



Completion Report

Project Number: 43149-012
Technical Assistance Number: 7437
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Asia Pacific Procurement Partnership Initiative

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TA Number, Country, and Name: TA 7437-REG: Asia Pacific Procurement Partnership Initiative			Amount Approved: \$1,300,000.00	
			Revised Amount: \$1,600,000.00	
Executing Agency: ADB		Source of Funding: TASF-OTH: \$800,000 TASF-IV: \$300,000 PRC-Regional Cooperation and Poverty Reduction Fund: \$500,000	Amount Undisbursed: \$317,093.39	Amount Utilized: \$1,282,906.61
TA Approval Date: 11 December 2009	TA Signing Date: 11 December 2009	Fielding of First Consultants: 15 January 2010	TA Completion Date Original: 30 June 2013 Actual: 30 June 2016	
			Account Closing Date Original: 30 June 2013 Actual: 25 July 2017	
Description ADB hosted the Asia Pacific Procurement Forum Consultative Meeting in August 2009 aimed at promoting policy dialogue and effective information exchanges on internationally-acceptable procurement practices to complement existing and new public procurement reforms in the Asia Pacific region. ADB designed a regional technical assistance (TA) to establish the Asia-Pacific Procurement Partnership Initiative (PPI) and to provide technical support to national public procurement reform measures. A key feature was the Procurement Partnership Facility (PPF) which provided financial support to implement procurement-related project proposals initiated by ADB developing member countries (DMCs).				
Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs The TA's expected impact was that a significant number of participating ADB DMCs would undertake initiatives to align their public procurement systems with international good practice. Its expected outcome was to strengthen and operationalize regional and subregional exchange of information and partnership among public procurement officials in ADB DMCs. The TA's expected outputs were: (i) implementation of country-specific procurement reform initiatives; (ii) procurement knowledge products and online support; and (iii) regional procurement officials' sharing of good procurement practices. The TA design was relevant as it bolstered informed policy dialogue and enhanced knowledge and capacity for effective procurement reform and implementation. It also aligned with ADB's Strategy 2020 in promoting operational effectiveness and supporting regional and country outcomes.				
Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities ADB was the executing agency for this TA. The TA engaged individual consultants (1 procurement communications expert, 11 international and 9 national procurement specialists) to carry out primary tasks of providing advisory support on procurement management to selected national procurement administrative offices and PPF project proposal proponents, conducting analytical case studies, organizing conferences and workshops, and contributing content and peer review to the publication of knowledge products. Their performance on the TA's activities is rated satisfactory. The TA amount was increased twice: by \$160,000 from TASF-IV in January 2011 and by \$140,000 from RCPF in May 2011. The TA was extended three times for a total of 36 months, and minor changes in implementation arrangements were requested to: (i) hold the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on e-Government Procurement (e-GP), (ii) conduct further subregional workshops, (iii) provide ADB contribution to regional public procurement forums in Central Asia and South Asia prepare, and (iv) publish knowledge products on e-GP, public procurement and trade and SME participation in government procurement. The TA was financially closed on 25 July 2017. In general, the TA was adequately formulated as it helped develop an adequate program of facilitating country-specific procurement related interventions and of strengthening regional and subregional exchange of procurement information among ADB's DMCs. In this aspect, ADB's performance is rated as satisfactory.				
Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome The overall satisfactory and effective achievement of the TA's outcome relied on the performance of the following outputs:				
Output 1. Supporting country-specific procurement reform initiatives. Project proposals from Nepal, Pakistan and Thailand were selected for PPF financing. Only proposals from Nepal and Pakistan received final endorsements for financing for \$150,000 and \$149,500, respectively. The submission from Thailand failed to receive a no-objection response from its national government and did not move forward. Following this successful initiative, several short-term advisory assignments from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mongolia and the Philippines followed.				
Output 2. Procurement knowledge products and online support. The knowledge products produced included four thematic country case studies (Armenia, People's Republic of China, India, and the Philippines), the e-GP Handbook, and the 2012 Country Procurement Assessment Report for the Philippines. An external website (http://adbprocurementforum.net) was created to provide a dynamic, collaborative venue for coordinated peer-to-peer cooperation on procurement issues. It contained PPI's first e-newsletter and the database of country procurement profiles of 31 DMCs.				
Output 3. Procurement officials in region share good procurement practices. PPI's start-up meeting was held in				

Yogyakarta, Indonesia in July 2010 to develop a work plan, launch the PPF, and define the PPI's outputs. The Asia-Pacific Conference on e-GP held in November 2011 was participated by more than 150 senior officials, policy makers and procurement practitioners from ADB's DMCs, multilateral and bilateral development institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector shared ideas, experiences and discussed common issues on developing and implementing e-GP. The Regional Conference on the Use of Procurement Agents in Public Procurement was convened in Beijing, PRC in September 2012 to discuss approaches on the use of procurement agents and related issues such as governance, integrity, and capacity development. Eight subregional workshops were likewise held (1 in Southeast Asia; 3 in South Asia; and 4 in Central Asia).

