

# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: POHQ

TA NO./NAME: TA No. 2484-FSM: Strengthening Agricultural Support Services				TA AMOUNT APPROVED: \$560,000 REVISED AMOUNT: -		Source: TASF	
EXECUTING AGENCY: Department of Resources and Development				TA AMOUNT UNDISBURSED: \$102,197.13		TA AMOUNT UTILIZED: \$457,802.87	
DATE:	APPROVAL: 19 Dec 1995	SIGNING: 8 Feb 1996	FIELD: July 1996	CLOSING: ORIGINAL: 30 Nov 1997		ACTUAL: 30 Nov 1997	

**TA DESCRIPTION**

With the grant aid provided under the Compact of Free Association with the United States ending in 2001, the Government places a high priority on increasing economic self-reliance. The agricultural sector provides an opportunity for increasing employment, reducing the dependence on imported foods, and generating exports to regional markets. The first and second national development plans (1985-96) emphasizes the need to improve subsistence and semicommercial production and self-sufficiency. Towards the end of the planning period many of the policies had only been partially addressed.

**TA OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE**

The overall objective of the TA was to promote economic self-reliance and growth, arising out of the need for increased food production and productivity for self sufficiency and export, and to strengthen the capacity of the Government agricultural support services. The consultants' tasks involved (i) focusing services on viable agricultural commodities; (ii) improving access to market information; (iii) enhancing the extension approaches; (iv) upgrading the skills of station and extension staff; (v) improving farmers' access to technical information and nongovernment agricultural service resources; and (vi) streamlining the operational planning of existing agricultural services including promoting greater integration with nongovernment services.

**TA INPUTS EVALUATION**

The TA was carried out over an 18-month period, with intermittent inputs of an agricultural economics and marketing expert and an agricultural extension expert. Early on the focus was shifted away from providing services on specific commodities towards an approach that encouraged the interactive participation of various stakeholders. This was justified, among other reasons, by the policy changes resulting from the national and state economic summits which had occurred since the approval of the TA. For the extension component this resulted in a shift from mainly providing technical training towards establishing a framework for an interactive extension approach. For the marketing component it implied a shift from mainly reporting on agricultural market data towards establishing a framework for market analysis which could serve as a basis for setting up an approach to market planning and a market information system. The consultants' input ranged from good to excellent.

**TA OUTPUTS EVALUATION**

Monthly reports were submitted to the Bank and the Government, and the Final Report was received in November 1997. A series of workshops on marketing and extension with participants from the public and private sector was held in each of the four states. In addition, a national marketing and extension workshop was conducted. Agricultural marketing information system manuals and extension manuals for each state were prepared. The quality of the outputs is high. The TA made valuable contributions in increasing awareness of key marketing issues. It also assisted in reorganizing the state agricultural agencies and realigning the extension approach from a top-down to a more interactive approach.

**TA OVERALL ASSESSMENT/RATING**

The TA has been generally successful. Despite the shift in focus, most of the consultants' terms of reference were carried out and completed within the implementation schedule envisaged. The active involvement and commitment of the state agencies has permitted clear direction and specific steps to be set in key areas for strengthening agricultural support services. However, the TA's timeframe was too short for measuring impact in terms of the overall TA objective. The impact will depend on the states' continued implementation of the measures promoted and strengthened by the TA. Respective work plans have been prepared towards the end of the TA. Yet there is the risk that without additional technical support government and non-government agencies may find it difficult to expand training and advisory services for farm and market business development.

**MAJOR LESSONS LEARNED**

The participatory approach proved very valuable and was appreciated by the stakeholders. The intermittent consultancy input allowed time for step-by-step implementation. Capacity building exercises need longer-term assistance.

**FOLLOW-UP ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

With the state agencies in the process of implementing what they have learned during the TA, the Department of Resources and Development preferred not to have an immediate follow-up to the TA. In the medium-term the need might arise for additional assistance which should be based on the same approach used by this TA.