

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

**Division:** PAHQ

TA No. and Name TA 6157-REG: Strengthening Poverty Analysis and Strategies in the Pacific			<b>Amount Approved:</b> \$1,000,000	
			<b>Revised Amount:</b> \$840,000	
Executing Agency: Asian Development Bank		Source of Funding: PRF, NPRS, TASF	Amount Undisbursed: \$58,188.19	Amount Utilized: \$781,811.81
TA Approval Date:  18 Dec 2003		TA Signing Date:  25 March 2004	TA Completion Date Original: 31 March 2006      Actual: 31 October 2007 Account Closing Date Original: 31 March 2006      Actual: 19 May 2008	
		Fielding of First Consultant:  1 March 2004		

### **Description**

Regional Technical Assistance (RETA) 6157: Strengthening Poverty Analysis and Strategies in the Pacific aimed to support Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Pacific developing member countries (PDMCs) in reducing poverty and in the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) by enhancing their capacity to formulate pro-poor strategies and budgets in a participatory manner.

The short and medium term objectives of the TA were to enhance the capacity and demand, both within government and civil society, for the collection, analysis and effective use of consistent and quality data related to poverty and hardship. The TA established the Regional Poverty Program (RPP) to address the need of PDMCs for statistical information to determine the level and extent of poverty or hardship and develop policies to address these issues.

### **Expected Impact, Outcome and Outputs**

The goal of the TA was to assist PDMCs to develop the capacity to formulate pro-poor strategies and budgets in a participatory manner, thereby enabling them to reduce poverty and achieve progress toward the MDGs.

The following describes the delivery of outputs: (i) A Paper advising PDMCs on how to address prioritization of development poverty strategies – Completed, the document was well received and circulated within the Pacific; (ii) A review of regional poverty data analysis – regional data sets were completed, data sets compiled and reviewed; (iii) Updates of (ii) produced on bi-annual basis and distributed – updates of the data are posted on the regional statistics website when individual PICs prepare new updates; (iv) Survey, capacity development needs assessment, and work plans completed and disseminated – delivered through conducting an HIES in 7 PDMCs; (v) Model poverty data set developed – completed and provided to SPC; (vi) Pacific poverty program initiated – SPC has developed appropriate sites in the Pacific Regional Information System (PRISM) for storage of poverty data and analytical reports, these can be updated by PICs; (vii) Support provided for MDG monitoring – through data collected and the development of PRISM MDG, the TA has supported monitoring of MDG data; (viii) Capacity built for Government and civil society in poverty analysis and in participatory poverty assessments – two Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) were conducted under the TA refining earlier methodology and resulting in a common regional approach and format; (ix) Survey design, scope, and analysis abilities strengthened – survey design, implementation, management, data collection and validation, data entry and data analysis have all been improved; (x) Database of regional poverty specialists established and maintained – there is no evidence that this database has been developed or maintained.

**Design:** As originally designed, the TA was overly ambitious. The design and monitoring framework (DMF) is poor repeating activities as outputs. Not all outputs or activities had a clear and measurable objective. There seems little evidence of high level engagement in approval of the design. Countries were not specified in the DMF resulting in a design framework that was too general. This is reflected in three variations to the TA, each of which refined the outputs further.

### **Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities**

**Economy of input provision.** The largest cost items in the TA were the support to the conduct of surveys, a fixed cost item. The TA maximized the use of Pacific consultants and regional institution staff, minimizing remuneration costs.

**Productivity of inputs** was low due to poor management and planning of the survey work. While initially designed to be more productive, delays by PDMCs in conducting the stages of each survey resulted tasks not being managed sequentially. SPC managed the delivery of the surveys but not the external consultant support, limiting their ability to utilize the external consultants for efficiency. Variations and ADB personnel changes also delayed implementation reducing productivity.

**Quality of inputs.** The TA engaged two long term consultants over the life of the Project. Both developed the skills and abilities of the recipient PDMCs and managed the delivery of quality poverty reports. They will continue to be a resource in the region beyond this TA. The performance of the short term Project Manager for the Solomon Islands PPA was only partially satisfactory. There were unnecessary delays in the completion of the outputs; report writing was poor requiring significant inputs from others.

