

Technical Assistance
Performance
Evaluation Report

ADB Support for Social Protection: Responding to Shocks and Risks



Independent
Evaluation 

Raising development impact through evaluation

Performance Evaluation Report

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Technical Assistance Performance Evaluation Report on ADB Support for Social Protection: Responding to Shocks and Risks

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NOTE

- (i) In this report, "\$" refers to US dollars unless otherwise stated.

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Abbreviations

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
DAE	–	Department of Agricultural Extension
DGF	–	Directorate General of Food
DMF	–	design and monitoring framework
IMF	–	International Monetary Fund
JFPR	–	Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction
MFA	–	Multi-Fibre Agreement
MOF	–	Ministry of Finance
MoWCA	–	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
NGO	–	nongovernment organization
NPC	–	National Planning Commission
NSO	–	National Statistics Office
PMT	–	proxy means testing
PRC	–	People’s Republic of China
TA	–	technical assistance

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IED retains full responsibility for the report.

Basic Data

Asian Development Bank Support for Social Protection: Responding to Shocks and Risks (Technical Assistance project numbers 4320, 7101, 7300, and 7530)

Key Data	TA 4320	TA 7101	TA 7300	TA 7530
Cost (\$ million)				
ADB Financing	420.00	600.00	700.00	200.00
Government Counterpart	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cofinancing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Number of Person-Months (Consultants)				
Expected	30.0 (Phase I)	13.0	46.0	13.5
Actual	...	13.0	87.4	13.5
Country	Bangladesh	Bangladesh	Mongolia	Nepal
Executing Agency	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	Ministry of Food and Disaster Management	Ministry of Finance	National Planning Commission Secretariat
Milestones				
Approval	16 March 2004	22 July 2008	24 June 2009	12 May 2010
Signing of TA Agreement	11 November 2004	11 January 2009
Fielding of Consultants	12 April 2005	1 July 2009	...	24 September 2010
TA Completion				
Expected	31 May 2006	10 November 2009	30 June 2011	30 April 2011
Actual	31 December 2007	30 May 2011	31 December 2011	30 April 2011
TA Completion Report Circulation	23 July 2008	26 July 2012	18 March 2013	22 June 2012

... = not available, TA = technical assistance.

Source: Asian Development Bank Independent Evaluation Department.

Executive Summary

This evaluation of four technical assistance (TA) projects with social protection elements assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of their social protection support. The four TA projects were: (i) Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh, (ii) Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh, (iii) Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia, and (iv) Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal.

The evaluation found that the TA projects focused more on providing crisis response measures than on helping to build national social protection systems or long-term resilience. The projects helped pilot social protection schemes, strengthened government awareness of and capacity for implementing social protection programs, and initiated policy discussions. However, their limited timeframes and funding generally did not support long-term programs and reforms designed to promote resilience.

As resilience and inclusion are expected to be highlighted in Asian Development Bank's (ADB) forthcoming Strategy 2030, the evaluation recommends that ADB should integrate social protection into its loan and TA projects more effectively. ADB should ensure that its support goes beyond crisis mitigation and fosters long-term resilience to risks and shocks.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) utilizes technical assistance (TA) projects to respond to or enhance resilience to risks and shocks. This report evaluates the performance of four TA projects designed to address ongoing and anticipated shocks: (i) Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh, (ii) Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh, (iii) Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia, and (iv) Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal.

The TA project for food security in Bangladesh and the TA project for social sectors in Mongolia were formulated in response to global food and financial crises, respectively, over 2007–2009. The TA project for female garment workers in Bangladesh sought to mitigate the potential employment shocks resulting from the expiry of the Multi-Fibre Agreement in 2005. The TA project for social protection in Nepal

aimed to reform the social protection system, given the government's increased focus on using it to respond to post-conflict risks and increased inequality.

This evaluation assessed the performance of the TA projects together as they each addressed social protection issues from their own angle. The evaluation results will feed into the ongoing corporate evaluation on policy-based lending, which usually supports countercyclical programs during crises. They may also inform ADB's forthcoming Strategy 2030, which will highlight inclusion and resilience.

The evaluation was based on a desk review of project documents, key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders, and focus group discussions with TA projects' beneficiaries. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were conducted during an independent evaluation mission to Bangladesh, Mongolia, and Nepal. The mission discussed social protection issues with line ministries and agencies, development partners, nongovernment

organizations, and ADB staff at the resident missions in the three countries and at headquarters.

Performance Assessment

Overall assessment. The TA projects were generally more successful in addressing short-term or immediate impacts of crises than in pursuing long-term policy reforms for strengthening national social protection systems and building long-term resilience. The evaluation assesses the overall performance of the TA project for the social protection of female garment workers in Bangladesh and the TA project for social sectors in Mongolia as successful in addressing social protection issues. The TA project for food security in Bangladesh and the TA project for social protection in Nepal were rated less than successful in responding to social protection issues.

Relevance. The TA projects were relevant to addressing the immediate impacts of crises in the three countries, and to supporting targeting and consolidation reforms, given the largely fragmented social protection schemes in the countries. They would have been more relevant if they had shown a better understanding of the political commitment to social protection reforms and beneficiaries' awareness of such programs. Also, the limited funding and timeframes specified in the framework of stand-alone TA projects were generally not suited to pursuing long-term resilience. The evaluation rates all four TA projects relevant.

Effectiveness. Outputs relating to the piloting of social protection schemes and development of tools for poverty targeting were generally achieved. However, outputs designed to support consolidation reforms and the development of social protection frameworks were not. At the outcome level, three of the TA projects helped enhance government capacity for designing and implementing social protection programs. The TA project in Nepal was the exception as the draft national social protection framework produced under the TA project was not adopted by the government, which

was focused on the adoption of a new constitution and government restructuring. The TA project did, however, initiate policy discourse on social protection in the country. All but one of the TA projects are rated effective in achieving their intended social protection outputs and outcomes—the TA project, Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal, is rated less than effective.

Efficiency. The short lifespans and limited funding of the TA projects did not allow for the flexible implementation arrangements that are needed to build the currently underdeveloped social protection systems in the three countries. Complex government procedures resulted in deferrals of required actions by line ministries and/or departments. Nevertheless, project ownership by executing agencies and the involvement of local stakeholders promoted efficient implementation through good coordination among government ministries and the involvement of beneficiaries. The evaluation assesses the TA project for the social protection of female garment workers in Bangladesh and the TA project for social sectors in Mongolia efficient in realizing their outputs and outcomes. The TA project for food security in Bangladesh and the TA project for social protection in Nepal were less than efficient.

Sustainability. ADB and the governments in Bangladesh and Nepal did not provide adequate financing or technical support to implement social protection schemes beyond the pilot phase. Nor did they enable the policy discourse to be continued after the crises, indicating that these projects were largely designed as one-off, emergency response projects. In contrast, ADB's continued engagement is helping to develop proxy means testing (PMT) as a targeting tool for various social protection schemes in Mongolia. The TA project in Mongolia helped develop awareness of PMT among government officials and other stakeholders and to establish an intersectoral database using PMT data. Two subsequent ADB policy-based loans in Mongolia are helping to expand PMT targeting in other social

welfare programs including the “Child Money Program,” school textbooks, and judiciary services. Three of the TA projects are assessed less than likely sustainable—with the project in Mongolia assessed likely sustainable.

Other Assessments

Development impacts. The TA projects helped develop crisis-response measures, but not to build long-term resilience. The TA projects’ support for targeting reforms in Mongolia and Bangladesh could have potentially positive impacts on poverty reduction and inclusion by reaching households trapped in extreme poverty and female workers with harsh working conditions. The TA projects have also helped improve the governments’ capacity to design and implement social protection programs, and to enhance their understanding of social protection issues, including targeting, fiscal sustainability, and monitoring. The evaluation rates the impacts of the four TA projects satisfactory.

ADB and borrower performance. ADB provided timely support to offset the immediate impacts of crises and initiated policy dialogues on social protection reforms. The executing agencies provided counterpart funding and staff for the TA projects. However, both ADB and the executing agencies generally provided limited follow-up support to sustain the achievements of the TA projects. The performance of ADB and the executing agencies are rated satisfactory.

Issues and Lessons

Issues. The evaluation identified the following key issues.

- ADB’s crisis-response measures were not followed through with continued engagement in strengthening national

social protection systems and building long-term resilience.

- Targeting and consolidation remain priorities for social protection reforms in Bangladesh, Mongolia, and Nepal, given their fragmented programs with overlapping objectives and benefits, and high administration costs.
- There is a high risk that the social protection achievements of the four TA projects will not be maintained, and there were limited efforts to track and monitor their results.

Lessons. The following lessons for ADB are identified.

- The designs of the TA projects could be geared toward building social protection systems rather than mitigating the immediate effects of crises, and could include measures for monitoring social protection support.
- While TA projects are useful in pilot testing social protection schemes and initiating policy discourse, their results could be maximized by including them in a long-term strategy for building national social protection systems or for promoting resilience in a particular sector.
- Taking advantage of the achievements of TA projects in social protection requires political commitment, particularly for pursuing targeting and consolidating reforms.

Moving forward. The evaluation proposes that loans and TA projects concerning social protection must support long-term goals of building social protection systems. They should not be designed only to mitigate the direct effects of a crisis. Integrating social protection more effectively into its loan and TA projects, particularly in the context of promoting inclusion and resilience, should be considered in ADB’s forthcoming Strategy 2030.

Introduction

1. Social protection programs are important tools for responding to shocks and building long-term resilience to various risks. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) regards social protection as integral to its goal of promoting inclusive economic growth. It views social protection not only as a mechanism for protecting people during crisis, but as an investment in future growth—since adverse impacts of shocks, if not mitigated, can spill over to future generations.¹ The four technical assistance (TA) projects examined in this evaluation were all designed to provide social protection support amid ongoing or anticipated risks and shocks.

A. Evaluation Purpose and Process

1. Background

a. Role of Social Protection in Responding to and Building Resilience Against Crises

2. Shocks are adverse events that lead to negative economic and social impacts affecting entire communities or individual households. Depending on the extent of their impacts, there are two types of shocks. Covariate shocks have an effect on a large part of a population and can be triggered by economic crises, including price hikes, natural or climatic disasters, pandemics, political crises, or conflicts. Idiosyncratic shocks, on the other hand, are commonly experienced over the course of an individual's life-cycle and include illness, old age, or loss of employment or income.²

3. Asia and the Pacific is not immune from covariate shocks and risks. The region has experienced the repercussions of the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis and the 2008–2009 global financial crisis. The international food crisis in 2007–2008 triggered food price hikes, with the region's overall food price index increasing by 54% from January 2007 to June 2008.³ The region is also highly vulnerable to climate change, with 6 of the 10 most vulnerable countries to climate change in 2013 located in Asia and the Pacific.⁴

4. Reducing people's exposure to risks and strengthening their long-term resilience to shocks require the aid of well-designed and targeted social protection programs. These programs can strengthen people's capacity to manage risks before shocks occur by, for instance, promoting human capital development and diversifying assets and livelihoods. Social protection also provides immediate support during shocks. It helps ensure recovery in the aftermath of shocks through pro-poor, countercyclical public investments, and risk diversification programs.

¹ ADB. 2017. *ADB and Social Protection*. Manila. Accessed 10 December <https://www.adb.org/themes/social-development/social-protection/about>

² F. Bastagli. 2014. *Responding to a Crisis: The Design and Delivery of Social Protection*. Overseas Development Institute Working Paper. London.

³ ADB. 2013. *Food Security in Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.

⁴ These countries are Cambodia, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Viet Nam. See ADB. 2015. *Climate Change in Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.

5. Covariate and idiosyncratic shocks require different social protection interventions, which should be adapted to the coping strategies and local conditions of affected populations. Skills development and training programs, for instance, can help cushion the impact of job losses due to economic crises. Humanitarian emergencies require food distribution and health services. Public health insurance interventions and pension reforms can address idiosyncratic shocks.

6. Timeliness, adequacy, and adaptability are all important for effective social protection measures.

- (i) **Timeliness.** Social protection programs need to be implemented quickly and at a scale that covers a large share of populations affected by shocks.
- (ii) **Adequacy.** Social protection measures must fulfill their goal of maintaining consumption and access to services in times of shocks. They must have sufficient financing to allow for both rapid response and scaling up.
- (iii) **Adaptability.** Social protection interventions need to be tailored to specific risks and shocks and the coping mechanisms of affected populations (footnote 2).

b. ADB Support for Social Protection

7. Social protection plays a fundamental role in ADB's efforts to promote inclusive growth, which is one of the strategic development agendas in its Strategy 2020.⁵ Strategy 2020 sees ADB's inclusive growth agenda as based on three pillars: social protection; high, sustainable growth; and broader access to economic opportunities.

