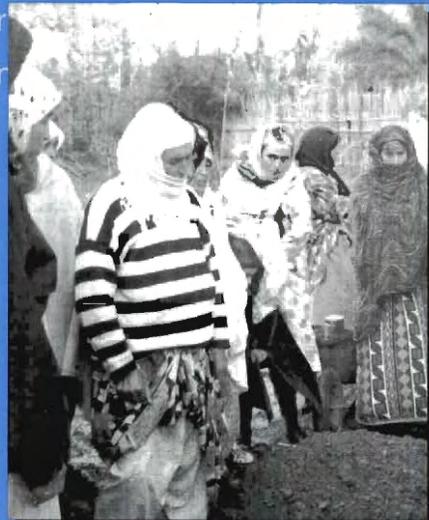


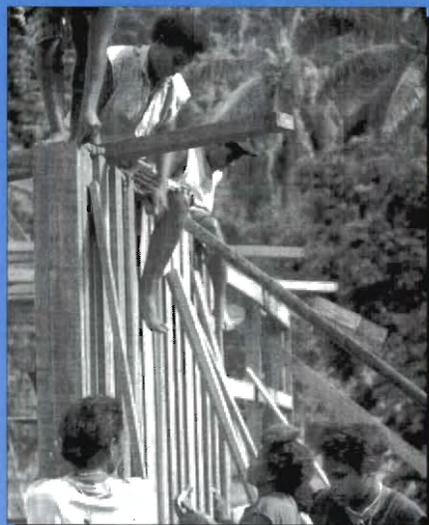
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Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program Handbook

For Peace Corps and USAID Staff

July 2000



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THE SMALL PROJECT ASSISTANCE (SPA) PROGRAM HANDBOOK



July 2000

PEACE CORPS
Information Collection and Exchange
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I. Program Overview

The Small Project Assistance Program (SPA) was established in 1983 through an agency-level Memorandum of Understanding between the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Director of the Peace Corps (PC). The SPA Program is governed by a Special Objective developed within USAID, which states that the objective of the Program is to increase the capabilities of local communities to conduct low-cost, grassroots sustainable development. In Peace Corps terms, the purpose of the program is to assist communities, acting in collaboration with Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs), to identify common community concerns, and to develop strategies and activities to address those concerns. Through the SPA Program, the technical knowledge and skills of PCVs are combined with the financial resources of USAID to help communities help themselves. The SPA Program makes grant funding available not only for construction and infrastructure development at the local level, but also to support the transfer of skills that will enhance the community's ability to conduct sustainable development activities through community-level training.

USAID supports the SPA Program through an Interagency Agreement (IAA) negotiated between the Peace Corps and USAID. This IAA is one of several agreements that combine the Peace Corps' human and technical field resources with USAID financial resources to promote effective development projects worldwide. The SPA Program is coordinated at PC/Washington through the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research (the Center).

The SPA Program includes two interrelated components: Grants and Technical Assistance. Together, these components assist communities and PCVs in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of sustainable grassroots development activities.

I-A. What Are SPA Grants and Technical Assistance?

The SPA Grants component makes budget authority available to each participating Peace Corps post for grants to community groups implementing small-scale, self-help activities. The level of authority provided is determined by local USAID Mission support, USAID Global Bureau support, regional considerations for equitable distribution, and a post's history of use and compliance with Program requirements.

The SPA Technical Assistance component provides resources for the training of host-country officials, counterparts and field staff so that they might address shared needs more effectively through design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development activities that are responsive to locally-defined needs and problems; and, to increase the impact of new and ongoing projects through the use of integrated planning and service delivery approaches.

I-B. Guidelines for Using SPA Grants

Activities funded by **SPA Grants** must follow the basic guidelines outlined in the agency-level Memorandum of Understanding between Peace Corps and USAID. These guidelines require that:

- The activity must fall into the broad area of community development.
- The activity must involve capacity-building activities, such as locally-organized training, or production and construction efforts.
- The activity must be conceived and implemented by a local community organization or group, in conjunction with a PCV.
- The local organization or group must commit its own resources, in cash or in kind, to the activity.
- The SPA contribution towards any one activity must not exceed \$10,000.
- The activity must be scheduled for completion within one year of the establishment of the obligation and a reasonable period of time before the PCV's Close of Service (COS).
- The activity must build local self-reliance and not encourage future dependency on continued U.S. assistance.

A comprehensive explanation of how and when to submit requests for **SPA Grant** funds is included in Part II, Section B of this Handbook.

I-C. Guidelines for Using SPA Technical Assistance

SPA Technical Assistance funds are provided to reinforce the skills of community organizations and PCVs to carry out sustainable grassroots development activities. Funds can support training, technical services, and materials development -- all designed to strengthen community-based development efforts.

SPA Technical Assistance activities must address one or more of the following requirements:

- The activity provides an in-country training opportunity that will strengthen the skills capacity of the local community;
- The activity leverages technical assistance resources;
- The activity develops necessary skills in host-country nationals (HCN) to implement community-based development efforts;
- The activity builds long-term, in-country programming and training capacity for PCV counterparts; and
- The activity supports SPA community activities.

Unlike SPA Grants, **SPA Technical Assistance** funds are managed by the Center, and are accessed through the annual Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS) exercise.

A comprehensive explanation of how and when to submit requests for **SPA Technical Assistance** is included in Part III, Section B, of this Handbook.

II. Participation in the SPA Program

Any country in which the Peace Corps operates is eligible to initiate and participate in a SPA program, with the current exceptions of China and Micronesia. In countries where USAID does not have a Mission, Office, or other representation, Peace Corps posts can participate with the approval of USAID/Washington, which would then assume the program functions normally handled by a Mission.

II-A. SPA Memorandum of Understanding

In each country participating in the SPA Program, the principal Peace Corps and USAID officers (usually the Peace Corps Country Director and the USAID Mission Director, or their designees) negotiate and execute a country-level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which provides a record of both parties' agreement to cooperate in administering the Program according to its stated guidelines. The MOU sets forth, to the extent possible, the programmatic, operating, and reporting procedures to be used in the implementation of the in-country SPA Program. The MOU may also include a statement of the recommended level of support for the SPA Program. Alternatively, the recommended level of support can be communicated via cable, e-mail or fax, as described below. A recommended template for the MOU is included as Appendix A.

We further recommend that the MOU be executed to run concurrently with the implementation period of the current Small Project Assistance IAA (expiration date of 09/30/2004), or for such lesser period as determined by mutual agreement of the principal Peace Corps and USAID officers in the country. The MOU may be amended at any time, in writing, upon the mutual agreement of both parties.

In countries where there is no USAID presence, the MOU should be developed by the Peace Corps Country Director, or designee, in consultation with PC/Washington's SPA Coordinator and the USAID/Washington Project Officer for the SPA Program. The PC/Washington SPA Coordinator can provide additional guidance to posts, as necessary.

II-B. Determining SPA Funding Levels:

1. Joint USAID-Peace Corps Request

In those countries where there is a USAID Mission, the Peace Corps Country Director, or designee, conducts discussions on appropriate funding levels with the USAID Mission Director, Representative, or designee. The concurrence of both the USAID Mission and Peace Corps on requested SPA funding levels is demonstrated via joint cable, fax or e-

mail. This joint exercise should be done in conjunction with a post's IPBS Strategic Plan in April of each year. Whenever possible, the joint PC/USAID cable should include the proposed funding levels for both **SPA Grant and Technical Assistance** that the two parties feel is appropriate and which the USAID Mission is prepared to support.

In those countries where there is no USAID presence, the Peace Corps Country Director should submit the request for SPA Grant Funding. Factors used to determine estimated funding levels can be found in the following section.

2. The Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS)

As mentioned in the paragraph above, the Peace Corps post should include the proposed funding level for **SPA Grants and Technical Assistance** in its IPBS Strategic Plan submission in April of each year. Posts generally estimate **SPA Grant** funding levels based on prior year spending patterns and the number of PCVs in country. Posts will receive feedback from PC/Washington on the requested levels, which will factor in USAID Mission support, USAID Global Bureau availability of funds, Peace Corps Regional considerations, and the post's record of performance. A key element in the approval of **SPA Technical Assistance** funding is the level of HCN participation in Peace Corps-sponsored skills training and capacity-building activities designed to stimulate sustainable development at the local level.

Following the exchange of information coming out of the IPBS Strategic Plans, Peace Corps posts have the opportunity to refine their requests for both **SPA Grant and Technical Assistance** through the IPBS Operating Plan exercise (July/August of each year). **This is a critical step in the SPA funding process.** In addition to establishing **SPA Grant** funding levels, this is the period when posts also need to finalize their **SPA Technical Assistance** requests for Center support for Project Design and Management (PDM) Workshops, technical in-service training, support for HCN participation in training events or other qualifying technical assistance needs. All requests for **SPA Technical Assistance** need to be accompanied by the standard Center Activity Request form (Appendix I).

In addition to the Operating Plan submissions, posts are able to request additional **SPA Grant and Technical Assistance** support at Periodic Budget Reviews (PBR) I and II. Again, requests for additional **SPA Grant** assistance should be done with the concurrence of the local USAID Mission and should be communicated to PC/Washington through a joint cable, fax or e-mail. For those posts where there is no USAID presence, a cable, fax or e-mail to the PC/Washington SPA Coordinator stating the additional resources required and a justification for the request will suffice. The PC/ Washington SPA Coordinator will discuss the request with Peace Corps Regional staff and the USAID Project Officer and inform the post of the decision. For **SPA Technical Assistance** requests, posts should submit Center Activity Request forms in the same manner followed during the Operating Plan exercise.

3. SPA Funding Requests to USAID/Washington

Following the IPBS Strategic Plan submissions by posts, but prior to the Operating Plan submissions, the PC/ Washington SPA Coordinator prepares a preliminary resource request submission to USAID, through the USAID Project Officer. This funding request is based on the proposed funding levels submitted in the joint USAID/Peace Corps cables, historical expenditure patterns, and projected USAID funds availability.

