



Completion Report

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A Framework for Effective Knowledge Management and Solutions

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TA Number, Country, and Name:			Amount Approved: US\$225,000	
TA 9087-REG: A Framework for Effective Knowledge Management and Solutions			Revised Amount: Not Applicable	
Executing Agency: Asian Development Bank		Source of Funding: Technical Assistance Special Fund (TASF-V)	Amount Undisbursed: US\$ 69,206	Amount Utilized: US\$ 155,794
TA Approval Date: 22 March 2016	TA Signing Date: 22 March 2016	Fielding of First Consultant: 31 May 2016	TA Completion Date Original: 31 March 2017	Actual: 15 August 2017
			Account Closing Date Original: 31 March 2017	Actual: 25 September 2017
<p>Description. The technical assistance (TA) identified enhancements to ADB's framework for knowledge management (KM) to enable the organization to better serve its operations and client countries. It assessed the adequacy of ADB's current KM framework and identified revisions to its business processes to ensure the knowledge requirements of developing member countries (DMC) client countries are adequately met.</p> <p>Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs. The TA's expected impacts were DMC policy makers informed and development impact of ADB operations improved. The TA's expected outcome was ADB's knowledge solutions better assessed and used. Originally, the TA had 4 outputs: (i) demand analysis prepared; (ii) evaluation of ADB's performance in meeting client needs updated; (iii) recommendations for implementing enhancements in ADB's knowledge management framework prepared; and (iv) appropriate documentation for implementation drafted. A minor revision in the scope of the TA reduced the number of outputs from four to two. The previous outputs were seen to be quite broad, not clearly linked and difficult to implement due to time and resource constraints. This reduction was meant to streamline the focus of this TA on assessing what the DMCs need, and to ensure that the proposed enhancements to the KM framework will help address these needs. The revised DMF reflects two outputs namely (i) survey results on DMC's knowledge needs completed and (ii) study on enhancing ADB's KM framework completed. The TA is rated as <i>relevant</i> as it aligns with ADB's thrust to provide DMCs with the knowledge they need. Surveying users and improving the flow of knowledge within ADB, are important steps to ensure its knowledge will be useful to the clients. The TA design is assessed to be relevant based on the use of the Knowledge Results Chain Model that tracks where improvements to creating knowledge can be done from creation by its authors¹, to synthesizing and harvesting for distribution and consumption by its users. The model draws from Nonaka's and Takeuchi's socialization, externalization, combination, internalization (SECI) model that tracks the flow of knowledge from supplier to user through transfer of tacit and explicit knowledge, organization and curation of documented knowledge, and accessing and disseminating knowledge through teams and individuals.</p> <p>Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities. ADB implemented the TA initially through the Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department (ERCD), which conceived the original TA design. In July 2016, the administration of the TA was transferred from ERCD to the Knowledge Sharing and Services Center, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (SDCC-KS). Despite the transfer, ADB's performance as an executing agency for this TA was <i>satisfactory</i> as coordination between the two departments continued for the succeeding activities of this TA. The coordination was most frequent during the conduct of the Knowledge Management Workshop in August 2016. As part of studying improvements to ADB's KM framework, this workshop was held to assess ADB's KM against good practices on knowledge management shared by resource persons from other multilateral development banks (MDBs) and knowledge organizations.</p> <p>There was a minor change in scope and an extension of the TA completion date from 31 March to 15 August 2017. This was meant to provide more time to assess DMC's knowledge needs, and to complete a paper on enhancing ADB's KM framework to validate the assessments done during the August 2016 Knowledge Management Workshop. A total of 5 individual international consultants were recruited under the TA. ERCD engaged a research analyst to synthesize proceedings from a roundtable discussion on "Infrastructure Provision in Developing Asia held in May 2016." This demonstrated a "One ADB" approach to managing knowledge as it involved inter-department collaboration, particularly in harvesting and capturing knowledge. Such collaboration has been flagged in various KM</p>				

