



Completion Report

Project Number: 40596-012
Technical Assistance Number: 4883
June 2018

Marshall Islands: Building Capacity for Independent Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) and Country Performance Assessment (CPA) Results Management – A Pacific Pilot

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| TA Number, Country, and Name: | | | Amount Approved: \$150,000 | |
| TA 4883-RMI: Building Capacity for Independent Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) and Country Performance Assessment (CPA) Results Management – A Pacific Pilot | | | Revised Amount: N.A. | |
| Executing Agency: Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO) of the Chief Secretary's Office | | Source of Funding: The Managing for Development Results Cooperation Fund administered by ADB | Amount Undisbursed: \$9,504.52 | Amount Utilized: \$140,495.48 |
| TA Approval Date: 5 Dec 2006 | TA Signing Date: Not applicable | Fielding of First Consultant: 4 Jun 2007 | TA Completion Date Original: 31 Dec 2009 Actual: 31 Aug 2010 Account Closing Date Original: 31 Dec 2009 Actual: 17 Aug 2010 | |
| Description <p>The Government of the Marshall Islands (RMI) requested the small scale technical assistance (SSTA) from Asian Development Bank (ADB) to support further strengthening of independent monitoring and management of the results of the country strategy and program update (CSPU) and for the annual country performance assessments (CPA). It was designed to (i) build RMI country statistics generation and policy analytical capacities, and (ii) continue to strengthen the country's capacity for an independent monitoring of and management for development results. The executing agency (EA) was the Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO) of the Chief Secretary's Office and the implementing agencies (IAs) were the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the College of the Marshall Islands (CMI).</p> <p>In the CPA of 2005 and 2006, the RMI was designated as a weakly performing country where adoption of improved development policy and institutional reforms has proven to be most difficult. Given the previous lack of implementation of policy recommendations, ADB's CSPU for 2007–2011 prioritized the provision of technical assistance and policy advice for increasing public sector productivity and stressed that ADB's assistance should be limited, focused, and tied to an assessment of results. Specifically, the CSPU proposed technical assistance for strengthening the EPPSO in support of improved policy formulation and implementation.</p> <p>Responding to the shortage of statistics and statisticians in RMI over a long period, there had been a series of ADB assistance programs for capacity building in statistics. Among those, TA 4199: "Strengthening the Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office" implemented in 2003–2007 was one of the most successful programs. It succeeded in building up some statistics capacity, rebuilding the statistical data set, and in the drafting of Cabinet policy briefs, which had been achieved partly through new statistics training programs to certificate level provided by the USP Majuro Campus. This SSTA was designed to continue the work of TA 4199 to increase capacities of a broader range of ministries to produce statistics.</p> <p>Further, the SSTA was designed to stimulate demand for greater information and knowledge about development issues by supporting the launch of the Public Policy Institute (PPI) of the CMI. This is in line with extensive demand-side consultation and participation of relevant stakeholder that the CSPU had stressed. ADB had funded participatory preparation of the earlier CSPUs, all TAs, informal and confidential leadership retreats, media consultations, and public presentations on development policy. The Parliament of the RMI had also started to conduct forum on development issues with NGOs.</p> | | | | |
| Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs <p>The expected impact of the SSTA was improved decisions on development policy and institutional development. As its outcome, the SSTA aimed to strengthen demand for improved policy and enhance government capacity to inform the public of policy issues. The SSTA identified two major outputs: (i) increased domestic capacity to produce statistics and (ii) increased demand for public policy debate and conduct of regular policy discussions.</p> | | | | |
| Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities <p>The activities of the SSTA consisted of two inter-related components: (i) the in-country part-time training of government officials in statistics to certificate level at the USP campus in RMI; and (ii) the PPI of the CMI, an independent and non-government entity, was to host a series of six independent public discussions on key development policy issues. The USP and CMI were selected on a sole source basis as, respectively, the only source of statistics and public policy tertiary education in RMI.</p> <p>On the first component, the EPPSO, the EA, prepared selection criteria for the part-time certificate level training at the USP, and the first class commenced in February 2007. In February 2010, at the request of the Government of RMI, minor changes in scope and implementation arrangements of the SSTA were made to increase the number of government staff receiving training, from 5 in the original agreement to 28. In relation to this change, funding for the training component was increased from \$67,000 to \$99,507 (66.3% of SSTA funds). Prior to the approval of the change, it was clarified that other components of the SSTA had been fully implemented with less resources than in the original estimates due to (i) services and facilities supplied from the RMI Government and (ii) additional funds for</p> | | | | |

the PPI forums provided by CMI. Following the minor changes in scope, the SSTA closing date was extended once by 8 months. By the closing date in August 2010, 28 key government staff had benefited from various statistics courses offered by USP. They were the key staff who contributed to and prepared various documents including the 2010 Census and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) progress report.

