

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: ERDI

| | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| TA No. and Name TA 3656-PHI: Improving Poverty Monitoring Surveys | | | Amount Approved: \$347,000 | |
| | | | Revised Amount: | |
| Executing Agency: Philippine National Statistics Office (PNSO) | | Source of Funding: \$197000 TASF \$150000 Gov. of New Zealand | TA Amount Undisbursed \$ 30,214.94 (TASF) \$ 53,372.45 (NZ) | TA Amount Utilized \$ 166,785.06 (TASF) \$ 96,627.55 (NZ) |
| Date | | | Completion Date | |
| Approval 24 May 2001 | Signing 26 June 2001 | Fielding of Consultants 1 October 2002 – 30 October 2003 | Original 30 June 2003 | Actual 21 November 2003 |
| | | | Closing Date | |
| | | | Original 30 December 2003 | Actual 11 March 2004 |
| Description | | | | |
| <p>1. In December 1999, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines requested the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for a technical assistance (TA) to improve its poverty monitoring surveys that are the major data sources of official poverty statistics -- the family income and expenditure survey (FIES) that the PNSO has conducted every three years since 1985 and the annual poverty indicator survey (APIS) that was initiated in 1998 and has been conducted annually since then in the years without FIES. There were flaws in the master sample¹ used in both surveys and in all other household surveys conducted by the PNSO because the implementation of the sampling design in the field was not done properly. A major consequence of these flaws was the underestimation of major characteristics of interest compared to the results of the 2000 census of population and housing (CPH). PNSO's capacity to design and implement sample survey strategies have to be strengthened because while there are many staff of PNSO who have academic background in sample surveys, their experience is limited only to the sampling design and operations of PNSO surveys. Aside from the usual tabulation of survey results, very little methodological research and analysis have been done at PNSO to keep abreast with the demands of the changing times. Moreover, PNSO has tended to rely on experts from international aid agencies to develop and improve the master sample design for its system of household surveys. Because these experts were only available intermittently, skills transfer to PNSO staff has been inadequate, so that external technical advice was still needed to improve the master sample design.</p> <p>2. Since FIES and APIS are also the main sources of data cited in the poverty partnership agreement (PPA) between the Government of the Philippines and ADB, improving these two surveys would also support poverty monitoring for the PPA. The TA for Improving Poverty Monitoring Surveys was included in ADB's projected TA Country Assistance Plan in 2000. A fact-finding mission in April 2001 discussed and confirmed with the Government the TA's objectives and scope.</p> | | | | |
| Objectives and Scope | | | | |
| <p>3. The goal of this TA is to improve PNSO's poverty monitoring surveys. The TA aims to assist PNSO in (i) improving the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the FIES and APIS by developing better survey strategies; (ii) linking the FIES and APIS for more in-depth poverty analysis and research; and (iii) establishing a research and development unit (RDU) in PNSO that will be responsible for sustained enhancement of survey sampling and operations. There were three major components of the TA to match the three objectives, namely: (i) the enhancement of the current master sample design; (ii) support and promotion of methodological research using FIES and APIS that will improve the measurement and analysis of poverty statistics; and (iii) a comprehensive training program for the key staff of PNSO, particularly those of the RDU that was formed when the TA was initiated, and concerned government agencies on sample survey design and operations and poverty analysis.</p> <p>4. The TA provided 10 person-months of advisory services in survey methodology and policy analysis. Two consultants assisted PNSO in revising the master sample design and provided on-the-job training to the RDU staff. Videoconferences were held weekly for about four months with the survey methodology consultant, the leading expert in this field, to develop the master sample design and its implementation. Users' forums and consultative workshops were held to get the consensus of the major stakeholders and to disseminate the salient information regarding the master sample design. All concerned government agencies and the academic community participated in this process. Unlike the previous master samples, a full technical documentation of the new master sample that could be used in the analysis of household surveys as well as in enhancing the current design, was written and circulated to all the major stakeholders.</p> <p>5. The TA funded nine methodological research projects proposed by local researchers. Six of these researches investigated alternatives to measuring the poverty line, one research applied cutting-edge small area estimation techniques to combine administrative, CPH and FIES data to generate more stable estimates at the provincial level, one developed non-income measures of poverty and another linked FIES and APIS survey data through statistical matching technique and also, developed the appropriate panel weights for exact matched data sets. To enable PNSO staff gain more expertise in analyzing survey data, one or two PNSO staff were assigned to participate in the activities of each project. These researches were reviewed by experts in their respective areas and were also presented to major stakeholders in several research conferences. The policy analysis consultant consolidated the salient results of researches on measuring the poverty line were and discussed policy implications of the important results with relevant government agencies. The integrated research results and policy analysis were disseminated through a publication and</p> | | | | |

¹ A sample from which subsamples can be selected to serve the needs of more than one survey or survey rounds. It is a set of sample units from which further selection may be done.

workshops. The reports of the other research projects were also published and circulated among concerned government agencies, international and academic communities.

