



Completion Report

Project Number: 47215-001
Technical Assistance Number: 8677
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Assessing and Monitoring Social Protection Programs in Asia and the Pacific

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TA Number, Country, and Name:			Amount Approved: \$750,000	
TA 8677-REG: Assessing and Monitoring Social Protection Programs in Asia and the Pacific			Revised Amount: n/a	
Executing Agency: ADB		Source of Funding: Technical Assistance Special Fund - V	Amount Undisbursed: \$87,380.51	Amount Utilized: \$662,619.49
TA Approval Date: 25 June 2014	TA Signing Date: n/a	Fielding of First Consultant(s): 03 October 2014	TA Completion Date Original: 31 December 2016 Actual: 31 March 2017	
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Description

The technical assistance (TA) was approved in mid-2014 following the approval of the Social Protection Operational Plan (SPOP) and the release of the mid-term review report and action plan of the ADB Strategy 2020. Both strategic documents reconfirm the importance of ADB support in social protection investments to promote inclusive growth in developing member countries (DMCs). The TA was primarily designed to address two of the five priority areas identified in SPOP which are: (i) support in capacity building and policy dialogues in DMCs; and (ii) monitoring and reporting on social protection in Asia and the Pacific region. The TA was intended to continue the pioneering work of ADB on the Social Protection Indicator (SPI) which has gained traction in the region,² and helped put ADB at the forefront of national and regional discussions on social protection. It also builds on achievements of TA 7601.³ By continuing knowledge and capacity building support for DMCs, the TA sought to support increasing investments in social protection in DMCs.

Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs

The TA's expected impact was improved monitoring of social protection programs for the poor and vulnerable in Asia and the Pacific; the expected outcome was increased DMC's capacities to assess, monitor, and report on expenditures, coverage, and gender and poverty impacts of national social protection programs. The TA intended to deliver three major outputs: (i) updated SPI and country assessments on social protection programs for the period 2011–2013; (ii) developed capacity in three national government agencies for social protection monitoring and assessment; and (iii) regional workshop and country policy dialogues for knowledge sharing on social protection programs and best practices. The TA design and formulation are rated *relevant* as it responded to the need identified in the TA to build the capacity of DMCs to monitor and measure the program impacts on target beneficiaries of social protection programs. Consultation with line agencies involved in the delivery of social protection programs and with resident missions where country-level activities will be conducted (in Mongolia, Nepal, and Viet Nam) was extensively conducted to formulate the social protection module questionnaire for pilot testing prior to incorporation in the household income and expenditure survey (HIES) instrument.

Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities

ADB was the TA's executing agency, and the Social Development Thematic Group in the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department led its implementation. Inception missions were undertaken between April and August 2015 in three DMCs (Mongolia, Nepal, and Viet Nam) where country-level implementation was planned. These missions were organized back-to-back with missions for another social protection TA on use of information and communications technology.⁴ SPI data updates and preparation of country reports were directly supervised by ADB staff. National statistical offices (NSOs) capacity building activities in Mongolia, Nepal, and Viet Nam were fully implemented. Selection of the three countries was finalized during fact-finding. Five individual international consultants, and 35 individual national consultants were engaged (altogether 40 contracts and 109 person-months of

¹ The TA was financially closed on 23 June 2017 but was reopened upon Controller's advice to accommodate a refund posted by Marsman Travel Agency on 12 July 2017.

² Cited in a number of publications—Centre for Social Protection. 2009. *Social Protection in South Asia: A Review*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies. <https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/SocialProtectioninSouthAsia.pdf>; *The Economist*. 2013. Social Spending in Asia. 6 July. <https://www.economist.com/news/asia/21580531-asias-emerging-welfare-states-spread-themselves-thinly-widefare>; *Rappler*. 2016. PH making "steady progress" on social protection – ADB. 13 November. <https://www.rappler.com/business/152248-philippines-social-protection-progress-asian-development-bank-study>; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2017. Social protection expenditure and coverage across Asia. In *A Decade of Social Protection Development in Selected Asian Countries*. Paris: OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264272262-5-en>

³ ADB. 2010. *Technical Assistance for Updating and Improving the Social Protection Index*. Manila.

⁴ ADB. 2014. *Technical Assistance for Information and Communication Technologies for Social Protection in the Asia Pacific Region*. Manila.

international and national consultant inputs) for the duration of the TA. All the consultants performed well and were rated *satisfactory*. Minor changes in implementation arrangement were undertaken such as reallocation of resources to purchase e-tablets for use by NSOs of the selected DMCs for data gathering, monitoring, and assessing social protection programs; hiring of additional consultants and external peer reviewers; and a three-month extension from December 2016 to March 2017 to complete the TA's deliverables, as the data needed for updating the SPI were not available earlier than Q3 of 2016 in some countries. By 31 March 2017, the TA utilized 88% of its total funding of \$750,000. ADB's performance has been *satisfactory*. Generally good feedback was received for its activities (e.g., the final workshop—attended by over 50 participants from governments [including 11 DMCs], academe, think tank organizations, development agencies, and civil society organization—garnered 80% satisfaction rate from the participants). The TA is rated *efficient*.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome

All of the TA's targets⁵ (in terms of outputs) were delivered and even exceeded: (i) 35 SPI country reports (covering 2011–2013 data) and additional 38 SPI country reports (covering 2014–2015 data) providing information and data on social protection programs in the country; (ii) two SPI regional reports—*Social Protection Indicator: Assessing Results for Asia* and *Social Protection Indicator: Assessing Results for the Pacific* were both published in 2016;⁶ (iii) three country reports for Mongolia, Nepal, and Viet Nam analyzing social protection data from the relevant surveys and identifying gaps with recommendations on how to improve and sustain social protection data capture through the household income expenditure surveys (HIES); (iv) three regional capacity building workshops; and (v) three SPI country-level policy dialogues.

