Solomon Islands: Information and Communication Technology for Better Education Services

Project Name	Information and Communication Technology for Better Education Services
Project Number	47201-001
Country	Solomon Islands
Project Status	Active
Project Type / Modality of Assistance	Technical Assistance
Source of Funding / Amount	**TA 8487-SOL: ICT for Better Education Services**
	Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund US$ 500,000.00
Strategic Agendas	Inclusive economic growth
Drivers of Change	Governance and capacity development Partnerships
Sector / Subsector	**Education** - Education sector development **Information and communication technology** - ICT industries and ICT-enabled services
Gender Equity and Mainstreaming	Gender equity
Description	The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is supporting the development of submarine optical fiber cable systems (SCS) in Solomon Islands where access to affordable telecommunications particularly high-speed (broadband) internet is low due to dependence on satellite connectivity. Once SCS is established, wholesale bandwidth prices are expected to halve, leading to a conservatively estimated retail price reduction of 20%. The SCS will impact the three large islands central areas (Honiara, Auki, and Gizo) most significantly. It is as yet unclear how the cable will influence connectivity in the most remote/rural areas on the periphery islands in the country. However, mobile networks have grown rapidly following deregulation 2 years ago, and local practices for data dissemination have emerged. Mobile phones can be an important conduit to broaden utilization of ICT. The interest of mobile companies to expand the number of cell sites that can tap into microwave signals from SCS presents an opportunity to increase connectivity to outer islands in the country. Solomon Islands already have approximately 70% mobile services coverage which can provide useful lessons and inputs to the overall ICT plan.
Project Rationale and Linkage to Country/Regional Strategy	The technical assistance (TA) will examine the potential contribution of ICT to the education sector in addressing constraints in managing and delivering services to widely dispersed and isolated schools in Solomon Islands. The TA activities and outputs are expected to facilitate future application of ICT to education management and service delivery. The TA will contribute to more equitable service delivery and increase benefits of the investments made by the development of SCS.
Impact	Improved management and delivery of education services, particularly at the periphery level, due to appropriate use of ICT

Project Outcome

Description of Outcome	Enhanced capacity of education sector in ICT application at sub-national levels
Progress Toward Outcome	The project experienced some delays initially but is now making good progress in piloting ICT applications at sub-national levels.
Implementation Progress	

Description of Project Outputs	1. Development and implementation of a gender inclusive ICT Plan linking MEHRD, provincial EAs and Schools 2. Identification of ICT hardware options, development of suitable applications and piloting their use in rural/remote areas, and capacity building 3. Comprehensive assessment study conducted on how enhanced access to ICT can add value to the Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL) 4. Convening an ICT4E Workshop/forum to share findings and lessons learned of aforementioned components
Status of Implementation Progress (Outputs, Activities, and Issues)	1. The firm has engaged with the NEAP Planning team and consultant and are working to include Gender inclusive ICTs in a more cross cutting and strategic way in the ESF and NEAP documents being prepared. 2. The firm has identified the following options for piloting: (I) 5 pilot schools using the Kio Kit with 40 tablets and a special Solomons build of teaching and learning resources linked to the Syllabus. Note the 5 schools have already had solar power installed and a laptop and printer are being delivered to each school in March; (ii) Equipping School Inspectors with 10 tablets to conduct their Whole of School survey with the data being automatically uploaded to SIEMIS to cross check data provided by schools; (iii) Piloting SMS data collection and presentation with the Education Authority (EA) section and the 30 EAs; (iv) Trialling an In-School Professional Development course delivered on a Flash Drive or other ICT device, most likely focussing on improving literacy teaching. Capacity building has been done through three training workshops in March, delivered to most operational divisions of MEHRD, but particularly to the Ifollowing units: Inspection Services, Teaching and Learning/Curriculum Development, EA Management, Information Services/SIEMIS, International, CESS/School Resources. Also, approximately 30 MEHRD staff has been trained in the areas of: Teaching and Learning using ICTs, Data collection with ICTs, Digital Content and the Curriculum. Demonstrations of the KIO kit were made during the training with most agreeing it would be a good to pilot. An ICT4BE web portal has been published in the MEHRD web page and all relevant information is being placed on the portal. An ICT readiness survey has been conducted and findings hared with MEHRD.
Geographical Location	

Summary of Environmental and Social Aspects

Environmental Aspects	
Involuntary Resettlement	
Indigenous Peoples	
Stakeholder Communication, Participation, and Consultation	
During Project Design	Staff visited Honiara Ministry of Education and IT officials and schools in Honiara and outside. Development partners in the education sector and IT were also consulted.
During Project Implementation	A MEHRD Steering Committee comprised of MEHRD and MOFT is engaged on progress of the TA during each mission.

Business Opportunities

Consulting Services	The TA will require a total of 120 weeks of consultant services (40 weeks international and 80 weeks national). A consulting firm in association with international and national consultants will be engaged following the Fixed Budget Selection process and simplified technical proposals by ADB in accordance with its Guidelines on the Use of Consultants (2010, as amended from time to time). In the case of difficulties in finding a qualified firm, individual selection will apply for consulting services.
Procurement	Procurement will follow ADB's Procurement Guidelines (2013, as amended from time to time). The firm/consultant inputs will be on an intermittent basis, responding to government requirements and progress made during implementation. The TA will be implemented over 24 months.

Responsible Staff

Responsible ADB Officer	Usui, Norio
Responsible ADB Department	Pacific Department
Responsible ADB Division	Urban, Social Development & Public Management Division, PARD
Executing Agencies	*Ministry of Finance and Treasury* *P.O. Box 26* *Honiara, Solomon Islands*

Timetable

Concept Clearance	16 Sep 2013
Fact Finding	-

MRM	-
Approval	21 Oct 2013
Last Review Mission	-
Last PDS Update	30 Mar 2017

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Milestones					
Approval	**Signing Date**	**Effectivity Date**	**Closing**		
			Original	**Revised**	**Actual**
21 Oct 2013	11 Feb 2014	11 Feb 2014	31 Mar 2016	31 Dec 2017	-

Financing Plan/TA Utilization							Cumulative Disbursements	
ADB	Cofinancing	Counterpart				Total	Date	Amount
		Gov	Beneficiaries	Project Sponsor	Others			
0.00	500,000.00	100,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	600,000.00	21 Oct 2013	377,075.81

Project Page	https://www.adb.org/projects/47201-001/main
Request for Information	http://www.adb.org/forms/request-information-form?subject=47201-001
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