR validation will provide the basis for assessing the quality and outcomes of TA operations, as well as an opportunity for generating knowledge (e.g., by synthesizing lessons learned through TA operations).

II. PROFILE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AT THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

A. Types of Technical Assistance

5. ADB seeks to “provide high-quality TA that has tangible development impact through (i) synergy between ADB lending and non-lending products at country and regional levels; and (ii) stronger developing member country (DMC) involvement and ownership at all levels, and greater use of national systems.”⁹ There are two main TA types:

- (i) **Transaction technical assistance (TRTA).** TA that: (a) directly benefits a project, which is, or will be, financed by ADB, (e.g., project preparation, project implementation, capacity support, policy advice as part of policy-based operations); or (b) helps develop a public–private partnership.
- (ii) **Knowledge and support technical assistance (KSTA).** All other TA (e.g., general institutional capacity building, policy advice, and research and development).¹⁰

6. During the period 2008–2016,¹¹ TA in ADB was categorized into four types: (i) project preparatory TA (PPTA), (ii) capacity development TA (CDTA), (iii) policy advisory TA (PATA), and, (iv) research and development TA (RDTA).¹² The relationship between the current and previous types of TA is illustrated in Figure 1.

⁸ ADB. 2018. *Strategy 2030: Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.

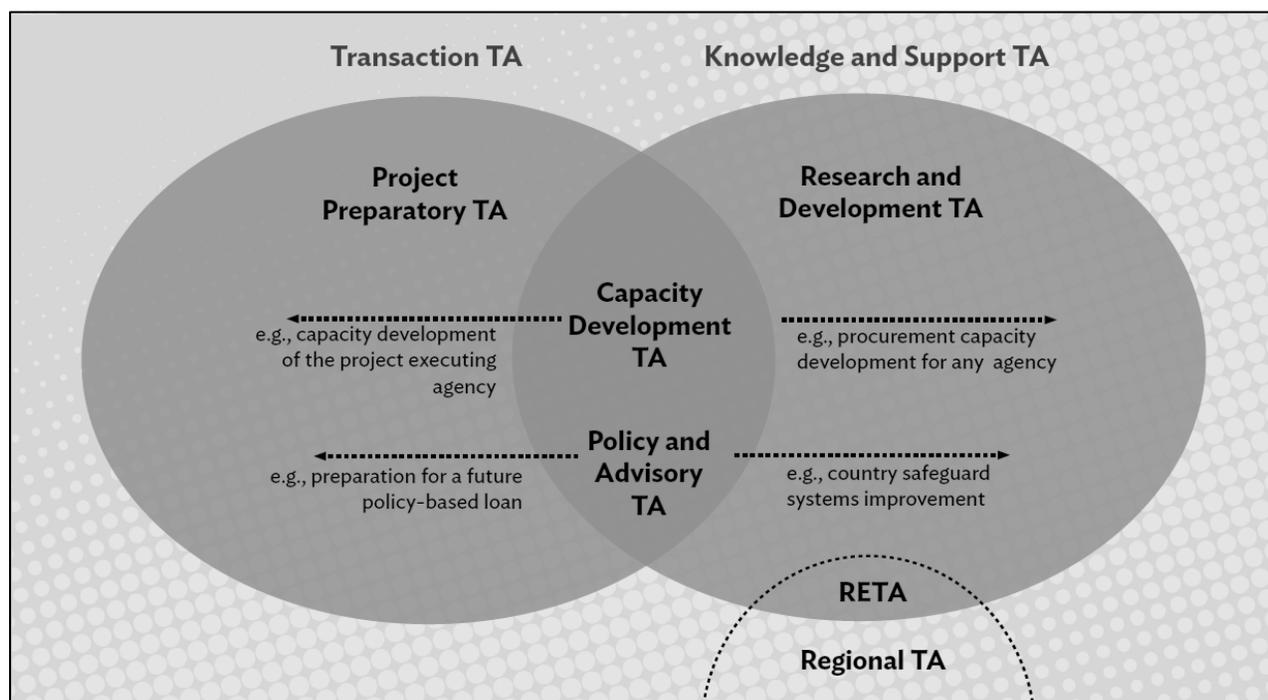
⁹ ADB. 2008. *Increasing the Impact of the Asian Development Bank’s Technical Assistance Program*. Manila.

¹⁰ ADB. 2017. *Technical Assistance Reforms – Improving the Speed, Relevance and Quality of Technical Assistance Operations*. Manila.

¹¹ From 2002 to 2008, there were only three types of TA: ADTA, PPTA, and RETA.

¹² ADF. 2010. *Review of Technical Assistance Special Fund Operations – Measures for Improving Effectiveness*, Manila. p.15.

Figure 1: Types of Technical Assistance at the Asian Development Bank



Source: Asian Development Bank.

B. Programmatic and Regional Technical Assistance

7. **Technical assistance facility.** TA facilities can be used to undertake related TA activities for two or more ensuing or ongoing projects in a DMC, or group of DMCs in the case of regional TRTA, when financing is available for the full scope of the TRTA. This allows the same consultants to be engaged across several projects for similar assignments under a single consulting services contract. Consultants financed through the TA facility can then be mobilized as needed to prepare projects. The TA facility is counted as one TA operation.

8. **Technical assistance cluster.** A TA cluster adopts an approach similar to that of the multitranche financing facility, where approval is sought for the overall TA program, while individual subprojects are approved using simpler business processes. Large multi-year TA, proposed for a period that extends beyond annual TA resource availability, can be implemented in phases as and when TA resources become available. Subprojects may support one or more projects in a DMC for TRTA, or group of DMCs in the case of regional TRTA. Consultants may be engaged across subprojects to reduce the number of consulting services contracts. Each subproject TA is counted as one TA operation.

9. **Regional technical assistance.** Under the former classification, PPTA, PATA, CDTA, or RDTA that covered more than one DMC was processed as a regional TA. Under the 2016 TA reforms, TRTA (including facilities) and KSTAs (including clusters) may be provided to more than one DMC. Such TA is also considered to be regional TA.

C. Technical Assistance Resources

10. The current Technical Assistance Special Fund is the main source of funding for TA projects. However, earmarked funds may also contribute to TA, e.g., funding from a specific partner or from designated funds with a specific thematic or operational purpose. Since 2009, ADB TA approvals have expanded from an annual average of \$231 million in 2004–2008 to \$321 million in 2009–2016. Approximately three-quarters of TA is processed by the regional departments, with the rest implemented by other departments, including the Private Sector Operations Department.

III. FEATURES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND COMPLETION

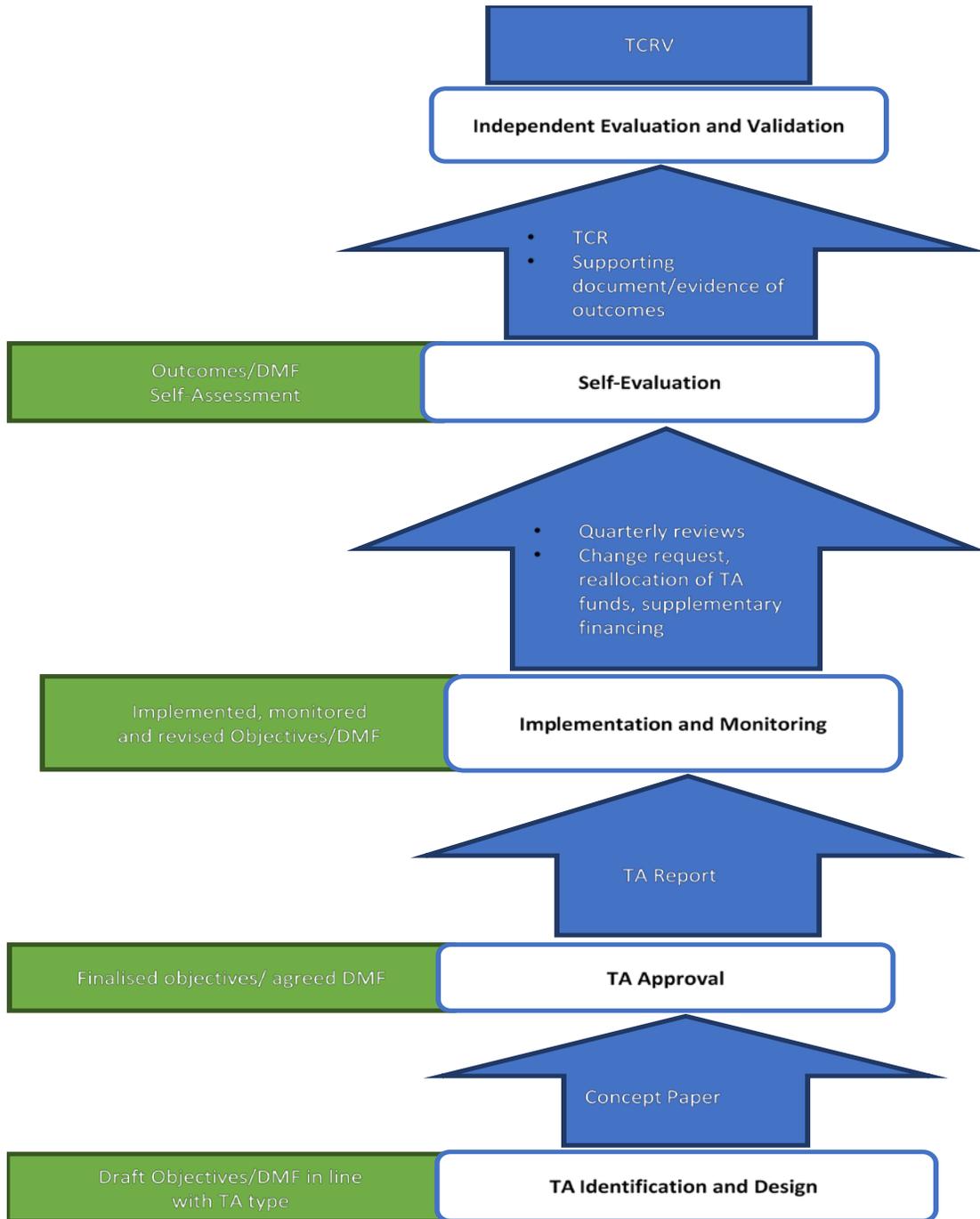
A. Technical Assistance Design, Implementation, and Completion Process