8. ADB defines social protection as the set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting functioning labor markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption and loss of income.⁶

9. ADB adopted its Social Protection Strategy in 2001, in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis. The strategy provides considerations for identifying priority social protection programs in a specific country and the strategic principles for the design of such programs.⁷ It seeks to help people break the cycle of poverty, enhance growth through investment in human capital, increase productivity, and reduce vulnerability to risk. The strategy envisions a greater focus on establishing robust national social protection systems in periods when there are no crises to help people cope better with future shocks, rather than on supporting crisis-response measures that mitigate the immediate impacts of shocks after they have occurred.⁸

10. The strategy envisages country-level assessments to identify opportunities for policy dialogues and new loan and TA projects covering social protection. Such assessments would include country poverty analysis (including vulnerability and risk assessments), labor market analysis, and social expenditure reviews (footnote 8). ADB's Social Protection Strategy endorses 33 types of social protection interventions and five subcomponents: labor market, social insurance, social assistance, micro area-based schemes, and child protection.

⁵ ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank 2008–2020*. Manila.

⁶ ADB. 2001. *Social Protection*. Manila.

⁷ ADB's Social Protection Strategy is designed so ADB can prioritize investments in social protection based on analysis of country needs, available resources, existing institutions, and political commitment to reforms. It also discusses how the design of social protection interventions can be improved by paying attention to the program's coverage and benefits, targeting, sustainability, and the integrated approach of coordinating government agencies, development partners and civil society organizations.

⁸ Independent Evaluation Department. 2012 *Asian Development Bank: Social Protection Strategy 2001*. Manila: ADB.

11. ADB adopted a Social Protection Operational Plan, 2014–2020 in 2013. The plan aims to operationalize the social protection pillar of ADB’s inclusive growth agenda. It also serves to align ADB’s Social Protection Strategy with the inclusive growth agenda of Strategy 2020.⁹

12. In contrast to the extensive scope of ADB’s Social Protection Strategy, the guidance provided by the Social Protection Operational Plan, 2014–2020 is mainly limited to (i) conducting country-level diagnostics to determine the need and demand for social protection support in developing member countries, (ii) ensuring that social protection interventions address key priorities such as adequate coverage and collateral issues and safeguards, (iii) recruiting six new social protection specialist positions, (iv) implementing training and issuing manuals and guidelines, and (v) monitoring and reporting on the strategy’s implementation (footnote 8).

13. Despite the Social Protection Strategy’s proposed shift from crisis response to strengthening national social protection policies and systems, ADB support for social protection has remained largely crisis-driven in practice. Over 1996–2011, ADB’s loan approvals for social protection peaked during crisis periods (e.g., in 1997–1998 during the Asian financial crisis and in 2007–2010 during the world food, fuel, and financial crises), and dropped after that. Approvals for ADB’s stand-alone social protection support in years when there were no crises did not increase during 1996–2011; there was no discernible increase after the adoption of the Social Protection Strategy in 2001 (footnote 8).¹⁰

14. ADB has supported social protection programs and policies during shocks and crises. For instance, in the aftermath of the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, ADB bolstered social protection measures in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Mongolia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam with loans amounting to more than \$1.1 billion. Bangladesh received ADB support amounting to \$645 million to help it to expand social safety net programs for populations affected by the financial crisis, including households reliant on remittances, laid-off factory workers, women forced into low-paying and insecure jobs, and young people joining the labor market at a time of limited job opportunities.

2. Evaluation Purpose and Uses

15. This evaluation examines ADB’s support for social protection in the context of responding to ongoing or anticipated shocks. The findings may be seen as a contribution to the ongoing corporate evaluation on the design, use, and results of policy-based lending in ADB, since ADB often provides policy-based loans to finance countercyclical programs during crises. The findings may also inform the inclusion and resilience agendas of ADB’s forthcoming Strategy 2030.

16. The evaluation assesses four TA projects: (i) Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh,¹¹ (ii) Strengthening the Government’s Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh,¹² (iii) Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia,¹³ and (iv) Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal.¹⁴ They were selected to examine how ADB uses TA projects to support social protection measures in responding to or

⁹ ADB. 2013. *Social Protection Operational Plan, 2014–2020*. Manila.

¹⁰ The 2012 IED evaluation defined stand-alone social protection support as having a clear, principal focus on one or more of the five major social protection categories: social assistance, social insurance, labor market, child protection, and micro/area-based schemes.

¹¹ ADB. 2008. *Technical Assistance Completion Report: Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments Project in Bangladesh*. Manila.

¹² ADB. 2012. *Project Completion Report: Emergency Assistance for Food Security Project in Bangladesh*. Manila.

¹³ ADB. 2013. *Project Completion Report: Social Sectors Support Program in Mongolia*. Manila.

¹⁴ ADB. 2012. *Technical Assistance Completion Report: Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal*. Manila.

preparing for shocks. They were among the few examples of such TA operations, indicating the rather exceptional nature of work done in this area, in spite of its importance given ADB's inclusive growth agenda and the 2013 operational plan (footnote 9).

3. Evaluation Methods

17. The evaluation assessed the four TA projects based on their: (i) relevance, (ii) effectiveness, (iii) efficiency, and (iv) sustainability, in accordance with the Independent Evaluation Department's evaluation guidelines for public sector operations.¹⁵ It also examined the possible development impacts of these projects and the performance of ADB and executing agencies in implementing them.

18. The evaluation evidence was gathered through (i) a desk review of project documents, including TA completion reports, project completion reports, reports and recommendations of the President, and back-to-office reports; (ii) key informant interviews with ADB project officers, staff of executing and implementing agencies, and representatives of nongovernment organizations (NGOs); and (iii) focus group discussions with TA projects' beneficiaries and other stakeholders.¹⁶

19. A mission was fielded in August 2017 to Bangladesh, Mongolia, and Nepal to discuss relevant issues related to social protection with line ministries and agencies, development partners, and NGOs. The mission also held discussions with ADB staff at the resident missions in the three countries and in ADB headquarters.

B. Technical Assistance Project Objectives

20. The four TA projects were all formulated against a backdrop of ongoing or anticipated shocks. Of the four projects, two were attached to loans, while the other two were stand-alone.¹⁷

21. The TA project for food security in Bangladesh was attached to the Emergency Assistance for Food Security Project, which was formulated to provide short-term budgetary support to meet high spending on safety net programs amid the food price hikes in 2008.¹⁸ The loan project supported the strengthening of open market sales of food grains, enhancing of food entitlements for the poor and vulnerable to enable them to survive short-term food deficits, improving the purchasing power of the poor and vulnerable, and establishing a more effective and efficient food security monitoring system. The TA project was designed to support the output on improving the food security monitoring system.

22. The TA project for social sector capacity development in Mongolia complemented the Social Sectors Support Program, which was approved to respond to the impacts of the 2008–2009 global financial crisis on Mongolia.¹⁹ The program sought to prevent a deterioration of poverty levels and per capita consumption in the midst of the financial crisis. It aimed to ensure funding of priority basic services and to increase the efficiency of social welfare spending after

¹⁵ ADB. 2016. *Guidelines for the Evaluation of Public Sector Operations*. Manila.

¹⁶ In Mongolia, almost 50 beneficiaries of the government's food stamp program from 9 *khoroos* (administrative units) in 4 districts of Ulaanbaatar city participated in the mission's focus group discussions. In Bangladesh, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were also conducted for selected beneficiaries of the food security and garment TA projects.

¹⁷ The inclusion of two TA projects attached to loans in this evaluation was done to provide a clearer picture of how ADB utilizes TA projects to support social protection. It provides a contrast between what ADB does and achieves when it uses stand-alone TA projects and when it uses TA projects attached to loans. The contrast suggests that TA projects by themselves offer limited opportunities to pursue long-term social protection programs.

¹⁸ ADB. 2012. *Project Completion Report: Emergency Assistance for Food Security in Bangladesh*. Manila.

¹⁹ ADB. 2013. *Project Completion Report: Social Sectors Support Program in Mongolia*. Manila.

the government implemented an economic stabilization program following the financial crisis. The program supported policy reforms in social welfare, health, education, and urban development. The implementation and coordination of the reforms were supported by the TA project.

23. The stand-alone TA project for female garment workers in Bangladesh sought to address the unemployment that was anticipated as a result of the expiry of quota restrictions for textiles and apparel under the Multi-Fibre Agreement. The project was formulated to help the government design and pilot-test interventions on social protection for female garment workers, and to provide re-employment and employment options for workers facing possible retrenchment.

24. The TA project in Nepal was a stand-alone intervention formulated amid the government's increased focus on social protection programs to address post-conflict uncertainties and the growing disparities between the rich and poor. Some of these programs provide immediate relief to conflict-affected people, while others focus on reducing poverty. Various government agencies are involved in carrying them out.

25. The TA projects supported measures for emergency response and building long-term resilience through social protection policy and reforms. Table 1 identifies the intended social protection response to various shocks and risks of the four TA projects.

Table 1: Intended Impacts, Outcomes, and Outputs of the Technical Assistance Projects

Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh	Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh	Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia	Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal
<p>Impact</p> <p>Reduced poverty of garment workers in a sustainable manner</p>	<p>Impact</p> <p>Improved capacity of the government for planning and undertaking mid- and long-term interventions to improve food security, including strengthening monitoring for increasing the efficiency of ongoing safety net programs</p>	<p>Impact</p> <p>Built firm foundations for change through strategic capacity development and a consensus-building program on the role of social assistance and the classification of recipients</p>	<p>Impact</p> <p>Reduced income inequality in Nepal</p>
<p>Outcome</p> <p>Reduced risks and improved job opportunities for garment workers</p>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Improved monitoring system and better planning capability of the ministries of agriculture, and food and disaster management</p>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Ensured reform targets of the Social Sectors Support Program were met for the prioritization of the poor, and the provision of targeted social assistance</p>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Strengthened capacity of the government to plan and manage social protection schemes</p>

Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh	Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh	Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia	Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal
<p>Outputs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce a strategic report on possible approaches after the expiry of the Multi-Fibre Agreement covering human-capacity development, employment, and social protection measures for garment workers 2. Pilot women-friendly labor market programs to facilitate reemployment and social protection of retrenched ready-made garment workers 3. Pilot different types of social assistance that could be scaled up such as shelter support and micro and group insurance or saving, discretionary fund 4. Identify lessons learned and potential for scale up of programs in reemployment and social protection of female garment workers 5. Share lessons learned with the key stakeholders in a national workshop 	<p>Outputs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide training on efficient food-stock management, use of information technology in increasing efficiency, and web-based monitoring systems and operations 2. Provide training on advance production planning, technology, and digital communication in relation to food security 3. Pilot operation of computerization of food-stock management 	<p>Outputs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide sector policy reform coordination and implementation support 2. Support policy reforms on targeting assistance and improving social sector efficiency 3. Strengthen statistical analysis and data collection 4. Build capacity for the management of an intersectoral national database of beneficiaries of social assistance and other government subsidies 5. Develop consensus on targeting social assistance with national and local government officials and the public 6. Develop environment and social safeguard capacity for urban development stakeholders in Ulaanbaatar 	<p>Outputs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a consolidated social protection framework 2. Enhance knowledge and skills of the participating agencies in social protection 3. Define organizational roles to implement the social protection framework 4. Identify financial options for social protection

Source: Asian Development Bank.

C. Technical Assistance Completion Reports

26. The four TA projects were self-rated successful by the operations departments involved. They were reported to have made important contributions to piloting social protection interventions and to supporting policy discourse on social protection. Complex government procedures and a lack of evidence on the impacts of social protection measures were among the

challenges faced by the selected TA projects. Below are summaries of the findings of the TA completion reports for each project.

27. **Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh.** The TA project made an important contribution to piloting social protection measures in a changing industry environment with little social protection for garment workers. It helped about 1,500 women workers (not only those who had been retrenched) to access housing services, skills training, and health care; and to redeploy about 500 out of about 1,000 retrenched women workers back into the sector. The TA project pilot tested labor market and social protection programs that provided a model that could be replicated in other sectors or other countries undergoing industry restructuring. The involvement of NGOs and target groups was also found to be instrumental in the successful delivery of the TA project's outputs (footnote 11).

28. **Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh.** The TA project successfully provided information technology equipment and staff development training to the ministries of food and disaster management, and agriculture for improving food security, including increasing the efficiency of ongoing safety net programs. It piloted a web-based monitoring system for food-stock management and delivery in selected *upazilas* (administrative units). The system has the potential to be replicated nationwide. While the TA project was generally effective in delivering its intended outputs and outcomes, procedural complexity at the ministries and departments contributed to delays (footnote 12).

29. **Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia.** The TA project supported policy dialogue and work to raise awareness and build consensus on targeted social assistance. It contributed to the passage of the amended Social Welfare Law in January 2012. The project also promoted the government's adoption of proxy means testing (PMT) for the targeting of social welfare programs. However, the planned capacity building for the staff of the National Statistics Office (NSO) on targeting methodologies did not push through because the office was not carrying out social transfer programs (footnote 13).

30. **Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal.** The TA project led the way for a vibrant policy discourse on social protection. It produced a draft social protection framework, which includes a proposed institutional structure to implement the government's social protection policy. The draft framework would have benefited from evidence of the coverage and impact of Nepal's cash transfers and public works programs. Decisions made in drafting the draft framework, such as the proposal to lower the age of eligibility for receiving the old age allowance from 70 to 65 years, were not based on such evidence (footnote 14).

