



Technical Assistance Report

Project Number: 50134-001
Knowledge and Support Technical Assistance (KSTA)
August 2017

Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Enhancing Agricultural Competitiveness in Viet Nam (Financed by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction)

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Asian Development Bank

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(as of 14 August 2017)

Currency unit	–	dong (D)
D1.00	=	\$0.000044
\$1.00	=	D22,733

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
GDP	–	gross domestic product
TA	–	technical assistance

NOTE

In this report, "\$" refers to US dollars.

Vice-President	S. Groff, Operations 2
Director General	R. Subramaniam, Southeast Asia Department (SERD)
Directors	J. Zhang, Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Division, SERD E. Sidgwick, Country Director, Viet Nam Resident Mission, SERD
Team leader	S. Ranawana, Senior Natural Resources Economist, SERD
Team members	D. V. Dung, Senior Public Management Officer, SERD M. Katagami, Principal Natural Resources and Agriculture Specialist, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (SDCC) M. Lemoine, Principal Investment Specialist, Private Sector Operations Department (PSOD) D. L. Ninh, Investment Officer, PSOD C. Pak, Senior Counsel, Office of the General Counsel P. Ramachandran, Senior Environment Specialist, SERD K. Trillanes-Panton, Project Analyst, SERD T. Ueda, Principal Natural Resources and Agriculture Economist, SERD
Peer reviewer	Md. Abul Basher, Natural Resources and Agriculture Specialist, SDCC

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KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AT A GLANCE

1. Basic Data		Project Number: 50134-001	
Project Name	Enhancing Agricultural Competitiveness in Viet Nam	Department /Division	SERD/SEER
Nature of Activity	Capacity Development	Executing Agency	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Modality	Regular		
Country	Viet Nam, Socialist Republic of		
2. Sector		Financing (\$ million)	
✓ Agriculture, natural resources and rural development	Agricultural policy, institutional and capacity development		1.80
	Total		1.80
3. Strategic Agenda		Climate Change Information	
Inclusive economic growth (IEG)	Pillar 2: Access to economic opportunities, including jobs, made more inclusive	Climate Change impact on the Project	Low
4. Drivers of Change		Gender Equity and Mainstreaming	
Governance and capacity development (GCD)	Institutional development	Some gender elements (SGE)	✓
Knowledge solutions (KNS)	Knowledge sharing activities		
Partnerships (PAR)	Bilateral institutions (not client government)		
Private sector development (PSD)	Official cofinancing Promotion of private sector investment		
5. Poverty and SDG Targeting		Location Impact	
Geographic Targeting	No	Not Applicable	
Household Targeting	No		
SDG Targeting	Yes		
SDG Goals	SDG8		
6. Risk Categorization		Low	
7. Safeguard Categorization Safeguard Policy Statement does not apply			
8. Financing			
Modality and Sources		Amount (\$ million)	
ADB		0.00	
None		0.00	
Cofinancing		1.80	
Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction		1.80	
Counterpart		0.00	
None		0.00	
Total		1.80	

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The proposed knowledge and support technical assistance (TA) will strengthen competitiveness of Viet Nam's agriculture sector by supporting enabling conditions for inclusive agribusiness development along the value chains of selected commodities. The TA aims to enhance competitiveness and sustain inclusive growth in the agriculture sector of Viet Nam in line with the government's Agriculture Restructuring Plan.¹ The TA will undertake assessments and build capacity (mainly in provinces) to support a long-term programmatic approach of commercializing the agriculture sector.² It is aligned with the country partnership strategy for Viet Nam, 2016–2020 of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) that aims to (i) promote job creation and competitiveness, (ii) enhance the inclusiveness of infrastructure and service delivery, and (iii) improve environmental sustainability and climate change response. The TA is included in the country operations business plan for Viet Nam, 2017–2019.³