11. The ADB Guidelines for Preparing a Design and Monitoring Framework (DMF) clearly state that TA requires a DMF and that this provides the basis for approval.¹³ This implies that indicators for outputs and outcomes need to be established and designed and monitored during implementation. However, TRTAs do not require a concept paper or DMF. Project preparation TRTAs do not require a TA completion report (TCR) if the project ensues.

12. TA design and implementation can occur at several different levels within ADB. Country-level TA design and implementation follows the same path as that for investment projects. National TA priorities may be identified as part of the country partnership strategy or may be designed in response to a specific government request or identified need. As part of the country partnership strategy and country operations business plan (COBP) programming processes, specific government requests and needs are identified. If a KSTA is not listed in an approved COBP or annual work plan, it may be processed, but the concept of the KSTA requires higher level approval. A country knowledge plan is prepared as part of the country partnership strategy to identify country knowledge needs and priorities; specific KSTA pipelines and knowledge products are then presented in the COBP. Once the TA has been identified, the TA design process follows the process illustrated in Figure 2.

¹³ ADB. 2019. *Guidelines for Preparing a Design and Monitoring Framework*. Manila.

Figure 2: Technical Assistance Completion Report Design, Implementation, Completion, and Validation Pathway



Source: Independent Evaluation Department.

13. In addition, TA may be developed as a strategic approach to institutional operation and development, led by a specific regional department, the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department, the Private Sector Operations Department, or nonoperations departments (e.g., the Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department or the Procurement,

Portfolio, and Financial Management Department) within ADB. Regional TA operations are also subject to a design and approval process, just the same as other TAs, despite the fact that they cover a wider variety of activities. Once a TA initiative has been completed, the concerned ADB department should prepare a TCR (i.e., a self-evaluation), which will be then validated by IED, as described in the next section.

IV. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT VALIDATION PROCESS

14. IED's pilot testing of a sample of TCRs in 2018 indicated that their assessments and evaluability varied widely, in terms of core evaluation criteria. IED's two principal concerns pertained to:

(i) an unsystematic approach to rating evaluation criteria (e.g., some criteria were not assessed); and (ii) the lack of rigor that was applied to some assessments (i.e., insufficient evidence and/or justifications were provided). These suggest there is scope for improving the quality of TCRs.

15. The TCR validation exercise carried out by IED will be a desk review. It is anticipated that it will lead to the following expected benefits:

- (i) better absorption, translation, and distillation of knowledge within ADB, especially lessons learned from TA operations, leading to better design for future TA operations;
- (ii) improved analysis of TA results and better accountability for ADB shareholders and clients;
- (iii) a better basis for setting priorities for future TA assistance by ADB Management and the Board of Directors in their role as stewards of ADB's TA operations;
- (iv) independent project ratings (the IED validated rating will be the official project rating);
- (v) greater incentives to departments and offices to produce high-quality TCRs, since they will be independently validated; and
- (vi) validated TCRs that will provide useful inputs to other evaluations, economic sector work, and country partnership strategy formulation.

A. Selection of Technical Assistance Completion Reports for Validation

16. IED will validate a sufficient number of TCRs in order to provide lessons, learning, and knowledge generated by TA resources. Since ADB produces 180 to 200 TCRs per year, IED will purposively select a representative sample of these to be validated. This will allow IED to optimize its staff resources by focusing only on the more important TA operations. The validation selection will be done in consultation with the concerned department in order to ensure adequate geographical, thematic, and TA type coverage.

17. In this regard, IED proposes to establish an exclusion rule that will target a specific number of TCRs to be validated each year, while ensuring that various TA types are well-represented. In the case of departments administering TA operations, the exclusion rule will help them determine the TA operations that may not need TCRs, specified below.

18. The following types of TA operations will be excluded from TCR validation process:

- (i) TRTA that resulted in a loan, including TRTA projects for implementation purposes (e.g., TA attached to a loan);¹⁴
- (ii) all TA operations that are mainly used by ADB departments to engage TA consultants every year or used mainly for ADB staff expenditure in support of ADB publications along with development purposes for DMCs;¹⁵
- (iii) TA operations that support logistics and travel expenditures for the conduct of conferences and workshops, aimed at raising awareness, consultation or dissemination,
- (iv) TA operations to fulfill ADB's legal or membership (including subscription, software license) obligations; and
- (v) TA operations amounting to less than \$225,000.¹⁶

19. For IED, a purposive sampling approach is proposed for TCR validation. For TA operations that need to produce TCRs, IED will target a specific number of TCRs to be validated each year, either by setting a particular percentage of the TCRs or specific number of TCRs. This purposeful sampling will be across regions, TA types, size and thematic areas, and will be carried out in consultation with the concerned departments at the beginning of each year. This is the most appropriate method of selecting TCRs for validation and IED will exert its best efforts to ensure that the TCR sample population is as equitable and representative as possible.

B. Timing and Preparation of Technical Assistance Completion Reports for Validation

20. An annual work program for TCRVs will be prepared as part of the IED work program for each year. The sample of TCRs to be evaluated will be based on the actual list of TCRs that were circulated in the previous year, and a purposive sampling framework will be applied as outlined in Section IV.A.¹⁷ Once the sample has been identified, IED will prepare a summary of the proposed TCR validation distribution by region and/or theme.

C. Documentation Required for Validation

21. The validation will consider TCR documentation and any other reference documents referred to in the TCR that are available from the offices concerned, e-Ops, or hyperlinks. Additional data or information not contained in the TCR may be submitted by operations departments during interdepartmental commenting stage.

D. Validation Approval

22. The TCR validation report will be subjected to internal IED review process and then circulated to the concerned operations department in draft form. The relevant department will be requested to provide comments on the draft report within 10 working days. IED will incorporate pertinent new information or evidence that enhances or adds value to the assessment. IED

¹⁴ TRTA projects for implementation purposes will be validated as part of the PCR validation process for the ensuing investment project.

¹⁵ TA projects, e.g. those that complement administrative budgets for the conduct of evaluation and workshops, administered by IED are excluded from the validation process.

¹⁶ TA projects with an approved amount of less than \$225,000 may be included for validation if the TA demonstrates innovation and/or high potential for learning.

¹⁷ A TCR has to be circulated within six months of the TA financial closing date.

management will then conduct a final review of the TCR validation report before approval and posting to IED's website for public dissemination.¹⁸

V. VALIDATION METHODOLOGY

A. Validation Process

23. The TCR validation process will be guided by these guidelines and the TCRV template (Chapter V, Section C and Appendix 1). It will entail desk reviews and cross-checking of the TCR, the TA report, and related documents and will be based on a rapid assessment of a TA's performance.

B. Rating Methodology

24. A TCRV will provide an assessment of the TA based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development–Development Assistance Committee (OECD–DAC) Evaluation Criteria.¹⁹ The overall success rating of a TA operation will be based on assessments of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, with a corresponding rating scale. The compound overall rating will not include the sustainability criterion, which will be assessed qualitatively. The calculation method is explained below. An explanation of each criterion is provided, including guidance on how it is to be assessed, and the standards for assigning ratings.

