



# Technical Assistance Report

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Project Number: 52285-001  
Knowledge and Support Technical Assistance (KSTA)  
May 2019

## Mongolia: Strengthening the Supreme Audit Function

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Asian Development Bank

## CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(as of 19 April 2019)

Currency unit	–	togrog (MNT)
MNT1.00	=	\$0.00038
\$1.00	=	MNT2,633

## ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
IT	–	information technology
MNAO	–	Mongolian National Audit Office
MONICPA	–	Mongolian Institute of Certified Public Accountants
TA	–	technical assistance

## NOTE

In this report, "\$" refers to United States dollars.

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## KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AT A GLANCE

<b>1. Basic Data</b>		<b>Project Number:</b> 52285-001	
<b>Project Name</b>	Strengthening the Supreme Audit Function	<b>Department/Division</b>	EARD/MNRM
<b>Nature of Activity Modality</b>	Capacity Development Regular	<b>Executing Agency</b>	Mongolian National Audit Office
<b>Country</b>	Mongolia		
<b>2. Sector</b>		<b>ADB Financing (\$ million)</b>	
✓ Public sector management	Public administration		0.33
	Public expenditure and fiscal management		0.16
Information and communication technology	ICT industries and ICT-enabled services		0.08
	ICT strategy and policy, and capacity development		0.08
		<b>Total</b>	<b>0.65</b>
<b>3. Strategic Agenda</b>		<b>Climate Change Information</b>	
Inclusive economic growth (IEG)	Pillar 1: Economic opportunities, including jobs, created and expanded	Climate Change impact on the Project	Low
<b>4. Drivers of Change</b>		<b>Gender Equity and Mainstreaming</b>	
Governance and capacity development (GCD)	Institutional development	No gender elements (NGE)	✓
Knowledge solutions (KNS)	Organizational development		
Partnerships (PAR)	Public financial governance		
	Application and use of new knowledge solutions in key operational areas		
	Knowledge sharing activities		
Private sector development (PSD)	Bilateral institutions (not client government)		
	Official cofinancing		
	Conducive policy and institutional environment		
<b>5. Poverty and SDG Targeting</b>		<b>Location Impact</b>	
Geographic Targeting	No	Rural	Medium
Household Targeting	No	Urban	Medium
General Intervention on Poverty	No		
SDG Targeting	Yes		
SDG Goals	SDG9, SDG16		
<b>6. Risk Categorization</b>		Low	
<b>7. Safeguard Categorization</b>		Safeguard Policy Statement does not apply	
<b>8. Financing</b>			
<b>Modality and Sources</b>		<b>Amount (\$ million)</b>	
<b>ADB</b>		<b>0.65</b>	
Knowledge and Support technical assistance: Technical Assistance Special Fund		0.65	
<b>Cofinancing</b>		<b>0.50</b>	
Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund (Full ADB Administration)		0.50	
<b>Counterpart</b>		<b>0.00</b>	
None		0.00	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1.15</b>	
<b>Currency of ADB Financing: USD</b>			

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Government of Mongolia requested knowledge and support technical assistance (TA) from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to support the Mongolian National Audit Office (MNAO). The TA is included in ADB's country operations business plan, 2019–2021 for Mongolia.<sup>1</sup> The TA will support the MNAO, as Mongolia's supreme audit institution (SAI), to better monitor the use of public funds. The TA will improve the capacity of the MNAO to conduct financial audits by improving the timeliness and quality of its audits, enhancing the capacity of its staff, and encouraging its use of new technology.<sup>2</sup>

## II. ISSUES

2. The Mongolian Law on State Audit, 2003 established the MNAO as the country's supreme audit institution. The MNAO reports to the Budget Standing Committee and is mandated to audit state entities. The auditor general, who heads up the MNAO, is appointed for a term of 6 years. Each *aimag* (province) has an audit office headed by a lead auditor who reports directly to the auditor general. As the government's external auditor, the MNAO conducts systems audits and reviews transactions. The MNAO covers financial, performance, and compliance audits. The number of MNAO staff is approved by Parliament and is 389. The MNAO completes financial audits of more than 6,500 budget entities annually. The MNAO is a member of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions and the Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions.