CHAPTER 2

Design and Implementation

31. This chapter (i) provides information on the rationale for the four TA projects; (ii) discusses the implementation arrangements of the TA projects in terms of time, costs, financing, and executing agencies; and (iii) examines design changes, and monitoring and reporting arrangements of the TA projects.

A. Rationale

32. The four TA projects largely aimed to address covariate shocks, which impacted a large portion of the populations in the three countries. They supported social protection schemes that sought to respond to existing or anticipated shocks due to a financial crisis, food price hikes and trade-related risks, and to build social protection frameworks in a post-conflict setting.

33. At the time of project formulation, female garment workers in Bangladesh risked a loss of income due to changes in trade environments, while food price hikes in 2007–2008 and the global financial crisis in 2008–2009 threatened to increase poverty in Bangladesh and Mongolia. The Nepal government was launching and expanding social protection schemes to address post-conflict risks and increased inequality during the time of TA preparation.

34. **Trade-related economic shocks and Bangladesh's female garment workers.** In Bangladesh, female garment workers were particularly vulnerable to losing their jobs and had to work in harsh working conditions. The expiration of the Multi-Fiber Agreement (MFA)—the prevailing global trade arrangement in textiles and garments from 1974 to 2004—on 1 January 2005 was expected to make a negative dent in Bangladesh's garment production as a result of greater competition with other countries, particularly the PRC. Since approximately 80% of garment workers in Bangladesh are women, the withdrawal of the MFA quota would hit them hardest.²⁰

35. The TA project promoting social protection of female garment workers sought to develop and test various approaches for the social protection of female workers who had been retrenched or were threatened by retrenchment because of the phase-out of quotas under the MFA. At the time, other development agencies, including the World Bank, International Labour Organization, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, the UK Department for International Development, and the United Nations Development Program, also supported the government's initiatives, including productivity improvement, strengthening of labor and social standards in factories, and putting in place a social safety net program for retrenched workers in the garment sector.

36. **Effects of the food crisis in Bangladesh.** The food crisis of 2007–2008 resulted from droughts, higher costs of farm inputs, increased demand for a more varied diet of Asia's middle class, and declining world food stockpiles and was a covariate shock that hit Asia and the Pacific

²⁰ M.H. Rahman, and S.A. Siddiqui. 2015. *Female RMG worker: Economic Contribution in Bangladesh*. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications. Volume 5. Issue 9.

hard. An additional 112 million people could have escaped poverty in the region had there been no increase in food prices during the second half of the 2000s.²¹

37. Bangladesh was one of the countries hit by the 2007–2008 global food price hike. At the height of the food crisis in 2008, the price of a kilogram of coarse rice in Bangladesh, the staple food of the poor, more than doubled to about \$0.60 over a 12-month period, yet wages of workers remained unchanged.²² The increased prices of food and other commodities in 2008 pushed an estimated 4 million Bangladeshis back into poverty, increasing Bangladesh's poverty rate by around 3-percentage points. They also forced poor households to cut their food intake, and pull their children out of school and have them work to help out their families during the crisis.²³

38. At the time of the food crisis, the ADB, Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United States Agency for International Development, and the World Food Program conducted a needs assessment. The assessment identified the need for ADB's emergency assistance to support the government's food safety net programs, provided through the Emergency Assistance for Food Security Project and its accompanying TA project for Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security. The World Bank also provided \$130 million and JBIC \$100 million in parallel financing to the ADB-funded loan and TA project.

39. Given the significant impact of the food crisis, it was imperative to ensure proper targeting and more efficient administration of social protection programs to maintain the food security of poor and vulnerable households during crises and also periods when there are no crises. The TA project for food security in Bangladesh aimed to help improve government capacity in managing safety net programs through efficient food stock management systems and in planning and coordinating food production.

40. **Global financial crisis and its impacts on Mongolia.** The worldwide financial crisis in 2008–2009 put a strain on macroeconomic stability in Mongolia and endangered the gains made in reducing poverty. The precipitous decline in copper prices in the midst of the global financial crisis had a significant impact in Mongolia, which was heavily dependent on mineral revenues. The price of copper, Mongolia's primary export, dropped by 70% during the period, resulting in fears of economic contraction and fiscal deficits that could reduce funding for Mongolia's social protection programs.²⁴

41. The recent economic crisis caused by the sharp drop in commodity prices since 2011 could again put the Mongolia government's social spending at risk. General government debt reached nearly 90% of gross domestic product (GDP) by the end 2016, leading the government to agree to a \$5.5 billion bailout package in May 2017 with ADB, IMF, World Bank, the PRC, Japan, and the Republic of Korea.²⁵

²¹ ADB. 2012. *Food Security and Hunger in Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.
<https://www.adb.org/features/fast-facts-seven-billion-and-growing>

²² BBC News. 2008. *Bangladesh faces food crisis*. 10 April. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7341111.stm>

²³ World Bank. 2008. *World Bank provides \$130 million to help Bangladesh respond to food crisis*.
<https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/world-bank-provides-us130-million-help-bangladesh-respond-food-crisis> (29 October)

²⁴ IMF. 2011. *Mongolia: Ex Post Evaluation of Exceptional Access Under the 2009 Stand-By Arrangement*. Washington, D.C. (<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2011/cr1177.pdf>)

²⁵ IMF. 2017. *IMF Executive Board Approves Financial Arrangement for Mongolia*. Washington, D.C.
<https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2017/05/24/17193-imf-executive-board-approves-financial-arrangement-for-mongolia>

42. Mongolia administers 71 social welfare projects, which fall into 7 categories: social welfare pensions, social welfare allowance, community-based services, social welfare allowance for the elderly with state merit, allowance for the elderly, allowance for the disabled, and allowance for mothers and children.²⁶ It initiated a new social security system in 1995 consisting of social welfare services and assistance (both targeted and universal), employment promotion programs, and social insurance. The compulsory social insurance system provides social health insurance; pension insurance; allowance insurance; work injury and occupational disease; and unemployment insurance to herders, the self-employed, and informal workers. Despite this extensive set of social protection programs, more than 75% of herders, self-employed and informal economy workers still had insufficient income because of difficulties in the administration and delivery of social security benefits and employment programs across sparsely populated locations.²⁷

43. The TA project on capacity development for Mongolia's social sectors was formulated to ensure the necessary fiscal adjustment and adequate social spending amid the global financial crisis. The TA project was implemented in close coordination with the IMF, World Bank, and Japan International Cooperation Agency, which provided technical support and conducted policy dialogue with the government during the crisis. Its support for policy reforms in targeting social assistance and improving social sector efficiency was expected to address not only the immediate impacts of the global crisis, but also the inefficiencies of the country's existing social protection programs.

44. **Conflict risks and social protection in Nepal.** Nepal has a universal pension system, approved in 1995, which catered to citizens 70 years old and above, widows 60 years old and above, and people with disabilities. The Health Service Act, 1997 identified various social security and health schemes, while the Labor Act, 1992 provided social security for formal sector workers. Similarly, the Local Self-Governance Act, 1999 upheld the protection and development of orphan children, helpless women, the elderly, and people with disabilities. However, the implementation of these laws and systems was affected by Nepal's civil war.

45. After the end of the armed conflict between the government and insurgents in 2006, the government committed itself to implementing social protection schemes as a means of addressing post-conflict uncertainties and structural poverty. This pledge was translated into a wide array of often fragmented social protection schemes, involving cash, in-kind and food transfers, insurance, subsidies, and public works programs.

46. The social protection schemes that have been introduced tended to have overlapping objectives, coverage and target groups. They were implemented by a range of government agencies with minimal coordination with each other, including the Ministry of Labour; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Livestock Development; Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare; and local governments. There was no social protection framework to clarify their roles.

47. Given these challenges, the ADB-funded TA project in Nepal sought to establish a consolidated national social protection framework and strengthen the government's capacity to plan and manage social protection schemes.

²⁶ ADB. 2016. *Social Welfare Support Program in Mongolia*. ADB Briefs No. 59. Manila.

²⁷ United Nations, International Labour Organization, and the Government of Mongolia. 2015. *Social Protection Assessment Based National Dialogue: Definition and Cost of a Social Protection Floor in Mongolia*. Ulaanbaatar. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_369999.pdf

B. Time, Cost, Financing, and Executing Arrangements

48. **Time.** The four TA projects were all supposed to take 1–2 years to implement. Three of them extended their original completion dates (Table 2). Their limited lifespans were often not sufficient to enable them to pursue social protection policies and programs, which are a long-term commitment.

Table 2: Expected and Actual Duration of Technical Assistance Projects

Technical Assistance Project	Approval Date	Effectivity Date	Original Completion Date	Revised Completion Date
Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh	16 March 2004	11 November 2004	31 May 2006	31 December 2007
Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh	22 July 2008	11 January 2009	10 November 2009	30 May 2011
Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia	24 June 2009	16 July 2009	30 June 2011	31 December 2011
Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal	12 May 2010	12 May 2010	30 April 2011	30 April 2011

Source: Asian Development Bank.

49. The TA project for female garment workers in Bangladesh was extended by 19 months following delays in signing the TA letter and mobilizing consultants. Despite the extension, the time allocated was not sufficient to enable the project to be efficiently implemented. Of the 30 months allocated for implementation, about 18 months was spent for conducting the diagnostic study and designing the pilot social protection schemes, leaving only 7-8 months for actual implementation of the pilot social protection programs, and 3-4 months for documenting and reporting the results.

50. From an initial duration of 10 months, the TA project for food security in Bangladesh was extended by 19 months to enable piloting of the web-based system for food storage and distribution to be completed. Start-up delays, complex procedures that hampered the approval of required actions from government agencies, and a lack of awareness among government staff of the TA project contributed to the extension of the project's timeframe.

51. The TA project for social sectors in Mongolia was extended by 6 months to enable follow-up activities to be conducted. These included policy dialogue and improving government awareness of and capacity for PMT targeting. The extension enabled ADB's continued advocacy work by supporting a policy seminar convened by a standing committee on social policy of the parliament, as well as PMT-related study tours by government officials to Georgia and the Philippines.

52. The TA project for social protection in Nepal was completed in 1 year as planned and was not extended. However, this was achieved at the expense of attaining its intended outputs and outcome. Delays in receiving the government’s feedback on the draft social protection framework reduced the time allocated for the consultants’ work on achieving the intended outputs. As a result, only one of the four intended outputs of the TA project was achieved with certainty. Chapter 3 discusses this issue in detail.

53. **Cost and financing.** Table 3 provides details on the approved and disbursed amounts and sources of financing for the four TA projects. The projects were used to finance consulting services that supported the provision of training and other capacity-building activities, formulation of reports and studies, and dissemination of the findings and lessons learned in the implementation of the TA projects. A portion of the TA funds was not utilized because of delays in the consultant recruitment process and lower costs incurred for consultant services than estimated at appraisal.

54. The non-utilization of TA funds indicates there were fewer consultancy inputs than planned. In some cases, this was because of a revision to the project scope. For instance, the TA project in Mongolia required lower consultancy inputs than at appraisal following the cancellation of the component on NSO capacity building. In other cases, lower consultancy inputs were due to efficiency issues. For instance, consultants hired for the TA project in Nepal had limited remaining time to work on the output for the costing of the proposed national social protection framework because of delays in receiving the government’s feedback on the draft framework. As a result, the component was not completed.

Table 3: Costs and Source of Technical Assistance Funds

Technical Assistance Project	Approved Amount (% disbursed)	Source of Technical Assistance Funds
Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh	\$420,000 (76.5%)	Poverty Reduction Cooperation Fund
Strengthening the Government’s Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh	\$600,000 (70.1%)	Technical Assistance Special Fund
Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia	\$700,000 (86.5%)	Technical Assistance Special Fund
Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal	\$200,000 (70.6%)	Technical Assistance Special Fund

Source: Asian Development Bank.

55. **Executing arrangements.** The implementation arrangements of the four TA projects involved several government agencies, since the TA projects supported policy reforms, institutional capacity building, and piloting of social protection schemes.

56. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) in Bangladesh was the executing agency for the TA targeting female garment workers. The ministry chaired a TA steering committee, which comprised the ministries of commerce, labor and employment, social welfare, textiles, and finance; and provided guidance on TA implementation. The Bangladesh Apparels Workers Federation, a trade union, and Karmojibi Nari, an NGO, conducted a survey, identified the target female beneficiaries, and implemented the piloted social protection programs of the TA project.

57. The food security TA project was implemented by the Directorate General of Food (DGF) in the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, and the Department of Agricultural Extension

(DAE) in the Ministry of Agriculture. DGF was responsible for activities aimed at improving the institutional capacity for food-stock management, and for monitoring and distribution programs. DAE oversaw the improvement of institutional capacity for advance planning on mid- and long-term interventions for crop production.