25. **Relevance.** The principles for the relevance assessment should cover three key dimensions: (i) strategic alignment—the TA should be aligned with and appropriate to a country's or region's development needs and priorities and ADB's strategic plans and programs; and (ii) design relevance in terms of (a) the results chain and the soundness of the causal relationships between activities, outputs, outcome, and impact; (b) the appropriateness of its design in terms of the configuration of components and technical soundness to achieve the envisaged development results; and (iii) the rationale for the TA operations, including the choice of the TA type.²⁰

26. TA is deemed relevant at the approval stage and it should continue to be relevant even after completion. The continued relevance of the TA from approval, throughout its implementation and after its completion, needs to be assessed. However, unforeseen external factors (e.g., changes in market conditions, natural disasters or conflict, new government priorities, or political or economic developments) may necessitate changes in scope or TA design to ensure the continued relevance of the TA. If the TA design was changed due to an unforeseeable event, this should not be counted as negative point, as long as this was a timely and appropriate response during implementation. However, a delayed and/or inadequate response could be assessed as negative. In the case of changes made for reasons that should have been foreseen during TA preparation, or as a result of design deficiencies, the need for such changes would be considered

¹⁸ TCRVs for PSOD TA will be redacted for confidential information, subject to clearance from the concerned parties. With regard TRTA projects, only those that did not lead to loan projects will be validated. TRTA projects for project implementation support (i.e., TA attached to a loan) will be assessed in the project or program completion report for the loan. and are therefore not validated.

¹⁹ OECD–DAC. 1991. *Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance*. Paris.

²⁰ TRTA projects to support a project or program loan need to be considered both as distinct initiatives and in relation to their expected contribution to the investment project outcomes they were linked to. This includes consideration of why the investment project did not proceed (e.g., because of contextual factors beyond the design process, because of the findings of the TRTA, or for other reasons).

negative in assessing relevance. For TA operations with formally approved scope changes, the relevance will be assessed from the point of view of the original objective at design, and the revised objectives at the time of TA closing. The reason for the changes and the extent to which these were justified will affect both the relevance rating and the lessons learned. The TCR should assess the appropriateness of these changes to maintain or enhance the relevance of a TA.

27. The assessment of a TA project's relevance may also depend on its timing. Contextual changes (e.g., policy and legislative changes or technological advances) during the course of the TA may also strengthen or weaken relevance. The assessment should determine how well the TA responded to any changes during the course of its implementation.

28. The relevance assessment should consider whether the TA design elements and resource allocations were commensurate with the expected outputs and outcome. The TA's innovative design elements and good practices should be given due consideration when assigning a rating for relevance. Innovation may trigger unforeseen challenges, resulting in valid design changes. Innovation also has the potential to generate valuable lessons that could strengthen the relevance of the TA. For larger and/or cluster TA, the use of composite TA should be assessed to identify whether the combination of TA projects served a particular purpose that could not be addressed through an alternative approach, and whether the TA projects aligned with, and contributed to, the overarching purpose.

29. In assessing relevance, the reviewer should take the following specific points into consideration.

- (i) **Strategic alignment.** What was the extent of the alignment or consistency of the TA's objectives with ADB's and national or regional priorities and strategies? Did the government specifically request this TA? Have efforts been made to synergize efforts with those of other development institutions or to minimize duplication?
- (ii) **Relevance of TA design in terms of the results chain and appropriateness.** For the results chain, was the DMF's results chain sound (coherent, connected, and complete)? Were the envisaged activities, outputs, outcome (or benefits), and impact realistic, given the specified time frame, funding and country capacity? For the appropriateness of the TA design, were the TA components appropriately designed? Were potential strategic risks and/or constraints taken into consideration when designing the TA, and if so, what mechanisms were put in place to overcome and/or mitigate them? Were sufficient resources allocated to properly address TA requirements? Was there sufficient management capacity available to implement the TA as designed? Was the preparation for TA implementation (e.g., the timeline for approvals and funds flow) adequately considered? In cases where there was no DMF for a particular TA, the project may be assessed based on how the activities, as formulated, logically contributed to the intended development results.
- (iii) **Rationale and choice of technical assistance type.** Was the development constraint or issue that the TA was designed to address clearly stated, with adequate substantiation in terms of supporting data? Was the immediate need for the TA clearly argued? What were the main reasons for the TA project? Was the chosen operational modality (i.e., TA as opposed to program or project investment lending) or TA type the most appropriate for addressing the identified constraints? What was the justification (i.e., the role and form) of ADB's involvement? Were the

target group and/or TA stakeholders and participants clearly defined? What were the expected constraints for the project?

30. **Ratings.** A TA can be rated *highly relevant*, *relevant*, *less than relevant*, or *irrelevant*. The assessment of relevance should be based on the evidence available. The weighting across the three dimensions should be applied equally. The ratings should be assigned as follows:

- (i) **Highly relevant.** The intended TA outcome was fully aligned with stated development priorities and related ADB strategies. The project design and results chain were sound and there were no design deficiencies. The TA design clearly corresponded to the allocated TA type, e.g., it related to policy or advisory changes, capacity development, or other knowledge and skills development at the time of the design. The TA rationale was well articulated. TA with innovative features or transformative effects had significant demonstration value for future TA.
- (ii) **Relevant.** The intended TA outcome was largely aligned with stated development priorities and related ADB strategies. The design and results chain were generally appropriate. There were no major deficiencies noted in the TA design or readiness for implementation; the design corresponded to the allocated TA type. Timely changes to address minor design deficiencies were undertaken during TA implementation. The TA's rationale was generally well articulated.
- (iii) **Less than relevant.** The intended TA outcome was not aligned with nor significantly consistent with country development priorities or ADB strategies. The TA design had significant and foreseeable deficiencies that were not addressed in a timely manner. The design did not fully correspond to the TA type. Design issues seriously affected the delivery of targeted outputs and intended outcomes. The rationale for the TA was not coherently explained.
- (iv) **Irrelevant.** The intended TA outcome was not in line with country priorities or with corresponding ADB strategies. There was no rationale for the TA operation. The TA design was technically unsound or not feasible, which greatly hindered or deterred the attainment of the envisaged development results.

31. **Effectiveness.** The effectiveness of a TA project should be assessed according to: (i) whether the intended outcome identified in the DMF was achieved, including any unintended outcome; and (ii) the extent to which the outputs that were crucial in achieving the envisaged outcome were achieved. TA projects should be assessed on the same basis as other projects, i.e., the outcome or TA objective should have been achieved, regardless of whether the TA covered capacity development, policy reforms, institutional development, or research and development. For TA projects without formal DMFs, there is a need to ascertain whether the indicated project output was effectively met in line with the expected objective. If the output was met, but the outcome was not achieved, the TA should be assessed as effective but the TCR should reflect the reasons for the outcome not being achieved in the lessons learned section.

32. The assessment should succinctly discuss what went right and what went wrong, including factors that may have contributed to or constrained the achievement of the intended outcome. In terms of outputs, the most important performance targets or indicators should be assessed against baseline targets indicated in the DMF. Specifically, the extent or degree to which the TA project's actual outputs contributed to the outcome should be assessed. The

assessment should consider the criticality of outputs (i.e., outputs that significantly contributed to the attainment of targeted outcome). The assessment should also carefully consider attribution issues. For instance, even if the intended TA outcome (specified as a national, regional or sector level goal or benefit) was achieved, this may have been due to activities or outputs other than those covered by the TA operation. With regard to such outcomes, the analysis should consider the relative scale of the TA outputs and activities related to other factors.

33. Unless the TA was restructured (i.e., budget, scope, and/or objectives were revised), the assessment should take into account only those outputs that were originally envisaged, as these formed the basis for the TA's funding approval. Changes to original outputs, including concomitant funding, should be explicitly indicated. Assessment of the TA's effectiveness in relation to the revised output targets should therefore be considered.

34. In assessing effectiveness, the reviewer should take the following specific points into consideration:

- (i) **Criticality of performance targets or indicators.** Which outputs contributed most to the outcome? How important were these indicators in terms of financial value and contribution to outcome? Did the designed indicators help guide progress toward the expected project outcome? What unexpected positive and/or negative factors impacted on the achievement of indicators?
- (ii) **Contribution to outcome.** Output assessment should consider the extent to which targeted TA products, activities, and services, as indicated in the DMF's results chain, were delivered and contributed to project outcome. Activities and outputs should be quantified as far as possible, e.g., numbers of participants, documents produced, demonstration units established. An assessment should be made of whether project outputs and activities were completed fully and satisfactorily? Were all outcome and output targets achieved? If not, how many? The assessment should also consider evidence of any unexpected positive or negative results (e.g., generation of knowledge or download rates for publications as a proxy indicator for use). Were the TA project output milestones achieved in a manner that would support the projected outcome?
- (iii) **Constraints encountered.** What were the constraints encountered during project implementation? What measures were taken to mitigate these? How did the constraints impede the achievement of outputs and outcome? Were these measures successful?