3. Financial audit in Mongolia faces three main challenges. First, statutory requirements dictate a broad mandate for the MNAO, which must be delivered with limited numbers of staff. This results in MNAO staff being overworked—In the first half of 2018 MNAO staff accumulated more than 27,000 hours of overtime. To make up for its staff shortage, the MNAO outsources more than one-third of its work to independent auditing firms. However, the government pays low fees for this outsourced work, resulting in financial audits of varying quality.

4. The second challenge is a lack of quality training and professional development. Although several universities and the Mongolian Institute of Certified Public Accountants (MONICPA) offer formal courses, practicing certified public accountants outside of the big four accounting firms have limited access to up-to-date courses and applied training. Auditors outside of the capital, Ulaanbaatar, cannot easily access training because of weak information technology (IT) infrastructure and their physical distance from the capital. The audit industry struggles to adopt international auditing standards because of delays in translation of standards, poor English language skills in the audit industry, and a failure to regularly update accounting standards.

5. The third challenge is the weakness of MNAO's IT infrastructure. The accounting software used by the MNAO has limited functionality and is not accessible to contracted private organizations. IT hardware is outdated and internet bandwidth is limited, wiping out functionality during peak office hours due to high network traffic.

6. The strategic vision of the MNAO calls for strengthening its auditing practices, enhancing the capacity of its staff, and building partnerships for a stronger supreme audit function. The strategic vision is underpinned by a recognition of the role that digital technology plays in auditing.

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<sup>1</sup> ADB. 2018. *Country Operations Business Plan: Mongolia, 2019–2021*. Manila.

<sup>2</sup> The TA first appeared in the business opportunities section of ADB's website on 27 March 2019.

Previous support for the MNAO provided by ADB, the World Bank, the National Audit Office of the United Kingdom, and the China National Audit Office laid the foundation for additional projects.

7. ADB is well-placed to help the MNAO deliver its strategic vision, drawing on previous support received by the MNAO. ADB's Strategy 2030 underlines the importance of using innovative technology and partnerships to solve development problems.<sup>3</sup> Auditing is well-suited to the application of blockchain, artificial intelligence, big data, and cloud technology. Developing productive auditing partnerships will deliver rich dividends to Mongolia in terms of training and software development. In addition, using technology to strengthen public financial management builds on ADB projects in Mongolia such as the recently approved loan on Strengthening Information and Communication Technology Systems for Efficient and Transparent Public Investment and Tax Administration Project.<sup>4</sup>

### III. THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

#### A. Impact and Outcome

8. The TA is aligned with the following impact: more inclusive and sustainable development process promoted.<sup>5</sup> The TA will have the following outcome: auditing of public sector in Mongolia modernized and strengthened.<sup>6</sup>

#### B. Outputs, Methods, and Activities

9. **Output 1: Institutional, organizational, and business processes arrangements in the Mongolian National Audit Office modernized and improved.** The TA will support a systematic review of assessments conducted by other development partners of the audit industry in Mongolia. The TA will draw on this systematic review to then conduct a review of the business processes of financial, performance, and compliance audit business processes in Mongolia. On the basis of this review, ADB will consult with independent auditors, the Ministry of Finance, and the Budget Standing Committee of Parliament to prepare a final report on public sector audit business processes, identifying where improvements can be made in line with international good practices such as the Supreme Audit Institutions Performance Measurement Framework developed by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions.<sup>7</sup> The ADB report will be integrated with the strategic plan of the MNAO, and will include a proposed results framework with strategic goals and associated indicators. The final report will recommend institutional, policy, and process improvements to enhance the efficiency and quality of the public sector audit process. Also, under this output, ADB will support the use of an audit manual produced under a previous ADB TA project for Mongolia to improve auditing on projects funded by international financial institutions.<sup>8</sup>

10. **Output 2: Digital master plan and action items for information and communication technology improvements in auditing and financial management prepared and piloted.**

<sup>3</sup> ADB. 2018. *Strategy 2030: Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.