¹ Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi introduced the SECI model in 1996 to demonstrate how knowledge is created and transferred. They proposed four ways that knowledge types can be combined and converted, showing how knowledge is shared and created in the organization.

practices as critical to establishing a good KM framework. SDCC-KS engaged an expert from the Teleos group to benchmark ADB's KM performance against other Most Admired Knowledge Enterprises (MAKE) through an internal survey. Resource persons from MDBs such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, and lead organizations including Microsoft, National Innovation Foundation of India, Brookings Institution and the Asian Institute of Management shared their best KM practices during the Knowledge Management Workshop held from 16 to 18 August 2016. To validate the good practices shared by these organizations and the results of the MAKE survey, a consultant from Knoco Ltd, a leading KM organization, was engaged to identify how the existing KM framework can improve the flow of knowledge across ADB and recommend measures to strengthen this flow. The study done by the Knoco consultant provided a KM perspective from the private sector. These individuals, who were engaged based on the Guidelines on the Use of Consultants and with terms of references aligned to the TA's objectives, were rated *satisfactory*. Besides benchmarking exercises on KM and commissioning the MAKE survey, part of the TA budget was used to provide research assistance for a paper green finance, two case studies on innovation projects, and contributions to the section on urban infrastructure indicators in the Asian Development Outlook, and various research on the knowledge economy that helped define the environment for improving KM.

The TA is rated *inefficient*. It only utilized 69% of the \$225,000 budget. Despite extension of the completion date, only one of the outputs was completed on time. The low TA budget utilization and partial completion of outputs based on planned schedule reflected inefficient use of funds under this TA.

Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome. ADB web-distributed knowledge solutions were downloaded 671,651 times in 2017, an increase of 20% over 2016 and above the annual target. The increase in downloads indicate better access and higher interest in ADB's content, but there is not enough evidence on use of knowledge to support the outcome of this TA. While the outcome of this TA was achieved to some degree, it is difficult to attribute this achievement to the implementation of the outputs under this TA, since one of the planned outputs was not completed. The TA is *less than effective* in achieving its outcome, given non-completion of the outputs.

Output 1. The survey to assess DMC's knowledge needs was not completed. There were extensive discussions between ERCD, SDCC-KS and the Department of Communications (DOC) on the approach to assess the clients' knowledge needs. There was debate between surveying the DMC clients directly or assessing their needs from the perspective of ADB staff. In the absence of an agreement, a method to assess knowledge consumption was demonstrated based on the top task analysis approach.² The top task survey conducted on ADB's website in 2015 revealed that DMC users are interested in lessons and good practices from project implementation; policy and technical advice from ADB; case studies; accessing raw data and datasets from projects; collaborating, sharing knowledge, and networking with peers and ADB experts; and e-learning and training opportunities. Subsequently in 2017, an internal top task survey was done to understand and assess what is important for ADB staff members to support the knowledge needs of the DMCs. Taken together, these surveys pointed to the need for a new platform to serve staff through an improved intranet to help them to ultimately respond to DMCs knowledge needs.

Output 2. To have a broad perspective on the effectiveness of ADB's existing KM framework, the TA team engaged a number of consultants to study the status of KM in the bank, while others helped validate the findings of the previous engagements. These engagements complemented each other. The 2016 KM Workshop highlighted good KM practices from the perspective of MDBs and public-sector organizations, against which a qualitative internal assessment was done in consultation with sector and thematic groups (STGs) and the operations departments in 2017. The MAKE survey provided a quantitative basis for assessing ADB's KM performance, while the KM expert from Knoco Ltd. evaluated ADB's knowledge management from the view of the private sector. The consultants held a series of consultations with the STGs, the resident missions and KM focals from the regional departments in June 2017. The research assistance on green finance and case studies fed into the study done by Knoco Ltd to assess the doability of capturing knowledge into easy-to-read templates that can improve the knowledge flow and increase findability of ADB's knowledge. The recommendations from all these assessments included (i) creating an ADB KM Policy which states the organizational commitment to KM in service of delivering the Outcomes; (ii) repurposing the country knowledge plans (CKP) from delivering planned knowledge outputs to providing just-in-time knowledge; (iii) rewriting the competency framework and including KM expectations into individual job descriptions; (iv) working with the STGs to rethink the approach to face-to-face knowledge sharing; and (v) piloting an enhanced role for sector groups to include the accountability for creation of an active virtual sector network dedicated to answering operational questions and solving member problems. Part of these recommendations provided inputs for the Content and Collaboration Roadmap prepared by OIST and SDCC-KS, for drafting the chapter on knowledge for Strategy 2030, and for the preparation of the Knowledge Action Plan (2019–2023).

