

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: RSPR

TA No. and Name TA 5948 – REG: Combating Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia			Amount Approved: \$440,000	
			Revised Amount: N/A	
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Description <p>The alarming number of women and children being trafficked for forced labor or slavery-like practices (including commercial sexual exploitation) was receiving increasing attention as a development concern. Given the cross-border nature of the issue, both regional as well country specific actions are required to combat the problem. South Asia was selected as the subregion for this regional technical assistance (RETA), as there was an immediate need expressed by the governments, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and development agencies in the subregion, the United Nations Development Fund for Women among others, to participate in joint efforts to combat trafficking in women and children. From the institutional perspectives, it was deemed important for ADB to take stock of the situation and develop operational approach to the issue. Further, given the multi-dimensional nature of the causes and nature of trafficking in women and children, coordination across various ministries within a country and between countries are crucial. At the time of the conceptualization of the regional technical assistance (RETA), understanding of the governments was limited on the need for concerted efforts across various ministries.</p>				
Objectives and Scope <p>The original objectives of the RETA were to (i) enhance the understanding of ADB and its developing member countries (DMCs) about the nature and causes of trafficking of women and children; (ii) help the DMCs formulate and/or implement country and subregional action plans to prevent and reduce in-country and subregional trafficking, and (iii) identify and develop future ADB interventions that have the potential to contribute to trafficking prevention. Three DMCs in South Asia – Bangladesh, India, and Nepal – were selected.</p> <p>Despite the detailed discussions with key stakeholders in the region during the RETA preparation, other initiatives that support preparation of country and sub-regional action plans had started after the RETA approval (i.e., the United Nations Children's Fund and the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation). Consequently, at the time of inception meeting on 22 August 2001, the following new objectives were adopted: (i) to increase ADB's understanding of how its existing country programs and regional policy dialogue can be used to support and strengthen antitrafficking efforts in South Asia; and (ii) to contribute to capacity building and other efforts by stakeholders to develop and implement policies and programs that will effectively combat trafficking in women and children in South Asia.</p> <p>The RETA included the following components: (i) research and documentation to collect and analyze available statistics, pull-push factors, mapping of source and transit areas and destinations, legal framework, and mapping of key stakeholders and to provide operational recommendations to ADB; (ii) identification of capacity needs of the governments and NGOs at a country and a subregional levels; (iii) exchange program between government and NGOs representatives from South Asia and the Greater Mekong Subregion; and (iv) subregional workshop in Manila (including a field trip to two locations in Manila).</p> <p>The duration of the actual implementation was initially deemed 12 months, which was eventually extended to 25 months. The extension was necessary to allow final publication in two volumes, follow-up actions to the government and NGOs involved, and dissemination activities (by sending government, NGOs, consultants to three international conferences).</p>				
Evaluation of Inputs <p>The overall performance in inputs delivery were adequate, timely, and appropriate. The terms of reference were comprehensive. The TA provided total 12.53 person-months of international consultants (Team Leader, Legal Specialist, Editor), and total 26.65 person-months of domestic consultants. The work plans prepared by the Team Leader were precise and feasible. The consultants' provision of inputs was satisfactory; poor performance of the domestic consultant in India and the additional domestic researcher in Bangladesh were compensated by the work of the Team Leader. Lack of office space provision to the Team Leader was initial constraints, but the letter of exchange signed with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) whose regional office is based in Dhaka availed much needed office space and logistical support. Engagement of local consultants associated with NGOs or international organization in all three countries facilitated interactions with other stakeholders and data collection, especially cross-</p>				

border trafficking data. The government counterparts provided in-kind inputs through staff time in facilitating the process and reviewing the series of drafts prepared under the RETA.

One inception mission and two review missions were carried out with three months interval, which was adequate and complemented by regular contacts with the Team Leader through email and the phone. In Bangladesh, a resident mission gender specialist also provided close supervision. Focal government agencies (ministry of women) in three countries provided counterparts who monitored the RETA progress and provided technical inputs.