<sup>4</sup> ADB. 2018. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Strengthening Information and Communication Technology Systems for Efficient and Transparent Public Investment and Tax Administration Project*. Manila.

<sup>5</sup> Government of Mongolia. 2016. *Sustainable Development Vision, 2030*. Ulaanbaatar.

<sup>6</sup> The design and monitoring framework is in Appendix 1.

<sup>7</sup> International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions. 2016. *Supreme Audit Institutions: Performance Measurement Framework*. Vienna.

<sup>8</sup> ADB. 2013. *Technical Assistance to Mongolia for Development of State Audit Capacity*. Manila.

ADB will prepare a detailed assessment of IT infrastructure and services in the MNAO, the Ministry of Finance's treasury department, and private audit firms that conduct audits of state organizations. Based on this assessment, a digital master plan for improving audit and financial management functions for the MNAO will be prepared. The TA will promote automation of audits by implementing at least one digital technology application (e.g., blockchain, artificial intelligence, big data, cloud technology) to the public sector audit process in Mongolia. This output, which will commence after the completion of output 1, will fully reflect the findings from the systematic review of output 1.

11. **Output 3: Sustainable capacity development of auditors established.** Building on the MNAO's learning and development frameworks, the TA will support establishing a partnership between the MNAO and Mongolian universities and/or MONICPA to develop a core series of auditing modules. ADB resources will be used to develop the initial modules and the MNAO will maintain and update these modules (by using their own budget or by entering into a partnership with an organization such as MONICPA). These modules will be made available to auditors in the public and private sectors, and support will be sought from major private sector auditors, peer supreme audit institutions, and/or regional and international audit institutions to ensure quality in line with international standards. ADB will also support on-the-job training for MNAO staff to apply the lessons of the audit modules. A training-of-trainer approach will be used and will be hardwired into the MNAO learning and development frameworks to ensure that lessons and knowledge are passed on from trained staff. The TA will support the MNAO top management on change management to prepare them to champion the partnerships, business process changes, and technological adaptations fostered under the TA.

12. Across these outputs, the TA project will emphasize sustainability so that the skills developed to produce the indicators remain within the Mongolian government. ADB will also explore the use of partnerships with other institutions to ensure that the benefits of the TA enrich not only the government but also Mongolia's entire auditing industry.

### **C. Cost and Financing**

13. The TA is estimated to cost \$1,250,000, of which (i) \$650,000 will be financed on a grant basis by ADB's Technical Assistance Special Fund (TASF 6); and (ii) \$500,000 will be financed on a grant basis by the Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund and administered by ADB. The key expenditure items are listed in Appendix 2.

14. The government will provide counterpart support in the form of counterpart staff remuneration, office accommodation, office supplies, and other in-kind contributions.

### **D. Implementation Arrangements**

15. The TA will be implemented from 20 May 2019 to 31 December 2021. The MNAO will be the executing agency and the implementing agency. The Mongolia Resident Mission will lead the TA and will take a one-ADB approach in this TA by working closely with relevant ADB departments. The MNAO will form a working group for each output. The group's proposed composition will be sent to ADB for no-objection approval prior to its formation. ADB will engage national consultants to act as secretaries for each group. The consultants will be responsible for organizing and delivering training in relation to each output so that the MNAO and other government staff have the capacity to implement the project outputs beyond the lifetime of the project. There will be at least three workshops (inception, midterm, and final) in addition to the training.

16. TA support for workshops may include costs related to the venue, equipment rental, translation, printing and copying, meals, transport, lodging, logistics and administrative support, and other expenditures with prior agreement from ADB. In line with standard ADB procedures, the TA will not support the executing agency's management fees or related costs such as staff salaries and allowances, and the use of executing agency resources such as office accommodation, which will be provided as part of the counterpart contribution. The TA will include one study tour for six government staff for no more than 5 working days to demonstrate best practices in the application of digital technology to auditing.<sup>9</sup>

17. The executing agency will provide office space and additional equipment. It will also provide access to utilities and telecommunication, including a broadband internet connection, for individual consultants. It will supply data and documents as required under the TA and will cover the cost of office utilities for consultants. To maximize the effectiveness of TA activities, the executing agency will designate a TA focal point with strong English speaking and writing skills to facilitate TA activities and links to local government representatives and other stakeholders.

