

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: PAHQ

TA No. and Name TA 3833-VAN: Institutional Strengthening of the National Statistics Office			Amount Approved: \$200,000	
			Revised Amount: \$200,000	
Executing Agency: Ministry of Finance and Economic Management		Source of Funding: TASF	TA Amount Undisbursed \$25,935.83	TA Amount Utilized \$174,064.17
Date Approval Signing Fielding of Consultants 1 February 2002 20 February 2002 29 July 2002			Completion Date Original Actual 28 February 2003 30 November 2005	
			Account Closing Date Original Actual 28 February 2003 22 February 2006	
Description The technical assistance (TA) supported Vanuatu's economic and social development through the preparation of relevant, timely, reliable statistical information. The TA upgraded the capacity of national statistical office (NSO) to meet its obligations to coordinate, collect, analyze, and disseminate economic, social, and demographic statistics, through improving the quality, relevance, timeliness, and reliability of the statistics.				
Objectives and Scope The main objective of the TA was to assist NSO to (i) produce or improve selected economic statistics, including the national accounts, business survey, and business license register; (ii) produce or improve selected social statistics, including the social profile, employment, squatter settlement, poverty and gender statistics; and (iii) analyze the NSO operations. The staff training provided by the TA was mainly to develop on-the-job skills, coach key senior staff to become capable of covering several types of tasks, and guide NSO to improve the quality of products, through participation in research and report writing activities. In April 2005, the Government requested assistance from ADB to review and update their survey blocks (census units). Survey blocks need to be revised periodically in order to conduct surveys efficiently, and the Government was of the view that the current survey blocks were already obsolete. Furthermore, since Household Income and Expenditure Survey (funded by New Zealand's Aid for International Development) and agricultural census (funded by European Union) were planned in 2006, the Government requested ADB to provide staff training for these surveys.				
Evaluation of Inputs The following inputs were provided by individual consultants under the TA: (i) assisted to compile the national accounts for 2000 and 2001 and incorporate revisions to the previously published accounts for the period 1983-1999; (ii) developed a strategy for compiling the annual and quarterly national accounts estimates; (iii) undertook the 2001 Annual Business Survey (ABS), and developed a strategy for future ABS surveys; (iv) reviewed the structure of the social statistical section and the existing systems and methodologies; (v) assisted in designing and establishing a "social monitoring data system" to monitor and evaluate progress of implementation of the Comprehensive Reform Program (CRP); (vi) provided on the job training in analyzing, interpreting, compiling, updating and using demographic and social statistics; (vii) helped prepare the Vanuatu Social Profile; and (viii) assisted in the development of a work plan and the survey instruments for a Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) and agricultural census. Clients were satisfied with the consultant's inputs, as ADB's support was commended by the TA recipients. The performance of ADB and the Executing Agency (EA) (the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management) is also rated as satisfactory.				
Evaluation of Outputs The following outputs were achieved under the TA: (i) updates for national accounts for 1983–2001, and the annual national accounts for 2000, 2001, and 2002 were published. (ii) the strategy for the publication of annual national accounts estimates was formulated (this strategy is compatible with the proposed development of quarterly national accounts estimates being undertaken under ADB RETA 6009); (iii) the results from the 2001 ABS were published; (iv) a socioeconomic survey plan has been prepared and key positions within the statistical division were documented; (v) a comprehensive document of key information needs was prepared based on CRP, Millennium Development Goals, generalized data dissemination statistics, and management and research information (it was noted that where key statistics required additional surveys, computerization of collections or procedural or methodological improvements; (vi) a series of recommendations was made to improve the quality and coverage of key government and nongovernmental administrative collections; (vii) staff training for capacity building was undertaken (training including editing, non-				

response adjustments, data analysis, graphing and in using actual social data); (viii) on-the-job training was provided through staff participating in report writing; (ix) a template of key indicators to support a range of policy, management, international reporting requirements, and statistical needs was developed; (x) a draft social profile covering most key social sector areas (except health data) was produced (the report was released in April 2004); and (xi) the sample frames for HIES and the survey instruments for the agricultural census were produced.

The reason for the 33-month delay was the Government request for further statistical capacity building activities, which was beyond its original scope. The TA was considered efficient as all planned outputs have been accomplished. Even though the Project went beyond its original scope, the TA provided the valuable inputs for the future surveys (HIES and agricultural census).

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA is rated as successful as the TA supported Vanuatu's economic and social statistical capacity building through the on-the-job training on preparation of relevant, timely, and reliable statistical information and various reports, revising the sampling frames, and creating the survey instruments.

Major Lessons Learned

ADB provided advances through fund transfers to the EA to cover various expenditures for the project. The funds were to be liquidated by the EA with supporting documents. However, during implementation, there were delays in the submission of the liquidation of advances to ADB. In order to avoid delays in the recovery of advances and closing of accounts, EA's capacity to handle financial administrative responsibilities should be carefully assessed first.

Even though this TA helped to promote two critical aspects of sound development management, i.e. transparency and accountability, it did not fully mobilize "political will" to utilize statistics for their policy making. During TA implementation, TA should have solicited for more consultation with the policy makers and planners, not only working with statistics office.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

Even though HIES and agricultural census are planned in 2006, NSO does not have adequate capacity (i.e. human resource as well as technical competency) to carry two surveys simultaneously. Additional TA for carrying out these two surveys would be necessary.

Prepared by Kiyoshi Taniguchi Designation Country Programs Specialist/Economist