



Completion Report

Project Number: 49073-001
TA Number: 8892
July 2016

Georgia: Support for Silk Road Forum

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TA 8892-GEO: Silk Road Forum			Amount Approved: \$225,000		
			Revised Amount: Not Applicable		
Executing Agency: Georgia Resident Mission		Source of Funding: TASF-other	Amount Undisbursed: \$17,667	Amount Utilized: \$207,333	
TA Approval Date: 28-Apr-2015	TA Signing Date: 21-May-15	Fielding of First Consultants: 5-Jun-15	TA Completion date Original: 31-Dec-15 Actual: 31-Mar-16		
			Account Closing Date Original: 31-Mar-16 Actual: 01-Jul-16		
Description					
<p>The small-scale policy and advisory technical assistance (TA) was processed by Georgia Resident Mission to support the Government of Georgia in organizing a two day Silk Road Forum (the Forum) in Tbilisi, Georgia in October 2015. The main goal of the Forum was to (i) discuss possibilities to enhance regional cooperation through improved cross-border transport and energy connectivity, trade facilitation and commerce along the Silk Road; (ii) help coordinate transport infrastructure investment plans and potential policy interventions aimed at achieving uninterrupted flow of goods through Silk Road corridor; and (iii) stimulate cross-border trade and commerce by identifying investment opportunities and facilitating business-to business meetings and public-private dialogue.</p>					
Expected Outcome and Output					
<p>The expected outcome was establishment of a regular venue in the form of a biennial Silk Road Forum by 2017, to facilitate increased understanding of regional trends in cross-border transport and energy connectivity, logistics and trade among the governments of the Asian region and the private sector. Successfully launched Forum by end October 2015 with strong participation by government officials and private sector representatives was the main expected output to achieve this outcome.</p>					
Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities					
<p>Preparatory work for the TA implementation began in early 2015. Recruitment of consulting firm to prepare the Forum was initiated in March 2015 using Consultants' Qualification Selection (CQS) method. However, during the short-listing, it was decided to cancel the selection process given that none of the consulting firms had relevant profile to carry out the assignment. The selection method was changed from CQS to Individual Consultant Selection (ICS) method with OSFMD approval and the team of two international and six national consultants was mobilized starting from early June 2015.¹ Consultant inputs were increased in July and August 2015 as registered participants far exceeded original plans of the Forum. These changes were well-justified and did not affect the overall TA amount. The consultants' performance was satisfactory as all tasks under the terms of reference were achieved. TA completion date was extended first from 31 December 2015 to 31 January 2016 and subsequently to 31 March 2016 in order to allow for sufficient time to prepare comprehensive Forum proceedings for publication in light of large turnout of participants during the Forum and the additional work products generated through Forum activities.</p>					
<p>The TA concept and scope were well thought-out and formulated as demonstrated by the successful implementation and achievement of output. The TA has been physically closed on 31 March 2016 with undisbursed balance of \$17,667 owing to cost savings as a result of donor financial support and private sector sponsorship for the Forum. The counterpart agency, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia (MOESD), was responsive and fulfilled its commitments under the TA; its performance is assessed as highly satisfactory. ADB's performance is also assessed as highly satisfactory, with full client responsiveness and efficient implementation of the well-attended Forum.</p>					
Evaluation of Output and Achievement of Outcome					
<p>The Silk Road Forum was conducted on 15–16 October 2015 in Tbilisi at two locations, Shota Rustaveli Theatre and the Parliament of Georgia. The event brought together over 800 delegates from 60 countries, far above the initially expected 200 participants, and featured 50 speakers and moderators. The government of People's Republic of China significantly contributed to the success of the event extending about \$200,000 in additional technical assistance to facilitate the event. As a result, a delegation comprising more than 200 officials and business representatives from the People's Republic of China participated in the Forum. The Embassy of the United</p>					

¹ Memo requesting change in consultant selection method dated 6 May 2015 (Approved on 7 May 2016).

States and the United States Agency for International Development have also contributed through organizing the attendance of high level officials from the United States. Four sponsors from private sector supported the event financially and through in-kind contributions including catering services, refreshments and promotional materials. The sponsors' contributions totaled around \$115,000.