II. ISSUES

2. Since around 1997, Viet Nam has made significant strides in integrating with international markets in the trade of agricultural commodities. In 2013, the export value of eight agriculture products exceeded \$1 billion per annum, making Viet Nam the world's largest exporter of cashew and pepper, second of coffee, third of rice and rubber, fourth of fishery products, and sixth of tea.⁴ It has established trade relations with over 160 countries and territories. Also in 2013, the overall agriculture trade surplus with 13 export markets exceeded \$1 billion and the surplus with three export markets exceeded \$10 billion. Export turnover from agro-forestry and fisheries grossed \$27.5 billion, accounting for around 20% of the country's total export turnover, which is commensurate with the agriculture sector's share of gross domestic product (GDP) of 18%–20%.⁵

3. These achievements were due to substantial investments in irrigation infrastructure and in intensifying the factors of production including land, labor, and agricultural inputs (e.g., seed, fertilizer), which resulted in the rapid growth of productivity in these commodities throughout the 1990s.⁶ However, the growth of land and labor productivity in agriculture began to taper off in around 2000, and growth in the total factor productivity in agriculture has been declining since then.⁷ The share of public investment in the agriculture sector from the state budget has also declined from 20.0% of GDP in 1990 to 6.3% of GDP in 2010. Because there has been limited investment in value addition,⁸ agriculture value added per worker as a ratio of average income

¹ Government of Viet Nam. 2013. *Prime Minister's Decision No. 899/QĐ-TTg of 10 June 2013 Approving the Project Agriculture Restructuring Towards Raising Added Values and Sustainable Development*. Ha Noi.

² The TA will contribute toward formulating investments under the Rural Business Commercialization and Competitiveness Enhancement Program for which a transaction TA is included in ADB's country operations business plan in 2018. ADB. 2016. *Country Operations Business Plan: Viet Nam, 2017–2019*. Manila.

³ The TA first appeared in the business opportunities section of ADB's website on 31 March 2017.

⁴ These included fishery products (\$6.7 billion), wood (\$5.5 billion), rice (\$2.9 billion), coffee (\$2.7 billion), rubber (\$2.5 billion), cashew (\$1.7 billion), vegetables and fruits (\$1.1 billion), and cassava (\$1.1 billion).

⁵ Government of Viet Nam, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. 2015. *Strategy for International Economic Integration for Agriculture and Rural Development Sector up to 2013*. Ha Noi. (Issued by Decision No. 1648/QĐ-TTg on 30 September 2015 by the Prime Minister).

⁶ The application of fertilizer per hectare of crop land in Viet Nam is 90% higher than the regional average. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2015. *Agricultural Policies in Viet Nam*. Paris.

⁷ Total factor productivity growth rate is calculated as the difference between the output and input growth rates. Average annual growth of total factor productivity in agriculture fell from 2.86 (1990–2000) to 2.18 (2006–2010). Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2015. *Agricultural Policies in Viet Nam*. Paris.

⁸ For instance, the agriculture sector accounted for less than 1% of all foreign direct investment in Viet Nam between 2015–2016. Dezan Shira and Associates. Maxfield Brown, ed. 2016. Vietnam's FDI Outlook for 2016: Trends and Opportunities. *Viet Nam Briefing*. 16 February. <http://www.vietnam-briefing.com/news/vietnamese-fdi-2016-outlook.html/>.

per capita in Viet Nam has declined more sharply than in any other country in Asia since 1990.⁹ The declining rate of growth of the agriculture sector reflects these trends. Growth declined from 3.8% during 2001–2005 to 3.3% during 2006–2010 and to 2.7% in 2013. Viet Nam also faces growing competition in trading agriculture commodities because of concerns over the quality and safety of products. Climate variability also threatens its agriculture sector. For instance, the 2014–2016 El Niño effect caused significant losses in agriculture production and in the livelihoods of rural farming households. Although the country has plentiful water resources, several regions experience significant seasonal variability. Sixty percent of Viet Nam’s surface water originates outside its borders, presenting high risks for water security.