35. **Ratings.** A TA can be rated *highly effective*, *effective*, *less than effective*, or *ineffective*. Where there is a difference in the performance for different activities or approaches, this should be clearly noted to assist in assigning a performance rating. These ratings should be assigned as follows:

- (i) **Highly effective.** The TA outcome and output targets were fully achieved and at least one key outcome was exceeded. There were no issues related to outcome or outputs achieved.
- (ii) **Effective.** The TA results (i.e., outcome and outputs), as targeted, were essentially achieved (close to 100%). In cases where data constraints hindered full validation

or the evaluation of TA outcomes, the assessment should ascertain whether all envisaged TA outputs and activities were met or completed and whether the pathway of achievement for key outcomes (including recipient behavior and performance) can be substantiated.

- (iii) **Less than effective.** TA results were not fully met. There were moderate shortcomings that hindered the achievement of outputs and outcome targets.
- (iv) **Ineffective.** TA results were not met. There were serious shortcomings or issues with the TA project. The TA failed to complete most of its activities and outputs, which in turn, led to the non-attainment of the expected outcome.

36. **Efficiency.** TCRs have typically assessed efficiency in terms of TA extensions, funds utilization, disbursements and savings, consultants' recruitment, and other process efficiency factors. Time and cost factors (including delays, variance to budget, and savings) have been the aspects most often highlighted. In general, TA operations covering, for example, capacity development, policy advice, research and development, cannot be subjected to rate of return estimations. The lack of qualitative assessments and this focus on process efficiency have constrained meaningful assessments of the efficiency of TA projects.

37. In assessing efficiency, basic financial data (i.e., budget allocation per activity, planned and actual), should be considered, including use of resources (i.e., funds, expertise, time) for different components under the TA. The assessment of timeliness should cover the delays that often occur during the TA start-up period. There is a need to determine whether any start-up delays were related to design issues (if so, this should affect the relevance rating) or whether they were due to implementation factors. In terms of implementation, an assessment should be made of whether any shortcomings were experienced that delayed implementation. In general, the assessment should elaborate on how financial and other resources were used to generate expenditure and the actual results of this expenditure (e.g., how the TA operation spurred private sector investment in a sector or facilitated replication of technology). In cases where there was no DMF for a particular TA, the project may be assessed on whether the activities, as formulated, were implemented within the expected timeframe and budget.

38. Specifically, the following three points should be considered:

- (i) **Process efficiency.** Was the TA delivered within budget? Was the specified budget appropriate for the TA project? Were funds disbursed in a timely manner? Did the TA experience any delays? If so, what was the effect on the completion of activities and outputs and the achievement of the targeted outcome? Could these delays have been reasonably mitigated? Was the project well managed with regard to the delivery of project activities and were resources (human and financial) applied in an appropriate manner? Was financial reporting and fiduciary compliance satisfactory?
- (ii) **Cost comparison.** Cost comparison provides a measure of whether resources were used as budgeted and whether the funds were well used. For example, was there a similar TA project or government program, with the same development goal? How did this TA compare with these other interventions? Could the costs be assessed with comparable outputs or activities that could generate similar results or benefits? What was the extent of the variance between expected and actual

cost items? Were the TA inputs generated at the least cost for the targeted level of quality?

- (iii) **Socioeconomic value.** In assessing efficiency, a qualitative assessment of the TA project's value for money should be considered as evidence of efficiency, particularly for TA projects that support knowledge products or skills development, where outcomes are not necessarily tangible. This could include, for example, a clear articulation of how a TA project generated value for the stakeholders (e.g., its contribution to easing the identified constraint, or its socioeconomic contribution). Also, it could indicate any indirect or associated socioeconomic benefits that resulted from the TA operation and the extent to which the TA contributed to addressing the development concern.

39. The level of analysis of efficiency should be simple for small TA projects and more rigorous for larger TA projects. Some good practice examples providing evidence of efficiency are provided in Appendix 2. In the case of larger and/or cluster TA or a TA facility, the efficiency assessment should be more detailed and should consider the way that the resources of different composite TA projects were combined or linked to achieve the overarching TA objectives (e.g., it should assess the economies of scale of related TA activities or outputs).

40. **Ratings.** A TA can be rated *highly efficient*, *efficient*, *less than efficient*, or *inefficient*. The ratings should be assigned as follows:

- (i) **Highly efficient.** The TA did not experience cost and time overruns. The project was managed efficiently (within the budget and as projected) and there were no delays in implementation. Funds were used as expected and there was clear compliance with fiduciary requirements for financial reporting and procurement. Resources achieved more results than expected or most activities and outputs were completed in a least-cost manner. There were substantial associated socioeconomic benefits generated as a result of the TA operation.
- (ii) **Efficient.** The TA experienced an implementation delay of not more than 2 years.²¹ Targets were achieved within the budget. Funds were used as expected and there were no issues with financial reporting and procurement. The TA project resulted in a few indirect socioeconomic benefits.
- (iii) **Less than efficient.** The TA project incurred cost overruns. Moderate issues with financial reporting or procurement were experienced. An implementation delay of greater than 2 years. Socioeconomic benefits were insignificant.
- (iv) **Inefficient.** The TA project incurred substantial cost and time overruns. Serious issues with financial reporting or procurement were experienced. There was no associated or indirect benefit.

41. **Overall performance rating.** Based on the assessment of each of the above criteria, a sub-rating is applied for each criterion as shown in Table 1. Each sub-rating is assigned a numerical value, e.g., *highly relevant* = 3, *relevant* = 2, *less than relevant* = 1, and *irrelevant* = 0. The rating should reflect whether the project was implemented as designed, considering the

²¹ A 2-year delay is a notional figure, given the short project life of TA projects. (Note: The term "notional" is also referred to in ADB.2016. *Guidelines for the Evaluation of Public Sector Operations*. Manila).

context and changes during implementation. Then the overall performance rating can be automatically determined using a compounded (weighted) score based on the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency ratings.

Table 1. Sample Technical Assistance Assessment Rating

Criterion	Weight	Assessment	Rating Value	Weighted Rating
Relevance Sub-ratings: highly relevant, relevant, less than relevant, irrelevant.	0.35	The TA largely conformed to government priorities and ADB strategies. The design had minor deficiencies. The rationale of the TA was generally well articulated.	Relevant 2.00	0.70
Effectiveness Sub-ratings: highly effective, effective, less than effective, ineffective.	0.35	The main outputs were achieved (two were not) and the TA largely achieved its expected outcome.	Effective 2.00	0.70
Efficiency Sub-ratings: highly efficient, efficient, less than efficient, inefficient	0.30	There was a delay in project implementation of 30 months. Activities were undertaken, and outputs were achieved but with cost overruns. Socioeconomic benefits as a result of the TA operation were insignificant.	Less than efficient 1.00	0.30
Overall Assessment (weighted average of above criteria) Highly successful: Overall weighted average is greater than 2.30. Successful: Overall weighted average is greater than or equal to 1.65 and less than or equal to 2.30. Less than successful: Overall weighted average is greater than or equal to 0.75 and less than 1.65. Unsuccessful: Overall weighted average is less than 0.75.		Successful. The project was relevant and effective. Delays in project implementation, cost overruns, and insignificant socioeconomic benefits affected efficiency and pulled down the weighted performance below 2. However, the overall rating is still above 1.65.		1.70

42. Overall ratings should be assigned as follows:

- (i) **Highly successful.** The TA had no design flaws and was fully aligned with the government's and ADB's priorities. The need for the TA was well articulated and the choice of TA type was appropriate. Its outputs and outcome were achieved as planned and the overall performance exceeded expectations, with no cost and time overruns. There was evidence of associated socioeconomic benefits being generated.
- (ii) **Successful.** The TA had no major design flaws and minor deficiencies were readily and adequately addressed. Its rationale was clearly explained, and the choice of TA type was appropriate. The TA's outputs and outcome were largely achieved. The implementation delay was 2 years or less and was implemented within the budget. A few indirect benefits were generated.
- (iii) **Less than successful.** The TA design had significant deficiencies and the envisaged outputs and outcome were not fully met. The TA incurred an implementation delay of 2 years or more, with a cost overrun. The socioeconomic benefits were marginal.
- (i) **Unsuccessful.** The TA design was not appropriate, and the TA incurred substantial time and cost overruns. There was no associated socioeconomic benefit from the TA operation.

43. If there is a disconnect between the self-evaluation and the IED overall performance rating, the TCRV template includes a table that compares ratings and provides space for explanations for any difference in the rating (Table 2).