58. The Ministry of Finance (MOF) was the executing agency for the TA supporting social protection reforms in Mongolia. The ministry established a program support unit that liaised with the implementing agencies: ministries of health; social welfare and labor; and roads, transportation, construction, and urban development; and the municipality of Ulaanbaatar. Since the TA project sought to facilitate program reforms, its implementation was coordinated with the program implementation.

59. For the TA supporting a national social protection framework in Nepal, the National Planning Commission (NPC) was the designated executing agency. The commission chaired a steering committee on social protection, with representatives from the ministries of finance; local development; education; health and population; women, children and social welfare; agriculture and cooperatives; and labor and transport management. The committee was tasked with reviewing the existing social protection programs and developing a consolidated national social protection framework.

C. Consultants and Scheduling

60. The consultant selection process was done in accordance with ADB's Guidelines on the Use of Consultants.²⁸ The consultancy services mobilized for each TA project are discussed below.

61. **Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh.** The TA required a total of 30 person-months of consulting services in 2 phases. Consultants for phase 1 were responsible for helping to develop a strategy and to propose measures to redeploy and protect garment workers. Phase 2 allocated funds for consultants, local NGOs, and trainers to pilot the measures identified in phase 1. All consultants were recruited through a consulting firm. The mobilization of consultants was delayed by 6 months due to visa problems. The performance of the consultants was deemed satisfactory by the executing agency at the time of the mission. The reach of local NGOs and training partners proved particularly useful in identifying and engaging target female beneficiaries in garment factories. However, the executing agency noted that the consulting firm that managed the TA project did not have a strong presence in Bangladesh. Moreover, language barriers between field staff of local NGOs, the consulting firm, and ADB staff hindered the coordination among these stakeholders.

62. **Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh.** The TA engaged (i) an international management specialist, who analyzed food procurement, stock management, and distribution systems; (ii) an international agriculture specialist, who identified policy interventions for advance crop production planning; (iii) a national crop production specialist, who analyzed measures for improving crop production; and (iv) an information technology specialist, who oversaw the piloting of a web-based food-stock management system. The performance of all consultants except the national crop production specialist was deemed satisfactory. The contract of the national crop production specialist was cancelled because of unsatisfactory performance. The executing agencies noted that the recruited consultants generally had extensive experience in working with the government.

²⁸ ADB. 2007. *Guidelines on the Use of Consultants*. Manila.

63. **Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia.** The TA utilized 87.4 person-months in consulting services, nearly twice the 46.0 person-months estimated at appraisal. This significant increase was needed to provide additional support to the ADB-funded Food and Nutrition Social Welfare Program and Project²⁹ for PMT data gathering and making such data available for supporting targeted social assistance. The development of PMT was started under the Food and Nutrition Social Welfare Program and Project, which was implemented in response to the 2008 food crisis. In contrast, only 12.7 person-months of the planned 19.0 person-months of international consultant inputs were utilized because (i) the capacity building activities of the NSO were not implemented since the office was not carrying out social transfer programs; and (ii) inputs to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science were reduced when the ministry decided to undertake further pilot-testing of the PMT-based targeting of the secondary school textbook subsidies instead of adopting the system. The executing agency noted that its participation in drafting the terms of reference for consultants was needed to ensure close coordination between the two of them.

64. **Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal.** The TA fully utilized the envisaged 0.5 person-months of the international consultant and 7 person-months of the team leader. However, only 2.3 person-months of the planned 6 person-months of the institutional specialist were utilized because of delays in the recruitment process. This was because of the delay in receiving feedback from NPC on the preliminary draft social protection framework produced by the National Steering Committee on Social Protection. The performance of the consultants was considered satisfactory by the executing agency.

D. Design Changes

65. There were no major changes in the design and scope of the TA projects examined.

66. The two TA projects in Bangladesh extended the project durations to achieve their intended outputs and outcomes, but with minimal or no changes in scope.

67. In contrast, ADB neither revised the scope of the TA project in Nepal nor increased its duration despite implementation delays that diminished the time allotted for the completion of output on the costing of social protection programs. No changes in scope were made in spite of the need for continuous policy dialogue since the government did not endorse the draft social protection framework. ADB instead decided to continue working on the framework under a subsequent project, the Grant Assistance to Nepal for Reducing Child Malnutrition through Social Protection that was approved in 2011 and financed through the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR).³⁰ Both ADB and the government acknowledged during the evaluation mission that 1 year was too short to pursue policy reforms in social protection.

68. ADB undertook a minor change in the scope of the TA project in Mongolia. The output on strengthening the capacity of staff of the NSO was dropped. This component was not pursued because NSO was not implementing social transfer programs.

E. Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

69. The TA projects paid little attention to monitoring and reporting on the social protection components they supported. Efforts to monitor the beneficiaries of the social protection

²⁹ ADB. 2008. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Asian Development Fund Grants to Mongolia for the Food and Nutrition Social Welfare Program and Project*. Manila.

³⁰ ADB. 2011. *Reducing Child Malnutrition through Social Protection*. ADB Briefing Note. Manila.

programs supported by the TA projects, particularly after project completion, were largely absent.

70. **Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh.** The TA project's design and monitoring framework (DMF) identified project reports and consultant's reports as data sources for monitoring and reporting on project performance. The TA completion report for this project largely relied on information provided by consultants' reports. The evaluation supplemented the information in the completion report with data from in-depth interviews with the executing agency and other relevant government agencies, the NGO, and trade union that pilot-tested social protection schemes for female garment workers, and selected beneficiaries. The NGO and trade union acknowledged that monitoring and follow-up activities were not conducted to determine whether the female garment workers who received training under the project were employed in other jobs. They also noted that data on the beneficiaries for the piloted housing assistance were not recorded after project completion.

71. **Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh.** The TA project did not have its own DMF as it was attached to a loan project, the Emergency Assistance for Food Security Project. The DMF of the loan project identified only one performance indicator relating to the TA project: "food security monitoring produces reliable reports," according to the project completion report. No data source or monitoring mechanism was identified for this indicator in the DMF. The completion report for this TA project only provided the number of government officials who received training under the TA project, but did not discuss in detail the results relating to the piloted web-based food management and distribution system. The evaluation visited the *upazilas* where the system was piloted, but found it difficult to gather data on the results of the web-based system since its operations were discontinued after project completion.

72. **Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia.** The reporting and review of the TA project was combined with that of the Social Sectors Support Program. Since the TA project provided implementation assistance to the program, it was deemed to have contributed to the indicators cited in the program's DMF. Government reports were the main data sources used to monitor and report on the indicators in the program's DMF. The evaluation validated the results cited in the program completion report through key informant interviews with ADB staff, government agencies and development partners, and in focus group discussions with beneficiaries of the food stamp program, for which PMT-based targeting was supported through the TA project.

73. **Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal.** The TA project did not have a DMF, but it identified its outputs and outcome. The monitoring and reporting of the outputs and outcome were largely based on the formulation of the proposed national social protection framework and the government's endorsement of this framework. Because the framework was not adopted by the government, the evaluation focused on understanding the reasons behind this lack of an endorsement through in-depth interviews with government agencies, development partners, and ADB staff.

Performance Assessment

74. This chapter assesses the four TA projects' relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability in supporting social protection. The individual performances of the four TA projects against the four evaluation criteria are discussed in Appendix 1.

A. Relevance

1. Factors that Enhanced Relevance

75. The following factors strengthened the relevance of the TA projects to the identified risks and needs at project and country levels. They cover responses to ongoing or anticipated crises, as well as to the need for social protection reforms.

76. **Developing crisis-response measures.** The TA projects were generally relevant to developing crisis-response measures to offset the direct impacts of shocks (Table 4).

Table 4: Social Protection Risk and Support Addressed by the Technical Assistance Projects

Technical Assistance Project	Shock Addressed	Key Social Protection-Related Response
Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh	Unemployment risks—the phase-out of the Multi-Fiber Agreement quota restrictions in Bangladesh resulted in the shutting down of some garment factories, which mainly employ women	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Published a strategic report on approaches to human development, employment, and social protection measures for female garment workers 2. Piloted social protection schemes for female garment workers, including livelihood counselling, housing assistance, redeployment assistance, and skills training
Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh	Food Crisis—Bangladesh suffered from food price hikes in 2008, which pushed an additional 2.5 million households, 12 million people, into poverty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Piloted a web-based system for food stock management and a distribution system to help promote food security
Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia	Global Financial Crisis—the 2008–2009 global financial crisis put at risk Mongolia's social spending	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developed consensus on the use of proxy means testing in the targeting of social protection programs 2. Supported consolidation of social protection programs

Technical Assistance Project	Shock Addressed	Key Social Protection-Related Response
Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal	Fragile and conflict situations—Nepal was emerging from a decade-long armed conflict, and socioeconomic and political inequalities were the root cause of the conflict	Developed a draft consolidated social protection framework

Source: Independent Evaluation Department.

77. The TA project for the social protection of female garment workers in Bangladesh responded to the risks of income losses after the MFA phase-out and to the need to improve working environments and conditions of female garment workers.

78. For the first phase of the TA project, ADB undertook a detailed diagnosis and review of the garment sector to develop a sound foundation for a post-MFA strategy on human capacity development and employment and social protection measures among female workers. The review included projections on retrenchment and the implications for the economy, an assessment of the capacity of various institutions to respond to potential impacts in a post-MFA scenario, and an analysis of the risks faced by female garment workers and their desired social assistance measures. The review also brought attention to issues relating to the working environments, access to housing services, and health conditions of female garment workers. Although the anticipated retrenchments did not occur, the TA project remained relevant because it highlighted other risks faced by the garment workers.

79. Government officials and NGO representatives considered the TA project for female garment workers in Bangladesh to be a pioneering project. Before the project, government and NGO officials noted that there had never been an intervention focusing on the plight of female garment workers in Bangladesh. The ADB-funded TA project was considered by various stakeholders to have paved the way for further legal and social actions to improve social protection services and products catering to female garment workers.

80. The TA on food security in Bangladesh was suitable for addressing the vulnerabilities of poor households to rising food prices. Bangladesh's susceptibility to natural disasters and climate risks disrupted agriculture production and was leading to food insecurity.

81. While it is not always possible to avoid crop losses due to natural disasters, adequate food reserves should be properly maintained, allowing the government to stabilize volatile food prices by providing the poor with food staples. The TA project was relevant in this respect as it addressed one of the root causes of food insecurity: the limited capacity of government agencies to manage and distribute food stocks. The project aimed to develop the government's ability to meet the demand for cereal, which tends to peak when natural disasters strike.

82. In Mongolia, the TA project for social sector reform was appropriate for ensuring efficient and reliable social spending in the midst of the 2008–2009 financial crisis. The TA remains relevant as Mongolia—whose economy is reliant on copper mining—continues to reel from the significant drop in commodity prices since 2011. The project was intended to ensure a pro-poor policy and the funding of key social welfare services for the poor.

83. The project provided crucial support as the government sought to mitigate the impacts of the financial crisis on the elderly, people with disabilities, orphans, people with low education and skills, and herders. As Chapter 2 notes, over three-quarters of herders, self-employed and informal economy workers still have insufficient incomes, despite existing social protection schemes.

84. The TA project on Nepal's social protection framework was also relevant given the increased national attention to the need to mitigate uncertainties and structural poverty following the end of the conflict in 2006. The Nepal government has expanded social protection programs and increased benefits since 2006.

85. **Targeting and consolidation reforms.** These social protection reforms were pursued in the four TA projects. Reforms in these two areas were necessary in all three countries to avoid duplication of benefits, reduce administration costs, ensure efficient public spending in the face of budget constraints, and promote equality and inclusion.

86. Targeting and consolidation reforms were fundamental in Mongolia and Nepal because of the two countries' extensive social protection programs. The wide array of social protection schemes in these two countries led to overlapping objectives and benefits, and to challenges in coordinating the lead government agency for social protection and other government agencies.

87. Mongolia currently implements 71 social protection schemes and most are "categorically targeted."³¹ The TA project supported targeting and consolidation reforms. Its support for poverty targeting is crucial given the fixed budget for these programs. The project supported the development of government awareness on PMT and the establishment of an intersectoral database using PMT data. It was also used to pilot the PMT—developed under the earlier ADB-funded Food and Nutrition Social Welfare Program and Project—in the targeting of textbook subsidies for secondary students.

88. The Nepal government also implements numerous social protection schemes, including cash transfers, a universal pension system, and public works programs. There is no official lead government ministry implementing social protection schemes. The role of local governments in delivering the schemes has yet to be clearly defined amid the country's shift to a federal form of government. The TA project's support for a national social protection framework was therefore needed to provide clarity to the objectives, coverage and institutional arrangements of Nepal's various social protection programs.

89. The TA project for the social protection of female garment workers in Bangladesh targeted female workers in the garment sector, who have remained largely unprotected from risks and shocks because the government's social protection schemes generally targeted vulnerable and poor populations in rural communities. The project piloted livelihood counseling, self-employment, retraining, reskilling, and redeployment schemes for female garment workers in Mirpur and Malibagh, poor communities in Dhaka. Most garment factories were situated in these two locations, with about 600 garment factories located in Mirpur and 1,000 factories in Malibagh at the time of the TA project. Garment workers rented small rooms near these factories to save time and money on transportation.

