

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: MKAE

TA No. and Name TA 3292–CAM: Capacity Building in the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology		Amount Approved: \$796,000.00 Revised Amount: No revision	
Executing Agency: Ministry of Water Resources & Meteorology (MOWRAM)	Source of Funding: JSF	TA Amount Undisbursed \$6,755.38	TA Amount Utilized \$789,244.62
Date Approval Signing Fielding of Consultants 10 Nov 1999 23 Feb 2000 1 July 2000		TA Completion Date Original: 31 March 2001 Actual: September 2002 Account Closing Date Original: - Actual: 31 October 2002	

Description

Over recent years, the Government has placed priority on stimulating the rural economy to alleviate poverty, and considers that water resource management and rural infrastructure are the two most urgent constraints that need to be addressed. Improving irrigation to boost agricultural production is a key goal in order to provide food security in rural areas. Therefore, efforts need to focus on planning and implementation of projects to increase the area under irrigation with attention to farm level issues to ensure efficient and sustainable operation and maintenance of the systems involving beneficiary participation. The Government also recognizes the need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to water resources management and development within river basins, although this approach is not yet widely adopted. Projects are planned without full consideration of basin issues and without consulting other stakeholders. Despite the overall abundance of water resources in Cambodia, there is already competition and conflicts between water users in some river basins during the dry season. Hence, appropriate policies and institutional arrangements for water resource management need to be established.

It was recognized that additional capacity is needed in MOWRAM to fulfill its responsibility for achieving these goals. Even though water resources development is a high government priority, MOWRAM had received relatively little assistance up until 1999. The major lessons learned from ADB operations in Cambodia are that project management capabilities require strengthening. Government agencies suffer from a shortage of skilled and experienced staff, and there is a lack of experience in project preparation and implementation. The implication for the ADB's operations is that substantial resources need to be devoted to capacity building in the sectors in which ADB will be active.

Objectives and Scope

The objectives of the TA were to (i) build the capacity of MOWRAM in key operational aspects to improve planning and implementation of investment projects within its jurisdiction, and (ii) promote an integrated approach to management and use of water resources within river basins. It aimed to improve the number and quality of project proposals prepared by MOWRAM for consideration of funding agencies, ensuring they focus on the sector goals of reducing rural poverty through increased irrigation and flood control to improve agricultural production. It also aimed to improve coordination between MOWRAM and other stakeholders, including government agencies, beneficiaries, NGOs and international donors. Scope of the TA included: (i) preparation of a draft National Water Sector Profile (NWSP) to analyze sectorwide issues, (ii) carry out a diagnostic analysis of MOWRAM to assess its capacity-building needs using a participatory approach, (iii) develop an action agenda to address the sector issues, and (iv) develop the operational capacity of MOWRAM by strengthening planning capacity, establishing sustainable management of irrigation systems, assessing human resource needs, and establishing financial and administrative procedures.

Evaluation of Inputs

The TA was implemented over 13 months by a team of consultants; 28 person-months international and 19.5 domestic. Both the consultant and MOWRAM considered the formulation of the assignment and terms of reference (TOR) to be appropriate and satisfactory, and experienced no difficulties in understanding what was expected. The performance of the consultants (Sir Mott McDonald & Partners in association with BCEOM) was rated highly satisfactory by ADB. MOWRAM expressed its satisfaction. The TA was well supported by MOWRAM, and it is notable that the Minister provided considerable hands-on inputs to the NWSP and policy issues. Even though the number of staff able to act as effective counterparts was limited, those involved nevertheless carefully reviewed and contributed to the consultants' outputs, especially the NWSP which has generated strong MOWRAM ownership. The consultant's scope of work and related TOR were expanded to assist MOWRAM and ADB to implement the Emergency Flood Rehabilitation Project (Loan 1824-CAM (SF)). Two ADB review missions participated in national workshops for development of the NWSP and water policy, and assessed the need for further support.