4. To remain competitive, the sector must shift its focus from low-value agricultural commodities to high-value agro-food products. This requires a strategic reorientation toward commercialization, mainly by promoting private investment in agribusinesses and developing inclusive value chains in agricultural products. Several constraints hamper this transition. For example, private sector investment in the agriculture sector is very limited and lags far behind the manufacturing and service sectors.¹⁰ There are significant risks associated with investing in agriculture such as climate variability, disease outbreaks, commodity price volatility, and governance issues. These risks are heightened by the sector’s decreasing factor productivity that can be attributed to resource degradation (e.g., soil, water) and low skill levels. Other reasons include limited financing opportunities and limited access to markets. Access to markets is affected by limited efforts in brand and market development and product differentiation. The lack of investment in promoting innovation and adopting technology has caused product differentiation to suffer. The poor quality and reliability of agricultural produce and inputs has also deterred private sector engagement. Smallholders dominate Viet Nam’s agriculture production landscape. This presents significant challenges for aggregation and product differentiation, maintaining quality and safety standards, and ensuring the inclusiveness of actors in value chains. Institutional arrangements (e.g., producer cooperatives) for streamlining aggregation and quality assurance (e.g., participatory guarantee systems) need to become mainstreamed for smallholder producers to participate and benefit from enhanced agro-food value chains.

5. Public investment planning, policy, and regulatory frameworks also further hamper commercialization of the sector. A disproportionate share of public investment has gone into supporting the agriculture production base (e.g., irrigation systems), whereas there has been limited support to promote post-harvest processing and value addition (e.g., storage, market structures, logistics) or to adopt innovation and technology in agro-food production. Investment in related sectors (e.g., science and technology, vocational training) has also been limited because of the lack of integrated and coordinated strategies to promote agriculture value addition.¹¹ Viet Nam has numerous laws and decrees aimed at creating a transparent and fair environment for investors. However, they are poorly implemented and enforced, creating considerable uncertainty. The planning, policy and regulatory environment must become more open to public–private collaboration arrangements.

6. The government recognizes the urgent need to undertake sector reforms to maintain its competitive edge in external markets and meet the demands of an increasingly discerning domestic market. The agricultural restructuring plan aims to (i) sustain growth and raise efficiency and competitiveness by increasing productivity, quality, and value addition to meet domestic and

⁹ World Bank. 2016. *Vietnam Development Report 2016–Transforming Vietnamese Agriculture: Gaining More from Less*. Ha Noi.

¹⁰ In 2014, foreign direct investment in agriculture accounted for slightly over 1% of the total registered capital of foreign direct investment in the country.

¹¹ Eighty percent of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development’s capital investment funds during 2006–2010 were channeled to the irrigation subsector.

international demands; (ii) raise incomes and improve the living standards of rural residents, ensure food security (including nutrition security) that contributes to poverty reduction; and (iii) enhance capacity in disaster risk management.¹² The strategy also calls for the agriculture sector to become more service oriented and demand driven with the government's role shifting from primary investor and service provider to facilitator of investments and services by the private sector.

7. ADB is well placed to support the country's efforts to enhance agriculture commercialization. ADB has helped improve the agriculture production base by investing in rural infrastructure facilities (e.g., irrigation, rural roads, rural water supply) and watershed protection to improve soil and water conservation. It has also supported soft interventions such as the adoption of good agricultural practices (e.g., traceability mechanisms, sanitary and phytosanitary standards) and agricultural waste management practices through low-carbon solutions (i.e., biogas from livestock waste). More recently, ADB's Private Sector Operations Department has supported Vietnamese private companies to expand their agribusiness investments. At the regional scale, support through the Greater Mekong Subregional program has strengthened ADB's role in promoting regional cooperation in agriculture. ADB also works closely with other development partners in the sector to address systemic issues such as food quality and safety. Past interventions highlight the need to adopt more integrated and inter-sector approaches to promote value chain development by combining investments in productive infrastructure, skills development and technology uptake, financing, and private sector engagement.

III. THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A. Impact and Outcome

8. The TA is aligned with the following impact: competitiveness enhanced and inclusive growth sustained in the agriculture sector of Viet Nam (footnote 1). The TA will have the following outcome: enabling policy, institutional, and investment conditions for agriculture commercialization enhanced in selected provinces.¹³

B. Outputs, Methods, and Activities

9. **Output 1: Public-private collaboration arrangements in agriculture value chains established.** This output will establish public and private collaboration arrangements to promote the development of agriculture value chains for selected commodities. It will also develop financing mechanisms for agribusiness development, taking climate risks into consideration.¹⁴ Activities will include (i) identifying commodities in which the selected provinces have a comparative advantage; (ii) supporting dialogue between public (i.e. provincial agencies) and private entities (i.e. companies or business associations) to facilitate agribusiness engagements; (iii) undertaking value chain assessments, market condition surveys, demand assessments, and identifying technology gaps and opportunities to promote innovation; (iv) identifying gaps in the current access to finance and the formulation of climate-responsive agribusiness financing mechanisms for both investment and working capital; and (v) establishing collaborative arrangements for agribusiness development including specifying arrangements between public

¹² Prime Minister's Decision No. 339/QĐ-TTg of 19 February 2013.

¹³ The design and monitoring framework is in Appendix 1. Three provinces—Can Tho, Khanh Hoa, and Thai Binh—were identified based on having (i) strong leadership, vision, and commitment to developing a commercially oriented and high-tech agriculture sector; (ii) a comparative advantage as a logistics hub that can support agriculture-based value chains; (iii) a broad agriculture commodity supply base including from surrounding provinces; (iv) proximity to domestic markets; (v) synergies with other ADB operations; and (vi) capacity and interest in participating in an ensuing investment loan.

¹⁴ Where climate risks may be addressed through mechanisms such as risk-adjusted premiums.

and private entities.

10. **Output 2: Public investment planning and expenditure management for agriculture commercialization strengthened.** Activities will build capacity of the public sector to assume roles in facilitating agribusiness development as defined under output 1. The output will result in agribusiness-related investments in infrastructure, processing, post-harvest distribution, and quality assurance being prioritized for inclusion in provincial medium-term investment plans. It will also adopt a framework to promote innovation and technology adoption within agriculture value chains. Activities will include (i) conducting policy and institutional analysis on agribusiness enabling conditions, (ii) helping define roles and responsibilities of key public sector institutions in promoting innovation and technology adoption in selected agriculture value chains, (iii) developing a framework to prioritize agribusiness infrastructure and service investments, (iv) building capacity to establish an agribusiness perspective in medium-term investment plans and expenditure frameworks, and (v) developing provincial agribusiness value chain strategies and action plans.

C. Cost and Financing

11. The TA is estimated to cost \$1,980,000, of which \$1,800,000 will be financed on a grant basis by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction and administered by ADB. The key expenditure items are listed in Appendix 2.

12. Under the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, ineligible expenditures include (i) vehicle purchases, (ii) salaries for civil servants, (iii) foreign travel, (iv) scholarships or long internships, (v) detailed engineering, (vi) civil works and other related expenses, and (vii) those under ADB's List of Ineligible Items (or Negative List) and Prohibited Investment Activities List.¹⁵

13. The government will provide counterpart support in the form of staff, office accommodation, office supplies, secretarial assistance, and other in-kind contributions.

D. Implementation Arrangements

14. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will be the executing agency. The ministry will assign the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development to be the implementing agency. ADB, through the Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture Division of the Southeast Asia Department, will administer and supervise the TA. The Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development will set up a project management unit and assign a project director and a core team of counterpart staff to work with the TA consultants. The ministry will ensure the coordination of TA activities internally with other departments with a mandate to support value chain development and externally with other ministries including the Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ministry of Industry and Trade, and other line ministries whose mandates have bearing on the TA outcome. The TA will be implemented in close coordination with provincial peoples' committees of selected provinces. Each provincial peoples' committee will establish inter-provincial coordinating arrangements between key provincial line agencies (i.e., departments of planning and investment, agriculture and rural development, industry and trade) and with private enterprises interested in agribusiness investments to facilitate the TA activities.¹⁶ ADB will consider engaging a third party entity that has experience establishing public-private collaboration arrangements in agriculture at the inception phase to facilitate dialogue with private enterprises.¹⁷ The implementation arrangements are summarized in Table 1.

¹⁵ Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction 2017 Policy Guidelines for Technical Assistance Grant.

¹⁶ Including private companies supported through ADB's Private Sector Operations Department operations.