Once funding support decisions within the respective USAID geographic Bureaus are finalized, the USAID Project Officer notifies the PC/ Washington SPA Coordinator of the funding expected to be authorized for the following fiscal year. Both USAID and Peace Corps each follow their own internal administrative processes which lead to approval of the Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA) authorization document. Once funding authorization is received from USAID (usually in late August or early September), the PC/Washington SPA Coordinator incorporates the final **SPA Grant** and **Technical Assistance** funding decisions into a master cable, which the Center distributes to posts notifying them of all Center decisions on requests for Center assistance submitted during the Operating Plan exercise.

4. SPA Budget Authority to Posts

- **Grants:** Budget authority for SPA Grants is transferred from Headquarters, through the Center, to posts at the beginning of each fiscal year (on/about October 1). However, depending on availability of funds and other fiscal considerations, it may not always be possible to transfer the entire year's authority at the start of the fiscal year. All budget authority issued during a fiscal year expires at the close of that fiscal year. In all cases, any unobligated authority remaining at the close of a fiscal year -- as specified in posts' end-of-year closeout reports -- is withdrawn. In most cases, the withdrawn authority is applied to funding requirements for the SPA Program in the next fiscal year and is not carried forward as additional authority available to a specific post.

One exception is where SPA Programs are supported through a USAID Mission Operating Year Budget (OYB). In this case, any unused authority will be made available to the post in the subsequent year.

- **Technical Assistance:** Budget authority for each approved SPA Technical Assistance event is transferred by the Center to posts at the beginning of the fiscal quarter in which the event is scheduled to occur. Any interim requests for SPA Technical Assistance should be submitted at PBR I or II following the standard procedures established by the Office of Planning, Budget and Finance (OPBF) and the Regions.

Posts should be aware that the ability to provide funds for Grants and Technical Assistance activities will vary from year to year. In the event that funding shortfalls do occur, the Center will consult with post and Regional staff to determine equitable adjustments to funding levels. Funding decisions will take into account prior year

spending patterns, the number of PCVs in each participating country, and previous compliance with SPA reporting requirements.

III. SPA Program Implementation

The SPA Program is based on the principle of "helping people help themselves" and focuses on facilitating sustainable development at the local community level. The Program is designed to provide communities with small infusions of financial support needed to initiate the activities they have identified and planned together to address community concerns. By also providing programming and training support to Peace Corps staff, PCVs and HCNs at post, the SPA Program enables Center, Region and post staff to increase community skill levels through technical expertise, long- and short-term project planning assistance and monitoring and evaluation.

Through the SPA Program, Peace Corps Volunteers facilitate and help communities work through the process of identifying concerns and problems, analyzing solutions to these problems, and assisting the communities in mobilizing resources, both internal and external, to address the problems.

III-A. SPA Grants Component

1. The Use of SPA Grants

The SPA Program focuses on the community, and provides modest grants which support development efforts that local community organizations can undertake on the own, first with the collaboration of the PCV and then through their own efforts. The SPA Grant component can be used in a variety of ways, to address local-level development problems and concerns, and to build capacity and transfer the skills that will permit community organizations to continue working to resolve even more complex development problems and concerns.

The different uses of SPA Grants are described below.

Community development activities

SPA Grants provide community organizations with small amounts of financial support to carry out activities they have identified to address their basic needs and those of their communities. SPA Grants can help communities gain access to clean, potable water, while providing complementary training in building latrines, maintaining the water system infrastructure, and reducing the spread of water-borne diseases. SPA Grants also support activities that provide "hands-on" training and help increase employment and income for groups who do not have access to capital, equipment or markets required to generate income. SPA-supported educational activities improve access to formal and non-formal education for students and community residents, upgrade infrastructure, and provide instruction in subjects ranging from literacy, to computer instruction, to vocational and employment

training. Environmental education, conservation of biodiversity, and sustainable natural resources management are also important areas of **SPA Grant** activity, especially where such activity creates new jobs and income for communities.

Community-based training

Building capacity is the essence of the SPA Program, and plays a central role in many country-level SPA Programs. SPA Grants can be used to build capacity and transfer the skills that will permit community organizations to carry out sustainable development activities at the local level.

A number of posts have enhanced the transfer of development skills to local organizations through community-level training activities. Technical skill transfer through locally-organized, community-based training has shown itself to be extremely cost-effective. In contrast to a technical IST — which may take place at the national/regional level and last several days—community-level training activities usually don't incur extensive travel and per diem costs.

Although SPA-supported community activities usually include some measure of training or capacity building, a change in the SPA Program in 1997 expanded the use of **SPA Grants** for activities that focus exclusively on community-level training organized by Peace Corps Volunteers and community members. These locally-organized training events are supported through the use of **SPA Grants**, both for materials and to offset the costs of HCN travel and per diem to communities and/or local training centers where they receive specific technical skills training. (Please keep in mind, however, that the **SPA Grant** contribution for HCN travel and per diem, when required, cannot exceed \$500 per training activity. See "Limitations on SPA Grant funding," below.)

Exchanges

SPA Grants may also be used to allow the counterparts of PCVs to exchange skills with PCVs and counterparts in other communities. During these exchanges, counterparts receive specific skills training from members of the "host" community. In other cases, **SPA Grants** allow HCN technical experts to travel to communities and lead or facilitate training sessions. In still other cases, **SPA Grants** allow counterparts to travel to a local training center, NGO, or model farm to gather information and acquire needed skills.

Notes:

1. **Community Focus:** Host-country community groups are to be the target participants and primary organizers of training activities supported with **SPA Grants**. Whenever possible, local host-country national resources -- employees of government agencies, NGOs, and community members themselves -- should contribute their skills and knowledge to these training events.

2. **Community Counterpart:** As with other SPA Grant activities, locally-organized, community-level training events require that community members — the training beneficiaries — contribute some of their own resources (either cash or an in-kind contribution) to offset the total cost of the training.
3. **Transportation Costs:** SPA funds may be used to cover all transportation costs connected with supplies and materials procured for SPA activities. Local transportation costs are considered to be a legitimate cost component of commodity procurement. However, the transportation costs of goods (e.g., library books and materials, computer equipment) from the United States is not an allowable expense.
4. **Travel and Per Diem Costs:** local HCN travel and per diem costs may be covered by SPA Grants only when costs are connected to community-level, locally-organized, participatory training events. The training may be part of a broader SPA-supported community development activity or may constitute the entire activity. SPA Grant support for travel and per diem is subject to the following conditions:
 - HCN travel and per diem costs must be directly related to participation in community-level, locally-organized training events, i.e., events organized by PCVs and the HCNs they work with. Training must also be linked to strengthening the technical and organizational skills needed by community groups to successfully implement small-scale, community development activities.
 - The SPA Grant contribution toward the costs of HCN travel and per-diem may not exceed \$500 per training activity. For community-organized training activities with travel/per diem costs in excess of \$500, posts may request SPA Technical Assistance support from the Center. Section III of this Handbook describes the procedure to follow in requesting SPA Technical Assistance.
 - Only HCNs are eligible for travel and per-diem support from SPA Grants; funds may not be used to support PCV travel.

SPA Grant funds may only be applied to local, in-country travel. Funds may not be used to support travel to other countries. In cases where a proposed training activity requires HCN travel to another country, posts may request SPA Technical Assistance support from the Center.

Please contact the PC/Washington SPA Coordinator with questions concerning the types of projects that qualify for SPA funding, or whether SPA funding can support a particular local-level training activity.

2. Limitations on the Use of SPA Grants

As with any program, there are certain restrictions on the use of SPA funds. SPA funds may not be used to support:

- a) Administrative costs normally associated with the placement and assignment of Peace Corps Volunteers, e.g., PCV housing or transportation.
- b) Overhead or other administrative costs associated with an individual SPA activity that may be incurred by Peace Corps, USAID, or the cooperating community organization. Prohibited costs include, but are not limited to, utility bills, building or office rentals, telephone bills or Internet service and access charges. However, the initial costs associated with a telephone hook-up or utility connection are allowable.
- c) Improvement of financial capital assets of the group involved, or the initial investment in a long term financial program, such as a revolving fund or credit union. For example, SPA funding cannot be used to capitalize a loan fund. However, SPA Grant funds may be used for the production of a commodity which could then be sold to generate income. The revenue generated from the sale of the commodity could be invested as the local organization sees fit.
- d) Personal services, except in such cases when the services of a local artisan or other technically skilled individual may enhance the success of a SPA activity. In such cases, however, personal services must be short-term and restricted to local sources.
- e) Assistance to organizations in the promotion or conduct of religious activities or to construct religious facilities.
- f) Financing of police, military or prison activities and programs;
- g) Educational or other facilities for use, in significant part, by U.S. employees or their dependents.
- h) Purchase of a motor vehicle or other conveyance to be used primarily for transportation of people.

3. The Phases of Activity Implementation

At the Peace Corps post level, the implementation of a SPA Grant can be divided into four major phases:

- 1) Activity Planning/Proposal Development
- 2) Proposal Review
- 3) Activity Administration
- 4) Activity Monitoring and Evaluation

The SPA *Activity Agreement*, *Activity Abstract*, *Activity Log*, and *Activity Completion Report* are forms which can be used to assist communities and PCVs to plan, monitor and evaluate activities. Each of these forms is discussed in more detail below. Sample forms are included in the appendices.

It is important to remember that the same implementation phases and documentation requirements apply whether SPA Grant-funded activities focus on production/construction or on capacity-building. In other words, locally- organized training activities still require completion of a SPA *Proposal*, *Activity Agreement*, *Activity Abstract*, *Activity Log*, and *Activity Completion Report*.

Phase 1: Activity Planning and Proposal Development

Community development begins when the members of a community identify their hopes and dreams and then work together to marshal the skills and resources needed to achieve their goals. The Activity Planning and Proposal Development phase provides a “road map” that can help a group realize its goals.