Table 2. Sample of a Disconnect between the Overall TCR Rating and the Overall Validation Rating

Item	Highly Successful	Successful	Less than Successful	Unsuccessful
TCR Rating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TCRV Rating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IED Assessment	This validation agrees with the TCR's findings in terms of <i>relevance</i> but the delays detracted from the <i>efficiency</i> assessment. The overall performance was therefore affected. Based on the compound rating, IED finds the overall performance to be less than successful.			

44. **Sustainability.** The sustainability assessment focuses on the durability of the underlying technical or institutional benefits supported by the TA. Where information is available, it also reflects the commitment by TA partners to build on the TA results. **The sustainability rating is not assigned a numerical value and is therefore not taken into account in the overall performance rating.** This assessment is based on the extent to which the project introduced mechanisms for sustainability through the TA project for the benefits achieved, any arrangements or incentives to continue project initiatives, and the availability of the required financial and human resources. The suitability and stability of the external framework conditions and the level of expected political commitment and support for the proper functioning of mechanisms beyond the TA project's life should also be considered. The following points may be taken into consideration:

- (i) **TA results.** What is the likelihood that project results will continue once the project has ended? What arrangements or incentives are in place to continue the TA project's initiatives? Are there appropriately qualified and available human resources to continue the project? Is there adequate government and/or local support to ensure that the mechanisms proposed will be able to function beyond the project lifecycle?
- (ii) **Funding.** Has the project been allocated appropriate funding to enable some of its components to continue after the TA project has closed?
- (iii) **Replication and upscaling.** Is there scope for possible replication or upscaling?

45. The assessment should identify the factors that could affect sustainability (e.g., political support, availability of budgets, recurrent activities such as maintenance, ownership by the beneficiaries or targeted organizations, and environmental resilience). Ratings for sustainability should be assigned as follows:

- (i) **Most likely sustainable.** There is clear evidence of sustainability mechanisms in place, resources allocated (human and financial), maintenance arrangements in place (with government support), among other things. There is a high degree of support from the government and stakeholders, including incentives and arrangements in place to ensure that the project continues after the ADB's involvement. The likelihood of project benefits continuing beyond the project's lifecycle is substantial.
- (ii) **Likely sustainable.** There is evidence of sustainability in key aspects, although minor weaknesses in sustainability mechanisms are apparent. An example of a gap or weakness would be: while appropriate financial resources have been allocated, it is proving difficult to recruit suitably qualified persons to continue project activities. A project with this issue would be rated likely sustainable. Although the gap is significant, it can be addressed by appropriate measures (e.g., staff training and capacity building).
- (iii) **Less than likely sustainable.** There is limited evidence of sustainability, e.g., ongoing financial and/or human resources for the project cannot be guaranteed. While this issue can still be overcome, it presents a large obstacle to the sustainability of the project.
- (iv) **Unlikely sustainable.** There are major barriers to sustainability and the TA project's initial gains are unlikely to be sustained. Expected sustainability mechanisms are unlikely to proceed.²²
- (v) **Not applicable.** The TA did not have a sustainability objective (e.g., it was a one-off event). The assessment should indicate that no continuity is expected and provide a corresponding explanation.

²² An example of a TCR that is rated as unlikely sustainable would be one that does not have the support of the government. Without cooperation and support from the government, a TA project is unlikely to be sustainable once the project lifecycle has ended and all the resources have been disbursed.

C. Validation Report Format

46. An outline of the TCR validation report format is included in Appendix 1. The following sections provide guidance for each section.

Section 1: Project Data

47. The key project data section provides a summary of the identification, financing, partners, and timeline of the TA.²³ It should indicate both the original approval data and any amendments to the financing during implementation. The majority of the key project data can be extracted directly from the TCR.

Section 2: Performance Indicators Results and Design and Monitoring Framework

48. The TA project's intended outcome should be indicated, including a short explanation of its rationale. The explanation should outline the development issues or opportunity to be addressed, the main expected outcome of the TA, and any information required to explain the TA design. All selected TA projects should have a DMF, or at least a clear statement of the expected performance indicators and targets.²⁴ To obtain the necessary information, the reviewer should check both the TCR and the original TA report. The critical performance indicators or targets should be noted, including specific targets and the data on the achievement of targets from the TCR.²⁵ Any changes in design, financing, or partnerships should be noted in this section. Changes during implementation (e.g., funding, implementation arrangements, components, and indicators) should be noted. If the critical indicators or achievements are not clearly articulated in the TCR, this may lower the effectiveness rating. The reviewer should comment on the quality of the most important indicators in terms of whether they are "SMART" and therefore evaluable.²⁶ The reviewer should provide a concise summary of the performance assessment in relation to the indicators or targets achieved.

Section 3: Technical Assistance Completion Reports for Validation Assessment Criteria

49. The current TCR format requires only one summary rating for overall performance and does not follow standard evaluation criteria (footnote 4). The validation will also incorporate good practice standards for evaluating public sector operations as endorsed by the Evaluation Cooperation Group of the multilateral development banks. These are already widely used within ADB for project completion reports and other evaluation activities. The TCRV will assess and rate each criterion separately. Where the TCR does not provide an explicit rating, the validation reviewer will assess the evidence presented and indicate a rating, giving a rationale for the rating assigned.

²³ These data should be consistent with the Procurement, Portfolio and Financial Management Department and e-Ops data for the TA project.

²⁴ PPTA projects may not have a DMF but should articulate their support for the potential loan. This will form the basis for an assessment of why a loan proposal did not proceed. Note that only PPTA projects that did not result in a project loan are required to produce a TCR. PPTA projects that resulted in a project loan do not produce TCRs, as these are assessed in the PCR of the project loan.

²⁵ In the current TCR format, not all TCRs present indicators or targets, or have a DMF. In these circumstances, the reviewer will need to assess the activities that lead to the TA project's objectives or results.

²⁶ SMART = specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely.

50. The overall performance rating will then be calculated as a compounded rating (see Table 1). The criterion for sustainability will also be assessed but, since this criterion is not applicable to all TA operations, it will not be incorporated into the overall performance rating. The following sections provide brief guidelines for the assessment of each criterion.²⁷

Section 4: Lessons Learned

51. The capture of lessons learned will provide a basis for institutional learning and potential knowledge products, in line with the ADB Strategy 2030.²⁸ The lessons should be a reflection of the operational learning in relation to the specific TA, and also identify where there has been technical learning with the potential for knowledge sharing beyond ADB. Eight categories are provided in the TCR format to help classify the lessons learned (three under implementation learning²⁹ and four under “development results”³⁰). These can facilitate a future synthesis of lessons learned across the TA portfolio.³¹ An additional “other” category is provided for any lessons not covered by these categories.

1	Design and/or planning. Such lessons may include how to improve the consistency of the TA with the ADB country partnership strategy, the technical soundness of the TA design, and the adequacy of the process of design (including the extent of stakeholder participation and the level of ownership generated). The lessons may relate to how rigorous ADB was in assessing the design elements or how the government or other partners have addressed the readiness requirements for the TA.
2	Implementation and/or delivery. These lessons can be drawn from how the TA was implemented and/or the changes made during implementation, e.g., to help achieve the quality and productivity of inputs or activities and how these were eventually translated into outputs and results. This may also include lessons related to how ADB or executing agencies implemented the TA or addressed implementation issues.
3	Management of staff and consultant resources. Human resources are major factors in the success or failure of TA and the role of human resources may have to be explained. Related lessons may also be drawn from ADB’s or the executing agency’s recruitment processes for consultants, contractors, or suppliers used by the borrower, especially with regard to their performance and how they affected the delivery of activities and outputs.

²⁷ Further guidance can be found in: IED. 2016. Guidelines for the Evaluation of Public Sector Operations. Manila.
²⁸ In this regard, the TCRV is more extensive than the current TCR format at the time of the development of these guidelines.
²⁹ These pertain to lessons from implementation and may be useful for future operations.
³⁰ These concern wider learning and coincide with development results. The type of learning may be related to different sectors and themes, according to the TA design. It may encompass technical advances, innovation, transfer of knowledge, and improved processes, among other things. There may not be a need to discuss each criterion; only those which are relevant to the TA and where evidence is available need be addressed.
³¹ Synthesis of validation results, focusing on lessons learned and knowledge generated will be undertaken periodically.

