

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: Capacity Development and Governance

TA No. and Name TA 6072-REG: GOOD PRACTICE ON PRO-POOR SERVICE DELIVERY BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS		Amount Approved: \$250,000	
		Revised Amount:	
Executing Agency: Asian Development Bank	Source of Funding: TASF	TA Amount Undisbursed \$27,791	TA Amount Utilized \$222,209
Date		Completion Date	
Approval 16/12/2002	Signing N. A.	Original 30/11/2003	Actual 30/06/2005
Fielding of First Consultants: February 2003		Original 30/11/2003	Closing Date Actual 30/09/2005
Description <p>Improving responsiveness in delivering services particularly for the poor and disadvantaged is a major challenge facing policy makers and service providers in many developing member countries (DMCs). Although there are many good practices and innovations in the way services are provided by DMCs, there is limited sharing of information on what works, the reasons for success and the specific measures taken to improve service delivery performance. This regional technical assistance (RETA) draws from the feedback received during the delivery of a professional development program (PDP) under RETA 5949 on 'Putting People First: The Key to Improving Public Services (10-15 November 2003). The PDP was attended by 24 representatives from 9 DMCs. The key recommendation from the PDP was that ADB should play a pivotal role in delivering learning events to enable the sharing of good practices in service delivery within the Region.</p>			
Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs <p>As many public services are delivered through sub-national governments and often by civil society organizations (CSOs), this RETA focused primarily on sub-national government policy makers and service providers. The expected outcome was for policy makers and service providers in selected DMCs with responsibility for the delivery of services to acquire knowledge on how to improve services, have tools and techniques for assessing the delivery of basic services; and access to documented case studies, to achieve improved delivery of local government services to the poor. The following outputs were expected: (1) three case studies on international experiences and good practices particularly for service delivery planning and for monitoring quality; (2) three case studies of DMC performance and experience in service delivery; (3) regional seminar; (4) seminar proceedings; and (5) action plan of seminar participants. The regional seminar highlighted the presentation of these case studies.</p>			
Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities <p>One of the first tasks during project implementation was to establish a multi-disciplinary project team to guide the delivery of the RETA outputs. RETA inputs were adapted after project design to allow for the institutional partnerships established with the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). Through these partnerships, additional financing was made available for the development of the case studies; design of toolkits and for widening the participation of DMC representatives to the regional seminar. ADBI co-financed the design and development of two e-learning toolkits on citizen report card (CRC) methodology and continuous improvement and benchmarking (CIB) techniques. Local educational and training institutions such as the National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) of the University of the Philippines (UP) and the Local Government Academy (LGA) of the Department of Interior and Local Government were brought in to assist with the organization and conduct of the regional seminar as well as in field testing of e-learning toolkits during design and development.</p> <p>A total of 47.5 person-months of expert services were utilized of which 9.3 and 38.2 person-months were international and domestic, respectively. Implementation of the RETA exemplified efficient execution of assigned tasks and effective delivery of the expected outputs by RETA staff and consultants. Timely and regular submission of required reports and outputs from the consultants was satisfactorily complied with.</p> <p>The regional seminar design was oriented towards providing the participants with practical examples and ideas to improve basic services, particularly to the poor. The seminar design and case studies focused on practical themes and discussions that could be adapted to suit specific local contexts. The content and materials presented at the seminar required local government units and CSOs to document and present evidence-based success stories that resulted in more efficient and responsive services for citizens, especially the historically disadvantaged and marginalized. The stories highlighted the importance of partnerships and collaboration, citizens' participation and feedback, knowledge management, and responsible leadership in raising the quality of public services. The CRC and CIB e-learning good practices were shared and there was considerable support for developing the toolkits. The seminar provided a good opportunity for laying the foundations of the development of the toolkits and their underlying architecture.</p> <p>As there were several local government practitioners making presentations for the first time, capacity building was an integral part of the process during the preparation of the case studies and seminar material. A common framework prepared by the project team made it easier for the presenters to develop the presentation material and it also strengthened the overall quality of the seminar. The project team quality assured the seminar materials through an iterative and learning by doing process. Executive summaries or abstracts of all case studies were also prepared and distributed. Adult-learning techniques</p>			

were utilized in the seminar. Physical arrangements were given considerable attention to maximize interaction among participants and presenters, thus creating a more conducive and facilitative learning environment. The project team carefully worked on the appropriate number of sessions and activities as well as sequenced them in such a way to suit the participants' learning profiles. A mix of pedagogical approaches was also utilized to sustain the audience's attention and interest. In addition to the case study presentations, learning diaries, and group learning activities, there were videotaped and live video-link presentations from the United Kingdom, South Africa, Brazil, and the United States.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome

There were over 120 participants to the regional seminar comprising of national government executives overseeing public services, local government officials responsible for services delivery, and civil society representatives advocating to improve responsiveness in services delivery coming from 19 countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji Islands, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Vietnam. The seminar provided two types of learning opportunities: firstly through the presentations (and case studies); and secondly, through subject-specific group learning activity on each day. The group learning activities were sessions designed specifically for the participants to unpack the complexity of a particular facet of service delivery and be given the opportunity to learn about benchmarking and continuous improvement techniques, improving service delivery in the rural areas, and strengthening citizens' voice and building/maintaining effective citizen-government partnerships. The seminar was rated as highly successful by both ADB and the participants given its innovative approach with strong emphasis on learning and high quality of presentations.

A total of 15 case studies highlighting experiences from 21 countries were written for and presented in the regional seminar. The case studies and seminar proceedings were packaged and disseminated in CD-ROM format. These materials are also available on the ADB website and are being used in teaching and operations research. Case studies were satisfactorily completed and exceeded targets as a result of the co-financing arrangements with UNCDF and ADBI as well as the partnership with UP-NCPAG and LGA. The CRC and CIB e-learning toolkits have been completed and disseminated to DMCs. Policymakers, service managers, academics, and CSO leaders have expressed keen interest in using the e-learning toolkits. A follow-on RETA is providing another package of support to promote and use the e-learning toolkits through educational and training institutes of public administration and governance in the region.

Action planning came in the form of an open forum to discuss what the participants can do with the lessons that they learned and knowledge products that were given to them. With about 120 diverse participants, it was difficult to come up with the usual action plan document identifying the actions to be taken, time table and responsible persons.

Through the case studies and sharing of experiences during the regional seminar, the RETA, was able to provide knowledge and information on how to improve basic service delivery, best practices, and tools and techniques for assessing service delivery to the seminar participants. The availability of the seminar materials in the ADB website and their subsequent use as training materials by UP-NCPAG and LGA, further provided opportunities for disseminating knowledge and information. Armed with this knowledge and information, it was expected that DMC officials would be able to apply what they have learned in improving service delivery in their respective jurisdictions. However, the actual achievement of improved delivery of local government services to the poor is difficult to measure since this will require more time and additional resources, which the RETA did not have any provisions for. While the TA Framework provided that improved delivery of services will be measured in terms of certain performance indicators (service delivery reviews by CSOs and local governments; benchmark of local government's performance in delivering services to the poor) and monitoring mechanisms, there were no follow through activities undertaken to ensure that these were done. The RETA focused more on the learning activities and knowledge dissemination.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The RETA is rated successful as the objective of knowledge dissemination was met and outputs delivered within the resource envelope provided. RETA case study outputs exceeded targets and together with seminar materials found further usefulness as training materials for the regular teaching and training functions of UP-NCPAG and LGA.

Major Lessons

Learning opportunities can be optimized through careful planning and enthusiasm to innovate and deliver the best possible results. Such was attested by the experience of organizing and managing this RETA. It was always a challenge to find the appropriate quantity and mix of seminar sessions that matched the absorptive capacity of the audience. Some participants felt that the seminar program should have been less packed and allowed more opportunities for open discussions.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

ADB has an important and continuing role in sharing knowledge and good practices about service delivery among DMC policy makers and service providers. Further investment in the delivery of learning events is required on a regular basis. The more difficult part, however, is measuring the outcome of such learning events, that is, whether it will lead to better delivery of services to the poor. It is also important to follow-up the development of the e-learning CRC and CIB toolkits with a phase of activity that promotes their use and effective application in projects where ADB is supporting service delivery improvement initiatives by DMCs.