90. After the MFA expired, many garment factories relocated from Dhaka to the outskirts of the city. Garment workers outside the city were more vulnerable than their urban counterparts since the media and other organizations advancing workers' rights were usually not present in the outskirts. Although it is understandable that the TA project did not anticipate the relocation of garment factories outside Dhaka, female garment workers in Tejgaon, Gazipur, Ashulia, and Uttara could have been targeted.

91. The TA project on food security did not directly support the identification of households eligible for receiving food aid, but it piloted a web-based system for food stock management

³¹ Categorical targeting entails selecting individuals belonging to a certain category or group based on observable characteristics. This type of targeting does not require the collection of a large amount of data.

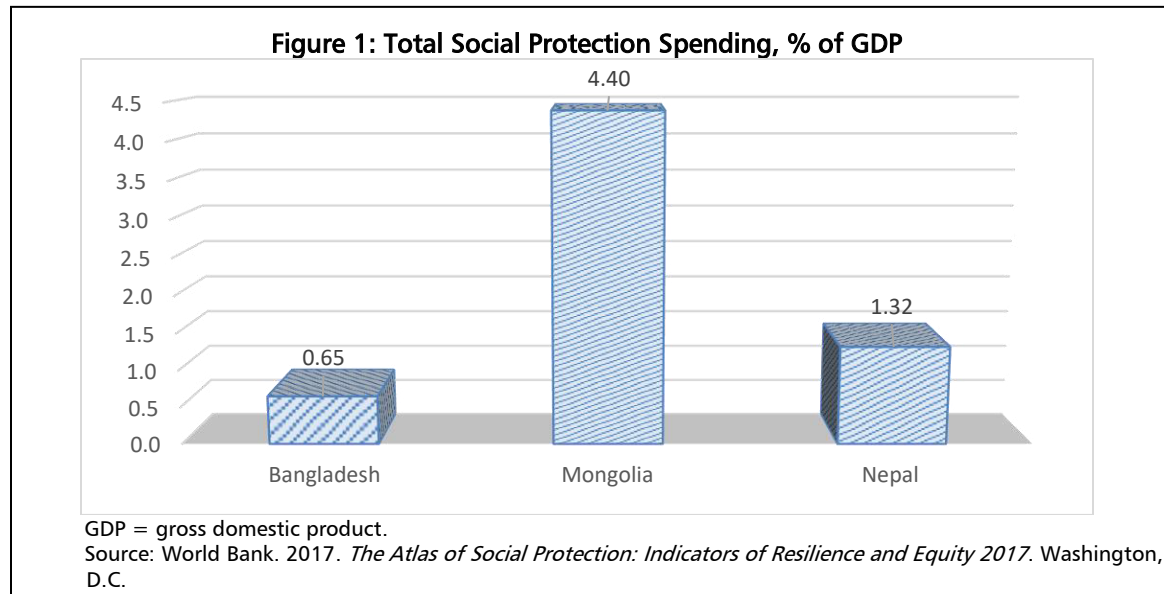
and distribution. Such a system promoted the efficient and timely delivery of food grains to households reeling from the impacts of food price hikes.

92. The web-based food stock management and distribution system was piloted in Chittagong and Tangail. The Directorate of Food in Chittagong handles the stock management and movement of cereal all over the country, while the office in Tangail manages food stocks at the district level. The web-based system led to the smooth loading and unloading process of food from millers to the government stock, and hence to ensure that food aid reaches food-insecure households efficiently.

2. Factors that Reduced Relevance

93. The relevance of the TA projects would have been higher if a deeper analysis of the socioeconomic and political factors influencing social protection had been undertaken, and if the limitations of the framework of TA projects in pursuing long-term reforms had been better understood.

94. **Better understanding of socioeconomic and political landscapes.** Although the TA projects analyzed the risks faced by the target populations amid crisis situations, a more in-depth analysis of the socioeconomic and political landscapes that risks and shocks are embedded in would have been useful to ensure the transition from shock response to long-term resilience. Low government spending on social protection in Bangladesh and Nepal indicates that this sector is not a priority (Figure 1). In Mongolia, the commitment to social protection was higher.



95. In Nepal, political momentum was largely geared toward the adoption of the new constitution and government restructuring; as a result, less emphasis was placed on policy and legislative reforms. This hindered the government's adoption of the national social protection framework. While the TA project helped drive the policy discussion, social protection is not a priority for the government and the lead government agency for social protection has yet to be specified. The shift to a federal form of government further complicates the delineation of responsibilities among government agencies as local governments are expected to assume an important role in the implementation of social protection schemes.

96. Lack of information was an important obstacle to the take-up of social protection programs. Limited public awareness of the schemes supported by the TA projects in Mongolia and Bangladesh (for the female garment workers) was not taken into consideration in the design of these projects. The TA for female garment workers in Bangladesh did not include support for raising the workers' awareness of the project's activities and outcomes. As a result, the NGO and trade union recruited to implement the project's pilot social protection schemes could not reach many of the targeted women workers.

97. In Mongolia, the public did not seem to be fully aware of the eligibility and graduation criteria for the government's food stamp program supported by the TA project. The focus group discussions among beneficiaries of the food stamp program revealed that some of them thought that beneficiaries could choose to drop out of the program and instead enroll other relatives to take their spots. Some reported being criticized by neighbors for being included in the food stamp program because they have jobs. In fact, eligibility for and graduation from the food stamp program is based on the results of Mongolia's household socioeconomic survey.

98. The TA on food security in Bangladesh could have included millers in the web-based food management and distribution system it developed. Millers play a crucial role in the government's food storage and monitoring system by supplying food grains to government warehouses. They should have been included in the digitization process supported by the TA project.

99. **Constraints in the design and financing frameworks of stand-alone TA projects.** Social protection reforms require long-term engagement and financing support. Getting governments on board and placing social protection high on their development agendas take time, particularly as attention to and interest in social protection tends to die down once crises are over. Identifying what constitutes social protection and delineating responsibilities of various government agencies also require long-term work. Hence, the limited funding and short lifespan of stand-alone TA projects are often insufficient to ensure that these projects go beyond crisis-response measures to help build national social protection systems for long-term resilience to shocks.

100. In particular, the framework provided by TA projects is not sufficient to achieve broad development impacts such as reduced poverty or inequality (as stated in the impact statements of the TA projects targeting female garment workers in Bangladesh and social protection in Nepal). The TA projects' limited relevance to fostering long-term resilience to shocks is not aligned with the ADB Social Protection Strategy's aim of building more effective national social protection systems and policies.

101. Because of the projects' limited funding and time frames, the schemes supported by the two TA projects in Bangladesh were not implemented beyond the pilot stage. The TA project on food security in Bangladesh was extended by 19 months from the planned duration of 10 months to achieve its intended outcomes. However, only 7-8 months of the 30 months allocated to the TA project for female garment workers was used to implement the pilot social protection schemes.

102. These TA projects in Bangladesh were formulated against a backdrop of ongoing risks and crises and their limited timeframes and extensions may indicate that they were designed in haste to respond to emergency situations. This underscores the trade-off between providing timely social protection support and ensuring TA projects have appropriate designs to support social protection reforms.

103. In Nepal, the 1 year allocated to the TA project for developing a social protection framework proved insufficient. While a draft social protection framework was produced within this period, it needed more than a year to ensure the government's adoption of such framework.

104. In contrast, the TA project for social assistance in Mongolia's was attached to a loan program. This enabled ADB to support both short- and long-term measures for addressing the impacts of the food and financial crises. The budgetary support provided by the loan projects to cushion the immediate impacts of the crises was complemented by the TA projects' support for targeting and consolidation reforms, and for building government awareness and establishing a consensus on the need for reforming social protection systems.

105. Taking into account the above assessments, the evaluation assesses all four TA projects relevant. The projects were relevant to developing measures that mitigate the immediate impacts of crises. They were aligned with the need to improve targeting and consolidate fragmented social protection schemes in the three countries examined. However, the framework of stand-alone TA projects, with their limited funding and timeframes, was not generally sufficient to promote long-term resilience to risks and shocks.

B. Effectiveness

1. Achievement of Outputs

106. The TA projects generally achieved their outputs for piloting social protection schemes and developing tools for poverty targeting. These helped to enhance government capacity for designing and implementing social protection programs. However, by and large, the TA projects did not achieve their outputs relating to consolidation reforms and the development of social protection policies. There were also issues with respect to the adequacy of the social protection schemes supported by the TA projects.

107. **Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh.** The TA project achieved all of its five intended outputs. It produced two reports outlining social protection schemes for female garment workers to be piloted based on its projected employment trends in garment factories in the post-MFA era, as well as its assessment of working environments, access to housing, and health conditions of female garment workers. The reports identified lessons and the potential for scaling up the piloted social protection schemes, and their findings were shared in a workshop with various government agencies in December 2007.

108. The TA project for female garment workers also piloted labor market programs and social assistance schemes. It provided livelihood counselling to 3,387 workers and skills training to 527 workers. Among those who received counselling and training, more than 90% decided to continue working in the garment sector since the anticipated levels of retrenchment did not occur and there were limited opportunities for self-employment outside the sector. The remaining 10% used the training they received to pursue income-generating activities such as tailoring and making pickles. The NGO and trade union that implemented the social protection schemes did not record or monitor the beneficiaries who received housing assistance.

109. However, the omission of health-related social protection schemes in the TA project targeting female social protection workers in Bangladesh meant that the protection provided to this group was inadequate. While the report produced during the first phase of the TA project recommended providing health insurance products to female garment workers, the project did not pilot any health-related social protection scheme or any health-related component. This was despite the fact that female garment workers suffered from diseases and malnutrition caused by working long hours in a hazardous environment, eating low-quality food, and living in sub-standard housing.

110. **Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh.** All of the three outputs of the TA project were realized. Some 349 officials at the Directorate General of Food (DGF) participated in the training on efficient food stock management, use of information technology to increase efficiency, and web-based monitoring systems and operations. In addition, the project provided training on advanced production planning and technology for food production, and digital communication in relation to food security, which engaged 321 Department of Agricultural Extension officials.

111. The project also piloted a web-based system for food stock management and distribution that demonstrated that automated food management and distribution was simpler to operate than the manual system. The TA provided capacity building training, technical support, and hardware and software.

112. However, data entry into the web-based system was hampered by slow internet connection and poor computer skills of DGF field staff. In addition, the government's bureaucratic process for the payment of internet services in the field offices and lengthy computer repair process (due to the unavailability of computer servicing in local areas) undermined the implementation of the web-based system. The low computer literacy of field staff underscored the need for training on using computers prior to training on the software used for the web-based food management system.

113. **Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia.** The TA project achieved all but one of its six intended outputs. It provided crucial implementation assistance for the Social Sectors Support Program and the achievement of its reform targets. It also helped to establish an intersectoral database of poor people and to incorporate pro-poor urban development in the Ulaanbaatar City Master Plan 2030.

114. The output relating to the capacity building in statistical analysis and data collection at the National Statistics Office (NSO) was cancelled because NSO was not carrying out any social transfer program.

115. Through its support for policy dialogue, the TA contributed to the passage of the amended Social Welfare Law in 2012. It supported an amendment to the Social Welfare Law in 2012. The revised law has reduced the number of social welfare programs, and included poverty benefits. Given the new poverty benefits, some other benefits should have been cancelled. However, lobbying and a lack of political will meant that these benefits remained in the revised law.

116. The TA project's most notable achievement was in helping to promote PMT as a targeting tool. It helped to develop a government and public consensus on the importance of PMT-based targeting to ensure social protection benefits reach those in greatest need. The TA also developed an intersectoral database using PMT data, which other government agencies can use to target their social protection programs.

117. Building upon ADB's previous engagement in PMT-based targeting for the food stamp program, the TA piloted PMT-based targeting of textbook subsidies for secondary students. While PMT was not eventually adopted for textbook subsidies, the government is now implementing its food stamp program using PMT.³² The food stamp program uses PMT to target the poorest 5% of households and covers about 100,000 households nationwide.³³

³² For the textbook activities, the government made a decision to distribute free textbooks to all students of primary grades and 40% of students in secondary and higher grades.

³³ M. Grosh, C. Andrews, R. Quintana, and C. Rodriguez-Alas. 2011. *Assessing Safety Net Readiness in Response to Food Price Volatility*. World Bank. Washington, D.C.

118. **Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal.** The TA project achieved only one of its four outputs with certainty. Nevertheless, officials of government agencies and development partners recognize that the TA started a policy discourse on social protection in Nepal.

119. While the TA project in Nepal produced its intended output of a draft consolidated national protection framework, the framework was not adopted by the government. The draft framework mapped Nepal's numerous social protection schemes, provided a definition of social protection, and identified a social protection floor.

