



# Completion Report

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Project Number: 47214-001  
Technical Assistance Number: 8686  
May 2017

## Information and Communication Technologies for Social Protection in the Asia and Pacific Region

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TA Number, Country, and Name:		Amount Approved: \$500,000	
TA 8686-REG: Information and Communication Technologies for Social Protection in the Asia and Pacific Region		Revised Amount: n/a	
Executing Agency: Asian Development Bank	Source of Funding: Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund	Amount Undisbursed: \$66,607	Amount Utilized: \$433,393
TA Approval Date: 11 July 2014	TA Signing Date: n/a	Fielding of First Consultant: 27 March 2015	TA Completion Date Original: 30 Jun 2016    Actual: 30 Sep 2016  Account Closing Date Original: 30 Jun 2016    Actual: 28 Dec 2016
<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>The technical assistance (TA) was designed to help address the knowledge and capacity gaps in Asia and the Pacific on use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in design, delivery, and monitoring of social protection programs. ICT for social protection can enhance targeting through more effective identification of beneficiaries and improve payment mechanisms, which will result in lower transaction costs when accessing payments or benefits. ICT has also played a vital role in identity management which has been linked to stronger governance of public social services. Evidence of efficiency gains for ICT use in social protection programs is extensively available for Latin America and the Caribbean. However, for Asia and the Pacific region, evidence is currently limited and not well disseminated. Developing member country (DMC) capacity to maximize benefits from investments in ICT to improve social protection delivery remains weak. Knowledge and capacity gaps perpetuate the digital divide between developing and developed economies. Against this context, the TA intended to take stock of regional best practices on ICT use in the design and delivery of social protection programs through a regional study, and build institutional capacity for applying or replicating some of the ICT tools to improve the efficiency of social protection programs in three selected DMCs of Mongolia, Nepal and Viet Nam. By facilitating knowledge sharing with DMCs, the TA endeavored to build awareness and administrative capacities for the adoption of ICT tools to enhance delivery mechanisms of social protection programs.</p> <p><b>Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs</b></p> <p>The expected impact was to improve delivery of social protection programs through expanded application of ICT in DMCs in Asia and the Pacific. The outcome was increased ICT literacy and stronger capacity of policymakers and government officials to design and implement social protection programs in DMCs. The planned outputs included: (i) regional study on ICT use in social protection; and (ii) capacity development events (regional capacity building workshop on ICT use in social protection, regional capacity building conference on identity management, and country-specific capacity building and knowledge exchange on ICT use in social protection). The TA design and formulation are rated <i>relevant</i> as it responded to the needs identified in the TA.</p> <p><b>Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities</b></p> <p>ADB was the executing agency for the TA. The Social Development Thematic Group in Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (SDCC) led the TA implementation. Activities were organized and conducted through inputs provided by consultants that were engaged by ADB as individual consultants. The regional scoping and country case studies were carried out with 12 person-months consultant inputs supported by line ministries in DMCs. National policy dialogues and capacity development workshops were delivered on time. Consultants' outputs were delivered on time and their performance were all rated satisfactory. Government concurrence in conducting the activities was generated through the support of operations departments, particularly Mongolia, Nepal, and Viet Nam resident missions. Collaboration with government focal points, the regional departments/resident missions, the Health Sector Group and the Information and Communication Technologies for Development team in SDCC in conducting capacity building activities led to savings in TA amounting to \$66,607 (13.3% of total TA money). ADB's performance is <i>satisfactory</i> as it met good practice standards and built collaborative relationship with government, development agencies, private sectors, and civil society organizations (CSOs). The TA is rated <i>efficient</i>.</p> <p><b>Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome</b></p> <p>The TA was able to deliver all planned outputs as stated in the design monitoring framework: (i) regional scoping study on ICT use for social protection in Asia and the Pacific with an estimate of the investment requirement for developing ICT systems to improve social protection delivery; (ii) 3 DMC case studies on ICT use in social protection for Mongolia, Nepal, and Viet Nam; and (iii) 3 national policy dialogues supported; 3 national capacity building workshops; and 2 regional capacity building/dissemination workshops were implemented as planned under the TA. The TA completion date was extended for three months to support the design and organization of the regional</p>			

capacity-building workshop on ICT use in social protection programs. This workshop served as a venue to present the findings of the regional study on ICT use in social protection programs. In addition, the TA supported a cross-country learning workshop on improving social protection delivery through integrated management information system (MIS) and unique identity as a culminating activity to share knowledge and further build awareness and capacity of selected DMCs on how ICT investments can improve social protection delivery, cut administrative costs and improve monitoring of program impacts. Views from various stakeholders on importance of ICT in social protection are available in ADB k-Learn ([https://youtu.be/iPNWC7\\_rrYA](https://youtu.be/iPNWC7_rrYA) and <https://youtu.be/EyOPOvnTelc>).