4	Knowledge building. This criterion is important in relation to the ADB Strategy 2030 and has several subcategories to be recorded. ³² Potential knowledge products or knowledge dissemination pathways are indicated in Appendix 3. Any areas in which the TCR provided evidence of different forms of knowledge building should be indicated, including a comment to substantiate the assessment.
5	Stakeholder participation. This is likely to be linked to the sustainability of the support and reflects non-financial commitment to TA benefits. The lessons may relate to an organization's or other stakeholders' participation in the project, their commitment, and their level of satisfaction at project completion. Data to support this assessment can be drawn from a post-completion survey and/or evidence of the level of adoption or uptake of TA findings, and other evidence of continuing action after TA completion.
6	Partnership (and cofinancing). The TA has generated networks with other institutions. Formal and informal networks have been established with other institutions or stakeholders, including building capacity and strengthening client relations. Any lessons for co-financing experience should also be described here. These may be internal to ADB or external.
7	Replication and/or scaling up. Lessons learned may be related on the extent to which replication or scaling up has been or could be achieved for the concerned DMC or executing agency. Replication occurs when the results of the TA could be repeated or copied in other areas or organizations after the TA completion. Evidence of scaling up can involve mainstreaming a TA process into a wider developmental pathway.
8	Post-TA financial resources. This criterion is linked to sustainability and can include indicative funding or other resources for the post-implementation period from ADB, the national and/or local government or the government of another country, the private sector, or other sources. The nature of the possible post-TA financial resources should be explained, e.g., whether funds come from an existing government budget allocation or whether the TA has been instrumental in leveraging new resources, including possible co-financing from other development partners.
9	Other lessons (as may be applicable).

Section 5: Technical Assistance Completion Report Quality Assessment

52. This section assesses the quality of the TCR with regard to:

- (i) **Coherence.** The TCR's coherence with relation to the stated objectives, outputs, and outcome and/or the DMF structure in relation to the achievements reported.

³² These subcriteria have been developed with reference to known literature on the effectiveness of knowledge and capacity building, particularly the Kirkpatrick Framework and Bennett Hierarchy.

- (ii) **Quality of data.** The extent to which baseline and monitoring data were generated and used to support outputs and outcome achievements.
- (iii) **Quality of lessons learned.** The depth, scope, and future applicability of lessons learned from the TA.

53. The rating for TCR quality follows the same rating for each criterion as for performance:

- (a) highly satisfactory (3),
 - (b) satisfactory (2),
 - (c) less satisfactory (1), and
 - (d) unsatisfactory (0).
- (i) An overall rating is applied in the same way as for overall performance (para. 42).
 - (ii) The TCR quality assessment includes a section to indicate whether a TCR should be subjected to further IED in-depth evaluation or investigation, e.g., due to the importance of the lessons learned or other requirements that could merit follow-up actions (e.g., undertaking a TA Performance Evaluation Report) . If further evaluation is required, the rationale for this should be included in the TCRV form for management attention.

Attachments

54. For each TCRV, two attachments should be provided:

- (i) **Attachment 1. Technical assistance report background information.** This should be drawn directly from TCR. Its purpose is to assist the reviewer in ensuring that essential information provided in the TCR could assist in the validation process.³³
- (ii) **Attachment 2.** The DMF

³³ This is due to the difference between the current TCR format and the TCRV structure. It also provides sufficient information to enable the reader of a validation report to understand the TA details. In future, there may be greater alignment between the TCR and the TCRV, and Appendix 1 may become the actual TCR without requiring a re-organization of information.

VI. VALIDATION REPORTING AND DISSEMINATION

A. Circulation of Technical Completion Report Validation

55. As noted in para. 22D, the respective ADB department will have 10 working days to review the draft TCRV report and provide feedback. Thereafter, IED will complete the internal approval process.

56. Should the department disagree with IED's overall assessment rating in the posted validation report, it may indicate its disagreement in its response. This response will be footnoted in the final validation report. IED may prepare a final response, if this clarifies issues and adds value, and this will be attached to the final validation report before it is posted.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT VALIDATION REPORT TEMPLATE

TCR VALIDATION REPORT:	REVIEWER: DATE OF REVIEW:
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1. PROJECT DATA TA No.

TA Name		Approval date		Approved (\$)	
		Signing date		Revised (\$)	
Country		Planned Completion Date		Disbursed (\$)	
		Actual Completion Date		Undisbursed (\$)	
Department		Date of Fielding First Consultant		Source(s) of funding	
Sector and Subsector:		TA Type:	TRTA <input type="checkbox"/> KSTA <input type="checkbox"/> PATA <input type="checkbox"/> CDTA <input type="checkbox"/> RDTA <input type="checkbox"/> PPTA <input type="checkbox"/> RETA <input type="checkbox"/>	Executing agency	

2. DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND RESULTS

Objective	
TA Rationale	

Include numerical targets if available. Add more rows if required

Results Levels	Indicators	IED Comment on Evaluability of Indicators
Outcome 1		
Outcome 2		
Output 1		
Output 2		

3. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Please mark relevant box with

Relevance

Item	Highly Relevant	Relevant	Less than Relevant	Irrelevant
TCR Rating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TCRV Rating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TCRV Rationale				

Effectiveness

Item	Highly Effective	Effective	Less than Effective	Ineffective
TCR Rating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TCRV Rating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of Outputs Achieved				
Evidence Outcomes Achieved				
IED Rationale				

Efficiency

Item	Highly Efficient	Efficient	Less than Efficient	Inefficient
TCR Rating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TCRV Rating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IED Rationale				

Criterion	Weight	Rating Value	Weighted Rating
Relevance	0.35		
Effectiveness	0.35		
Efficiency	0.30		
Overall Assessment (weighted average of above criteria) ³⁴			

Overall Rating

Item	Highly Successful	Successful	Less than Successful	Unsuccessful
TCR Rating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TCRV Rating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IED Rationale				

4. SUSTAINABILITY

Item	Highly Likely	Likely	Less Likely	Unlikely	NA
TCR Rating	<input type="checkbox"/>				
TCRV Rating	<input type="checkbox"/>				
IED Rationale					

³⁴ Each sub-rating is assigned the numerical value assigned to each rating: e.g., highly relevant = 3, relevant = 2, less than relevant = 1, and irrelevant = 0. The compound criterion for performance rating is: highly successful (overall weighted average greater than 2.30), successful (overall weighted average greater than or equal to 1.65 and less than or equal to 2.30), less than successful (overall weighted average greater than or equal to 1.00 and less than 1.65), unsuccessful (overall weighted average is less than 1.00).

Lessons Learned (1–3 implementation, 4–7 development results, 8 others)

Criteria		TCR Self-Assessment	Comment
1. Design and/or planning			
2. Implementation and/or delivery			
3. Management (staffing, including consultants)			
4. Knowledge building		<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness <input type="checkbox"/> Technical product <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption or uptake <input type="checkbox"/> Building institutional or system capacity <input type="checkbox"/> National or sector practice (guidelines) <input type="checkbox"/> Policy, legal standards <input type="checkbox"/> Academic literature	
5. Stakeholder participation			
6. Partnership (and cofinancing)		<input type="checkbox"/> Internal to ADB <input type="checkbox"/> External to ADB (may also include ADB)	
7. Replication and scaling up		<input type="checkbox"/> Replication <input type="checkbox"/> Scaling up	
8. Post-TA financial resources		<input type="checkbox"/> ADB <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
9. Others			

TCR Quality Assessment (Reviewer's Assessment)

TCR Quality	TCRV				IED Comment	Remarks
	HS	S	LS	US		
Coherence of TCR (25%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Quality of Data (25%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Quality of Lessons Learned (50%)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Overall TCR Quality (weighted as per performance) ³⁵						
Further IED Action (e.g., in-depth evaluation)	Y	N	Reason:			
Other Remarks						

³⁵ See footnote 2 in the main text.

Attachment 1: Description of the Technical Assistance
(extracted directly from the TCR)

Description

Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs

Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome

Overall Assessment and Rating

Major Lessons

Recommendations and Follow-up Actions from ADB

Attachment 2: Design and Monitoring Framework (DMF)

DMF

Impacts the Project is Aligned With			
Results Chain	Performance Indicators with Targets and Baselines	Data and Reporting	Risks
Outcome			
Outputs			
Key Activities with Milestones			
Inputs			

Planned and Actual Achievements of the TA

Performance Indicators	Planned	Actual	Reason(s) for Variance
Outcome(s) 1. . . .			
Outputs 1. 2. 3. . . .			

TECHNICAL COMPLETION REPORT EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

1. The following table provides a guideline for assessment of efficiency. The guidance is to be used as a reference only for examples that may have been applied by the TCR author.

2. **The mix of methods used by the TCR author should be appropriate to the size and type of TCR.** An economic internal rate of return (EIRR) would not be expected for small and/or simple TA projects. In general, the more measures that are applied to assess the TA, the stronger the evidence for the rating will be. For larger and more complex TA projects, more measures should be included. If necessary, the reviewer should contact the department responsible for the TCR for more information on each method of measurement.