120. Political transition delayed the government's adoption of the social protection framework. The frequent changes in government meant that the priority accorded to social protection and to approving the draft framework fluctuated. Estimating budget allocations for social protection has also been problematic, given the numerous, fragmented social protection programs implemented by the government. If education and health assistance are included in the set of social protection programs identified by the draft framework, the cost of Nepal's social protection would reach about 20% of GDP.

121. Similarly, the TA project's proposed implementation arrangements for social protection programs—which were included in the draft social protection framework—did not take into account Nepal's eventual shift to a federal system of government and hence were not endorsed by the government. The output on identifying financial options for social protection was not achieved due to time constraints. Because of delays in receiving government feedback on the draft social protection framework, consultants recruited for the TA project did not have sufficient time to work on the costing of the social protection framework.

122. The TA achieved its output of enhancing the skills and knowledge of government officials on social protection. Some 75 central and local government officials benefited from the training. The improved knowledge of government officials on social protection was in part demonstrated by the inclusion of a separate chapter on social protection in the 3-year Plan Approach Paper for 2010/2011–2012/2013.

2. Achievement of Outcomes

123. The two TA projects for food security in Bangladesh and the social sector in Mongolia generally achieved their intended outcomes. The TA project targeting female garment workers in Bangladesh also by and large achieved its outcome, but it involved only a small segment of female garment workers who benefited from the piloted social protection schemes. The TA project in Nepal generally did not achieve its intended outcome since the draft national social protection framework and the corresponding implementation arrangements were not adopted by the government.

124. **Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh.** The TA project's intended outcome of reduced risks and improved job opportunities for garment workers could be considered achieved, but the scale was limited. The piloting of employment and social assistance program for workers showed that social protection measures can be implemented for unprotected female garment workers.

125. However, the pilot was not scaled up. It is not clear whether the social protection measures for garment workers recommended by the two reports produced under the TA project

were taken up by the government. Female garment workers remained vulnerable to various employment- and health-related shocks at the time of TA completion. Nevertheless, the TA project is considered by government and NGO stakeholders to have been a pioneering initiative on promoting social protection of female garment workers.

126. **Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh.** The TA project's intended outcome was an improved monitoring system and better planning capacity in food production and management at the ministries of agriculture and food and disaster management. The TA generally achieved this outcome by creating awareness and understanding, and by developing the skills of high-level officials and field staff of DGF and DAE for automating food production, management, and distribution systems.

127. Nevertheless, the piloted web-based food stock management and distribution system was not scaled up nationwide. This would have helped increase awareness and understanding of automated food management in more field offices of DGF—and hence could have contributed to the achievement of the TA project's outcome. ADB's resident mission in Bangladesh acknowledged that the web system developed under the TA project was piloted in only a few *upazillas* although it could have been extended to more *upazillas* by using funds from the Emergency Assistance for Food Security Project in Bangladesh.

128. **Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia.** The TA project by and large attained its intended outcome of helping to meet the reform targets of the Social Sectors Support Program to prioritize the poor and to target social assistance, particularly social transfers using PMT. The TA helped MOF, the executing agency for the loan and TA project, coordinate policy reforms across the social welfare, education, health and urban development sectors, and across government agencies including the ministries of health, education, culture and science, and labor and social protection.

129. By helping to develop a government and public consensus on PMT-based targeting, the TA project played a notable role in the government's adoption of PMT as a targeting tool for social protection schemes such the food stamp program. An effective targeting method is vital to maximize the impacts of social protection programs. To show how PMT-based targeting can help enhance the impacts of social protection schemes, the evaluation assessed the impacts of the food stamp program on food security, education, health and finances of the poorest 5% of households targeted through the PMT.

130. Households receiving food stamps were found to have more diverse diets and to experience 2 fewer months of inadequate food provision compared with their counterparts who were not recipients of the food stamps. Food stamp recipients were also 15% less likely to have to borrow or use credit to buy food and were 20% less likely to borrow food from friends and relatives.³⁴

131. The evaluation's focus group discussions also revealed the food stamps' positive impacts on children's health and attendance and performance in school. The children of food stamp recipients had a higher nutritional status and were likely to be more productive in school. Food stamp recipients also noted that their savings from food expenses were usually used for children's education, purchase of coal and wood for heat, housing improvements, and establishment of small businesses.

132. Nevertheless, there were some issues relating to the adequacy of the size of the food stamps supported by the TA project. Beneficiaries have raised concerns about the value of the

³⁴ ADB. 2014. *Food Stamps and Medicaid Impact Evaluation Report*. Manila.

food stamps supported by the TA project, which have increased from MNT10,000 per month for each adult and MNT5,000 per month for each child in the household in 2012 to MNT13,500 per month for each adult and MNT6,500 per month for each child in the household in 2015.

133. Some of the beneficiaries who participated in the evaluation’s focus group discussions reported cases of overcharging among shopkeepers, reducing the purchasing capacity of food stamps recipients. Shopkeepers were said to have forced food stamp recipients to make purchases on a day when they would increase food prices between MNT1,000–MNT2,000 in their shops.

134. **Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal.** In its outcome statement, the TA project sought to strengthen the capacity of the government to plan and manage social protection schemes. This outcome was generally not achieved since the draft national social protection framework and its costing and implementation arrangements were not adopted by the government. Nevertheless, the TA project paved the way for policy discourse on social protection in Nepal.

135. Three of the four TA projects are assessed effective. The TA projects in Bangladesh and Mongolia generally achieved their intended outputs and outcomes. However, the TA project in Nepal achieved only one of its four intended outputs—on enhancing the skills and knowledge of government staff on social protection through the provision of training. It did produce a draft national social protection framework and proposed implementation arrangements for social protection programs, but they were not adopted by the government. The output on financial options for social protection was not achieved so its planned outcome of strengthening government capacity for managing social protection schemes cannot be considered to have been achieved either. The evaluation therefore assesses the TA project for Nepal less than effective.

C. Efficiency

1. Factors that Supported Efficiency

136. The TA projects that had efficient implementation arrangements ensured ownership by executing agencies. They also used local stakeholders to carry out social protection schemes. These factors helped ensure good coordination among government ministries and involvement of target vulnerable groups.

137. **Project ownership by executing agencies.** Smooth implementation of TA projects rests in part on the executing agencies’ ownership of these projects.

138. In Mongolia, MOF served as the executing agency for the TA project on capacity development for the social sectors. Because social protection was high on the government’s agenda following the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, MOF was involved in the TA project’s implementation and, because of its resources and authority, it managed and coordinated the work of other government agencies effectively. MOF held monthly and quarterly meetings with heads of departments of the ministries of welfare and labor, health, education and science, and urban development to discuss progress and the improvements needed for project’s implementation. MOF’s leadership helped ensure good communication among relevant ministries and smooth implementation of the TA project.

139. In contrast, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) in Bangladesh—the executing agency for the TA project for female garment workers in Bangladesh—showed a lack of project ownership which contributed to implementation delays and an extension of the closing date. Because TA funds were largely managed by the recruited consulting firm, MoWCA had little

authority on the utilization of financing. Also, the project director at MoWCA changed four times over the TA project's lifespan.

140. **Tapping local actors.** The recruitment of local organizations to implement and monitor the TA project targeting female garment workers in Bangladesh contributed to its efficient implementation. The NGO, Karmajibi Nari, and the trade union Bangladesh Apparel Workers Federation implemented the TA project's pilot social protection schemes for female garment workers. They each have more than 20 years' experience of working with garment workforces. Their networks and experience were useful in reaching the target groups of female garment workers.

2. Factors that Reduced Efficiency

141. The limited funding and timeframes of the TA projects and their implementation delays hampered their efficient implementation.

142. **Limited funding and short project life cycles.** The short lifespans and limited funding of TA projects limited the flexibility of the implementation arrangements. Social protection reforms take up significant time and resources so such arrangements are vital. As social protection remains an undeveloped sector in Bangladesh, Mongolia, and Nepal, the limited funding and timeframes of TA projects and implementation delays underscored the complexity of pursuing social protection policy and reforms.

143. The 1 year allocated for the implementation of TA project for the social protection framework in Nepal was not sufficient to conclude the policy dialogue with the government and complete reforms on social protection. As the government and its development partners had previously done little work on social protection policies, more generous funding and a longer time frame could have supported studies and research to help inform the decision-making process of line ministries and other agencies.

144. The TA project for food security in Bangladesh was extended to 30 months from 10 months so it could achieve its intended outputs and outcome. The original duration was not feasible given that Bangladesh has 30 agro-ecological zones, each conducive to growing specific varieties of food grain. Hence, each agro-ecological zone requires specific preservation and storage methods.

145. **Implementation delays.** Procedural complexities within government ministries and departments have led to implementation delays, which have affected the achievement of the TA projects' intended outputs and outcomes.

146. The TA project on food security in Bangladesh suffered from complex government procedures. This delayed the implementation of required actions by the line ministry and/or department. The problematic quality of the capacity development support, and of the hardware and software provided under the TA project impeded the piloting of the web-based food stock management and distribution system. The web-based system in Tangail remained closed for a period because the computers provided under the TA project needed constant repair. DGF field staff with limited computer skills failed to monitor the system efficiently and no data entry operators were provided at the *upazilla* level. Correcting wrongly entered data was done by the software firm recruited under the TA project, a process that took time.

147. In Nepal, delays in receiving NPC's feedback on a preliminary draft of the national social protection framework led to delays. The change in the vice chair and the member secretary of the commission further delayed TA implementation.

148. In conclusion, the TA project for social protection of female garment workers in Bangladesh and the TA project for capacity development in Mongolia's social sector were efficient. Their implementation arrangements were generally sound and allowed for the efficient use of resources. In contrast, implementation issues affected the TA projects for food security in Bangladesh and for social protection framework in Nepal. These hindered the achievement of their outputs and outcomes. These two TA projects are assessed less than efficient.

D. Sustainability

1. Factors that Supported Sustainability

149. Social protection is a long-term contract requiring continuous work. Hence, continued support both by governments and development partners is crucial to maintaining gains.

150. **Continued support.** Developing PMT targeting for Mongolia's social protection programs benefited from ADB's continued engagement in this area. ADB's work on PMT-based targeting started in an earlier project, the Food and Nutrition Social Welfare Program and Project approved in 2008 (footnote 29). ADB helped develop a government and public consensus on PMT-based targeting through the TA project, which would have been more difficult if only a stand-alone TA project had been implemented. In contrast, ADB did not provide follow-up support to capitalize on the lessons learned in the pilot social protection schemes under the TA projects in Bangladesh. As a result, the pilots for female garment workers and the web-based system for food stock management and distribution were not sustained after the project completion.

151. While there have been initial gains in implementing PMT targeting, challenges remain. Conducting PMT surveys is costly—visiting every household in Mongolia's sparsely populated geographical locations requires considerable resources. Collecting and cleaning the data also demand resources and expertise. The PMT indicators for selecting beneficiaries need to be refined and updated to ensure that minimum living standards are accurately reflected.³⁵ With the PMT database being regularly updated, PMT targeting, which is currently used only for the food stamp program, could be expanded to other social protection schemes. The public needs to be made aware of how recipients are chosen for the PMT-targeted social protection schemes and a grievance mechanism needs to be put in place to enable recipients to voice their concerns about program operations.

152. Further support from ADB, the government and other development partners are needed to update the PMT database, improve PMT targeting in the food stamp program, and apply PMT targeting in other social protection programs.

153. After the TA project, two succeeding ADB policy-based loans in Mongolia helped expand the use of PMT targeting in other social protection programs. The Social Welfare Support Program³⁶ (approved in 2015 and closed in 2016) and the Social Welfare Support Program Phase 2³⁷ (approved in 2017) helped to apply PMT targeting for the Child Money Program, as well as to progress the introduction of PMT targeting in more welfare programs, including school text books and judiciary services.

³⁵ For example, owning television sets should not be considered a luxury since people stay informed by watching news.

³⁶ ADB. 2015. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan to Mongolia for the Social Welfare Support Program*. Manila.

³⁷ ADB. 2017. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan to Mongolia for the Social Welfare Support Program Phase 2*. Manila.

154. The continuity of ADB support for PMT targeting in Mongolia since the global financial crisis in 2008–2009 is an example of good practice for long-term engagement in social protection that yields results. Such continuity supports the aim of ADB’s Social Protection Strategy, which aims to build national protection systems, a process that requires long-term commitment and work.

2. Factors that Undermined Sustainability

155. Limited efforts to continue support and the design of projects as apparent one-off responses to crises undermined the sustainability of the TA projects.

156. **Limited funding and institutional capacity.** Adequate financing was not made available by either the government or ADB to scale up the pilot social protection schemes for female garment workers in Bangladesh after the TA project’s completion. The NGO and trade union that implemented the pilot social protection projects anticipated that a large-scale project would be carried out after the pilot phase, but this never happened.