18. The executing agency will establish a separate advance payment facility in United States dollars at a commercial bank acceptable to ADB in coordination with the Ministry of Finance in accordance with ADB's *Technical Assistance Disbursement Handbook* (2010, as amended from time to time). This will be used to pay for workshop and training costs, survey costs, report publication costs, a study tour, and equipment costs. The executing agency is assessed as having the financial management capacity and internal controls to maintain records.

19. The implementation arrangements are summarized in the table.

#### Implementation Arrangements

Aspects	Arrangements		
Indicative implementation period	20 May 2019–31 December 2021		
Executing agency	Mongolian National Audit Office		
Implementing agency	Mongolian National Audit Office		
Consultants	To be selected and engaged by ADB		
	Individual consultant	Audit expert (6 person-months, international)	\$153,000
	Individual consultant	Audit expert/TA coordinator (24 person-months, national)	\$90,000
	Individual consultant	Information technology expert (6 person-months, national)	\$21,000
	Individual consultant	Audit training expert (4 person-months, national)	\$15,000
	Individual consultant	Finance and administrative officer (24 person-months, national)	\$43,000
	Firm	Digitization in audit firm (24 person-months equivalent)	\$386,000
	Firm	Audit training firm (20 person-months equivalent)	\$170,000
Procurement	To be procured by ADB's Mongolia Resident Mission		
	Shopping	Equipment and software (to be defined but could include laptops, tablets, small servers, statistical software, and data/internet connections)	\$120,000

<sup>9</sup> The study tour will only be for government staff directly involved in the project, and the TA coordinator will join. It will be fielded in the region and will take place in the fourth quarter of 2019. The results of the study tour will be fully reflected in the TA outputs.



Aspects	Arrangements
Disbursement	The TA resources will be disbursed following ADB's <i>Technical Assistance Disbursement Handbook</i> (2010, as amended from time to time). The disbursement of the two funding sources will be undertaken on a cost sharing basis according to the cost estimates and financing plan in Appendix 2.
Asset turnover or disposal arrangement upon TA completion	All licenses, registrations, and equipment will be transferred to the executing agency upon completion of the project.

ADB = Asian Development Bank, TA = technical assistance.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

20. **Consulting services.** ADB will engage five individual consultants and two firms to deliver the project. ADB will hire one international auditing expert and four national consultants, including one TA coordinator/auditing expert to provide support across all three outputs, one consultant each for outputs 2 and 3, and one finance and administrative officer. ADB will also engage two firms. One firm will deliver the work on digitization in auditing and the other firm will deliver the training output. Lump-sum payment contracts and outcome-based contracts for consulting services will be considered where appropriate and possible. ADB will engage consultants following the ADB Procurement Policy (2017, as amended from time to time) and its associated project administration instructions and/or staff instructions.

21. Consultants will be responsible for producing the TA outputs and deliverables in a timely and effective manner, and for organizing and carrying out all TA activities. Consultants will report to the ADB project officer. ADB will evaluate the progress of the TA during review missions and workshops, based on the performance targets and indicators defined in the design and monitoring framework (Appendix 1).<sup>10</sup>

22. **ADB's procurement.** ADB will procure a small amount of equipment and software to support the delivery of the outputs. This may include office equipment, laptops, tablets, small servers, statistical software, and data/internet connections. ADB's Mongolia Resident Mission will undertake procurement. All licenses and registrations secured through ADB's procurement will be secured under the name of the MNAO to facilitate transfer to the MNAO upon completion of the project. Procurement will follow the ADB Procurement Policy (2017, as amended from time to time) and its associated project administration instructions and/or staff instructions.

#### IV. THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION

23. The President, acting under the authority delegated by the Board, has approved (i) the Asian Development Bank (ADB) administering a portion of technical assistance not exceeding the equivalent of \$500,000 to be financed on a grant basis by the Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund; and (ii) ADB providing the balance not exceeding the equivalent of \$650,000 on a grant basis to the Government of Mongolia for Strengthening the Supreme Audit Function, and hereby reports this action to the Board.