6. The establishment of RDU at NSO was supported by the TA through on-the-job training provided by consultants, apprenticeship program for two months at the University of Michigan for three RDU staff who performed well in the development of the master sample design and procurement of computing equipment, statistical analysis software (STATA) and statistics books. All RDU staff also participated in the comprehensive eighty-hour training program on designing household surveys and survey methodology that was conducted for 35 key NSO staff and other concerned government agencies. A two-week workshop on basic poverty measurements and diagnostics was also given to 30 NSO middle management staff. The survey methodology consultant gave lectures on small area estimation and survey design to NSO staff, concerned government agencies and the academic community.

Evaluation of Inputs

7. The major activities were planned and implemented to fulfill the objectives of the TA. However, some of the research projects that required the 2000 CPH were delayed when the data processing approach of the census had to be changed in midstream. The consultants' terms of reference were appropriately determined based on the requirements of the TA's major activities and PNSO. In designing the master sample, the survey methodology consultant considered the available sampling frame, the limitations in infrastructure, peace and order situation in some areas, the requirements of all the periodic household surveys and the available financial resources. RDU staff and other PNSO key personnel worked closely with the consultants in designing of the master sample and in the process, acquired enough knowledge to be able to apply on their own the master sample design on other household surveys. The policy analysis consultant was able to motivate concerned government agencies to address measurement issues about the official poverty statistics by disseminating her report and conducting small group discussions.

8. The comprehensive training program, workshops and lectures that were conducted under the TA were suitably designed and efficiently implemented. Frequent correspondence by all the concerned parties and a series of consultative meetings with major stakeholders contributed to the successful implementation of this TA. Because the consultants held regular discussions with the TA project officer and PNSO top management, all the major issues were resolved and the TA schedule of activities was followed. Overall, both the PNSO and ADB agreed that the inputs provided by this TA were satisfactory.

Evaluation of Outputs

9. The master sample design proved to be a flexible design because it could also be used by any ad-hoc household survey of national coverage, even with varying available resources. With the institutionalization of the RDU, PNSO is now able to address data quality issues in-house and to further improve its field operations procedures because the technical capability of PNSO staff, especially that of the RDU was considerably upgraded through formal and on-the-job training. RDU staff also learned to conduct methodological research to improve future surveys, to perform critical analysis of existing data to improve the quality of data of future surveys and to write technical documentation that will facilitate future enhancements and accurate analysis of household surveys that employs the master sample design.

10. The three PNSO staff successfully completed their apprenticeship program at the University of Michigan and two of them were able to use their new knowledge in writing the technical documentation of the master sample. However, one staff after undergoing the apprenticeship program was reassigned to tasks outside this TA. The training on poverty measurements and diagnostics for middle management of PNSO enabled them to appreciate why they should meticulously supervise the survey operations for FIES and APIS.

11. The research projects were professionally carried out and generated a lot of interest among relevant government agencies and the academic community. While their impact on poverty monitoring is not yet evident, they have already contributed significantly to the on-going debate on poverty measurement and they have also influenced PNSO to improve their public utility files and business procedures. Overall, the outputs of this TA contributed to the improvement of poverty monitoring surveys as well as the addressed major issues in measuring the poverty line.

Overall Assessment and Rating

12. The TA was successful.

Major Lessons Learned

13. Methodological research is necessary to upgrade the quality of data and survey procedures at the PNSO. The computations and publication of sampling errors of major survey variables should be required to inform the users about the level of data quality and for the PNSO to improve the future survey rounds. Moreover, technical documentation of the master sample should be done to further improve surveys and to assist users in applying correct analytical procedures.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

14. While the RDU has already been established at PNSO, its further development in terms of additional technical personnel and support from PNSO top management is needed to continue the improvement in data quality and to further strengthen PNSO's business procedures. The momentum that this TA has gained cannot be sustained without a strong RDU.

15. To further apply the small area estimation techniques that This TA has developed in generating indirect poverty estimates at various sub-national levels, coordination with other government agencies that produce consistent poverty-related administrative data nation-wide should be pursued.