To facilitate this planning process, a PCV works closely with her/his counterpart and other community members, discussing and deciding what **priority need** they will address and what action is required to address it. The process of discussing and deciding can take some time but is absolutely essential to achieving effective community participation. Prioritizing needs and actions, and then assigning roles and responsibilities is, in fact, the process of activity planning. Once the group has agreed upon a plan with clearly delineated responsibilities and timeframes, it is possible to translate the plan into a proposal.

Continuing to work closely with a local community group, the PCV helps develop the SPA proposal. Preparation of the proposal continues the planning process begun by the community and the PCV to determine the priority need the activity will address. In addition to outlining a planned activity, drafting the proposal can also help identify other key individuals and organizations (e.g. government agencies, NGOs, PVOs, etc.) who can assist the community and establish relationships with them. Finally, the proposal can also be used by the community group as an implementation guide for the activity and as a monitoring instrument to check its progress in meeting its goals and objectives.

The proposal also provides the PCV’s Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD) – and/or Project Manager, PCV Leader/Coordinator, SPA committee, etc. -- with a framework for ongoing discussion about the activity. At many posts, PCVs (and community members, if possible) are required to discuss the proposed activity with their APCD or other appropriate Peace Corps staff person prior to developing a proposal and submitting it for SPA funding approval. This gives Peace Corps staff an opportunity to discuss the community activity with the PCV and counterpart, in order to determine if the proposed solution is appropriate and technically feasible, if all available sources of in-country resources have been fully explored, and if the levels of community contribution and SPA funding are reasonable.

- a) Although SPA proposal formats may be adapted to suit the needs of individual countries, any variation must include the following basic components:
- b) Local language summary, if appropriate
- c) Description of the priority need to be addressed
- d) Benefits and Gains (what the proposed solution will mean to the community)
- e) Action plan
- f) Budget in U.S. Dollars

g) Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

With respect to the budget component, it must specifically show what SPA funds will be used for. It must also include a breakdown of the community group's financial contribution to the activity, including a calculation or valuation of any in-kind contribution, as well as any additional contributions to be received from government agencies, NGOs or other international organizations. Basic components of a SPA proposal, including budget line items, are outlined in greater detail in Guidelines for Writing SPA Proposals (Appendix C). See also SPA Activity Criteria Checklist (Appendix D).

The *Activity Agreement* (Appendix E) should be attached as the cover sheet to the activity proposal and **must bear the signature of the local group's authorized representative**. In addition, the Activity Agreement must include the following elements:

- Name of the community group
- Name and Close of Service date of the PCV
- Activity Name and Activity Number (assigned by Peace Corps post)
- Total Activity Cost, Community Contribution, and Amount of the SPA Grant, expressed in U.S. Dollars
- Timeframe for Activity Implementation
- Authority under which the Activity Agreement is executed (as stated in the country-level SPA Memorandum of Understanding)
- Other local organization(s), U.S. Government signature(s) and concurring signatures, if necessary

Phase 2: Proposal Review

Each Peace Corps post is responsible for establishing an internal SPA proposal review process. At some posts, the Country Director reviews all proposals. At other posts, a SPA Committee composed of Peace Corps staff and PCVs is established to review the submitted proposals. At still other posts, USAID staff participate as do representatives from host-country agencies. Regardless of the review process and the make-up of the review body, certain essential criteria for each approved activity must be met:

- The activity must fall within the broad area of community development.
- The activity must be conceived and implemented by a local community organization or a group working in conjunction with a PCV.
- The local group must devote some of its own resources to the activity.
- To the extent possible, the activity must be scheduled for completion within one year of the establishment of the obligation and a reasonable period before completion of the PCV's service.

- The contribution of a SPA Grant toward completion of the activity must not exceed \$10,000 per any one activity, or a lower ceiling if dictated by the country-level MOU.
- HCN travel and per diem for the activity may not exceed \$500 per activity without prior approval from the PC/Washington SPA Coordinator.
- The activity must not encourage continued reliance on U.S. or other outside assistance.

Given that the above are requirements for **each** activity proposal, posts may choose to include additional criteria which are post-specific, as long as any adaptations do not violate the SPA Program's basic guidelines and criteria. For example, while the basic guidelines require a local group to devote *some* of its own resources to an activity, a post may require that a community group contribute 15%, 25% or 50% of the total activity costs. Or, while there is a Grant ceiling of \$10,000 on any one activity, a post may decide that it will set a lower ceiling, say \$3,000 or \$5,000. (As a general guideline, over the past few years, typical **SPA Grant** activities approved have been in the range of \$2,400 - \$3,000.) What a post **cannot** do, however, is waive the community contribution entirely, or exceed the \$10,000 grant ceiling for the activity. If questions arise concerning the appropriateness of such additional criteria, contact the PC/Washington SPA Coordinator for additional guidance.

As posts are developing their proposal review process, it may be useful to incorporate the following questions as criteria in assessing potential SPA activities:

- Does the activity increase local skills capacity?
- Are the beneficiaries among the most needy?
- Does the activity promote a lasting solution to the priority need?
- Are the beneficiaries an integral part of the project development and implementation process?
- Will the activity use locally available resources?
- Is the activity complementary to other development activities being supported by Peace Corps?
- Does the activity have potential for replication?
- Is the activity technologically appropriate?
- Is the activity culturally acceptable?
- Is the activity ecologically sound?

For more information on the importance of having a solid set of project/activity criteria when developing a project framework, see Peace Corps' Programming and Training Booklet II, Chapter 3 Develop the Framework: Where Do We Want To Go? (Available from the Center/ ICE.)

Some posts develop a checklist of criteria -- a kind of working tool for Peace Corps staff, PCVs and communities -- that can be used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of planned activities. Such a checklist can become part of an information guide for PCVs and Counterparts that posts put together for their SPA Program.

Finally, please keep in mind that the SPA Program is intended to function as a fast funding mechanism. The proposal review process should be structured in such a way as to facilitate timely decision making and release of funds, with a minimum of paperwork for Peace Corps and USAID staff.

Post is encouraged to consider a 'rolling' approval for SPA Grant activities, rather than approve projects at only one or two times during the year. Recent experience suggests that there is a close relationship between activity success and such factors as the timeliness of funding and the ability of the PCV to complete an activity well before his/her COS date.

Phase 3: Activity Administration

Assigning Activity Numbers

Each SPA Grant activity approved for funding at post is given a sequential control number, assigned in country. The control number identifies the fiscal year for which the activity is funded, a three-digit (country) location code, and a sequential control number from 001 through 999. Activities are numbered, as follows, using an example of an activity in Bolivia that was approved for implementation in Fiscal Year 2000. The activity is a women's vegetable gardening activity (let's call it the Goodtime Gardening Project):

- 00 = Fiscal Year 2000
- 511 = Location Code for Bolivia
- 010 = The tenth activity funded in Bolivia using FY-2000 funds.

In this example, 00-511-010 becomes the activity number for the Goodtime Garden Project. Although this activity was approved and obligated in FY-2000, implementation may continue into FY-2001. (Please remember, however, that the activity must be completed within one year of the obligation date.)

The activity number and name should appear on all documents and correspondence referring to this activity.

Completing the Activity Abstract Form

An *Activity Abstract* (Appendix F) is required for each SPA Grant activity. As part of the SPA Program operating procedures established at each post, the PCV is responsible for completing *the Activity Abstract*, and a determination is made at post whether the SPA Committee or appropriate APCD will be responsible for forwarding it on to the PC/ Washington SPA Coordinator. The *Activity Abstract* must include:

- Post assigned Activity Number
- Activity Name
- Name of the Community Group

- Volunteer Name and COS Date
- Estimated direct beneficiaries of activity, disaggregated by gender
- Community members who will actively participate in the activity
- Activity implementation period
- Peace Corps Project Sector and SPA Program Priority Area Grouping
- Budget detail, including community in-kind valuation and any third-party resources
- Priority need to be addressed
- Activity tasks
- Expected benefits and gains
- Indicators to be used for measuring benefits and gains
- Statement of how the SPA funds will be used

Copies of completed *Activity Abstracts* should be sent to the PC/Washington SPA Coordinator on an ongoing basis throughout the fiscal year, following post approval of the activity. It is **neither necessary nor** preferred to wait until an activity has been completed before sending the *Activity Abstract* to Washington. Timely submission and receipt of *Activity Abstracts* is critical to the Program, as information from the *Activity Abstract* is used to prepare reports on the Program and for periodic updates to the USAID Project Officer, and to assess the need for supplementary and future funding requirements.

A complete SPA proposal packet, inclusive of all the documentation related to an activity, does **not** need to be submitted to the PC/ Washington SPA office, except when the *Activity Abstract* makes reference to the proposal in lieu of completing the *Abstract* summary statements. Peace Corps posts should retain the *SPA Proposal* and *Activity Agreement* forms in their files, in accordance with Agency directives on file management. However, if posts would like to submit an exemplary activity or “case study” to the PC/Washington SPA staff -- for use in reports or other outreach material – a copy of the complete proposal packet along with photos and any other background information will be gratefully accepted. The original should remain at post as part of the Program record file. Conversely, as PC/ Washington SPA staff review *Activity Abstracts* and *Activity Completion Reports*, we may be in contact with posts to request additional information on a particular activity.

Disbursing and Accounting for SPA Funds

It is strongly encouraged, as part of the development of a *SPA Activity Proposal*, that the PCV and the community group establish an implementation plan that includes a realistic schedule for resource input requirements. When developing the implementation plan, it is advisable for the PCV to meet with the post Administrative Officer (AO), to determine whether the schedule builds in enough lead time to allow for processing the grant payment(s) **before** funds are needed for approved activity expenses (e.g. materials procurement).

Whenever possible, the planning exercise should also include a provision that the community group establish a bank account to manage SPA activity funds. If the community group has an established bank account, or is a recognized entity, this should be communicated to the post AO so that a Vendor Identification Number can be established.