Efficiency Measure	Examples of Evidence for Efficiency	Notes
Process Efficiency		
Procurement Efficiency	Procurement was demonstrated to be timely, transparent, competitive. The services and/or products procured fulfilled requirements	It is expected that procurement will be efficient and that adequate documentation to demonstrate this will be available. If there is no evidence to support efficient procurement, a rating of efficient should not be applied.
Timeliness	The actual timeframe was similar to or shorter than planned.	Generally, a TA project should be implemented within the expected timeframe to be considered efficient. However, delays may be justified when they are beyond the control of the implementers, when additional activities or budget were added, or there were other valid reasons to extend the implementation period. However, such justifications are valid only up to a delay of 2 years; thereafter the TA should have been cancelled or restructured to address the bottlenecks.
Funds Utilization	TA funds utilization was as budgeted.	Funds utilization should not be the sole assessment for efficiency but it can help to demonstrate efficient use of funds. Utilization can be efficient even if funds are not 100% utilized (i.e., there may be savings). Cost over- or underruns from the original or revised budget can be justified. However, for a rating of efficient, fund utilization should have reached at least 80%; otherwise the TA project design coherence may be questioned. Where supplementary funds have been allocated or budget amendments made, the assessment should take these into account and assess the full, final utilization rates.
Counterpart Funding (should be shown as a percentage of total funding)	Government counterpart funding was secured and represented 30% of total TA funding.	Counterpart funding should be available for most TA projects as it demonstrates the relevance of the TA to partner governments. The TCR should provide details of both the counterpart funding that was expected at the design stage and that secured during implementation. For a rating of

Efficiency Measure	Examples of Evidence for Efficiency	Notes
		efficient, counterpart funding should have been at least as great as expected at the design stage.
Unit Cost Analysis		
Unit Cost Analysis	TA expenditure was similar to expenditure on similar items in the country.	This is often used when discrete items are procured, constructed, or installed during a TA, e.g., computer upgrades for a government department, kilometers of road constructed, and water pumps installed. Cost comparisons should provide detailed evidence of like-for-like unit costs for the rating to be efficient. Least-cost options should be demonstrated, or reasons given as to why a higher cost was incurred. For example, infrastructure with climate proofing will have a higher unit cost than infrastructure without it, but the higher cost can be justified because climate proofing provides greater resilience to weather events.
Cost Savings	The TA enabled organizations, businesses, or TA participants to reduce their costs.	There are many potential ways in which such savings can occur: processes may have been digitized to save manual handling, more fuel-efficient technology may have been introduced, transport network upgrades may have made transport cheaper. These savings may be actual or prospective, e.g., in the case of a technical assistance study. If cost savings are prospective, sufficient technical evidence should have been provided to convince the reviewer that implementation of study findings is likely to generate the expected savings.
Opportunity Cost Comparisons	The value generated was greater than the value displaced.	Such comparisons are often used when there is labor involvement, e.g., one type of labor is forgone in favor of alternative employment. The wages from new employment should clearly exceed those from previous employment for the rating to be considered efficient. Opportunity cost comparisons can also be applied for private sector decision-making, e.g., when production time is shifted from one product to another.
Finance and/or Funds Leverage	Funds have been attracted from donors or the private sector.	An expectation that funds will be allocated by other donors may be identified at the design stage; if so, such funding should be allocated as agreed at design. If additional funds were leveraged during implementation, evidence should be provided that these funds were secured as a result of the TA and not just because the other funder already had similar plans to ADB. Financial leverage can also occur through private sector investment in TA activities, e.g., companies

Efficiency Measure	Examples of Evidence for Efficiency	Notes
		may use their own funds or borrow funds to install technology promoted through a TA project.
Socioeconomic Assessment		
Value for Money	Stakeholders received value from the TA.	<p>An assessment of value for money often requires a clear definition of need. However, it is frequently challenging to assign monetary value to achieved results. For example, in the case of a TA project that corrects a lack of knowledge of modern livestock husbandry techniques, the TA will not be able to provide evidence of deaths prevented, but it can provide evidence of the value of livestock in the local economy (both in monetary terms and in other ways such as savings levels and status).</p> <p>Evidence of value can be determined by conducting a satisfaction survey of stakeholders on the TA inputs and outcomes. The TA may be considered efficient if respondents explicitly state the TA funds have been well spent.</p>
Socioeconomic Analysis (rarely used in TCRs due to the limited resources available for TCR preparation)	The TA produced health, employment, education, or gender equity benefits.	Planned social outcomes may be related to economic benefits, e.g., women may have greater access to health services, which make them more economically active, with positive opportunity costs and other social benefits. Socioeconomic analysis often requires use of available population data, e.g., employment statistics and health data. These enable trend analysis of the results of TA interventions. Such analysis can be complex and usually involves research and primary data collection. An impact assessment can be helpful but whether this is done will depend on the length of TA, its expected benefits, and the resources available for socioeconomic data collection and analysis.
EIRR (rarely used in TCRs due to the limited resources available for TCR preparation)	The TA project generated an economic internal rate of return of over 10%. For private sector operations, the TA project generated an acceptable financial internal rate of return (FIRR) (if FIRR is greater than weighted average cost of capital) and/or net present value (NPV) (if NPV is positive)	An assessment of EIRR, FIRR, or NPV is likely to require an experienced economist to collect the necessary data and develop an approach to generate the EIRR. For a TA, an EIRR above 10% is likely to be considered efficient, but a justification of other efficiency measures should be included.

A. Good Practice: Illustrations

3. The following examples of good practice TCRs have been drawn from real examples of TCRs and strengthened to demonstrate how efficiency assessment in TCRs can be validated.

1. Bhutan: Institutional Strengthening for Skills Development (\$750,000)

4. **Expected impact, outcome, and outputs.** The expected impact of the TA was improved relevance of technical vocational education and training (TVET) in Bhutan. The outcome was improved planning capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MOLHR) to guide skills development initiatives. The outputs of the TA were: (i) TVET blueprint developed; (ii) professional development plan for TVET staff piloted; (iii) standards, curriculum, and learning materials for priority skills developed; and (iv) improved capacity for delivery of community-run youth services.

5. **Technical completion report efficiency assessment.** The TA was efficient—outputs were achieved on time and some savings were realized.

6. **Technical completion report validation efficiency assessment.** Based on other information supplied in the TCR.

- (i) **Process efficiency.** Procurement of consultants followed ADB guidelines and was implemented as planned, despite the unexpected departure of the senior consultant. All outputs and deliverables were achieved on time. Contract savings were achieved through lower than expected contract costs, resulting in funds utilization of 74%.³⁶ The savings were to be reallocated but additional funds were leveraged instead.
- (ii) **Cost comparison.** An indicative cost for implementing the blueprint was developed, and, based on costed plans, the government increased its annual TVET budget allocations, demonstrating counterpart funding commitment. It has subsequently commenced implementation of near-term initiatives. The blueprint provided a base for a future firm pipeline investment project of \$15 million for the Skills Training and Education Pathways Upgradation Project.
- (iii) **Socioeconomic benefit.** The TA investment in the consultancy led to an expansion in the resources allocated to the TVET sector that would not have occurred without the TA. The adoption of the blueprint resulted in an increase in the government's commitment in TVET that, given the budget allocation, the adoption of a new curriculum in line with industry needs, training plans, and the future investment project, is likely to lead to improved capacity for TVET delivery in Bhutan.

7. The TA demonstrated positive process efficiency, costs comparison, and socioeconomic benefits. Evidence that funds have used to leverage government counterpart funding has been provided and there are positive prospects of future investments building on the TA. Therefore, the TA is rated as efficient.

³⁶ The guidelines provide an estimate of 80% as valid under-spend for efficiency. This example is below the guideline level but the TCR provided good justification for why the savings were generated and a variation to absorb the savings did not occur.

2. **India: Operational Research to Support Mainstreaming of Integrated Flood Management under Climate Change (\$1.3 million)**

8. **Expected impact, outcome, and outputs.** The TA impact was to strengthen the protection and resilience of flood-prone areas in India. The outcome was to improve knowledge of integrated flood management (IFM) for decision making and program implementation. The TA had four outputs: (i) an appropriate IFM plan for the focal sub-basin, incorporating climate change impacts, developed, (ii) comprehensive assessment and feasibility analysis of various approaches and best practices in IFM conducted, (iii) a knowledge sharing and awareness program conducted, and (iv) knowledge products on appropriate IFM techniques developed.

9. **Technical completion report efficiency assessment.** The TA was efficient with 82% of TA funds utilized. The 15-month extension was needed because of initial delays and time spent on the acquisition of relevant data.

10. **Technical completion report validation efficiency assessment.** Based on other information supplied in the TCR.