Evaluation of Outputs

Three country reports, one regional synthesis, one legal report, one report on regional workshop proceedings, and one report on exchange program proceedings were prepared. These were later synthesized into a two-volume publication (Volume 1 – Regional Synthesis; Volume 2 – Guide for Integrating Trafficking Concerns into ADB Operations). The final reports were delivered on time and the quality was highly satisfactory. Publication took longer than expected, due mainly to the printing contractor's unsatisfactory performance. The India Country Report was acknowledged as the government report, and was circulated to the state governments. Volume 1 successfully provided a conceptual framework for addressing trafficking in women and children as part of broader migration pattern and identified links with globalization and policy changes. Volume 2 (sector guidelines) developed potential entry points for loan projects in ADB's key sectors and thematic issues (e.g., transport, rural development, urban development, involuntary resettlement, women empowerment) to address antitrafficking concerns. This 'integrated' approach had not existed prior to the RETA, as antitrafficking operations had generally been considered as 'stand-alone' grant projects. The sector guidelines therefore were well received not only by ADB staff for its operational relevance but also other multilateral and bilateral agencies. The guidelines, *inter alia*, highlighted the links with infrastructure projects under regional cooperation initiatives and raised awareness among the staff on the issue. The two-volume publication remains as one of the most downloaded publications in ADB's external website.

Among the various capacity needs identified, the RETA significantly increased the stakeholders' capacity on regional dialogue. It was the first regional antitrafficking initiative that effectively brought the Government of India to the dialogue. With India's participation, the dialogue between the government and NGOs across the three countries was activated which was instrumental in carrying forward the discussion for implementation of the SAARC Convention on Trafficking (adopted in January 2002). The RETA also brought in multiple ministries (including the police) and raised awareness among them of the importance of a comprehensive approach, especially coordination of service delivery at a local level. Broader perspectives and the importance of linking (e.g., for antitrafficking NGOs to work closely with microfinance and HIV/AIDS NGOs; for women's ministries to work with highway agencies to monitor HIV/AIDS and trafficking impacts) were adopted by the stakeholders involved in the RETA process. ADB has become a prominent player in South Asia in upgrading the issue at a subregional level.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The RETA was highly successful. Two key objectives were successfully achieved. ADB staff members' understanding of the issue and how to address it through programming and project designs increased. Country Strategy and Programs (CSPs) or their updated (CSPUs) in these countries as well as some loans started addressing the issue of human trafficking. The RETA was the first attempt to identify ways for ADB to 'mainstream' antitrafficking concerns into operations. The process of tripartite discussions between the government, NGOs and donors in the region made a significant progress as mentioned above.

Major Lessons Learned

The start-up of the RETA was not easy, due to the 'competition' felt by some donors despite their expressed interests in ADB's participation in this field of work. Nonetheless, it ended with successful deliverables. The following are the lessons learned from this process: (i) Quality of Team Leader, especially good writing skills and capacity to involve the government, is crucial; (ii) Networking capacity of domestic consultants are crucial to be 'part of the circle' especially in the environment where resident missions are not familiar with the topic; (iii) Frequent communication with the government counterparts and full respect to their needs is essential to gain mutual trust; (iv) Flexible TA design is essential to allow quick actions when changes are required; and most importantly (v) Focusing on ADB's comparative advantage (in this case, the capacity to bring together high level government representatives in rather 'hard' sectors e.g., finance, transport, and to address the impacts of ADB-assisted projects in various sectors) is a most effective way to coordinate donor activities and gain high profile.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

The RETA made a lot of recommendations for ADB's operational approach. The transport sector in the South Asia Department developed two road projects with specific loan components to address human trafficking and HIV/AIDS (Bangladesh and India). A similar approach is applied in road projects in Mongolia and People's Republic of China. GMS is starting a second generation RETA which pilot tests specific mechanisms in two cross-border projects. The next step is to push forward the agenda of the regional economic cooperation entities such as SAARC and GMS that ADB has been supporting. A follow-on RETA is under consideration.

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