157. Nevertheless, the TA project was regarded as the first project to recognize the importance of workplace safety and the working conditions of garment workers, as well as the shocks and risks they face outside the industry. It helped to pave the way for further programs and policies on the social protection of garment workers. For instance, the government in 2016 formed a board with representatives from garment stakeholders to operate a fund designed for the welfare of workers in the export-oriented apparel sector. The Bangladesh Labor Act, 2013 requires owners of export-oriented garment industries to contribute 0.03% of export value to this workers’ welfare fund.³⁸

158. The TA project recommended that the web-based food stock management and distribution system it piloted be scaled up nationwide. However, a lack of funding and skills to maintain the system led to its cessation. The software and hardware technology used to pilot the system eventually became obsolete. The frequent turnover of staff required a constant transfer of knowledge and skills and hampered the implementation of the system. Still, the TA helped foster government awareness on the use of automation in increasing the efficiency of the food management and distribution system.

159. In Nepal, the TA project’s draft national social protection framework was not adopted by the government. However, the TA project was instrumental in starting a policy discussion in this area. The ongoing Reducing Child Malnutrition through Social Protection Project provided follow-up support for the finalization of the draft social protection framework. A second version of the draft framework was produced in 2016, although the government has yet to approve it. The TA project’s proposed implementation arrangements for social protection could not be sustained since these arrangements were not formulated in the context of a federal form of government. Nepal introduced a new constitution in 2015 following a shift to federalism.

160. **One-off projects.** The TA projects in Bangladesh and Nepal appeared to be one-off projects that were formulated as emergency responses instead of long-term engagement in the social protection sector. Change in priorities and staff turnover on both ADB and the government sides, and the governments’ limited demand for continued support for social protection contributed to ADB’s short-lived engagement in social protection in these two countries. The limited priority both ADB and the governments gave to following up on the achievements of the TA projects did not help the sustainability of their outputs. Because TA projects have limited timeframes and funding, governments and development partners such as ADB need a long-term

³⁸ Dhaka Tribune. 2016. *Board Formed to Operate RMG Welfare Fund.*
<http://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2016/03/31/board-formed-to-operate-rmg-welfare-fund/>

vision of their engagement in social protection policy and reforms. Long-term engagement is needed to strengthen the countries' resilience to shocks and risks, build national social protection systems, and address covariate shocks that adversely affect a huge portion of a population.

161. Of the four TA projects examined, all but the TA project for Mongolia's social sector are rated less than likely sustainable. The outputs achieved under the TA projects for food security and female garment workers' social protection in Bangladesh have not been sustained. The draft social protection framework produced under the TA project in Nepal was not adopted by the government. A second version of the draft framework (built upon the previous version) was produced in 2016. In contrast, the TA project in Mongolia is assessed likely sustainable since the PMT targeting it supported has been institutionalized by the government.

CHAPTER 4

Other Assessments

162. This chapter discusses the overall development impacts of the four TA projects and the performances of ADB and executing agencies in designing, implementing, and monitoring these projects.

A. Development Impacts

163. Examining the development impacts of these TA projects supporting social protection would have benefited from impact evaluations but none were carried out. Monitoring and evaluating the social protection interventions in the four TA projects have been largely lacking.

164. **Crisis-response measures.** Since the TA projects were formulated against ongoing or anticipated risks and shocks, their piloted social protection schemes have helped the governments implement crisis response measures. The projects have helped the governments design and implement programs to mitigate the impacts of risks and shocks on various segments of the population. These initiatives reflect ADB's reliability in times of crises by providing loans and TA projects to support governments to finance crisis response initiatives in a timely manner.

165. The TA projects in Bangladesh piloted social protection schemes to help offset risks of income losses due to the phase-out of the MFA and the negative impacts of the global food crisis during 2007–2008. The TA project in Mongolia helped ensure efficient social spending despite the repercussions of the global financial crisis on the fiscal health of the government.

166. While ADB has implemented various crisis-response measures, it has not been as active as in providing support for long-term engagement in social protection in Bangladesh and Nepal. ADB's performance in strengthening the resilience of populations to risks and shocks during periods when there are no crises and over the long run remains inadequate. For instance, ADB did not capitalize on achievements made in the pilot social protection schemes in Bangladesh, which could have been used as the foundation of large-scale and long-term work on the social protection of female garment workers and addressing impacts of food insecurity.

167. **Poverty and inclusion impacts.** Social protection programs play a crucial role in promoting poverty reduction and inclusive growth. Their support for reducing people's exposure to risks and increasing their capacity to protect themselves and to cope with the impacts of various shocks helped reduce poverty and vulnerability. The TA projects' support for targeting could possibly have impacts on reducing poverty and promoting inclusion.

168. Building the government and public consensus on PMT targeting in Mongolia's social protection programs under the TA project on capacity development for social sectors has helped deliver benefits to the poorest 5% of households. Further support by ADB has resulted in the application of PMT targeting in other social programs, including the Child Money Program.

169. Households in extreme poverty are usually the hardest to reach, but efforts will be assisted by the use of PMT targeting, which would facilitate inclusion and poverty reduction. Through PMT targeting, limited funds for social protection could deliver greater benefits to the poorest of the poor. The intersectoral database using PMT data that has been created can be

used to introduce poverty targeting in other social protection programs, as well as for the efficient delivery of both targeted and universal social protection schemes.

170. The TA project supporting social protection of female garment workers in Bangladesh could have broad impacts on inclusion based on gender. Women and men face different barriers to accessing economic opportunities and addressing these gendered forms of vulnerability can help women to maximize their economic potential.

171. Female garment workers in Bangladesh usually face harsh working conditions, long working hours and unsafe work environments, making them vulnerable to risks of income loss due to unemployment or health-related shocks. By targeting female workers, the TA project in Bangladesh helped improved their capacity to withstand and cope with shocks.

172. **Institutional impacts.** The TA projects have helped improve government capacity for designing and implementing programs relating to social protection. The piloting of social protection-related schemes provided lessons and examples of good practice for government agencies in designing and implementing these schemes. The projects also helped encourage government agencies to use technology to improve the efficiency of social protection schemes.

173. The TA projects initiated policy dialogues on social protection reforms. Such dialogues have underscored the importance of social protection policies and programs in pursuing broader objectives of poverty reduction and inclusive growth. They have also helped increase the awareness and understanding of government agencies on various approaches to promoting social security across sectors or groups, and to develop poverty-targeted social protection measures.

174. The TA project for social protection in Nepal, in particular, laid the foundation for continued engagement of development partners in this area including (i) the revision of the cash transfer guidelines to improve beneficiary registration processes undertaken through the JFPR-funded grant for Reducing Child Malnutrition through Social Protection; (ii) digitization of the cash transfer registry through the JFPR-financed Reducing Child Malnutrition through Social Protection grant as well as projects by the World Bank and United Nations Capital Development Fund; (iii) expansion of the child grant to two more districts in fiscal year 2017 and government's commitment to expand this to a further four districts in the current fiscal year through continued policy dialogue by UNICEF; (iv) use of the cash transfer program to channel top-up grants to earthquake-affected victims in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake, led by UNICEF; and (v) an improvement to the government's events registration database and cash transfer registry through a \$150-million World Bank project in 2016.

175. The development impacts of the four TA projects are broadly satisfactory from this perspective. The social protection programs and reforms supported by the program were likely to have had a broad positive impact on various levels including in mitigating the immediate impacts of crises, supporting poverty reduction and inclusion, improving institutional capacity for social protection, and initiating policy discourse on social protection reforms.

B. ADB and Borrower Performance

177. ADB provided TA projects for timely crisis-response measures to help offset adverse impacts of shocks and risks—although its support has been more for mitigation than for building social protection systems over the long run. ADB played a significant role in conducting policy dialogues on social protection. It provided guidance during the design and implementation of social protection-related support, but paid little attention to the monitoring and evaluation of such schemes. It fielded review missions that helped monitor the implementation of the TA projects. The evaluation rates ADB's performance satisfactory.

178. The executing agencies collaborated with ADB and generally showed project ownership. They provided counterpart funding and staff to achieve the intended objectives of the TA projects. However, the executing agencies had limited funding and institutional capacity to maintain the TA projects' achievements. The performance of the executing agencies for the TA projects was satisfactory.

CHAPTER 5

Overall Assessment, Issues, and Lessons

179. This chapter provides an overall assessment and highlights the key issues in supporting social protection programs and policies in Bangladesh, Mongolia and Nepal. It also discusses the lessons learned from the design and implementation of the TA projects.

A. Overall Assessment

180. Based on the evaluation's ratings of individual TA projects for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, the overall performance summary ratings for each of the four TA projects are presented in Table 5. The summary of the evaluation findings for each TA project is in Appendix 1, while the aggregate performance ratings for the four TA projects are found in Appendix 2. This evaluation rates the TA project for female garment workers in Bangladesh and the TA project for social sectors in Mongolia successful in pursuing social protection issues. The TA project for food security in Bangladesh and the TA project for social protection in Nepal are rated less than successful in carrying out social protection programs and reforms.

Table 5: Ratings of Individual TA Projects

Criteria	Weight (%)	TA 4320 ^a		TA 7101 ^b		TA 7300 ^c		TA 7530 ^d	
		Rating Value	Rating	Rating Value	Rating	Rating Value	Rating	Rating Value	Rating
Relevance ^e	25	2.0	0.50	2.0	0.50	2.0	0.50	2.0	0.50
Effectiveness ^f	25	2.0	0.50	2.0	0.50	2.0	0.50	1.0	0.25
Efficiency ^g	25	2.0	0.50	1.0	0.25	2.0	0.50	1.0	0.25
Sustainability ^h	25	1.0	0.25	1.0	0.25	2.0	0.50	1.0	0.25
Overall Rating ⁱ	100		1.75		1.50		2.00		1.25
		Successful		Less than successful		Successful		Less than successful	

TA = technical assistance.

^a TA 4320: Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh (footnote 11).

^b TA 7101: Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh (footnote 12).

^c TA 7300: Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia (footnote 13).

^d TA 7350: Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal (footnote 14).

^e Relevance: highly relevant (3); relevant (2); less than relevant (1); irrelevant (0).

^f Effectiveness: highly effective (3); effective (2); less than effective (1); ineffective (0).

^g Efficiency: highly efficient (3); efficient (2); less than efficient (1); and inefficient (0).

^h Sustainability: most likely (3); likely (2); less than likely (1); unlikely (0).

ⁱ Overall rating: highly successful (≥ 2.5); successful (≥ 1.75 and < 2.5); less than successful (≥ 0.75 and < 1.75); unsuccessful (< 0.75).

Source: Asian Development Bank Independent Evaluation Department.

B. Issues

1. Policy Directions

181. **Continued engagement in social protection.** ADB's support for social protection in the four TA projects is evidence of its reliability in helping member countries respond to ongoing or anticipated risks and shocks by providing emergency responses. ADB generally supported crisis-response measures—through policy-based loans, project loans and TA projects—relevant to countries' risks and needs. Such measures were generally provided in a timely manner.

182. However, ADB's crisis-response measures were not followed through by continued engagement in social protection areas, which is crucial for establishing or strengthening countries' social protection systems in the long run. ADB needs to remain engaged in periods when there are no crises, and to work with countries to address covariate shocks that impact large segments of a population. The lessons learned and gains made from the TA projects were not used to formulate follow-up, large-scale projects or to map out ADB's long-term engagement in this sector. Rather, ADB support seemed to have been short-term or one-off responses to crises without a clear plan for a continued commitment to building social protection systems.

2. Country Programming

183. **Targeting and consolidation reforms.** Countries in Asia and the Pacific are vulnerable to climate risks and natural disasters, financial crises, and economic volatility. Countries need to establish robust social protection systems that not only mitigate impacts during post-crisis periods, but also ensure the resilience of populations even in periods when there are no crises.

184. However, the social protection systems of countries in the region, including Bangladesh, Nepal, and Mongolia, generally consist of a wide array of fragmented programs that have overlapping objectives and benefits and are costly to administrate and difficult to coordinate. Despite this, reforms to consolidate social protection programs and improve their targeting do not seem to be high on the agendas of governments, as indicated by their low social spending spread across fragmented social protection programs.

3. Operations Management

185. **Sustainability of outputs.** The four TA projects piloted social protection-related schemes and initiated policy dialogues for social protection reforms. However, these achievements have not been sustained after project completion. Government agencies had limited funding or institutional capacity to continue carrying out the piloted schemes. Frequent staff turnover and political transitions have further hampered the continuity of policy dialogue and of the pilot initiatives. For its part, ADB did not generally launch follow-up projects to scale up the piloted schemes and offered only limited support to keep policy dialogues with government going.

186. **Monitoring and evaluation of social protection schemes.** ADB paid little attention to the monitoring and evaluation of its support for social protection. In particular, there were limited efforts to track and monitor how the piloted social protection schemes improved the resilience of the targeted populations.