- (i) **Process efficiency.** A consulting firm with an internationally recognized portfolio of flood management research was engaged through a competitive process. The consultants' services were rated satisfactory. All outputs and deliverables were achieved on time, apart from the data collection phase which took longer than anticipated and required a TA extension of 15 months. All planned activities leading to project outputs and the project outcome were undertaken. The considerable unutilized amount under the TA was primarily due to savings. Funds utilization was 82%.
- (ii) **Cost comparison.** Reimbursable and out-of-pocket expenses were lower than budgeted, contributing to cost savings for the phase 2 consultancy contract.
- (iii) **Socioeconomic benefit.** The TA analyzed both river basins, and found that about 90% of the average annual damage could be avoided by implementing a 1:25 return period flood safety standard for rural areas. In its appraisal of flood schemes, the executing agency is adopting this standard for rural areas. The TA report and its recommendations were accepted by the Ministry of Water Resources (MOWR). This demonstrates that the TA investment was valued by MOWR. The technical analysis of the TA has substantial potential to achieve economic benefits when applied by MOWR.

11. The TA project demonstrated process efficiency, apart from the delays, which were reasonable in view of the complexity of the TA. Cost comparisons were only conducted in relation to the budget, but the high level of savings demonstrates cost-efficiency. The socioeconomic benefits are likely to be substantial if the TA recommendations are followed. If the standard is implemented, the incidence of floods and the resultant economic loss of crops and structures could be substantially reduced. Therefore, the TA is rated efficient.

3. Results for Malaria Elimination and Control of Communicable Disease Threats in Asia and the Pacific (\$18 million)

12. **Expected impact, outcome, and outputs.** The TA project's expected impact was improved health status of the populations in Asia and the Pacific. The expected outcome was reduced risk from drug-resistant malaria and other communicable diseases in the Asia and Pacific region and globally. The TA had four outputs. Output 1 was strengthened regional leadership and financing for malaria and communicable disease threats, established through a separate TA. Output 2 was increased availability and use of quality-assured commodities appropriate to internationally agreed guidelines for malaria and other communicable disease threats to support the strengthening of the operational capacity of national regulatory agencies and ministries of health to enhance operational efficiencies, improve access to quality-assured malaria and other communicable disease commodities, and increase reporting of substandard and falsified medicines. Output 3 was increased availability and use of quality information, tools, and technologies on malaria and other communicable disease threats to support strengthening of information systems through the development and testing of information technology tools and solutions (digital health governance framework, information exchange standards, geographic information systems, core geo-registries, and unique patient identification), which are foundational investments for sustainable disease-specific surveillance systems. Output 4 was communicable diseases addressed in large commercial and infrastructure projects, with a view to reducing the detrimental impact of communicable diseases in hundreds of large infrastructure projects across the region.

13. The TA was efficient in terms of the activities conducted, results achieved and disbursements, considering the short implementation time. The cost of the TA implementation was relatively low because ADB implemented the TA with ADB staff and individual consultants, keeping administrative costs down.

14. **Technical completion report efficiency assessment.** Given the large scope of the TA, greater level of evidence was sought from the TCR.

(i) **Process Efficiency**

- a. **Procurement efficiency.** The TA was highly complex, with varied outputs and a requirement for specialist skills. Consequently, the procurement modality did not allow for outsourcing of implementation to a consulting firm. The TA required 57 individual consultants, 35 international consultants, and 3 consulting firms. In addition, three large contracts with universities were signed. Despite the complexity, procurement proceeded smoothly and all contracts were completed satisfactorily. A total of 187.78 contract days were planned and the actual amount was 283.73 days. Feedback from developing member country (DMC) implementers regarding ADB administrative support to procurement was positive because they were able to access the support they needed. The TA was tailored to country contexts, it was on time and within budget. This contributed to good funds utilization and built country ownership of the process.
- b. **Timeliness.** The planned project duration was 3 years. There was an extension of 8 months to allow for the completion of all activities. There were several amendments to outputs and budget to tailor the TA to the needs of participating DMCs. The extension was reasonable given the large scope of the TA. The TA can still be assessed as efficient.
- c. **Funds utilization.** Of the original \$18 million, only \$12 million was utilized but this was as a result of changing donor commitments and beyond the control of ADB. Of the \$12 million, funds utilization was 95.83%.
- d. **Counterpart funding.** In addition to partnership funding through the Health Financing Partnership Facility, funding from participating DMCs for malaria elimination in the Greater Mekong Subregion more than tripled from \$90 million (2013 baseline) to more than \$300 million (2018).

(ii) **Cost comparison**

- a. **Unit cost analysis.** The TA was implemented as planned and was on budget with regard to unit cost items for consultants, events, publications and other items of expenditure. The TA conducted analysis into the efficiency of portable post-market surveillance devices to assess medicines' quality. Different devices were field tested for performance and evaluated for their cost-effectiveness, contributing to greater efficiency in malaria treatment.
- b. **Cost savings.** A regional road map to inform the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) process of converging regulatory practices was prepared along with course curricula and training for pharmacovigilance, medical device regulation, and good regulatory practice. Jointly with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United States Pharmacopeia, regulatory focal points from 22 countries in the region were trained on the WHO Global Surveillance mechanism for substandard and falsified medicines in order to improve their detection and reporting. By improving detection and reporting, prevention measures can be better targeted, using

DMC funds for malaria control more efficiently, creating savings within eradication programs for other protection measures.

- c. **Opportunity cost comparisons.** No opportunity cost calculations were carried out for this TCR. However, since the TA paper stressed that the focus on malaria and other communicable diseases should not be at the expense of other important health interventions, the TCR could have commented on the national budget increases allocated to malaria and other communicable diseases. It could have investigated whether there had been cost shifting from other health budget line items or whether there had been an overall increase in health budget.
- d. **Finance and funds leveraged.** The TA strengthened regional bodies such as the Center of Regulatory Excellence at the Duke–National University of Singapore Medical School, which mobilized funding from the Singapore Economic Development Board and is likely to receive a grant from other development partners. The TA catalyzed additional ADB funds through new financing mechanisms to support efforts to eliminate malaria and address other communicable diseases. A total of \$52.5 million was mobilized for health security measures for countries eligible for funding from the Asia Development Fund (ADF). ADB's first health bond with a value of \$100 million was issued to support lending to countries for targeted health financing, including communicable disease programs.

(iii) **Socioeconomic benefit**

- a. **Value for money.** The TA responded to the stated demands of DMCs to use funds related to malaria control and eradication more efficiently. The TA engaged the DMCs early in implementation, leading to slight adjustments in the methodology per country in line with their needs. This enhanced the satisfaction of stakeholders with the project. An assessment of existing surveillance systems in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Viet Nam highlighted the need to mainstream and harmonize existing malaria and other communicable disease information systems into routine health information systems to overcome fragmentation and to support surveillance for malaria elimination. This was achieved during the course of the project, resulting in better information exchange and better disease control.

- (iv) **Socioeconomic analysis.** The TA targeted a 75% reduction in malaria deaths and malaria cases over the 2013 baseline by 2025. Output 4 addressed communicable disease control in large commercial and infrastructure projects. The project introduced ADB's health impact assessment to strengthen the health outcomes of such large infrastructure projects and reduce the detrimental impact in hundreds of development projects across the region. While evidence of the impact of the TA cannot yet be seen, progress in relation to the outputs, as described in the effectiveness section, can be seen. In those areas specifically vulnerable to vector-borne diseases, there are good prospects of achieving the expected socioeconomic outcomes of reduced ill health for the populations and a lower health financial burden for both households and governments.

- (v) **Economic and financial return.** Although an EIRR was not prepared for the TA investments, the TA helped to generate a costing tool. These were made available to DMC malaria elimination programs to model the potential economic and financial viability and the value of investments in malaria control and prevention.

Potential Knowledge Products or Dissemination Pathways

Knowledge building	Evidence Description
<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness	<p>The TA made efforts to disseminate existing knowledge and there is evidence that the targeted audience is now more aware of the material presented. Dissemination materials may include posters or brochures and other promotional material. Evidence should be provided that such material has been used and that heightened awareness has been achieved (e.g., group discussions or consultations among targeted beneficiaries and other stakeholders).</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Technical Product	<p>The TA has contributed to innovations or a new or improved technology product, process, or practice.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Adoption and/or Uptake	<p>Awareness raising activities, technology development, and/or training have led to a new technology or practice being adopted by participants.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Building Institutional and/or System Capacity	<p>The TA has made recommendations and provided knowledge at the institutional or sector level that has led to institutional or sector-wide change and enhanced the ability of the institution or sector to perform at optimum levels.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> National and/or Sector Practice (Guidelines)	<p>The TA has made a specific contribution to the development of new national or sector guidelines, e.g., a specific knowledge product (operational guidelines or manual) and/or related reports and documents have been generated.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy and/or Legal Standards	<p>The TA has made a specific contribution to the development of a new or improved policy, law, or standard, e.g., a specific policy knowledge product and related reports and documents have been generated.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic	<p>The TA has generated knowledge that has been captured in the academic literature, e.g., an academic journal or a refereed conference paper. Alternatively, it has been added to a community of practice or center of excellence databank. This is an indication that the knowledge generated has extended beyond the TA participants.</p>