There is an on-going discussion on the advisability of establishing bank accounts in the name of the community group, and entrusting group members with the management of funds. Given that the purpose of the **SPA Grants Program** is to strengthen the capacity of community organizations to carry out sustainable local development activities, post is encouraged to consider options that will permit communities to gain direct experience in managing funds. For example, a bank account may be opened in the name of the community group, where three signatures, including the PCVs, are required to withdraw funds from the account. Encouraging the PCV and the community, **together**, to fill out and maintain the *Activity Log* will also provide an opportunity for the community group to gain 'hands-on' financial management experience. Post should feel free to include additional conditions as well, for example, requiring a PCV to work closely with a representative from the local community organization to approve all disbursements, or requiring more frequent reports.

Once an activity has been approved for implementation, the AO at each post is responsible for establishing an obligation for the approved activity. The *SPA Activity Agreement* and the *Activity Proposal* itself are the obligating documents. In addition to the standard fiscal coding attached to any obligating document, each **SPA Grant** obligation document should also be marked with the Activity Control Number, described earlier.

The method of disbursement of **SPA Grant** funds against an individual activity obligation is left to the discretion of each Peace Corps post. Depending on the size of the activity, it may make sense to disburse funds in one payment. For larger-scale activities, however, it may be more appropriate to disburse funds in an incremental manner.

The method for disbursing SPA Grant funds will depend on the nature of financial institutional support available in the country or region, and the relative level of the management capacity of the community group, among other factors. Imprest funds may also be used to facilitate the disbursement of SPA funds. Regardless of the particular method, standard Peace Corps accounting procedures and regulations should be followed.

Disbursement of **SPA Grant** funds will occur in one of three ways:

- a. Payment to Local Organizations** - As mentioned previously, the preferred method of disbursement is directly to the local organization because it helps promote and strengthen the financial management capability of the organization.

Prior to making such payment, however, it may be necessary for post staff to consult with the PCV to determine the financial management ability of the local group. It may also be necessary to further consult with PC/Washington on procedural controls for the prevention of fraud and misuse of SPA funds.

Funds may be disbursed directly to the organization based on its planned activity implementation schedule or on a reimbursable basis if the community organization has the resources to “front” the purchases and then seek reimbursement for its actual costs.

In the event the PCV elects to serve as a co-signer of a community group’s bank account, there should be a clear written statement in the SPA Activity Proposal protecting the PCV, and limiting the PCV’s liability in the administration of SPA funds. Moreover, the Proposal should clearly state that the PCV does not assume liability for any other decisions or actions the community group may undertake with respect to the SPA activity in question or in the future.

Monetary limits and enforcement parameters on liability issues may vary according to the circumstances. Please contact the SPA Coordinator in Washington for guidance on how to proceed.

When requesting a check, or when making a cash payment to a local organization, the back-up documentation for the payment request should be a copy of the approved Activity Agreement.

b. Direct Payment - For major activity purchases, payment should be made by check directly to the vendors or suppliers. The payment should be made only upon the submission of a valid invoice for goods and services received, and should follow the normal voucher process for check or cash payments.

c. Disbursement to PCVs - This method is the least preferred, although it is sometimes necessary when the local group’s financial management capability or the local banking and market infrastructure is inadequate. In cases where funds must be disbursed to PCVs, every effort should be made to involve a member(s) of the local organization in the approval and tracking of purchases, as well as other financial management functions (e.g., completing their own copy of an Activity Log). **Under no circumstance** should a PCV be required to accept funds without his/her prior written voluntary consent to do so. The consent form (see Appendix L for an example) that a PCV signs before receiving any SPA funds must clearly state that the PCV accepts liability for the funds he or she is receiving. Once funds are transferred to the group, however, the PCV’s liability reverts to the limited liability for managing SPA Grant funds, as described above.

For all disbursements, please include an executed copy of the Activity Agreement approved by the Country Director. For disbursements made to or through PCVs, include a signed copy of the PCV Consent and Liability

Acceptance form (Appendix L). For disbursements to host-country nationals, include a signed copy of the Host-Country National Consent and Liability Acceptance form (Appendix M).

Budget Advice and Activity Accounting for SPA Grants

SPA funding is an increase to a post's budget authority, provided under a particular Purpose Code. Posts are responsible for all aspects of the accounting of funds received from SPA. This includes assuring that obligations and liquidations are correctly recorded; monitoring and reconciling the post CUFFS records to the IFO Reporter; and requesting adjustments to authority, obligations and liquidations through standard procedures established by the Office of Planning, Budget and Finance (OPBF), and as described in the Overseas Financial Management Handbook (OMFH) published by International Financial Operations (IFO). Section IV of this SPA Handbook provides additional guidance on a post's financial reporting of SPA activities.

The Center, via OPBF, transfers **SPA Grant** budget authority directly to posts, in response to post requests and approved PC/USAID funding levels. Authority is transferred by means of an electronic *Budget Advice*. A *Budget Advice* is sent at the start of each fiscal quarter, and when necessary, in the middle of a quarter (ad-hoc). Post will receive a confirmation notice from the Center's Administrative Liaison Officer for all Center funding actions via cable or e-mail. This confirmation will reflect the Activity Title, Center Activity Tracking System (CATS) Reference Number, Purpose Code, Transfer Amount and Transfer Quarter. Posts should verify that the amounts in the confirmation notice are consistent with the requested amounts and the electronic Budget Advice received from OPBF/IFO.

Budget Authority for **SPA Grants** is issued on a fiscal year basis. Each **SPA Grant** activity must be individually obligated within the particular fiscal year and liquidated as the individual transactions related to Grant-funded activity are completed and receipts tendered. *SPA Grant funds must NEVER be block obligated.*

Obligations against **SPA Grant** authority cannot exceed the budget authority issued. Once a post has obligated all of the authorized **SPA Grant** funds, it **cannot** continue to approve additional activities for implementation. Careful management of funds must be in place so as not to exceed the post budget authority. If additional authority is needed, post should contact the PC/Washington SPA Coordinator during the designated Center request periods of the IPBS cycle.

The AO at each post is responsible for maintaining an account of the annual budget authority provided for **SPA Grant** activities through the Post CUFFS records. Please note: Unlike previous years, fiscal coding for SPA Grant, and all other reimbursable funding is consistent with fiscal coding for appropriated funds.

SPA Grant activity obligations should be coded in this format:

LOC FY PC OB XXXX

LOC = 3-digit Post Location Code, **FY** = 1-digit fiscal year (2001 = 1), **PC** = 4-digit purpose code, **OB** = 2-digit, first two digits of the object class, **XXXX** = 4-digit sequential number

Effective FY 2001, all **SPA Grant** activities must be coded to Object Class 4120. The reference field of the obligation record in cuffs should include the unique SPA Activity Number (FY-LOC CODE-SEQUENTIAL NO.) established by post at the time the grant activity is approved.

The AO, in coordination with a Post-designated SPA Coordinator, is also responsible for tracking obligations and disbursements for each individual Grant-funded activity. Timely tracking of funds is extremely important, especially in cases of Volunteer early termination, medical evacuation and close of service.

Remember, a SPA Grant obligation is valid for one year after it is established. The activity must be completed, receipts verified, liquidations finalized and any de-obligation actions done within this one-year time frame.

PCVs and community representatives should receive instructions about ensuring accountability for funds, the level of required documentation to substantiate procurements, and other accounting related procedures. In all cases the following three guidelines must be followed:

- Invoices must be obtained for all large purchases of equipment and materials. Invoices should be legible, with an English translation, and contain the name of the vendor, name of purchaser, date of purchase, itemization of materials purchased, quantity, cost per item in U.S. Dollars, and total amount of the purchase.
- For goods and services where invoices are not traditionally used (e.g., by artisans), receipts should be collected containing, at a minimum, the date, the service provided, the name of the service provider, the number of hours or days worked, an hourly or daily rate, and the total amount paid (Note: Day laborers and unskilled labor should not be paid from SPA funds, in accordance with guidance provided on page 13 of this Handbook).
- The community group and/or the PCV should submit interim reports on the use of SPA Grant funds, at specific intervals (monthly or quarterly, dependent on the projected length of the activity) as well as a final report upon completion of the activity. The final report should account for the total amount of all invoices and receipts, as well as any unused funds.

Using the Activity Log to Track SPA Grants

At the time a SPA proposal is approved, an *Activity Log* (Appendix H) is established and kept on file at the Peace Corps Office by the Post SPA Coordinator. Initially, the

Activity Log shows the post-assigned SPA Activity Number, an Activity Title, the approved **SPA Grant** level (in both USD and local currency) and date the obligation was created. As funds are disbursed against the activity, they are recorded in this record showing the date of issuance, assigned document control number, the amount of the transaction in USD, and the balance remaining in the activity agreement being implemented. Likewise, as activity invoices and receipts are turned in by the PCV and community group, they are also recorded on the *Activity Log* and an outstanding balance against the Peace Corps disbursement is re-computed. The *Activity Log* is vital to internal control and is subject to review by Peace Corps' Office of the Inspector General or USAID auditors. Brief notes or comments relevant to an individual implementation action may be attached to the *Activity Log* as needed.

Phase 4: Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is integral to project development and implementation. Monitoring answers the question, "how are we doing?" and tells us if the project is on track and making progress toward achieving its objectives. Evaluation tells us if the project is on the **right** track and having the desired impact, and answers the question, "what differences do we see as a result of our efforts?" Monitoring and evaluation are also key components of the capacity-building process at the community level. Not only can monitoring and evaluation demonstrate how projects are contributing to building the capacity of individuals and families, organizations, and communities, but when done in a participatory manner, can also encourage greater ownership of the project by participants. Finally, monitoring and evaluation can facilitate the process of learning from experience, and provide insights and lessons to share with others involved in similar activities.

Within Peace Corps, monitoring and evaluation efforts collect information that is used to address the Capacity Building Framework at the level of individuals, service providers, organizations and communities. Changes occurring are expressed in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior.

The SPA Program focuses on building the capacity of local groups and communities to carry out sustainable development activities. Given this focus, most of the changes that occur from using SPA Grants will take place at the level of the individual, the family, or the community group. Some activities may, in fact, impact the community at-large. In any event, change will be expressed principally in terms of knowledge and skills.