Evaluation of Outputs

The outputs expected in the original scope of work were mostly accomplished and are summarized as follows:

- (i) **National Water Sector Profile (NWSP):** By the end of the TA, MOWRAM and other stakeholders

understood the process and purpose for preparation of the NWSP, and realized the benefits in terms developing clear future direction of the sector. MOWRAM has prepared a draft final version in Khmer. A draft National Water Policy was also prepared and this has subsequently been further progressed under a follow on TA.

(ii) **Water Resources Planning:** Planning parameters, criteria, and the processes are now better understood and further assistance in plan formulation will be provided under a follow-on TA. However, the outputs might have been more effective if more suitably qualified counterpart staff had been available to work with the TA team.

(iii) **Sustainable Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of Irrigation Systems:** It was envisaged that the TA would assist to develop and consolidate existing guidelines already introduced by MOWRAM. However, it became evident during the TA that there was disagreement and debate amongst stakeholders about the approach encompassed in the guidelines. Hence, the relatively limited input allocated to this aspect (3 person-months) was too short to resolve the issues. However, the debate and process was moved forward and key issues were highlighted, including the need to improve operations, water use efficiency, and to prepare O&M manuals.

(iv) **Human Resources Development:** The database of MOWRAM staff was created and data for more than 60% of staff inputted. Staff were trained in the process and continued to work after the TA. A thorough review of selected MOWRAM departments was carried out and detailed proposals presented. Counterpart support was highly effective for this activity.

(v) **Administration and Finance:** Concerned staff were trained to follow procedures and guidelines in the current ADB and World Bank manuals, and training was consolidated through practical exercises. The consultants assisted staff to initiate daily administration and financial management of 2 ongoing ADB projects; the Emergency Flood Rehabilitation and Stung Chinit Irrigation and Rural Infrastructure Projects. This included procurement of equipment and recording inventories.

(vi) **Other Training:** Basis training in English language and computer skills was provided and was greatly appreciated by MOWRAM. The project supported the attendance of six staff at overseas conferences/workshops.

(vii) **Emergency Flood Rehabilitation Project:** The TA provided hands-on assistance during loan appraisal and initial start-up (before the loan consultants were mobilized). This included preparation of design reports and a resettlement plan for the urgent rehabilitation work on the Kap Srov flood dikes surrounding Phnom Penh. Although this represented an extension of the original scope of work, it provided real and urgent tasks which proved highly effective as a capacity building exercise.

The consultants provided comprehensive reporting of the outputs, with many more reports produced than were required under the contract. MOWRAM staff actively reviewed and commented on draft reports, and comments were incorporated in the final versions. The reports are generally of a good standard and have been submitted in well presented hard and soft copies.

Overall Assessment and Rating

Overall the TA is rated as successful; it has generally achieved its objectives and available resources were efficiently utilized. However, achievements across the components are variable. For example, work on the NWSP, human resource development, basis training, and assistance to the Emergency Flood Rehabilitation Project is rated as highly successful, whereas water resources planning, and sustainable O&M is rated as partially successful.

Major Lessons Learned

Although the TA has clearly improved the capacity of MOWRAM, it was recognized that capacity building is a long-term undertaking and could not be fully achieved within the time frame of this TA. It is part of an ongoing process, thus highlighting the need for follow-on support, coordinated with the efforts of other funding agencies active in the sector. The shortage of fully trained and experienced professionals was also highlighted during the TA. The need for basic training in English language and computer operation remains important; funds for this should be allocated to future projects.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

Specific capacity building issues identified under this TA were successfully continued under a follow-up TA (TA3758-CAM: Northwest Irrigation Sector Project – Part A). The national water policy was further developed and is now ready for submission to the Council of Ministers for approval. Training in integrated water resources management has been provided and put into practice during preparation of the new sector loan under Part B of the TA. The Ministry's staff database has been completed, and human resource development requirements were analyzed in the departments in the Directorate General of Technical Affairs. Looking further into the future, it would be desirable to provide support for strengthening the Department of Planning and International Cooperation, developing a strategy for flood protection and mitigation, disaster management, evolving guidelines for development in scheduled reservoir areas, and provision of specific training.

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