The PPI at CMI was launched in 2007 with the support of the SSTA. Before the launch, a minor change in scope was made in order to accommodate the CMI's request to set aside a budget for Equipment (video cameras, back-up equipment, and accompanying accessories) for documentation purposes. A budget line item for equipment was created and \$15,000 was reallocated from contingencies. By the closing date, the SSTA successfully engaged six international resource persons individually and through CMI and supported their public speeches and discussions at PPI as envisaged in the TA report. The inaugural speech was made by the then Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa, Misa Telefoni Retzlaff, in June 2007. The subsequent speakers for the PPI addressed the following topics: (i) the impact of the US military build-up in Guam on RMI; (ii) public financial management; (iii) natural resources conservation; (iv) solid waste management; and (v) fisheries. All discussions were well received with good attendance from private sector companies and the general public, and there was strong buy-in from the diplomatic community. The performance of the resource persons was satisfactory, as they completed their assignments at PPI on time and in a professional manner. During implementation, it was determined that a national consultant identified in the initial plan was not needed. The EA and IAs performed satisfactorily, having provided counterpart support. The performance of ADB was satisfactory. ADB's response to the EA's/IAs' requests to set aside a budget for recording equipment and increase the number of government staff receiving training within the budget of the SSTA was conducted in a timely manner.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome

The SSTA achieved its intended outcome of enhancing government capacity to inform the public of policy issues. Evidence of stronger independent monitoring and managing for development results and improved policy implementation can be observed in the improvement in the annual CPA ratings. While the CPA rating for RMI's public administration was 2.0 in both 2006 and 2010–2012 (the Pacific average: 3.2 in 2006, and 3.0 in 2010–2012), it rose to 2.5 in 2013–2015 (the Pacific average: 3.0). Similarly, the rating for RMI's transparency, accountability, and corruption was 2.5 in 2006 and 2010–2012 (the Pacific average: 3.1), and it significantly improved and caught up with the Pacific average at 3.2 in 2013–2015.

Output 1, increased domestic capacity to produce statistics, was fully achieved. In total 28 government employees received support to enroll in the USP's program for certificate and diploma in official statistics, and they contributed to and prepared various documents including the 2010 Census and the MDG progress report. Output 2, increased demand for public policy debate and conduct of regular policy discussions, was also fully achieved with support from the CMI, Chamber of Commerce, and a national NGO umbrella organization. The first public policy resource input by the then Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa made an excellent start and subsequent five speakers were also well received.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The SSTA is rated successful overall. The TA was largely implemented as planned, with two minor changes in scope (enabling purchase of recording equipment and reallocating budget to the training component) and a single extension of the completion date by 8 months for sponsored students to complete their courses in 2010.

The SSTA is rated relevant. The intended outcome was strategically aligned with RMI's Vision 2018, the Strategic Development Plan Framework 2003–2018, which emphasized the importance of "a statistical database adequate for planning, implementation and monitoring of sustainable and self-reliant development policies and programs". The SSTA was effective, as it achieved its intended outcome and outputs as specified in the design and monitoring framework. The SSTA was implemented efficiently, as evidenced by the fact that the budget allocation was fully utilized (94%) without any cost overruns. Changes in the TA implementation arrangements were swiftly carried out. Finally, the TA is rated likely sustainable. The outcome has been sustained after 3–5 years of the TA completion as observed in the improvement in the annual CPA ratings in 2013–2015.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

The PPI plays an important role in RMI by supporting open dialogue on public policy issues and challenges. To ensure PPI's continued contribution in knowledge sharing and capacity building, the CMI should budget for more regular activities at the PPI. Lack of sufficient information on the TA due to the length of time since its closure was a major challenge in preparing the TCR; therefore, TCRs should be completed in a timely manner.

ADB = Asian Development Bank, CMI = College of the Marshall Islands, CPA = country performance assessment, CPS = country partnership strategy, CSPU = country strategy and program update, EA = executing agency, EPPSO = Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office, IA = implementing agency, MDG = Millennium Development Goals, NGO = nongovernment organization, PPI = Public Policy Institute, RMI = Republic of the Marshall Islands, SSTA = small scale technical assistance, TA = technical assistance, TCR = technical assistance completion report, US = United States, USP = University of the South Pacific.