Post is asked to monitor the progress of SPA Grants and report on the outcomes of the activities (See Appendix F and *SPA Activity Completion Report*, Appendix G). In this regard, one task PCVs will face is deciding what to monitor. Another task will be to select the appropriate "markers" (usually called indicators), that will help demonstrate whether projects are, in fact, building skills and abilities within community groups, and whether these groups are becoming more able to sustain and/or broaden their activity over time.

Indicators can help measure change that is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Specific indicators can measure tangible outcomes (numbers of training events and individuals trained) as well as more intangible outcomes (observations of how the self-esteem of participants has changed from their participation in the training).

In order to conduct monitoring and evaluation of SPA Grants, PCVs are asked to select three or four indicators that they will track during implementation of the activity. PCVs, in consultation with counterparts and the community group, should select indicators that will permit them to describe the benefits and gains expected as outcomes of the activity, and should be chosen during the proposal planning process.

To aid in the selection of indicators, the SPA Program has grouped indicators into two broad categories which reflect the nature of small, community development activities. **Quality of life** indicators will permit PCVs, their counterparts and community groups to describe benefits and gains in terms of basic needs, skills/knowledge, income and self-esteem -- benefits which occur among individuals and their families. **Organizational capacity** indicators, as the name implies, will permit PCVs, counterparts and community groups to describe the benefits and gains which primarily occur within organizations, in terms of more transparent and accountable organizational practice, improved management, and greater financial self-reliance.

As the activity unfolds, PCVs, counterparts and the community should take stock of how they are doing, in relation to the selected indicators. At the end of the activity, the PCV and the community should fill out the Activity Completion Report (Appendix F), again focusing on benefits and gains, and indicate any changes that might have occurred during the implementation period.

The Activity Completion form, in addition to providing quantitative data on the number of activity beneficiaries and participants, disaggregated by gender, and the final activity cost breakdown, also provides PC/Washington with critical information for reporting to its partner agency, USAID. This information includes:

- What did the community group achieve because of the activity? What happened?
- Did the focus of the planned activity change?
- How has the community group been affected by the activity? What has changed within the community?
- What new skills have been learned or transferred to activity participants?
- What problems were encountered? How were they resolved?
- What observations were made about social behavioral attitudes toward gender equality and interactions with other groups?
- What are the next steps for the community following this activity?
- How will recurring costs be managed?
- Were there observable unexpected outcomes?
- Recommendations for others interested in a similar activity.

Remember, copies of the *Activity Completion Report* should be sent to the PC/Washington SPA Coordinator on an ongoing basis throughout the fiscal year, upon completion of the activity. This information is critical for the timely preparation of SPA reports and to address other program inquiries and requirements.

Post is also encouraged to consider undertaking country-level evaluation of SPA Grants. Guidelines for undertaking an evaluation of SPA Grants are provided in Appendix N. Note that the SPA Program will cover the costs involved in a country-level evaluation.

III-B. SPA Technical Assistance Component

SPA Technical Assistance funds provide programming and training support for community-based development efforts. Specifically, **SPA Technical Assistance** funds are provided to reinforce the skills of community organizations and PCVs to carry out sustainable grassroots development activities.

As is the case with **SPA Grants**, in order to receive **SPA Technical Assistance** funds posts **must** have a current country-level MOU in place. Unlike **SPA Grants**, however, **SPA Technical Assistance** funds are managed by the Center and are accessed in a different manner.

To qualify for SPA Technical Assistance funding, an activity request must address at least one of the following:

- Provide an in-country training opportunity that leads to strengthening the skills capacity of the local community.
- Leverage technical assistance resources within the country or sub-region, and the HCN community when possible.
- Build long-term, in-country programming and training capacity for PCV counterparts.
- Develop necessary skills in HCNs to implement community activities they have initiated (or will initiate after training).
- Advise on SPA projects and activity design.

Types of SPA Technical Assistance include, but are not limited to:

- Project Design and Management (PDM) Workshops for PCVs and Counterparts;
- Technical exchanges between PCVs and Counterparts;
- HCN participation in technical training activities;
- SPA Country-level program evaluations;
- SPA Program consultations with Peace Corps, Host-country Agency and USAID staff.

SPA Technical Assistance can fund training activities at the national or regional level (e.g., In-Service Training, Project Design and Management Workshops), or at the community level (e.g., a community-based training organized by PCVs for HCNs, and where travel and per diem costs of the activity exceed \$500).

SPA Technical Assistance funds can also support HCN, Third-Country, or U.S.-based technical specialists, trainers or programmers to work with Peace Corps staff, Volunteers and local communities in developing and implementing community development activities. Other forms of technical assistance are available to assist posts and host-country agencies interested in developing project design skills, including project needs assessments, project reviews and evaluations, and technical consultations.

The PC/Washington SPA Program Coordinator in the Center manages **SPA Technical Assistance** funds. Requests for technical assistance may originate from Peace Corps posts, the Region, or from within the Center.

SPA Technical Assistance is only one resource that is available to provide assistance in community development activities. Peace Corps staff can also assist the community and PCVs by recommending other sources of information, such as, the Whole ICE Catalogue, the P&T Manual, and VITA (Volunteers in Technical Assistance) publications, among others.

1. Requesting SPA Technical Assistance Funds

Post should submit **SPA Technical Assistance** requests to the Center as part of the agency's annual Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS) exercise during the Operating Plan phase, and at PBR I and II. It is important to remember, however, that since the majority of field requests are submitted with the Operating Plan, most of the Center resources will be committed at that time, with fewer resources available at PBR I and II.

Requests are developed by Peace Corps staff at post, in consultation with Region and Center staff, and are submitted to the Center on the standard Center Activity Request form (Appendix I). Once received in Washington, each request is reviewed by SPA staff, Center Sector specialists and Regional Program and Training Advisors on the basis of technical merit, how the request complements post and regional strategies, and the way(s) in which the activity contributes to the goals of the SPA Program. Therefore, it is important that the Center Activity Request contain sufficient technical and budgetary information to allow for informed decision-making. The Center Activity Request must include:

- brief activity description
- Activity goals and objectives
- whether any Center or Consultant assistance is required
- level of SPA Technical Assistance requested
- what SPA funds will be used for

- breakout of the projected participants,
- Peace Corps post, host-country agency, and community contributions (if any) to the activity.

It is important that the *Center Activity Request* demonstrate how the use of **SPA Technical Assistance** will affect the future design and implementation of community development activities. Specifically, the request should articulate how the technical assistance being requested will help provide the skills necessary to build local capacity and promote sustainable development at the community level.

For further information on how to request Center technical assistance, refer to the annual IPBS guidance from Peace Corps, and the Center guidance provided for the submission of Operating Plan requests for Center assistance.

2. Technical Assistance Approval Criteria

All SPA Technical Assistance requests will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- Center Activity Request must be in support of small self-help projects within the broad programmatic area of community development.
- Center Activity Request must be technically sound.
- Center Activity Request must include HCNs as primary beneficiaries.
- When using personal service contractors (PSCs), post must strive to use HCN local hire PSCs.

If no local hire PSC is available and a U.S. or third-country PSC is required, a host-country national must be included in the scope of work for the proposed activity (as co-trainer or similar role) so that long-term, in-country programming or training capacity is built.

The activity budget request must show a reasonable Peace Corps post and /or host government agency contribution to the proposed activity. As with all technical assistance requests from the Center, posts are expected to cover PCV costs. We strongly encourage posts to cover PC staff-related costs.

Requests can only be submitted at Operating Plan, PBR I or PBR II.

Note: Once a U.S. or third-country PSC has provided SPA-funded programming or training assistance to a post, it is expected that the newly trained host-country national co-trainer will be the lead trainer when similar training is repeated at post.

3. Budget Authority

Once a **SPA Technical Assistance** request is approved, budget authority is administered in the same manner as any other Center budget authority provided to post. Funding support from **SPA Technical Assistance** increases a post's budget authority under a particular Purpose Code. Posts are responsible for all aspects

related to the accounting of funds received. This includes ensuring that obligations and liquidations are correctly recorded; monitoring and reconciling the post CUFFS records to the IFO Reporter; and requesting adjustments to authority, obligations and liquidations through standard procedures established by OPBF. Section IV of this Handbook provides additional guidance on a post's financial reporting of **SPA-supported Technical Assistance** activities.

Budget authority for approved technical assistance activities is transferred by the Center, via OPBF/IFO, to posts at the beginning of the quarter in which the technical assistance activity is scheduled to occur, generally a minimum of 30 days in advance of the scheduled activity start date. As is the case with Grant funds, a Budget Advice is electronically generated and transmitted to posts. The Budget Advice is sent at the start of each fiscal quarter, and when necessary, in the middle of a quarter (ad-hoc transfer). Post will receive a confirmation notice of all Center funding actions, including **SPA Technical Assistance**, via cable or e-mail from the Center's Administrative Liaison Officer. This confirmation will reflect the Activity Title, CATS Reference Number, Purpose Code, Transfer Amount and Transfer Quarter. Posts should verify that the amounts in the confirmation notice are consistent with the requested amounts and the electronic Budget Advice received from OPBF/IFO.

Obligations against SPA Technical Assistance authority cannot exceed the budget authority issued and must not be in the form of a block obligation. Moreover, **SPA Technical Assistance** budget authority is authorized for specific use in specific activities and cannot be reprogrammed by posts for other purposes or other activities without the expressed consent of the PC/Washington SPA Coordinator. Careful management of funds must be in place so as not to exceed the post budget authority or its authorized use.

Moreover, budget authority for **SPA Technical Assistance** activities should be converted to an obligation status in relation to the individual technical assistance activity for which the authority was provided. For example, if SPA support was provided for a conference where there is a) a contract with a facility for rooms and meals, b) travel allowances for participants, and c) supplies, there should be three separate obligations established, one for each budget line. Also, budget authority issued during any one fiscal year expires at the close of that fiscal year. Obligations should not be established in any one fiscal year that cannot be completed, liquidated and closed within one month following the end of the fiscal year (i.e., no more than 30 days into the new fiscal year).