The Forum consisted of a welcome session and five panel discussions on trade and economic cooperation, transport infrastructure development, cross-border trade facilitation, energy trade, and investment opportunities in Georgia. Six topical presentations on key sectors of Georgian economy and legal and institutional aspects of business climate in Georgia were given for interested investors by senior government and private sector representatives. Ms. Sumnima Udas, CNN International's Delhi-based correspondent moderated the Forum sessions. The introductory session was also moderated by the prominent economist, Dr. Hernando De Soto and included opening speeches from H.E. Irakli Garibashvili, the Prime Minister of Georgia; Wencai Zhang, the Vice President of Asian Development Bank; Xuekerat Zakir, the Governor of Xinjiang Uygur Region of People's Republic of China and other high officials from different countries. The panels featured Georgian government officials, international experts and foreign investors equipped with specific industry expertise and knowledge of the Georgian economy and business environment. Ms. Xiaohong Yang, Director of Transport and Communications Division and Mr. Sohail Hasnie, Principal Energy Specialist participated in the Transport and Energy panels respectively on behalf of ADB.

Business-to-business meetings were held on 16 October, organized through an electronic platform built into the Forum website, as supported by this TA. A total of 136 business meetings took place between 97 entities from 26 economies.² The sectors covered included energy, manufacturing, transport and logistics, real estate and retail among others. In addition, MOESD, with ADB TA support, developed an Investment Catalogue to introduce investment opportunities in the country. More than 40 Georgian companies and government entities, presented up to 90 proposed projects in the catalogue.³ The trade faire was organized after the completion of the Forum sessions supported by the governments of Georgia and People's Republic of China with participation from Georgian and Chinese businesses.

The achievement of the output of the TA is documented in the Forum proceedings shared with the government.⁴ The outcome has already been achieved as The Silk Road Forum has been established as a biennial event and the 2017 Silk Road Forum is already under preparation by the government.

Overall Assessment and Rating

Based on achievement of the output and the outcome of the Design and Monitoring Framework, the TA is rated as highly successful. Overall, the Forum met the government's and ADB's expectations. By bringing together governments, international organizations and private sector from Asia region and beyond the Forum helped build the networks and enhance the dialogue on the central themes of economic cooperation along the Silk Road corridor. As a result of successful outreach campaign, the event brought together over 800 delegates from 60 countries, far above the initially expected 200 participants. The event was noteworthy in terms of its scale, seniority and seriousness of international participation. The Silk Road Forum established itself as an important biennial platform for cross-country government engagement, public-private dialogue and business-to-business network development.

Major Lessons

Engaging the governments of ADB member countries early in the preparatory process ensured strong and high level government participation in the Forum. The format of business-to-business meetings, publication of investment catalogue and extensive outreach campaign through government and business channels generated strong interest to attend the Forum among the private sector internationally. The diversity and relevance of panelists was also a major factor behind making the Silk Road Forum a highly rewarding event. The Forum has now been established as a biennial event and the government plans to replicate and build on the success of the 2015 Silk Road Forum.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

Extending ADB support for similar international forums in the future will benefit Georgia through increasing the country's visibility in international business circles as a rapidly developing trade, energy and transport hub along the Silk Road. It will also compliment current operational work under the CAREC Program, particularly in view of Georgia's upcoming membership in CAREC.⁵

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² Participants from Australia; Azerbaijan; Belgium; People's Republic of China; France; Georgia; Ghana; India; Israel; Italy; Lithuania; Nepal; the Netherlands; Nigeria; Poland; Romania; Sierra Leone; Slovakia; South Africa; Spain; Taipei, China; Turkey; Ukraine; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom; and the United States attended the business meetings.

³ The print version of the catalogue was disseminated to Forum participants during the sessions. The electronic version can be accessed at <<http://www.tbilisisilkroad.ge/en/b2b/>>

⁴ The full Silk Road Forum Report is under preparation for publication.

⁵ Georgia's East-West Highway is an important extension of CAREC corridor 2, its most extensive corridor, linking the Central and East Asia countries to the European markets and beyond.