¹⁷ Possible partners include IDH the Sustainable Trade Initiative and Grow Asia.

Table 1: Implementation Arrangements

Aspects	Arrangements		
Indicative implementation period	October 2017 - September 2019		
Executing agency	MARD		
Implementing agency	IPSARD		
Consultants	To be selected and engaged by ADB		
	Individual consultant selection	95 person-months (international and national)	\$1,134,000
	Studies and surveys	TBD	\$200,000
Procurement	To be procured by the executing agency		
	Shopping	1 contract	\$40,000
Disbursement	The TA resources will be disbursed following ADB's <i>Technical Assistance Disbursement Handbook</i> (2010, as amended from time to time). An advance payment facility will be established under IPSARD, MARD to facilitate the disbursement of office equipment, workshops, seminars, and a portion of miscellaneous administration and support costs.		
Asset turnover or disposal arrangement upon TA completion	Upon completion of the TA, the equipment will be turned over to the executing agency.		

ADB = Asian Development Bank, IPSARD = Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, MARD = Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, TA = technical assistance, TBD = to be determined.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

15. **Consulting services.** The TA will require services of 33 person-months of international and 62 person-months of national consultants to be recruited using individual consultant selection, in accordance with ADB's Guidelines on the Use of Consultants (2013, as amended from time to time).¹⁸ These include (i) agriculture value chain and marketing specialist and team leader, (ii) a agriculture value chain (institutional) specialist and deputy team leader, (iii) agricultural economists, (iv) agribusiness financing specialists, (v) agribusiness development public-private partnership specialists, (vi) climate-smart agriculture specialists, (vii) a rural enterprise development specialist, and (viii) a public finance specialist.¹⁹ To reduce the administrative burden—and improve economy, efficiency, and value for money—consulting services under the TA will be engaged on output-based (lump-sum) contracts, wherever appropriate. The TA may need to engage specialized institutes to undertake specific assessments for which they possess the necessary skills and information including the development of knowledge products. In such cases, the scope and method of selection would be decided beforehand by the TA supervising unit in consultation with the Operations Services and Financial Management Department.

IV. THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION

16. The President, acting under the authority delegated by the Board, has approved ADB administering technical assistance not exceeding the equivalent of \$1,800,000 to the Government of Viet Nam to be financed on a grant basis by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction for Enhancing Agricultural Competitiveness in Viet Nam, and hereby reports this action to the Board.

Takehiko Nakao
President

11 August 2017

¹⁸ The consultant inputs and scope of work were refined during fact-finding in consultation with the government.

¹⁹ Includes 6 person-months of international and 8 person-months of national inputs listed without specialization. The specialization will be decided based on demand during implementation. Individual consultant selection method is preferred over a firm because of the specialized nature of expertise that is being sought, i.e., better targeting of specialists who have the required expertise and country and/or regional experience.

DESIGN AND MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Impacts the TA is Aligned with			
Competitiveness enhanced and inclusive growth sustained in the agriculture sector of Viet Nam (in line with Prime Minister's Decision No. 899/QD-TTg of 10 June 2013 on Agriculture Restructuring Towards Raising Added Values and Sustainable Development).			
Results Chain	Performance Indicators with Targets and Baselines	Data Sources and Reporting	Risks
Outcome Enabling policy, institutional, and investment conditions for agriculture commercialization enhanced in selected provinces	By 2020 (2017 baseline: 0) a. Value chain development strategies and investment plans approved by at least three PPCs b. Investments linked with public–private collaboration on value chains reflected in annual budgets of at least three provinces	a. Provincial progress reports on agriculture restructuring plan b. Provincial annual budget frameworks	Global and regional trade disruptions in agriculture products
Outputs 1. Public–private collaboration arrangements in agriculture value chains established 2. Public investment planning and expenditure management for agriculture commercialization strengthened	By 2019 (2017 baseline: 0) 1a. At least three public–private collaboration agreements linked to high-value agriculture commodity value chains signed 1b. At least one agribusiness financing instrument targeting a commodity-specific value chain developed 2a. Agribusiness-related investments included in medium-term public investment plans of at least three provinces 2b. At least 50 provincial and central government agency staff trained in value chain assessment and agribusiness development, of which at least 30% are women	1a. Provincial investment reports on agriculture restructuring plan 1b. TA reports 2a. Provincial medium-term investment plans and expenditure frameworks 2b. TA reports	Market volatility in agricultural commodities affects business sentiment. Government lacks commitment to reforms and investments supporting agriculture commercialization. Provincial financial situation prevents prioritizing of key investments and innovation.
Key Activities with Milestones			
1. Public–private collaboration arrangements in agriculture value chains established 1.1. Select high-value agriculture commodities for development of value chains (Q4 2017).			

