



# Completion Report

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Project Number: 47035-001  
Technical Assistance Number: 8646  
February 2016

## People's Republic of China: Chongqing Vocational Training Information Management Platform Development

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| TA Number, Country, and Name:  |   | Amount Approved: \$400,000                  |  |
| TA 8646-PRC: Chongqing Vocational Training Information Management Platform Development |   | Revised Amount: Not applicable              |  |
| Executing Agency: Chongqing Municipal Bureau of Finance                                | Source of Funding: Technical Assistance Special Fund (TASF-Other Sources) | Amount Undisbursed: \$183,113.90            | Amount Utilized: \$216,886.10  |
| TA Approval Date: 12 May 2014  | TA Signing Date: 5 June 2014  | Fielding of First Consultants: 30 June 2014 | TA Completion Date<br>Original: 15 December 2015<br>Actual: 15 December 2015<br>Account Closing Date<br>Original: 15 March 2016<br>Actual: 29 January 2016 |

#### Description

To encourage all working-age population to receive vocational training, the People's Republic of China Government provides subsidies for vocational training institutions and trainees. These subsidies are to be allocated based on the results of quality assessment of training institutions, and skills certification or employment of trainees. However, the procedures for application, approval, transfer, and management of vocational training subsidies vary across provinces, municipalities, districts, and counties. In addition, there is no means to verify and ensure whether (i) vocational training subsidies reach the targeted population, and (ii) vocational training institutions benefiting from subsidies meet the quality and performance standards. Citizens, on the other hand, had limited access to information and services related to vocational training, employment, and their entitlement. To enhance the equity, effectiveness, and efficiency of vocational training and subsidies, the PRC Government requires provincial and municipal governments to establish a unified information management platform for vocational training that is integrated with employment and social security information systems, within the framework of the Golden Social Security Project of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security. The Golden Social Security Project supports fundamental social security system reforms by (i) the use of information technology that enables data sharing between the national, provincial, and county levels; and (ii) the integration of various employment and social security services into systems of social security cards, issued at the place of residence, regardless of individuals' permanent places of household registration. In 2012, the Chongqing Municipal Bureau of Human Resources and Social Security (BHRSS) completed phase I of the Golden Social Security Project with the establishment of a social security card system. Under phase II for which the technical assistance (TA) was requested, BHRSS planned to link the social security card system to employment and social security services, including vocational training.

#### Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs

The TA's expected impact was enhanced equity, effectiveness, and efficiency of vocational training and subsidies provided in Chongqing. The expected outcome was improved planning and management system of vocational training and subsidies.

The TA's main outputs included development of a unified information management platform for vocational training and dissemination of information and knowledge on the platform. The platform would (i) standardize quality assurance mechanisms for vocational training institutions and training courses, procedures for application, approval, transfer, and management of subsidies for vocational training institutions and trainees across districts and counties; (ii) allow online registration, change, and cancellation for training courses and skills assessment and certification, online payment, and online training; (iii) host databases of vocational training institutions, trainees, employers, occupational classification, and financial transactions involved in vocational training subsidies; (iv) enable user management and authentication; and (v) provide access to information on vocational training institutions and courses, quality and performance of institutions and courses, and labor market and vocational training analysis and forecasting.

#### Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities

The formulation of the TA, as well as terms of reference for six individual consultants and the platform development firm, was adequate. The individual consultants were mobilized in June and July 2014. Due to issues with information security and privacy related to the platform development and the role of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in supervising the platform development firm, the recruitment of the firm was delayed by 5 months. ADB fielded two consultation missions to resolve the issues, in addition to regular review missions. The platform development firm was eventually mobilized in January 2015. To address the need for closer communication and coordination between Chongqing Municipal BHRSS and ADB, a project coordinator (consultant) based in Chongqing was recruited in March 2015 on an intermittent basis for the rest of the TA implementation period. Progress in the TA implementation tended to be slower than expected due to a need for coordination between departments of Chongqing Municipal BHRSS, Human Resource Information Center, Bureau of Employment, and others, and due to a change of directors and focal officers at Chongqing Municipal BHRSS. Nevertheless, all the TA activities were completed on time without any extension of the TA original completion date. Therefore, the performance of Chongqing Municipal BHRSS and ADB were satisfactory.