The AO at each post is responsible for maintaining an account of the budget authority provided for **SPA Technical Assistance** activities through the post CUFFS records. **SPA Technical Assistance** activity obligations should follow the standard obligation "string" as other post administered funds. When possible, the description field of the obligation should include the Activity Title and/or CATS Activity Reference.

Remember, **SPA Technical Assistance** authority is valid only during the fiscal year in which it is issued. Obligations connected with an activity authorized during any given fiscal year must be completed by September 30 and the activity must be completed by October 31 of that year. Moreover, it is expected that all funds will be liquidated against technical assistance obligations, and the obligation record will match liquidations and be completely closed out by December 31. (To cite a hypothetical example, an activity authorized with FY-2000 funding is scheduled to take place between September 27 and October 12, 2000, and therefore spans two fiscal years. The expectation is that all obligations for the activity will be created by September 30, 2000, and that the final liquidations, and de-obligations, if necessary, against these obligations will be completed by December 31, 2000).

IV. SPA Program Reporting Requirements

In accepting SPA Program assistance, be it Grant or Technical Assistance support, each Peace Corps post assumes the same duties and responsibilities that any other reimbursable or appropriated funding authority requires in terms of documentation procedures, adequate accounting controls, and financial and programmatic reports required by PC/Headquarters' offices and the Center. In addition, post is responsible for submitting summary reports to the local USAID mission, according to the reporting procedures (that may be) established between individual USAID Missions and posts under their current SPA Program Memorandum of Understanding.

IV-A. Financial Reporting

Posts follow the same obligation, fiscal management, and accounting procedures for SPA as they would for any other appropriated or reimbursable account.

Post AOs are urged to maintain close monitoring of the status of all outstanding SPA Program budget authority, obligations, and liquidations. As expeditiously as possible, payments should be requested against outstanding obligations and activities and their related obligations should be closed out. Obligations should be reduced to liquidation level in a timely manner, and reported to PC/Washington either through the IFO Reporter or through the current year PBR exercises. Timely liquidations ensure that SPA funds can be reprogrammed back to the field.

IV-B. Programmatic Reporting

1. Grant Reporting

In those countries where there is a USAID presence, at the end of each fiscal year, the Peace Corps Country Director should provide a briefing to the appropriate USAID official regarding the experiences and lessons learned from the SPA activities authorized during that fiscal year. This briefing fosters an exchange of information

between the two agencies on SPA activities at the field level, and can become the basis for continued discussions on future directions, funding level support and possible collaborations on new project developments. A summary of this briefing should be forwarded to PC/Washington, to the attention of the SPA Coordinator and the Regional Director.

In some countries, if required by post-specific SPA guidelines, the community group receiving assistance may be requested to provide interim reports detailing the activity's progress and expenditures. Whenever possible, Peace Corps and USAID staff are encouraged to visit activity sites to demonstrate support for the community activity and to assist the Volunteer and community group in the ongoing monitoring of the activity.

As mentioned earlier, once a SPA activity has been approved by the Country Director, SPA review committee or other designated authority, a copy of the Activity Abstract should be sent to the PC/Washington SPA Coordinator. Upon completion of an activity, the PCV and community group should complete an Activity Completion Report, with any relevant narrative information or pictures as an attachment, and present it to the designated SPA Coordinator at post. A copy of this Activity Completion Report, with any attachments, should also be sent to the PC/Washington SPA Coordinator, and to the appropriate in-country USAID Officer, when required by the MOU.

Based on the submission of the *Activity Abstracts* and *Activity Completion Reports*, the PC/Washington SPA Program staff prepare a SPA Program activity report, which summarizes supported activities. The staff then presents the report to USAID/W, thereby fulfilling SPA program reporting requirements. This report, as well as aggregated summaries, is available to post staff and In-Country Resource Centers.

2. Technical Assistance Reporting

Each Peace Corps post receiving SPA Technical Assistance funds is required to submit a final programmatic report to the PC/ Center through the annual Project Status Report (PSR) filing. As part of the PSR guidance, posts will be provided with a list of all activities that are being supported with SPA funds for the fiscal year in question.

Beginning in FY2000, the only programmatic reporting required of posts receiving SPA Technical Assistance will be the completion of a short form contained within the PSR under the heading of **Post Activities Receiving Center Support**. The templates provided under these headings are designed to increase Peace Corps' own learning and to inform our partner agency, USAID, about how the resources of the SPA Program support Peace Corps' project goals and contribute towards sustainable community development.

- A copy of the template is enclosed as Appendix I. The following information is requested:
- Activity results, i.e., Did the activity contribute to materials development, curriculum design, project design, etc.?
- Were there any skills transferred as a result of the activity?, i.e., technical skills, training of trainers, organizational management skills.
- What was learned as a result of activity?, i.e., What do you now do differently?;
- How does this learning contribute to purposes and goals for which the technical assistance was provided?
- Comments on any other outcome of the activity (e.g., attitude changes; NGO development; new approaches or methodologies).
- Summary of the activity participants, disaggregated by gender.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

**Small Project Assistance Agreement
Between the U.S. Agency for International Development
And the Peace Corps *COUNTRY***

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Agreement between the Peace Corps (PC) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is to set the programmatic, operating and reporting procedures to be used in the implementation of the SPA Program in the *COUNTRY* during the Fiscal Years 1996 through 1999. (Approved procedures shall be set forth in the attachment to this agreement).

The SPA Program is designed to encourage and support community self-help efforts by providing funding for local activities which have an immediate impact at the community level. The program shall also support technical assistance and training to improve the design and management of sustainable community development efforts. Additionally, the Program should foster greater collaboration between USAID and Peace Corps staff and Volunteers in helping to solve *COUNTRY'S* development problems.

II. Authority

SPA Projects are authorized by and must be conducted within the terms of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (The "FAA"). Individual activities must meet the approval standards set forth in the SPA Handbook.

III. Governing Provisions

The Peace Corps agrees to provide the services outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between USAID and Peace Corps on the Small Project Assistance Funds, dated August 27, 1999.

IV. Period of Performance

This MOU shall be effective upon signature through *Month, Day, Year*

****NAME****

Country Director
Peace Corps/**Post**

**** NAME****

Title (Mission Director / USAID Representative)
U.S. Agency for International Development

Appendix B

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF SPA DOCUMENTATION

ACTIVITY AGREEMENT

PCV fills out: Activity name
Primary project classification
PCV name and COS date
Project implementation dates
Budget information

Community Organization Official is to sign in the appropriate place. Note: This signature should be obtained prior to the SPA Review Committee meeting in order to speed up the processing of the grant.

ACTIVITY ABSTRACT FORM

This is to be completed by the PCV and community members. It should reflect any changes recommended prior to activity approval.

All monetary amounts are to be listed in US Dollars.

Narrative descriptions are to be written as completely and concisely as possible. The Activity Abstract will be sent to PC/Washington for inclusion in the SPA Activities Report and SPA Program files.

ACTIVITY COMPLETION REPORT FORM

This report is due no later than 2 weeks after completion of project.

Narrative descriptions are to be written as completely and concisely as possible. The Activity Completion Report will be sent to PC/Washington for inclusion in the SPA Activities Report and SPA Program files.

ACTIVITY LOG

This is for the PCV's and community members' use in tracking project transactions. An additional copy is kept in the project file by the in-country SPA Coordinator for update on a quarterly basis.

Appendix C**SPA PROPOSAL WRITING GUIDELINES**

Use the following outline -- and the information in each section suggested for inclusion -- as a guide when preparing a SPA proposal.

A. LOCAL LANGUAGE SUMMARY (if applicable)

- Brief summary of activity
- Indicate community support for activity

B. STATEMENT OF NEED

- Background Information
 - ⇒ Community demographics (size, # families, % women, youth, minority)
 - ⇒ Relevant social and economic data on context/beneficiaries
 - ⇒ Brief history of group involved (purpose, size, legal status, internal structure, nature of leadership, previous activities undertaken as a group, capacity to manage activity)
- Description of the Need/Problem
 - ⇒ Describe the need or problem?
 - ⇒ Who is most directly affected?
 - ⇒ Why is this a priority?

C. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Describe the overall aim or goal of the activity (longer-term)
- Describe the intermediate objectives (shorter-term results; should be specific, measurable, achievable, time-bound)
- Specify who the beneficiaries are and how they will benefit
- Specify how activity will build on, or otherwise enhance, the community's assets

D. PROJECT DESIGN & ACTION PLAN

- List the tasks required to carry out the activity
- Who will carry out each task? (PCV, counterparts, other community members)
- Describe how the activity will be managed
- For required inputs (including labor, materials, transport), indicate where and how they can be acquired (utilize locally-available inputs whenever possible)
- If training is required, include training plan (human, material, and financial resources)
- Marketing plan (if applicable; include such aspects as storage of materials, where and when products will be sold, etc.)
- If activity will generate revenue, include plans for receiving and handling payments, for bookkeeping, and for distribution/use of revenue.
- Discuss plan for group/community to cover recurring costs for continuing the activity
- Describe any potential problems which may arise, and plans to cope with them
- What, beyond your direct control, could cause this activity to fail?

- Include any other issues of feasibility (e.g. appropriateness of proposed solution and technology, complexity of training or external technical assistance required)
- Include timeline for implementation of activity.

E. COST BREAKDOWN/BUDGET

- Demonstrate community contribution, and indicate whether contribution will be cash or in-kind contribution)
- Demonstrate that material/labor costs are reasonable and justified
- Indicate expected contributions from other sources (e.g. government, NGOs); indicate whether cash or in-kind
- Clearly detail total SPA funds requested and provide break down by type of line item
- Budget figures must correspond to pro-forma receipts
- Include total project cost and provide break down (listed as a percentage of the total project cost) of funds requested and contributed as counterpart

F. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Provide a monitoring plan for the activity (to include the indicators that will be used to track benefits/gains and the activity's progress toward meeting its objectives, who will be responsible for monitoring, how and when monitoring will be conducted)
- Provide an evaluation plan (to include the indicators that will be used to determine the activity's impact/outcomes, who will be responsible for conducting the evaluation, when and how it will be conducted)
- Discuss the likelihood that the group and the activity will continue beyond the implementation period; mention any new activities that are likely to be carried out by the group

G. ADDENDA (include as applicable)

- Contracts/work agreements with appropriate signatures
- Diagrams/Blueprints/Maps
- Pro-forma invoices
- Letters of support from other organizations participating in or endorsing the activity, including a description of the type of support to be provided.