<p>1.2. Establish provincial public–private engagement platforms for strategic planning of market based value chain development (Q4 2017 and beyond).</p> <p>1.3. Assess value chains of selected commodities including market and demand conditions and identify technology gaps and innovation opportunities (Q2 2018).</p> <p>1.4. Propose options for climate change-responsive agribusiness financing (Q2 2018).</p> <p>1.5. Develop public–private collaboration arrangements for agribusiness in selected high-value crops. (Q4 2018).</p> <p>2. Public investment planning and expenditure management for agriculture commercialization strengthened</p> <p>2.1. Support policy and institutional capacity to establish enabling environment for agribusiness development (Q1 2018 and beyond).</p> <p>2.2. Support defining the roles and implementation responsibilities in promoting innovation and technology adoption in agriculture value chains (Q2 2018 and beyond).</p> <p>2.3. Develop a framework to prioritize value chain-related infrastructure (Q3 2018).</p> <p>2.4. Support integration of value chain investments in medium-term investment plans and medium-term expenditure frameworks (Q1 2018 and beyond).</p> <p>2.5. Support the development of strategies and action plans for agriculture value chains (Q1 2018 and beyond).</p>
<p>Inputs</p> <p>Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction: \$1.8 million^a</p> <p>Note: The government will provide counterpart support in the form of counterpart staff, office accommodation, office supplies, secretarial assistance, and other in-kind contributions.</p>
<p>Assumptions for Partner Financing</p> <p>Not Applicable.</p>

PPC = provincial people's committee, Q = quarter, TA = technical assistance.

^a Administered by the Asian Development Bank.

Source: Asian Development Bank.

COST ESTIMATES AND FINANCING PLAN
(\$'000)

Item	Amount
Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction^a	
1. Consultants	
a. Remuneration and per diem	
i. International consultants	759.0
ii. National consultants	232.5
b. Out-of-pocket expenditures	
i. International and local travel	102.5
ii. Reports and communication	15.0
iii. Others (includes payment for office operation) ^b	25.0
2. Equipment ^c	40.0
3. Workshops and seminars ^d	215.0
4. Surveys and studies	200.0
5. Miscellaneous administration and support costs ^e	40.0
6. Contingencies	171.0
Total	1,800.0

Note: The technical assistance (TA) is estimated to cost \$1,980,000, of which contributions from the Asian Development Bank are presented in the table above. The government will provide counterpart support in the form of counterpart staff, office accommodation, office supplies, secretarial assistance and other in-kind contributions. The value of government contribution is estimated to account for about 9% of the total TA cost.

^a Administered by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

^b Includes office utilities.

^c Equipment for office work will be procured in accordance with ADB's Procurement Guidelines (2015, as amended from time to time). The equipment purchased will comply with the guidelines on accountability of TA purchased assets and will include photocopier, computers, and printers. Upon TA completion, the equipment will be turned over to the executing agency.

^d Workshops and seminars include inception, interim, and final workshops; capacity building workshops; and central and provincial meetings. It includes participants' travel and logistic costs, fees, and related costs for external resource persons. This includes travel costs of ADB staff when engaged as resource persons, as well as support services as per the Strategy, Policy and Review Department and Budget, Personnel and Management Systems Department memo dated 26 June 2013.

^e This includes domestic air travel and land travel of government staff.

Source: ADB estimates.

LIST OF LINKED DOCUMENTS

<http://www.adb.org/Documents/LinkedDocs/?id=50134-001-TARreport>

1. Terms of Reference for Consultants