**Reasons for Deviation of Activities.** Variations to the TA were to effect improved management arrangements, remove inputs for which there was insufficient demand, and to respond to changes in implementation schedules brought about by client availability to participate. These deviations could have been reduced by more inclusive design approaches, a better management structure and more realistic timeframes. They could not have been eliminated due to unforeseen events, such as the Tsunami.

**Client Satisfaction.** Refer to Evaluation of Outputs – Outputs and Activities in the DMF are identically worded.

**ADB Performance.** ADB assigned three Project Officers to the TA during its 4 year life and three Project Analysts. This resulted in a significant loss of corporate memory. Record keeping on the TA was consistently poor. With the TA operating in eight countries, it was not cost effective for the Project Officer to work directly with the recipient PDMCs reducing the ability to closely manage the activity, and respond effectively to emerging issues. SPC, as the implementing agency, spent more time in direct management during implementation but sometimes lacked the authority to negotiate effectively. Rated less than satisfactory.

### **Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome**

#### **Efficiency in Production.**

ADB's budget allocation was adequate. The TA sought to utilize regional institutions to strengthen both PDMCs and the role of the regional institution (SPC) in supporting poverty analysis in the region. The Contract was innovative allowing SPC to manage the delivery of outputs as core business not in a project mode. Additional outputs were also achieved as SPC has the contacts and daily involvement with the PDMCs to seize and respond to opportunities when they arose.

#### **Effectiveness**

The TA generated interest from other donors in poverty assessments. ADB and SPC were successful in securing additional funding on a ratio of 1:1.15. Ownership has varied between PDMCs. Factors affecting the level of ownership have included: competing work programs, and political imperatives; limited resources; the work program driving the pace not the recipient government organizations; and changes to staff during implementation. Notwithstanding, 9 of the 10 outputs were achieved.

**Quality of Outputs.** The performance indicators and targets in the DMF are delivery type indicators with no quality measures. An assessment against the DMF can not be made. The following benefits are recognized by PDMC clients through discussions in regional fora: (i) it developed a regional capacity and interest in HIES, poverty assessments and dialogue on the definition and causes of poverty leading to greater policy dialogue on poverty reduction; (ii) the role of SPC in supporting HIES and poverty analysis in the region, improving the sustainability of technical expertise within the region was strengthened; (iii) a cadre of committed and dedicated offices within PDMCs willing to share technical expertise was developed; and (iv) a common approach to undertaking poverty assessments and HIES work in the Pacific was generated.

**Client Satisfaction.** At a meeting in September 2007, Pacific Heads of Statistics thanked ADB for the TA, commenting on its importance in raising the profile of poverty analysis and strengthening PDMCs capabilities. They saw the TA as instrumental in developing a regional approach to these issues. Some concerns were raised on the need for continuing donor support, and the lack of flexibility in the timing of certain surveys in some countries.

#### **Overall Assessment and Rating**

Overall, the TA is partly successful. The TA was extremely successful in continuing support for raising poverty and poverty analysis as a key development issue in the region. Significant skills development has been achieved and regional collaboration and coordination established. The TA design and implementation approach led to input inefficiencies and poor coordination among implementing agencies and consultants.

#### **Major Lessons Learned**

The following major lessons were identified: (i) An overly ambitious timeline for the delivery of TA outputs reduced the quality of the final poverty analysis; (ii) Insufficient time and resources for management of the TA (particularly travel budget) resulted in loss of momentum during various stages of the TA. This was true for both ADB and the implementing agency; (iii) A more flexible mechanism to support regional activities would have facilitated better management by regional organization; (iv) While the TA had good beneficiary agreement at the operational level, there was not sufficient political commitment established during design for the outputs of the TA; and (v) Regional approaches and regional implementation mechanisms are more likely to be effective in the long run than ADB managed TA.

#### **Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions**

It is recommended that ADB continue to support collection of poverty data and assist in poverty analysis. There is no need to continue support for raising the profile of poverty analysis in the region. ADB should retain its role in working with regional, bilateral and multilateral partners in supporting the collection, analysis and dissemination of poverty related data in the Pacific.