Appendix D

SPA ACTIVITY CRITERIA CHECKLIST

The attached activity proposal:

- Is community initiated and directed.
- Is part of a self-help initiative to address a community priority.
- Has a clearly defined objective(s).
- Has a "capacity-building" component.
- Includes a complete and realistic budget.
- Demonstrates significant community counterpart contributions.
- Utilizes locally-available raw materials insofar as possible.
- Shows community commitment and ability to cover recurring costs in continuing the activity into the future.
- Describes the process for monitoring the progress of the activity and chooses specific indicators for tracking expected outcomes.
- Is scheduled for completion within approximately one-year of commencement.
- Is scheduled for completion before the COS date of the Volunteer.

I (we) have reviewed the attached activity proposal and certify that it is well planned, accurately budgeted, and has the approval of the appropriate community leaders and government officials.

(Designated SPA Review Committee Official)

Date (Month/Day/Year)

Name of Community Group: _____

Name of PCV: _____

Appendix E

To Be Completed by PC Staff
Activity Number:

**PEACE CORPS/*COUNTRY*
ACTIVITY AGREEMENT**

Requesting Community Group:

PCV Name:

COS Date:

Implementation Dates:

Budget:

Local Contribution	\$	Local Currency	@	%
SPA Grant Amount	\$	Local Currency	@	%
Total Project Cost	\$	Local Currency	@	

Fiscal Data:

Authority: This Activity Agreement is executed pursuant to the authority of the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of _____ dated ___/___/___ and in accordance with the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the (*COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION*) and Peace Corps, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Bilateral Agreement mentioned above, each acting through its respective duly authorized representative, have caused this Activity Agreement to be signed in their names and delivered as of this date and year.

Signature:

Signature:

Name: *Community Organization Official*

Name:

Title:

Title:

Peace Corps Director

Date

Date:

Concurrence (where applicable)
Name
Title
Organization
Date

Appendix F

SPA ACTIVITY ABSTRACT

Country:

Activity Number:

Activity Title:

Community Group:

PCV Name(s):

Peace Corps Project Name:

COS Date:

Activity Implementation Period:

From

/ /

To

/ /

Projected # of Beneficiaries / Participants	Male	Female	Total
Community Beneficiaries (include only those community members who will be directly affected by this activity)			
Community Group Participants (include those active in implementation)			
Community Group Participants Trained			
Number of Community Youth Active in Implementation			

Activity Classification

Peace Corps Project Sector Grouping

(Choose One)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Water & Sanitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

Priority Grouping

(Choose as many as applicable)

- Infrastructure Development** (Use this grouping if the activity includes construction and renovation of classrooms, libraries, science labs, resource centers, community centers, health clinics, market facilities, agriculture storage and processing facilities, water delivery systems, wells and toilets/latrines)
- Resources/ Equipment and Supplies** (Use this grouping if the activity includes books and other resources for libraries and resource centers, as well as equipment and supplies for health clinics, school labs, post production machinery, and other production / start up inputs. Category should also be used for purchase of start-up stock, seeds or tree stock as well as resources for community initiated information technology activities).
- Training** (Use this grouping if the activity will provide a substantial level of capacity building skills transfer in such areas as agricultural production and processing, business skills, community health, cooperative development, environmental education, health and hygiene, information technology, livestock production, marketing and management, non-formal education, camps, nutrition and food security, teacher education and vocational skills).
- Instructional Materials** (Use this grouping if the activity is involved with producing materials that may have applicability outside of this activity, in such areas as cooperative development, curriculum development, teaching aids, literacy, environmental education, health and hygiene, HIV/AIDS and technical support).
- Income Generation** (Use this grouping if the activity is addressing initiatives to improve the income capacity of the community in areas such as agriculture production, agroforestry, fruit tree production, beekeeping, livestock production, ecotourism, post harvest and processed foodstuffs, handicrafts or other small business endeavors).
- NGO Development** (Use this grouping if the activity includes organizational development inputs in establishing farmer associations, market associations, producer associations, parent-teacher groups, non-formal education groups and NGO networks).

Projected Budget				
Source	Type	Local Currency	Exchange Rate	Amount (USD)
SPA Grant	Cash			
Community Contribution	Cash			
	In-Kind Labor			
	In-Kind Materials			
	In-Kind Land			
Other Contributors (Int'l Organizations, NGOs, Government Agencies, etc.) <i>Specify source by name and type</i>				
Name:	Cash			
	In-Kind			
Name:	Cash			
	In-Kind			
TOTAL ACTIVITY BUDGET				

How will SPA Grant be used? *(be specific with planned use)*

1	What community identified priority does this SPA Grant activity address?	
2	Does this activity contribute to your Peace Corps project assignment? If YES, briefly describe the contribution.	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
3	List the principal tasks you and the community group will undertake to accomplish this activity.	
4	Does the community group have the skills required to undertake the activity? If not, what specific skills are needed and how will they be provided?	
5	How does the activity contribute to building capacity within the community?	
6	What benefits/gains do you	

	expect the community group to derive from this activity?	
7	How do you see the community group continuing after this activity is complete?	
8	A critical element of any activity monitoring plan is the selection of indicators you will use to describe and measure the gains and benefits. The SPA Program has grouped indicators into two categories, Quality of Life and Organizational Capacity. Please review the suggested indicators and incorporate them in your Activity Completion Report responses. Use as many as you feel the activity can support. Remember, these are only suggestions. If you feel you have other indicators that can be supported by the activity, discuss them with your APCD and use as appropriate.	<p style="text-align: center;">Quality of Life Indicators <i>(includes basic needs, skills/knowledge, income and self esteem)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> # of beneficiaries experiencing a change <i>(Observable and quantifiable. Number of people benefiting from such activities as construction, health and nutrition training, preventative health care, improved diet).</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> # of beneficiaries who perceive a change in their quality of life <i>(Non-tangible, related through community satisfaction with changes affecting improved diet, medical attention, sanitation and hygiene, improved opportunities) .</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> # of total beneficiaries acquiring new skills <i>(Quantitative and tangible).</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> # of total beneficiaries achieving new level of literacy <i>(Quantitative and tangible).</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> # of total beneficiaries applying new vocational skills <i>(Quantitative and more intangible. Relates more directly to behavior).</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Net number of new jobs created or improved <i>(Quantitative and tangible).</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Estimate of self-employment opportunities in production and commerce created <i>(Quantitative and tangible. Relates to skills and behavior).</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> # of beneficiaries with changed perception of self and others <i>(Qualitative and intangible. Relates directly to attitudes).</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> # of beneficiaries who assume new roles and functions <i>(Quantitative and tangible. Relates more directly to attitudes and behavior).</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Degree of acceptance or rejection and sense of inclusion and participation in decision-making <i>(Qualitative and more intangible. Relates to attitude and behavior changes, especially toward gender equality and interactions with minorities).</i></p>

8	(Continued)	<p style="text-align: center;">Organizational Capacity (includes organizational practice, accountability, and self-sufficiency.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrated capacity to define goals and objectives (<i>Observable and tangible. Relates most directly to knowledge, skills and behavior.</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrated and systematic approach to planning, monitoring and evaluation (<i>Observable and tangible. Relates to knowledge, skills, and behavior, especially ability to learn from experience.</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Management capacity in administration, production and/or marketing (<i>Observable and tangible. Relates to knowledge, skills and behavior, especially improved administrative practices and upgrading technical competence.</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Capability to mobilize resources (<i>Quantitative and tangible. Includes both cash and in-kind, as well as grants and loans from local, regional, national and international sources. Also includes technical or management assistance from same sources.</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> % of total resources which are internally generated (<i>Quantitative and tangible. Refers to sustainability of organization.</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Access to information (<i>Qualitative, generally observable, and intangible. Relates most directly to attitude and behavior, especially group's willingness to share information about all aspects of group activities. Also referred to as transparency in information sharing, and accountability in management of financial resources</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Participatory decision making (<i>Generally observable, qualitative and intangible. Relates more directly to attitudes and behavior, and may be expressed in degrees from low to high, depending on degree of shared decision making.</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> # of linkages the community group has with similar groups or networks (<i>number of formal and informal contacts and nature of these contacts.</i>)
---	-------------	--

Appendix G**SPA ACTIVITY COMPLETION REPORT****Country:****Activity Number:****Activity Title:****Community Group:****PCV Name(s):****Peace Corps Project Name:****COS Date:****Activity Implementation Period:**

From / / To / /

Actual # of Beneficiaries / Participants	Male	Female	Total
Community Beneficiaries			
Community Group Participants (<i>active in implementation</i>)			
Community Group Participants Trained			
Number of Community Youth Active in Implementation			

1.	What did the community group achieve because of the activity? What happened?	
2.	Did the focus of the activity change? If so, describe how and why.	
3.	How has the community group been affected by the activity? What has changed in the community? Use the indicators from the Activity Abstract.	
4.	What new skills have been learned or transferred to the activity participants? To the larger community?	
5.	What problems, if any, did you encounter during the activity and how did you resolve them?	

6.	If you did not use this as an indicator, what were your observations on group social behavior and attitude changes toward gender equality and interactions with minorities?	
7.	What are the next steps for the community group following this activity?	
8.	Will there be recurring costs coming out of this activity? How does the community plan to cover those costs?	
9.	Were there any unexpected outcomes?	
10.	From what you learned from this activity, what recommendations would you have for others interested in this activity area?	