² Top task is a survey method that identifies and ranks the tasks that stakeholders are trying to perform through a webpage.

Overall Assessment and Rating. The TA is rated *less than successful* as the TA team fell short of delivering its outputs. Even as enhancements to ADB's existing KM framework were provided, there was no means to determine how these contributed to achieving the outcomes of this TA. There is merit in continuously reviewing ADB's approach to managing its knowledge assets and resources, but the current approach of doing so largely through internal consultations makes this TA *less than sustainable*.

Factor	Explanation	Rating Description	Rating Value	Scores
Relevance	The TA is aligned with ADB's corporate strategy placing importance on operationally relevant knowledge. Surveying users and improving the flow of knowledge within ADB, are important steps to ensure its knowledge will be useful to the clients.	relevant	2	0.5
Effectiveness	Outcomes are reasonably met, but it is difficult to attribute this to the outputs because the output on assessing DMC needs was not implemented.	less than effective	1	0.25
Efficiency	There is a 30% underrun in the TA budget, and despite the extension of the completion date, Output 1 was not implemented.	inefficient	0.75	0.1875
Sustainability	Reviewing ADB's KM framework should be done drawing from internal views. But is it also important to do this from the perspective of the client DMCs	less than sustainable	1	0.25
OVERALL	Less than successful			1.1875

Major Lessons. In this TA, the use of the Knowledge Results Chain Model was an important framework to identify areas for improving the way knowledge is managed in ADB. Validating this through consultations with STGs, the focals from regional departments and resident missions are critical to identify who should be accountable for implementing various KM measures. Based on this model, it is also important to identify metrics to measure and evaluate ADB's KM performance. As many of the consultations were done either with middle management or ranking staff, the recommendations remained mere proposals and have not been operationalized.

Also, limiting this approach to gathering internal staff perspectives is not sufficient to determine the real state of KM in ADB. One can benefit the most from drawing more insights from the resident missions who are at the frontline of providing knowledge to clients DMCs, and more so from the DMC clients themselves. More importantly, given the diversity of ADB clients, and the variety of knowledge products and services offered to them, a considerable amount of time and resources should be allocated to carefully survey the clients' needs.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions.

- i) Based on the recommendations to the existing KM framework done under Output 2 of this TA, specific actions that can be done over the next five years should be identified and validated with the relevant staff to put these recommendations in place as part of a new Knowledge Action Plan (KAP) to succeed the Knowledge Management Directions and Action Plan (KMAP) 2013–2015. As part of the KAP, SDCC-KS is leading the consultations with nominated staff from various departments to discuss the recommendations and determine which could be implemented.
- ii) Knowledge Management is anchored on elements that include strategy, people, process and technology. It will be useful to determine how these recommendations align with or complement the content and collaboration framework done under the Office of Information and Systems Technology (OIST). As part of the KAP preparation, SDCC-KS and OIST will discuss where the work can be harmonized.
- iii) With numerous efforts to revisit what constitutes knowledge in ADB and emphasizing the creation of operationally relevant knowledge, it will be timely to put in place a system for assessing client needs that will become part of sharing and disseminating knowledge. As part of updating the Corporate Results Framework and generating indicators for knowledge, SDCC-KS will work with the Strategy and Policy Department (SPD) and DOC in designing this system.

TA = technical assistance.

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