<sup>10</sup> The full terms of reference for consultancy services are in Terms of Reference for Consultants (accessible from the list of linked documents in Appendix 3).

## DESIGN AND MONITORING FRAMEWORK

<b>Impact the TA is Aligned with</b> More inclusive and sustainable development process promoted ( <i>Sustainable Development Vision, 2030</i> ) <sup>a</sup>			
<b>Results Chain</b>	<b>Performance Indicators with Targets and Baselines</b>	<b>Data Sources and Reporting Mechanisms</b>	<b>Risks</b>
<b>Outcome</b>  Auditing of public sector in Mongolia modernized and strengthened	By 2022:  a. Improvement in PEFA assessment scores (using 2016 PEFA methodology) related to: annual financial reports (indicators 29.1–29.3); external audit (30.1–30.4); and legislative scrutiny of auditing reports (31.1–31.4). <sup>b</sup> (2015 baseline: under pre-2016 PEFA methodology (so indicator numbers and names have changed): PI 25 (C+), PI 26 (B+), PI 28 (D+))	Data from PEFA Secretariat ( <a href="http://www.pefa.org">www.pefa.org</a> ). If PEFA not available, ADB will commission consultants to provide an update of these specific indicators.	Government changes priorities.  PEFA data not updated regularly enough to ascertain TA impact.
<b>Outputs</b>  1. Institutional, organizational, and business processes arrangements in the Mongolian National Audit Office modernized and improved	By 2021:  1a. Report on auditing business processes in Mongolia prepared (2019 baseline: None)  1b. At least one recommendation from report acted on by MNAO with support from ADB as evidenced by draft legislation, regulation, or policy submitted for final approval to relevant approval authority (2019 baseline: Not applicable)  1c. Manual on auditing international financial institutions updated and finalized (2019 baseline: Draft manual prepared but not finalized)	Final report endorsed by MNAO and ADB with record of inputs from consultation with MONICPA  Draft legislation, regulation, or policy document and record of submission to approval authority  Final manual endorsed by MNAO and ADB	Implementation delays caused by reasons outside the control of the project, such as staff turnover or a change in MNAO senior leadership
2. Digital master plan and action items for information and communication technology improvements in auditing and financial management	By 2021:  2a. Digital master plan prepared and at least five action items on digital service improvements identified and accepted by MNAO (2019 baseline: None)	Acceptance notification on the digital master plan by MNAO  Official reports published, and announcement made by MNAO	

<b>Results Chain</b>	<b>Performance Indicators with Targets and Baselines</b>	<b>Data Sources and Reporting Mechanisms</b>	<b>Risks</b>
prepared and piloted	2b. At least one demonstration initiative deployed in MNAO (2019 baseline: None)		
3. Sustainable capacity development of auditors established	<p>By 2021:</p> <p>3a. At least three audit modules developed and made available online to MNAO staff (2019 baseline: None)</p> <p>3b. At least eight MNAO staff trained using training of trainers' approach (2019 baseline: None)</p> <p>3c. MNAO commitment to use own funds to sustain modules; and/or partnership agreements in place to sustain modules (2019 baseline: None)</p>	Annual progress reports on the implementation of the capacity development strategy	Communication and collaboration issues with relevant institutions

### **Key Activities with Milestones**

#### **1. Institutional, organizational, and business process arrangements in the Mongolian National Audit Office modernized and improved**

- 1.1 Field consultants by August 2019.
- 1.2 Conduct inception workshop and/or mission by September 2019.
- 1.3 Assess institutional arrangements and business processes by December 2019.
- 1.4 Plan in place to improve institutional arrangements and business processes by February 2020.

#### **2. Digital master plan and action items for information and communication technology improvements in auditing and financial management prepared and piloted**

- 2.1 Agree on terms of reference for consulting firm by September 2019.
- 2.2 Field consulting firm by March 2020.
- 2.3 Conduct inception workshop/mission by May 2020.
- 2.4 Conduct assessment of information technology systems by July 2020.
- 2.5 Provide master plan by September 2020.
- 2.6 Pilot implementation design by November 2020.
- 2.7 Implement pilot by April 2021.

