Regional: Supporting Knowledge Solutions in Central and West Asian Countries

Project Name	Supporting Knowledge Solutions in Central and West Asian Countries
Project Number	52050-001
Country	RegionalAfghanistanArmeniaAzerbaijanGeorgiaKazakhstanKyrgyz RepublicPakistanTajikistanTurkmenistanUzbekistan
Project Status	Active
Project Type / Modality of Assistance	Technical Assistance
Source of Funding / Amount	**TA: Supporting Knowledge Solutions in Central and West Asia Countries**
	Technical Assistance Special Fund — US$ 750,000.00
Strategic Agendas	Inclusive economic growth
Drivers of Change	Governance and capacity development Knowledge solutions Private sector development
Sector / Subsector	**Public sector management** - Public administration
Gender Equity and Mainstreaming	No gender elements
Description	The proposed regional knowledge and support technical assistance (TA) will support the delivery of knowledge solutions to Central and West Asia Department (CWRD) countries. Promotion of knowledge solutions for ADB's developing member countries (DMCs) is identified as ADB's strategic priority. The proposed TA will realize this role of ADB as a generator, facilitator and enabler of knowledge solutions, in the context of CWRD region. The proposed TA will support demand-based and just-in-time Knowledge Products and Services (KPSs) to CWRD countries and facilitate knowledge and experience exchange between the CWRD countries and other countries of interest, in the spirit of South-South knowledge exchange. Further, based on expressed needs by CWRD countries, it will support improved data for evidence-based policy making in CWRD countries, and will assist selected middle-income CWRD countries with innovative near-term forecasting (NTF) techniques. The TA will be undertaken in close collaboration with ADB's Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department (ERCD) and will draw upon lessons from previous ADB operations.

Project Rationale and Linkage to Country/Regional Strategy	Need for knowledge solutions for CWRD countries. The CWRD region covers a very diverse range of countries in Central and South Asia, and South Caucasus, including six lower middle-income countries (ARM, GEO, KGZ, PAK, TAJ, and UZB), three upper middle-income countries (AZE, KAZ, and TKM), and a low-income and post-conflict country (AFG). These economies face numerous common, region-wide, and country-specific constraints to their economic and social development. For example, almost all Central Asian and South Caucasus countries have low economic diversification, dependency on natural resources or on remittances, weak rule of law, and rising inequality. The CWRD DMCs are turning increasingly to ADB for knowledge solutions.
Focused, relevant, demand-driven, and timely knowledge solutions are critical to addressing these development constraints and enhancing the quality of people's lives in CWRD region. The knowledge support ranging from support to policy analysis and formulation, its implementation, capacity building, and learning from other countries' experiences is just as important for the region's low-income as for the middle-income countries, and is demanded by various players, including governments, public and private think tanks, and other institutions.
Consultations with CWRD authorities and national think tanks revealed strong interest towards sharing knowledge and relevant experiences between the CWRD countries themselves, as well as with successful reformers elsewhere (for example, the PRC in its poverty reduction and certain aspects of economic management). There is a need for a suitable mechanism within CWRD for sharing the experiences between the CWRD countries and those with other DMCs. Such learning and sharing of experiences on broad and demand-driven issues in spirit of the South-South knowledge exchange will contribute to development of relevant nation-focused knowledge solutions.
Need for improved data for evidence-based policy making in CWRD countries. In complex and dynamic development landscape of CWRD region, continuous monitoring of major macroeconomic and social trends and issues is vital for proper economic analysis and policy-making aimed at ensuring economic growth and its inclusiveness. For such evidence-based policy making, capacities and capabilities of national statistical offices (NSOs) in CWRD countries need to be significantly improved. While most NSOs in the region have benefited from earlier development partners' assistance, significant gaps and needs remain, including, in particular, in national accounts compilation, global and regional value chain indicators, labor market indicators (for example, on the category of self-employed labor), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets, various disaggregated data, and others.
In almost all CWRD countries, macroeconomic data are released with substantial delay, and some key indicators are not available at all. Moreover, the low frequency data (for example, annual national accounts) often rely on a small number of surveys and indicators, and hence, provide a partial picture of the economy. In such a context, conducting proper macroeconomic forecasting is significantly impaired. Current advances in economic profession and forecasting practices, however, allow construction of reliable forecasts based on the use of higher-frequency data (e.g., monthly, weekly, or daily indicators) and/or the use of Big Data. This near-term forecasting is increasingly employed by policy makers throughout the world for analyzing the current state of the economy and predicting the economy's near future direction. Several NSOs in CWRD's middle-income countries have started employing such techniques, but they require further assistance in advancing their use.
The proposed KSTA will focus on addressing the identified above issues and challenges through tailored, timely, and flexible support to the emerging knowledge needs in CWRD countries. The TA will utilize the experiences and lessons from relevant past ADB assistance and analyses, the ADB-wide expertise, and will be closely collaborated with ongoing ERCD activities. The TA will also be closely coordinated with development partners and local think tanks in each of the CWRD countries, and with Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Institute and Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) activities.
Impact	Economic and social policy making improved in CWRD DMCs

Project Outcome

Description of Outcome	Analytical capacities and capabilities enhanced in CWRD DMCs
Progress Toward Outcome	

Implementation Progress

Description of Project Outputs	1. Timely and relevant knowledge solutions delivered to CWRD DMCs
2. Data for evidence-based policy making improved in CWRD DMCs
3. NTF techniques improved in selected CWRD DMCs
Status of Implementation Progress (Outputs, Activities, and Issues)	
Geographical Location	Afghanistan - Nation-wide; Armenia - Nation-wide; Azerbaijan - Nation-wide; Georgia - Nation-wide; Kazakhstan - Nation-wide; Kyrgyz Republic - Nation-wide; Pakistan - Nation-wide; Tajikistan - Nation-wide; Turkmenistan - Nation-wide; Uzbekistan - Nation-wide

Summary of Environmental and Social Aspects

Environmental Aspects	
Involuntary Resettlement	
Indigenous Peoples	

Stakeholder Communication, Participation, and Consultation

During Project Design	
During Project Implementation	

Business Opportunities

Consulting Services	A team of national and international individual consultants, as well as resource persons, will be engaged to support the implementation of the three components of the technical assistance project. Up to 15 person-months of international consulting services, 15 person-months of national consulting services, and up to 1 person-month of international and national resource persons as needed
Procurement	Shopping and direct contracting for workshops, conferences and computer software. Procurement will be in accordance with ADB's Procurement Policy (2017, as amended from time to time)

Responsible ADB Officer	Sabyrova, Lyaziza G.
Responsible ADB Department	Central and West Asia Department
Responsible ADB Division	Regional Cooperation and Operations Coordination Div, CWRD
Executing Agencies	*Asian Development Bank* *6 ADB Avenue,* *Mandaluyong City 1550, Philippines*

Timetable

Concept Clearance	09 Aug 2018
Fact Finding	-
MRM	-
Approval	30 Oct 2018
Last Review Mission	-
Last PDS Update	30 Oct 2018

Project Page	https://www.adb.org/projects/52050-001/main
Request for Information	http://www.adb.org/forms/request-information-form?subject=52050-001
Date Generated	01 November 2018