Overall Assessment and Rating

In the absence of current OECD-DAC baseline indicator data, surveys on e-GP system implementation conducted under the TA in 2011, 2014 and 2017 showed that, since 2009, 11 DMCs established e-GP systems by 2014 and a further 4 DMCs adopted e-GP systems by 2017. Also, data published by PEFA¹ indicates that, out of 17 ADB DMCs that have been evaluated more than once using its methodology, 5 DMCs improved their procurement systems (reflected in the indicator 'Competition, value for money and controls in procurement') by a minimum of 1 point on a 4-point scale².

The TA has established a platform to strengthen strategic partnerships among procurement policy officials in the region. For example, officials from 25 DMCs participated in the multi-regional conferences (as against the outcome's target of 20 DMCs). The TA thereby helped ADB to maintain its procurement-related commitments to the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of strengthening national procurement systems and supporting procurement officials' capacity development. Having met the intended outcome, the TA laid the foundation for regional and subregional exchange of information and partnership among public procurement officials in ADB DMCs. The regional forums are now co-led with other MDB partners and Asia Pacific Procurement Network is facilitated by a new TA³. Even though only 2 procurement-related project proposals were selected for PPF funding (against the target of at least 4 proposals), the TA nevertheless raised awareness among DMCs about updating their respective public procurement systems in line with international good practices. A new e-GP Web Portal (<https://e-gp.adb.org/>) with improved design, content and social media interface has been developed under the new TA, building on and largely superseding the external website developed under this TA. Based on the impetus being maintained by these ongoing measures, the TA is assessed as efficient and sustainable. It was relevant as it was aligned to regional procurement needs. The TA was effective as outputs were substantially met. The overall outcome of the TA is rated successful.

Major Lessons

The TA was successful in engaging a wide range of stakeholders, initiating dialogues on systemic issues influencing public procurement outcomes, releasing knowledge products, launching a procurement website as well as supporting strategic forums on regional procurement. This was accomplished through close coordination between ADB DMCs, resident missions, executing agencies, government and development partners. The TA laid the groundwork for key procurement related initiatives that are still being continued. The positive feedback of DMCs and partners in the Yogyakarta conference increased expectations for future conferences, knowledge products and procurement-related project proposals, prompting the request for additional funding. However, since only two procurement-related project proposals were ultimately selected, combined with delays due to the involvement of many stakeholders, the allocation for PPF (\$500,000) was underutilized despite efforts to use it to fund other initiatives. Further, a number of the objectives and activities envisioned were assumed by the new TA in December 2013. The extended period of the TA caused delays in financial closing since the substantiation of expenses associated with conferences and other events, and the settling of consultants' final claims was challenging.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

The initiatives implemented under this TA have been continued in TA 8520-REG, which supports the creation of the Asia Pacific Procurement Network. Regular assessments of e-procurement systems developed by DMCs are currently ongoing as well as updates on assessments already conducted. The TA was also relevant for ADB regional procurement strategy and for improving DMC capacity to better execute and implement procurement under ADB financed projects. Being demand driven, it has successfully supported high level regional knowledge sharing forums which are now being sustained with help of collaborations with other MDBs. Information on the external website that has become outdated and not superseded by new e-GP Web Portal should be updated.

Prepared by: Alexander Fox Designation and Division: Principal Procurement Specialist, PFP2

¹ The PEFA (Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability) program is a multi-donor initiative intended to improve the quality of public financial management (PFM) in countries receiving development assistance.

² The DMCs, dates of assessment, and scores are: Bhutan (July 2010: C, September 2016: B), Cook Islands (August 2011: D, August 2015: C), Georgia (November 2008: D+, September 2013: A), Kyrgyz Republic (December 2009: D+, March 2015: B), Nepal (February 2008: C, May 2015: B). Refer <https://pefa.org/assessments/listing>, 'Consolidated PEFA Assessments Scores' (accessed on 18 September 2018).

³ TA 8520-REG: Asia Pacific Public Electronic Procurement Network.