The TA is rated *effective* in terms of achieving the outcome of increased ICT literacy and stronger capacity of policymakers and government officials to design and implement social protection programs in DMCs. The capacity building, policy dialogues and regional workshops were attended by a total of 363 DMC officials, 131 development partners including youth and CSOs, and 101 participants from ADB's regional Departments and resident Missions. The proceedings and/or presentations prepared for the two regional workshops (International Identity Management Conference and first Asia-Pacific Social Protection Week) are publicly available at [https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/7125/International\\_Identity\\_Management\\_Conference\\_Proceedings.pdf?sequence=4](https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/7125/International_Identity_Management_Conference_Proceedings.pdf?sequence=4), <http://www.ipc-undp.org/read-full-coverage-asia-pacific-social-protection-week-2016#>, and <https://www.adb.org/news/events/asia-pacific-social-protection-week-2016>.

The TA facilitated knowledge sharing on ICT use in social protection across countries and sub-regions. It helped close knowledge gaps on four key areas: (i) building unique ID systems to improve targeting and payment systems in social protection programs delivery; (ii) importance of building integrated MIS ground on interoperability that can be used by various line ministries to implement a number of social protection programs; (iii) role of civil registration systems improvement in improving targeting and delivery; and (iv) increasing role of inclusive finance in improving efficiency of social protection programs delivery. The training/workshop participants affirmed, through post-training evaluation reports, that the knowledge gained during the learning programs will help initiate discussions at the country level to call for more ICT investments for social protection programs. Furthermore, there are requests from the Ministry of Social Welfare in Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, and Viet Nam for ADB to assist in developing, updating and upgrading the MIS, cashless payment for social assistance programs. Response to these requests is expected to improve the use ICT applications in the delivery and monitoring of social protection programs in these countries.

#### **Overall Assessment and Rating**

The TA is rated *successful*. This is a first attempt to review potential applications of ICT application in improving social protection delivery for ADB DMCs. The TA was successful in showcasing alternative successful options to DMCs in social protection program delivery and monitoring when the norm is still manual inputting and fragmented databases, and cash-based transactions. The TA is rated *likely sustainable* as there is demand from DMCs for investment in improving delivery of social protection and health insurance programs through better ICT infrastructure. While the TA money is designed to only cover at least 3 DMCs for support in national dialogues and capacity building, the TASU worked with development partners and internal ADB partners to be able to extend knowledge dissemination and capacity building activities to reach other DMCs. The TA increased knowledge and awareness of several DMCs on the potential efficiency gains that can be achieved through improvements in identity management systems, payment delivery through digital finance, and enhanced monitoring through integrated MIS.

#### **Lessons Learned**

The concept of enhancing ICT investments in social protection is a new area for most DMCs. Country case studies and showing the experience of other DMCs in the region and developing countries outside Asia and the Pacific is a good approach to increase the knowledge of policymakers and project managers in DMCs. However, interest must be sustained through a series of activities focused on increasing awareness and capacity on ICT utilization for social protection and identifying champions to push reforms that will benefit the country in the long-run. For ADB, there is scope in increasing investments in ICT for social protection in using both lending and non-lending instruments. Country studies suggest that country conditions and preparedness will vary considerably. It also suggests that the most likely support that will be appreciated and effective is one that incrementally improves internal processes and administration, including improving database management systems, financial systems and reporting as well as introducing on a case by case basis, such as mobile payment solutions, short message service money transfers and use of biometrics for a national identification system.

#### **Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions**

Through the activities supported by the TA, government officials were made more aware on the benefits and possibilities that ICT investments can bring into their program, however, take-up or future action will require further support from ADB. Similar scoping studies and national policy dialogues can be supported in other DMCs.

TA = technical assistance.