C. Lessons

1. Policy Directions

187. **Long-term framework for social protection work.** Long-term engagement built on both crisis-response and post-crisis measures is vital to strengthening social protection systems. One-off responses to crises may help mitigate their immediate effects, but such responses by themselves cannot ensure long-term resilience to risks and shocks, or strengthened national social protection systems. TA projects including capacity development TA projects play a crucial role in pilot testing social protection schemes, initiating policy discourse in social protection, and helping to build government consensus and capacity in social protection. Their impacts on social protection could be optimized if they are part of a long-term programmatic approach designed to build national social protection systems or strengthen resilience in a particular sector.

2. Country Programming

188. **Government buy-in for social protection.** Government demand for and interest in social protection is crucial for the success of programs and reforms in this area, particularly in improving the targeting of schemes and consolidating fragmented social protection programs. Capitalizing on the gains made by the TA projects, as well as the policy-based loans they were attached to, requires political commitment by governments. The scaling up of pilot-tested social protection programs and continuing policy discourse on social protection cannot be achieved without the government putting a high premium or priority on social protection.

3. Operations Management

189. **A focus on sustainability and results.** Since the TA projects were largely formulated as responses to ongoing or anticipated crises, their designs were geared more toward addressing the direct effects of crises and less toward the broader goal of building social protection systems. The emergency nature of these projects did not fully support the assessments of wider socioeconomic and political issues that could have (i) laid the foundation for long-term work in strengthening the populations' resilience both during crises and during times when there are no crises and in reinforcing national social protection systems, and (ii) identified measures to regularly monitor the progress of implementing social protection programs and policies.

D. Moving Forward

190. **Defining ADB's role in building social protection systems and long-term resilience.** Based on the limited observations made in this evaluation, ADB needs to reconsider its long-term engagement in social protection, as called for by its Social Protection Strategy. It needs to move beyond providing support for crisis response. Since resilience and inclusion are likely to be important elements of ADB's forthcoming Strategy 2030, ADB should consider how it can incorporate social protection work more effectively into its loan and TA projects to promote its overall inclusive growth agenda.

Appendixes

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY EVALUATION FINDINGS OF INDIVIDUAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

1. This evaluation rates the overall performance of the four technical assistance (TA) projects based on the performance of individual TA projects in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

A. Social Protection of Poor Female Workers in the Garment Sector in the Context of Changing Trade Environments in Bangladesh

2. **Objective.** The object of the TA project was to help the government sustain poverty reduction by reducing unemployment risks and improving job opportunities for female workers affected by the anticipated contraction in the garment sector after the phase-out of quotas under the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA) in 2005.

3. **Overall assessment.** The evaluation rates the TA project successful, which is consistent with the rating provided by the technical assistance completion report.

4. **Relevance.** The TA project covered not only the risks of income losses after the MFA phase-out, but issues relating to the working environments and conditions of female garment workers. Officials of government agencies, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and development partners considered the TA project for female garment workers in Bangladesh to be a pioneering project. However, the TA did not include support for raising workers' awareness of the project's activities and outcomes. As a result, many of the targeted women workers could not be engaged in these activities. The TA project is rated relevant.

5. **Effectiveness.** The TA project achieved all five of its intended outputs, including producing two reports on piloting social protection schemes for female garment workers, identifying lessons from the pilots, and highlighting the potential for scaling them up. The findings were shared with various government agencies in a workshop. The TA project piloted labor market programs and social assistance schemes for female garment workers, including livelihood counselling, redeployment, skills training, and housing services. The TA project's intended outcome of reduced risks and improved job opportunities for garment workers could be considered to have been achieved, but on a limited scale involving a small number of female garment workers. The evaluation assesses the TA project effective.

6. **Efficiency.** The recruitment of local organizations to implement and monitor the TA project contributed to its efficient implementation. The NGO, Karmajibi Nari, and the trade union Bangladesh Apparel Workers Federation implemented the pilot social protection schemes for female garment workers. They each had more than 20 years of experience working with garment workforces. Their networks and experience were useful in reaching the target groups of female garment workers. The TA project was efficient.

7. **Sustainability.** Adequate financing was not made available by either the government or the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to scale up the pilot projects in Bangladesh after the TA project's completion. It is not clear whether the social protection measures for garment workers recommended by the two reports produced under the TA project were taken up by the government. Nevertheless, the TA project is considered by government and NGO stakeholders to have been a pioneering initiative on promoting social protection of female garment workers. The evaluation assesses the TA project less than likely sustainable.

B. Strengthening the Government's Institutional Capacity for Improving Food Security in Bangladesh

8. **Objective.** The object of the TA project was to improve the government's capacity for planning and undertaking mid- and long-term interventions to improve food security, including strengthening monitoring for increasing the efficiency of ongoing safety net programs.

9. **Overall assessment.** The evaluation rates the TA project less than successful. In contrast, the TA completion report rated it successful.

10. **Relevance.** The TA project addressed one of the root causes of food insecurity: the limited capacity of government agencies to manage and distribute food stocks. The web-based system for food stock management and the distribution system developed under the TA project led to a smooth loading and unloading process of food from millers to the government stock. The TA could have included millers in the web-based system it developed, since they play a crucial role in the government's food storage and monitoring system by supplying food grains to government warehouses. The TA project is rated relevant.

11. **Effectiveness.** All of the three outputs of the TA project were realized: (i) providing training on efficient food-stock management, use of information technology and web-based monitoring systems and operations to increase efficiency; (ii) conducting training on advance production planning and technology for food production, and digital communication in relation to food security; and (iii) piloting a web-based system for food stock management and distribution that demonstrated the greater ease of using automated food management and distribution than the manual system. Data entry into the web-based system was hampered by slow internet connections and poor computer skills among the staff. The TA project generally achieved its outcome by creating awareness and understanding, and by developing the skills of government staff for automating food production, management and distribution system. The evaluation rates the TA projects effective.

12. **Efficiency.** The TA project was extended to 30 months from the planned duration of 10 months to achieve its intended outputs and outcome. Given the limited timeframe and financial allocation, it was not possible to incorporate into the project design the different varieties of food grains in each of the country's 30 agro-ecological zones. Complex government procedures contributed to the delays in implementing the required actions by each line ministry and/or department. The TA project was less than efficient.

13. **Sustainability.** The TA project recommended that the web-based food stock management and distribution system piloted under the TA for food security in Bangladesh be scaled up nationwide. However, lack of funding and skills to maintain the system meant that the system was abandoned and the software and hardware technology used to pilot the system eventually became obsolete. The frequent turnover of staff required a constant transfer of knowledge and skills and hampered implementation of the system. Nevertheless, the TA helped to foster government awareness of the use of automation to increase the efficiency of the food management and distribution system. The evaluation assesses the TA project less than likely sustainable.

C. Strategic Capacity Development for Social Sectors in Mongolia

14. **Objective.** The object of the TA project was to help build a firm foundation for change through strategic capacity development and to develop a consensus-building program on the role of social assistance and the classification of recipients.

15. **Overall assessment.** The evaluation rates the TA project successful, which is consistent with the TA completion report rating.

16. **Relevance.** Mongolia currently implements 71 social protection schemes and most are categorically targeted. The TA project on capacity development for Mongolia's social sector supported targeting and consolidation reforms. It supported poverty targeting, which is crucial for enhancing the efficiency of social protection programs and increasing the benefits accruing to the poor, particularly given the fixed budget for these programs. Since the TA project was attached to a loan program, this enabled ADB to support both short- and long-term measures for addressing the impacts of the food and financial crises. The TA project is rated relevant.

17. **Effectiveness.** The TA project achieved all but one of its intended outputs. It provided crucial implementation support for the Social Sectors Support Program and the achievement of its reform targets. It helped to establish an intersectoral database of poor people and to incorporate pro-poor urban development in the Ulaanbaatar City Master Plan 2030. Through its support for policy dialogue, it contributed to the passage of the amended Social Welfare Law in 2012. The TA project's most notable achievement was developing a government and public consensus on proxy means testing (PMT) as a targeting tool. It helped to develop and implement PMT-based targeting for the government's food stamp program. The output relating to the capacity building of the National Statistics Office (NSO) for statistical analysis and data collection was cancelled because NSO was not carrying out any social transfer program. By and large, the TA project attained its intended outcome of helping to meet the reform targets of the Social Sectors Support Program to prioritize the poor for targeted social assistance. The evaluation rated the TA project effective.

18. **Efficiency.** The Ministry of Finance (MOF) served as the executing agency for the TA project. Because social protection was a government priority following the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, MOF was involved in the TA project's implementation. With its resources and authority, MOF managed and coordinated the work of other government agencies involved in the TA project effectively. MOF held monthly and quarterly meetings with heads of departments of the ministries of welfare and labor, health, education and science, and urban development to discuss the progress and improvements needed in project's implementation. MOF leadership helped ensure good communication among relevant ministries and a smooth implementation of the TA project. The TA project is rated efficient.

19. **Sustainability.** ADB's continued engagement in this area has helped develop PMT targeting for Mongolia's social protection programs. ADB's work on PMT-based targeting began with an earlier project, the Food and Nutrition Social Welfare Program and Project approved in 2008. Its continued work through this TA project enabled the successful adoption of PMT-based targeting. After the TA project, two succeeding ADB policy-based loans in Mongolia helped expand the use of PMT targeting in other social protection programs, the Social Welfare Support Program (approved in 2015 and closed in 2016) and the Social Welfare Support Program Phase 2 (approved in 2017). These two programs have contributed to the application of PMT targeting for the Child Money Program, as well as to progress in introducing PMT targeting in more welfare programs, including school text books and judiciary services. The evaluation rated the TA project likely sustainable.

D. Supporting the Development of a Social Protection Framework for Nepal

20. **Objective.** The object of the TA project was to strengthen the capacity of the government to plan and manage social protection schemes.

21. **Overall assessment.** The evaluation rates the TA project less than successful, while the TA completion report rated it successful.

22. **Relevance.** The TA project was formulated as the government was paying increased attention to social protection to mitigate the uncertainties and structural poverty following the end of conflicts in 2006. The government implements numerous social protection schemes, including cash transfers, a

universal pension system, and public works programs. There is no official lead government ministry for implementing social protection schemes. The role of local governments in delivering social protection schemes has yet to be clearly defined in the country's shift to a federal form of government. The TA project's support for a national social protection framework was therefore necessary to provide clarity to the objectives, coverage and institutional arrangements of Nepal's various social protection programs. The TA project is rated relevant.

23. **Effectiveness.** Of the TA project's four intended outputs, only one has been achieved with certainty. The draft consolidated national protection framework and the corresponding implementation arrangements formulated under the TA project were not adopted by the government, mainly because of the political transition in Nepal. The costing for social protection was not completed due to time constraints. The TA project achieved its output of enhancing the skills and knowledge of government officials on social protection. Some 75 central and local government officials benefited from the TA project's training on social protection. The improved knowledge of government officials on social protection was in part demonstrated by the inclusion of a separate chapter on social protection in the 3-year Plan Approach Paper for 2010/2011–2012/2013. The project's outcome was generally not achieved since the draft national social protection framework and implementation arrangements were not adopted by the government. Nonetheless, the TA project was recognized by officials of government agencies and development partners to be an initiative that started policy discourse on social protection in Nepal. The evaluation rates the TA project less than effective.

24. **Efficiency.** Delays in receiving the government's feedback on a preliminary draft of the national social protection framework delayed the TA project's implementation process. The change in the vice chair and member secretary of the commission further delayed implementation. Because of these delays, the recruited consultants had limited time to work on the output on financial options for social protection and as a result this output was not achieved. The TA project is rated less than efficient.

25. **Sustainability.** The TA project's draft national social protection framework was not adopted by the government. However, the TA project was instrumental in starting policy discussions in this area. The ongoing Reducing Child Malnutrition through Social Protection Project provided follow up support to finalize the draft social protection framework. A second version was produced in 2016, although the government has yet to approve it. The TA project's proposed implementation arrangements for social protection could not be carried out since these arrangements were not formulated in the context of the shift to federalism in Nepal's new constitution in 2015. The evaluation rates the TA project less than likely sustainable.

APPENDIX 2: AGGREGATE PERFORMANCE RATINGS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

Table A2. Aggregate Performance Ratings of Technical Assistance Projects^a

Criteria	Weight (%)	Rating	Average Score
Relevance ^b	25	Relevant	2.00
Effectiveness ^c	25	Less than effective	1.75
Efficiency ^d	25	Less than efficient	1.50
Sustainability ^e	25	Less than likely sustainable	1.25
Overall^f	100	Less than successful	1.625

^a Scores are aggregates of the evaluation ratings and scores of individual projects.

^b Relevance: highly relevant (3); relevant (2); less than relevant (1); irrelevant (0).

^c Effectiveness: highly effective (3); effective (2); less than effective (1); ineffective (0).

^d Efficiency: highly efficient (3); efficient (2); less than efficient (1); and inefficient (0).

^e Sustainability: most likely (3); likely (2); less than likely (1); unlikely (0).

^f Overall rating: highly successful (≥ 2.5); successful (≥ 1.75 and < 2.5); less than successful (≥ 0.75 and < 1.75); unsuccessful (< 0.75).

Source: Asian Development Bank Independent Evaluation Department.