#### **3. Sustainable capacity development of auditors established.**

- 3.1 Agree on terms of reference for consulting firm by October 2020.
- 3.2 Field consulting firm and agree on focus modules by April 2020.
- 3.3 Make modules operational by September 2020.
- 3.4 Initiate training of trainers by January 2021; complete training by June 2021.
- 3.5 Finalize modules and materials by September 2021.
- 3.6 Put operational arrangements in place by December 2021.

**TA Management Activities**

Establish project working groups by September 2019.

Recruit national consultant leads for each output and TA finance officer by August 2019.

Prepare inception (Q3 2019), midterm (Q4 2020), and completion (Q4 2021) reports and workshops.

**Inputs**

ADB: Technical Assistance Special Fund (TASF 6): \$650,000

Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund: \$500,000

Note: The government will provide counterpart support in the form of counterpart staff remuneration, office accommodation, office supplies, and other in-kind contributions.

ADB = Asian Development Bank, MONICPA = Mongolian Institute of Certified Public Accountants, MNAO = Mongolia National Audit Organization, PEFA = Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability, Q = quarter, TA = technical assistance.

<sup>a</sup> Government of Mongolia. 2016. *Sustainable Development Vision, 2030*. Ulaanbaatar.

<sup>b</sup> Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability assessment. The last PEFA assessment was published in April 2015; it is understood that the next assessment will be published in 2020 (with work starting in 2019).

Source: Asian Development Bank.

**COST ESTIMATES AND FINANCING PLAN**  
(\$'000)

Item	ADB <sup>a</sup>	eAKPF <sup>b</sup>	Total
1. Consultants			
a. Remuneration and per diem			
i. International consultants (26.0 person-months)	208.0	200.0	408.0
ii. National consultants (82.0 person-months)	166.3	34.0	200.3
b. Out-of-pocket expenditures	50.7	24.0	74.7
c. Reimbursable expenditures	106.3	89.0	195.3
2. Surveys <sup>c</sup>	22.0	8.0	30.0
3. Trainings, seminars, workshops, forums, and conferences			
a. Venue rental and related facilities	15.0	10.0	25.0
b. Participants	9.0	6.0	15.0
c. Representation	6.0	4.0	10.0
d. Study tour <sup>d</sup>	18.0	12.0	30.0
4. Equipment (rental or purchase) <sup>e</sup>	10.0	110.0	120.0
5. Contingencies	38.7	3.0	41.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>650.0</b>	<b>500.0</b>	<b>1,150.0</b>

ADB = Asian Development Bank, eAKPF = Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund.

Note: The technical assistance (TA) is estimated to cost \$1,250,000, of which contributions from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund are presented in the table. The government will provide counterpart support in the form of counterpart staff remuneration, office accommodation, office supplies, and other in-kind contributions. The value of the government contribution is estimated to account for 10% of the total TA cost.

<sup>a</sup> Financed by ADB's Technical Assistance Special Fund (TASF 6).

<sup>b</sup> Financed by the Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund and administered by ADB.

<sup>c</sup> Includes research and survey materials

<sup>d</sup> Study tour will be limited to government staff directly involved in the project, and will include the project coordinator. It will be fielded in the region and will include six people.

<sup>e</sup> TA funds will be used to procure a small amount of equipment and software to support the delivery of the outputs. This may include office equipment, laptops, tablets, small servers, statistical software, and data and/or internet connections. ADB's Mongolia Resident Mission will undertake the procurement, and all licenses and registrations will be secured under the name of the executing agency to facilitate transfer to them upon completion of the project. Equipment and software purchased under the TA will be turned over to the executing agency upon completion of TA activities.

Source: Asian Development Bank estimates.

**LIST OF LINKED DOCUMENTS**

<http://www.adb.org/Documents/LinkedDocs/?id=52285-001-TARreport>

1. Terms of Reference for Consultants