

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: COPP

Division: COTF

TA No. and Name TA 5782-REG: 1998 Seminars on Project Implementation and Administration		Amount Approved: \$800,000	
		Revised Amount: \$800,000	
Executing Agency: Asian Development Bank	Source of Funding: JSF	TA Amount Undisbursed 1,659	TA Amount Utilized 798,341
Date Approval Signing Fielding of Consultants 20 March 1998 - -		Completion Date	
		Original 31 December 1998	Actual 30 June 2003
		Closing Date	
		Original 31 December 1998	Actual 31 March 2004
Description: Since 1978, ADB has been helping Executing Agencies (EAs) strengthen their capabilities to manage and implement projects through regional and country training programs on project implementation and administration under regional technical assistance grants (RETAs). Although many DMC officials have acquired substantial project experience and knowledge of ADB's policies and procedures (by 1998 ADB had conducted 135 training programs under RETAs), there was and is still demand for more training in procurement and other project administration activities for new project managers and EA staff. This is evidenced by delays in project implementation caused in part by a lack of understanding and familiarity with ADB's policies and procedures.			
Evaluation and feedback from past RETA seminars indicated that the training provided had been successful in strengthening participants' professional skills and increasing their understanding of ADB's policies and procedures. Building on experience gained, the RETA was formulated to continue building the project implementation skills of EA personnel on ADB's policies and procedures for procurement, selection and engagement of consultants and administration procedures. The RETA was also designed to address the continuing need for training new executing agencies. These actions were supported by ADB's <i>Task Force on Improving Project Quality</i> report which called for a greater effort on the part of ADB to support DMC ownership of projects and capabilities for project implementation.			
Objectives and Scope: The objectives of this RETA were to provide project directors, managers and other key staff of EAs with an accurate understanding of modern principles and techniques in project administration and management and to acquaint them with ADB's policies and procedures for procurement, selection and engagement of consultants, disbursement and other aspects of project implementation. The seminars also served as a forum for sharing and learning from other participants' project experiences. The RETA was originally conceived for conducting three regional seminars (two in Manila and one in Fiji), and 10 country project and implementation (CPIA) seminars in Cambodia, India, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Pakistan, Philippines, People's Republic of China, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Uzbekistan.			
Evaluation of Inputs: As a result of changes in circumstances the CPIA in Kazakhstan was dropped while ten CPIAs (covering eight additional countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, and Vietnam) and two regional seminars were added. This was made possible due to significant TA savings couple with strong DMCs demand for seminars.			
Overall, 24 seminars were conducted under this RETA, from 1998 to 2003:			
Type of Seminar	No of Seminars	Country	
Regional Project Implementation and Administration	5	Fiji Islands; Philippines, ADB Headquarters (three seminars) (Nandi) and Uzbekistan.	
Country Project Implementation and Administration	19	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia (two seminars), India, Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic (two seminars), Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines (two seminars), PRC (two seminars), Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Vietnam	
The regional seminars focused on the project manager's responsibilities for planning, organizing, budgeting, scheduling, directing, monitoring, controlling and evaluating project implementation. The selection of the countries for the CPIA seminars was based on factors such as the number of new executing agencies particularly for social sector projects, requests from DMCs, and needs analysis undertaken during country portfolio and program review missions. The scope and contents of the CPIA seminars were generally the same as the regional seminars with some adjustments to meet the country-specific requirements of EAs. The method of instruction included lectures, cases			

studies, exercises and workshops. Translation services were required for the seminars carried out in Cambodia, Kyrgyz Republic, People's Republic of China, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. The resource speakers were ADB staff: procurement and consulting services specialists from COSO and staff from the Controller's Department. In the CPIA seminar held in PRC, 5 resource speakers, trained under the TTP (Training of Trainers Program) were invited to conduct lectures and provide translations services for some Seminar's modules.

The RETA facilitated the first CPIA seminars in Afghanistan, Cambodia and Lao PDR. Fiji's regional CPIA seminar was attended by participants and observers from 9 Pacific countries: Fiji Islands, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. This regional seminar also included a presentation on ADB's operations in the Pacific, PARD's organizational set-up and common project implementation problems in the Pacific. The Uzbekistan seminar was attended by participants from Tajikistan.

All seminar programs were appropriately formulated and the resource speakers performed well. The seminar arrangements were adequately addressed by liaising with DMC government officials and EA staff on administrative issues (arranging venue of seminars, hotel bookings, travel arrangements, payment of per diem) and personnel issues (shortlisting of participants, securing endorsement of government for participation of selected candidates, etc.). The concerned Resident Missions played a critical facilitating role in organizing the seminars and selecting the participants.

Evaluation of Outputs: Approximately 900 participants from 26 DMCs participated in regional and CPIA seminars. Most of the participants were senior-level staff involved in ADB-funded projects, and they returned to their projects with a better understanding of their general and ADB-specific administration and implementation responsibilities. The seminars continued to be a good vehicle for delivering training to EA staff on ADB's policies and procedures relating to procurement, consulting services and disbursement.

Overall Assessment and Rating: Most of the seminar participants were satisfied with the overall quality of the seminars' venue, course content and presenters. Based on standardized questionnaires distributed at the end of each seminar, on average, 75% of the participants indicated that the seminars were relevant to their work. Participants from Cambodia, India, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, PRC and Vietnam, requested seminars on an annual basis. For the Fiji Islands regional seminar, 90% of the participants found that the seminar was totally relevant to their work. Using the participant's response as a proxy, the RETA is rated successful.

Major Lessons Learned: The frequency of regional and CPIA seminars should normally be based on (i) the number of projects approved in each DMC; (ii) the frequency of DMC staff transfers; (iii) the requests received from projects divisions concerned; and (iv) availability of budget and competing demands on COSO resources. In non-English speaking countries the seminar program should be reviewed taking into account the time needed for translation. ADB's capacity to deliver seminars and DMC demand should be carefully assessed when formulating seminar programs and structuring training programs.

In many cases, participants requested speakers for case studies related to projects executed or being executed in their home countries. Also participants suggested allocating more time for cases studies. While adjustments were made to provide more case studies, this adjustment impacted the time available for the rest of the seminar program. Some redesign of the seminar program and materials would be appropriate to provide greater training flexibility to presenters. Additionally, alternate training modalities should be explored with the objectives of lowering delivery cost and increasing learning opportunities.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions:

The seminars provided through this RETA facilitated implementation of ADB-financed projects and warrant continued support. However, there is a need to be more realistic in balancing the funding allocation with the implementation period. In hindsight, a longer implementation period should have been adopted for the funds allocated or alternatively fewer funds should have been allocated.

For future seminars, alternative training modalities will be developed along with improved seminar material. As requested by participants, the use of case studies will be expanded and more time will be allocated for participants to discuss problems encountered during project implementation.

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