The TA is rated *effective* in terms of achieving the outcome of increased DMC capacity to assess, monitor, and report on expenditures and impact of national social protection programs. The SPI is a unique ADB knowledge product that has been used by scholars, researchers, government agencies and development partners. The updated SPI data and country reports have been widely disseminated and can be openly accessed by users in DMCs and globally through the online SPI database, and at least three NSOs in selected DMCs (Mongolia, Nepal, and Viet Nam) have gained improved capacity to monitor social protection programs. The experience of these three NSOs was shared with other DMCs. The regional and national capacity building workshops and dialogues were attended by a total of 272 DMC officials from relevant ministries working on social protection. The workshops facilitated cross-country learning and enhanced understanding on methods for monitoring. In addition to the targets, an update on the 2016 SPI regional reports has been published. The updated SPI data shows an increasing trend on social protection expenditures across DMCs in Asia and the Pacific (the unweighted average expenditure on each target beneficiary over 2009–2015 increased from 3.4% to 4.2% of gross domestic product per capita). The SPI data has been used in ADB internal reporting and some country programming documents regarding discussions on inclusive growth and monitoring of ADB development result framework and background of country performance assessments for ADF countries.

Overall Assessment and Rating

Overall, the TA is rated *successful*. The activities and outputs were able to show that there is demand from DMCs for knowledge and capacity building support on social protection. The TA was successful in helping to facilitate cross-country exchange on social protection programs and transfer of skills to NSOs, and other government agencies. The design of combining knowledge work with country-level dialogues and training proved to be a good combination to support DMCs. The TA is rated *likely sustainable*. There is continued support and interest from DMCs on the SPI update and also demand for more capacity building programs. Indonesia, Mongolia, and Viet Nam continue to use the social protection module questionnaire as part of the household income and expenditure survey. Meeting these DMC expectations and sustaining achievements will require continuing ADB support in terms of staff and financial resources to disseminate results in DMCs and conduct follow on activities.

⁵ TA targets (outputs) as stated in DMF are: (i) at least 35 country SPI reports and SPI worksheets updated, (ii) one regional report produced, (iii) at least three country reports from NSOs on incorporating the social protection module in HIES, (iv) 100 DMC officials participated in capacity-building activities, and (iv) one regional workshop and at least three country-level policy dialogues conducted.

⁶ The SPI data, 38 SPI country reports and two regional SPI reports are available in ADB statistical database www.adb.spi.org.

Major Lessons

Strengthening the capacity of NSOs to monitor the SPI requires significant investment for countries in Asia and the Pacific. The cumulative experience of the six countries supported under TA 7601 (Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines) and this TA shows that incorporating a social protection module into the HIES yields important results. However, the willingness of DMCs to continue monitoring of the SPI requires incorporation of the SPI module in the HIES and continuity of funding for regular HIES is essential for sustainability. Another lesson is regarding the sustainability of managing and administering the compilation and analysis of data for the SPI regional reports. This requires substantial financial and human resources within ADB to manage the data collection, especially since there is no single data repository in the countries. It has been a challenge for the TA to manage the TA's limited resources so that all its commitments will be delivered.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

The TA intended to expand coverage of SPI data updating to 41 countries, however, due to demand and availability of data, the TA was only able to cover 38 countries. Going forward, there is a need to continue awareness raising and capacity building on social protection to increase DMCs knowledge and at the same time appreciation of the need for rigorous monitoring and assessment of social protection expenditures. The government, development partners, and academic representatives recommended that ADB should continue to monitor the SPI as this is the only social protection monitoring data available at the regional level that can contribute to the monitoring of sustainable development goal (SDG) achievement in countries in Asia and the Pacific. Given the importance of developing sustainable social protection systems in the SDGs, the SPI's established data collection methodologies and role in monitoring progress can help DMCs comply with reporting requirements at the national level. Due to resource constraints, stronger collaboration needs to be developed in managing the future updates of SPI to monitor SDGs, capacity building of DMCs, and knowledge dissemination: (i) internally, the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department with Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department (ERCD), Strategy, Policy and Review Department, regional departments, and resident missions; and (ii) externally, ADB can continue its work with development partners such as International Labour Organization, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD-Korea Policy Center, Social Protection Inter-Agency Coordination Board, and UNESCAP. The SPI update and social protection country reports are available in the ADB Statistical Database, which is being managed by ERCD. In building the capacity of DMCs, emphasis should be placed on generating greater traction for monitoring and investing in social protection; and preparing the turn-over to appropriate agencies (based on technical capacity) the work of producing future SPI reports and providing refresher training for staff at NSOs and line agencies responsible for implementing social protection programs. An upcoming corporate TA on social protection linked to SDGs will strive to support this recommendation. Internally within ADB, information sessions and further dissemination will be organized to encourage greater use of the SPI among staff as reference for discussion with governments on areas for investments.

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