The platform development firm performed satisfactorily, albeit with delays in testing and piloting functional modules of the platform, which were caused by factors external to the TA, such as technological requirements and overall progress of the Golden Social Security Project. The firm established a good relationship with departments of Chongqing Municipal BHRSS,

Human Resource Information Center, Bureau of Employment, and others, and conducted sound business analysis, as well as the design and development of four main functional modules of the platform, testing and piloting of the modules, and training of pilot users. Although the firm had no previous experience with ADB's TA, the firm appropriately handled reporting and disbursement requirements set by ADB. The performance of the individual consultants was also satisfactory, except one international expert whose contract was pre-terminated due to non-delivery of a milestone report.<sup>1</sup> The consultants conducted two or three missions to Chongqing, performed desk reviews and assessments in their respective areas, and provided recommendations for enhancing the planning and management of vocational training and subsidies through the platform.

#### **Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome**

The two main outputs were achieved with delays. By November 2015, the four main functional modules of the platform were operating in three pilot districts/counties of Chongqing Municipality. In December 2015, knowledge sharing workshops were held with the participation of different bureaus of Chongqing Municipal Government, district and county BHRSSs, vocational training institutes, enterprises, and college graduates. The consultants produced quality reports with practical recommendations for improving quality assurance mechanisms for vocational training institutions and programs, streamlining procedures for application, review, approval, transfer and management of vocational training subsidies, and conducting labor market and vocational training needs forecasting. Due to delays in testing and piloting the platform, the number of users trained under the TA was only 30, compared to 1,000 anticipated. Since Chongqing Municipal BHRSS plans to implement the platform in phases across all the districts/counties in 2016, the outcome is likely to be achieved as expected.<sup>2</sup> ADB will be updated on progress in the platform implementation.

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

The TA is rated successful. The platform highlights innovative features, such as (i) information management of enterprises and training institutions integrated with employment and social security systems; (ii) information management of trainees integrated with social security and social security card systems; (iii) criteria for allocating vocational training subsidies standardized across different types of training programs, and across districts and counties; (iv) automated calculation of the amount of vocational training subsidies transferred to training institutions and trainees based on online verification of skills certification, and employment of trainees; (v) enhanced verification of information, and prevention of multiple allocations of subsidies to the same trainees; and (vi) integration of services, information, functions, and users concerning vocational training, occupational skills certification, employment, participation in social security programs, social security cards, bank accounts, etc. It also provided timely support for the implementation of phase II of the Golden Social Security Project in Chongqing Municipality. In line with the legal provision,<sup>3</sup> Chongqing Municipal BHRSS and Human Resource Information Center plan to continuously upgrade the functions of the platform and expand users in other bureaus of Chongqing Municipal Government to ensure the sustainability of the platform.

#### **Major Lessons**

The TA implementation initially faced difficulties due to the sensitivity related to personal information stored in social security card and social security information systems. It was agreed between Chongqing Municipal BHRSS and ADB that ADB's supervisory role vis-à-vis the platform development firm should be limited to functional aspects of the platform rather than technological aspects, and ADB should not receive any of the personal information in the systems. Similar issues with information security and privacy may arise in future IT projects. Another lesson learned is that IT projects necessarily involve institutional, organizational, and procedural changes, which could be slower and more difficult to realize than information system development projects. Therefore, sufficient time for communication and coordination should be built into any IT projects. Additionally, unlike most other policy advisory and capacity development TAs, this TA developed a tangible output—the information management platform for vocational training and subsidies—which was much appreciated by Chongqing Municipal Government.

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

ADB put together and shared with Chongqing Municipal Government and BHRSS recommendations made by the consultants for enhancing functions of the platform. It is advised that ADB continues following up on the recommendations with Chongqing Municipal Government and BHRSS to be reflected in the platform. Moreover, Chongqing's information management platform for vocational training and subsidies compatible with other employment and social security information systems is an interesting case, given that Chongqing Municipality is one of the progressive municipalities/provinces which have introduced resident permit systems and the National Internet Plus Program was released in March 2015. It is recommended that Chongqing's case is properly documented and shared with the central government and other municipalities/provinces in the form of bilingual knowledge products.

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<sup>1</sup> The consultant was replaced by a national expert who eventually delivered the expected report.

<sup>2</sup> The implementation of the platform in all districts/counties of Chongqing Municipality will lay the foundations for data sharing between the national, provincial/municipal, and county levels planned under the Golden Social Security Project.

<sup>3</sup> The General Office of Chongqing Municipal People's Government, No. 247. 2012.