FINAL TOTAL ACTIVITY COST BREAKDOWN (IN \$USD):

	SPA Grant	Community Contribution	Other Agency Name	Other Agency Contribution
Cash				
Labor				
Materials				
Land				
Travel/Per Diem				
Total				

WHAT DID SPA FUNDS PURCHASE?

Category	Description
Supplies and Materials	
Equipment	
Skilled Labor	
Travel/Per Diem	
Other: <i>(be specific)</i>	

Appendix I

Center Activity Request Form

CATS Reference:

- New Request
- Previously submitted at IPBS Strategic Plan *
- Previously submitted at Operating Plan *

*Note: One of the above options MUST be checked. If you checked any of the "previous submitted" options, the CATS reference number MUST be included in the table at the right. Refer to the recent cable from your RAU or ask your AO for the CATS number.

Country:	Activity Title:	Type

Project Code	Project Title	Post Contact

Requests for Center assistance should be supported by post strategy as outlined in your IPBS submission. In addition, please use the guidance and criteria provided by the Center for developing requests for Center assistance that were included with the FY 2000 IPBS instructions.

When will the activity happen?	Start:		/		/	Finish:		/		/
What will take place during this activity?										
What do you hope will result from this activity?										
Will you need technical assistance outside of your own Post staff? (check all that apply)	Field Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Local Consultants <input type="checkbox"/> Center Staff* <input type="checkbox"/> USPSC* <input type="checkbox"/>									
What expertise will be required?	*Note: If Center Staff or a USPSC are required, you must fill out the Center Managed budget request box below									
How will Center funds be used?										

Activity Budget Request Summary

Remember, among the criteria used in assessing requests for Center assistance include the degree to which activity budgets are reasonable and demonstrate cost-sharing by Posts and Host-Country organizations. Whenever possible, posts should make use of local staff or contractors in lieu of USPSCs. **In addition, Posts are expected to cover PCV travel and per diem costs.**

In the Budget Transfer to Post Column, include only the costs of the activity that you need the Center to transfer to Post for each line item.

In the Budget Managed by Center Column, include only the amount needed to cover the costs of a Center staff or USPC to provide technical assistance to this activity. This amount will not be transferred to post.

In the Budget Covered by Post Column, provide an estimate of what the Post contribution to this activity will be. Please remember that posts are expected to cover PCV travel and per diem costs.

In the Other Column, provide an estimate of what the Host-country Agency contribution to this activity will be, including any in-kind contribution, such as the use of facilities, staff time, etc.

	BUDGET TRANSFER TO POST	BUDGET MANAGED BY CENTER	BUDGET COVERED BY POST	OTHER (HCA & local agency contribution)
PCV Travel Costs (travel, per diem, hotel)				
HCN Travel Costs (travel, per diem, hotel)				
Post Staff Travel Costs (travel, per diem, hotel)				
USPSC /CEN Staff Travel Costs (travel, per diem, hotel)		Center Champion will calculate		
USPSC Contract Costs (Contract, visas, insurance)		Center Champion will calculate		
Local Contractor Travel Costs (travel, per diem, hotel)				
Local Contractor Contract Costs				
Materials / Supplies				
Other (Conference Room, Buses, etc.)				
Equipment Itemize:				
Total USD				

Projected Activity Participation

	Participants	
	Male	Female
Peace Corps Staff		
Peace Corps Volunteers		
Host-Country Nationals (Non-Peace Corps Staff)		

Submitted By: _____

Date: _____

Appendix J**PRIORITY MATRIX
FOR CENTER SUPPORT**

COUNTRY:

I. REQUESTS FOR CENTER ASSISTANCE

Priority #	Type of Support	Activity Name	Project Code (as applicable)	FY-01 Qtr
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

II. SPA GRANT REQUEST

Requested amount for SPA community self-help activities to be implemented by community groups and facilitated by PCVs:

SPA Grant Funds *

(Reflects preliminary discussion with USAID)

Total: \$

* For more information on the process for requesting SPA Grant funds, please refer to the SPA Handbook. Note that requests will be met based on funding availability, thus the ability to provide Grant funds may vary from year to year.

Appendix K

**Project Status Review
Center Supported Activity Report**

Activity Name	Indicate Actual Numbers Participating in this Project Activity							
	PCV		Peace Corps		Other		Invitees	
	PCVs	Counterparts	Staff					
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Product result of activity <i>(Check off as many as apply and provide a brief comment on how the product is being used).</i>	Category: <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Developed <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum Designed <input type="checkbox"/> Project Design <input type="checkbox"/> Other:							
	Comments:							
Skill Transfer result of activity <i>(Check off as many as apply and provide a brief comment on how these skills are being used or what secondary transfer of knowledge is planned)</i>	Category: <input type="checkbox"/> Technical <input type="checkbox"/> Training of Trainer <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Development <input type="checkbox"/> Other:							
	Comments:							
Agency Initiative <i>(If applicable, check off and provide a brief comment on how the activity addressed an Agency Initiative)</i>	Category: <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Polio Eradication <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal Development <input type="checkbox"/> Girls' Education <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity							
	Comments:							
What was learned as a result of activity? What do you now do differently?								
How do these learning contribute to Project purposes and goals?								
As a result of this activity, what additional needs/skills are necessary to strengthen the Project purposes and goals?								
Comment on any other outcome of this activity <i>(e.g., attitude changes, NGO development, new approaches or methodologies)</i>								

Appendix L

**SMALL PROJECT ASSISTANCE (SPA) PROGRAM
PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER
CONSENT AND LIABILITY ACCEPTANCE**

By signing this statement, I agree to accept SPA Grant funds on behalf of (insert name of Community Group) and assume the responsibility to manage these funds in accordance with SPA Program guidelines and to obtain the necessary original invoices and receipts in connection with the SPA Activity and deliver them to the in-country SPA Coordinator.

To the extent possible, all purchases and payments drawn against the SPA Grant will be made by check ordered through Peace Corps/_____. To decrease my own personal liability, I will work closely with my community group to establish a funds management system and their own community bank account and, when possible, utilize account to account transfers for major purchases.

I understand that any loss of SPA Grant funds under my control, due to negligence on my part, may result in me being held accountable to repay all, or a portion, of the grant.

I further understand that my liability with respect to this community activity is limited to the management of funds secured through the SPA Program. I do not agree to accept responsibility for community generated or third party contributions, nor any liability with respect to the activity after the stated objectives of the activity are completed.

Peace Corps Volunteer (Printed Name) _____
 Peace Corps Volunteer Signature _____
 Witnessed by (Printed Name) _____
 Witness Signature _____
 Date _____

Check No. :	Check Amount:
SPA Activity Reference:	Date of Check:
SPA Activity Title:	

Appendix M

**SMALL PROJECT ASSISTANCE (SPA) PROGRAM
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION OFFICIAL
CONSENT AND LIABILITY ACCEPTANCE**

By signing this statement, I agree to accept SPA Grant funds on behalf of (insert name of Community Group) and assume the responsibility to manage these funds in accordance with SPA Program guidelines and to obtain the necessary original invoices and receipts in connection with the SPA Activity and deliver them to the SPA Coordinator.

To the extent possible, all purchases and payments against the SPA Grant will be made by check ordered through Peace Corps/_____. To decrease my own personal liability, I will work closely with my community to establish a funds management system and our own community bank account and, when possible, utilize bank transfers for major purchases.

I understand that any loss of SPA Grant funds under my control, due to negligence on my part, may result in me being held accountable to repay all, or a portion, of the Grant.

I further understand that my liability to the Peace Corps with respect to this community activity is limited to the management of funds secured through the SPA Program.

Community Organization Official (Printed Name) _____
 Community Organization Official Signature _____
 Witnessed by Peace Corp Volunteer (Printed Name) _____
 Witness Signature of Peace Corps Volunteer _____
 Date _____

Check No. :	Check Amount:
SPA Activity Reference:	Date of Check:
SPA Activity Title:	

Appendix N**SPA COUNTRY EVALUATION GUIDELINES****Introduction**

The Small Projects Assistance (SPA) Program requires, as part of the governing agreement between the Peace Corps and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), that Peace Corps address USAID's Special Objective of "enhancing communities' capabilities to conduct low-cost, sustainable development activities."

A critical aspect of the SPA Program is that the development activities it supports cut across many sectoral areas, including environment, child survival, food production, education, water and sanitation, and small enterprise development.

Regular monitoring of the Program focuses on the extent to which the Program *stimulates, supports, or strengthens* the capacity of local communities to implement development activities in communities where Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) live and work.

Evaluations, and particularly country-level evaluations, provide an impact assessment of the Program (i.e. what has changed), and measure the extent to which the Program *increases the capabilities* of local communities to implement sustainable development activities. Of particular note is the ability of these community groups to continue to carry out development activities following the COS of the PCV.

Within Peace Corps, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) efforts collect information that is used to address the Capacity Building Framework at the level of individuals, service providers, organizations and communities. Changes occurring are expressed in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior. (See *Programming & Training Booklet 2: How to Design or Revise a Project*, available from CEN/ICE, for more information.) M&E guidelines recommend that staff ask the following questions. In monitoring, the focus should be placed on 'process' questions that ask about the implementation of a project, for example, "what activities have been implemented," "have they been implemented as planned?" "if not, why?" Evaluation questions focus on 'outcome' questions and ask about the effects of activities, for example, "what are the changes as a result of the activity?" "have the desired changes been achieved?" "if not, why?"

Monitoring and evaluation are necessary components of planning, goal setting and benchmarking at the Peace Corps Project level. The same is true for this country-level evaluation of the SPA Program. While there is no specified "end-product" required other than the assessment (report), conducting the evaluation itself will assist programming staff to gauge progress toward Peace Corps Project objectives, examine opportunities to use SPA Grants to complement or support these objectives, promote cross-sector collaboration and integrated programming, and develop or refine a country-level strategy to utilize SPA Grants in the unique country context.

SUGGESTED EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

In evaluating the use of SPA Grants at the country level, the outline that begins on the next page may prove useful as a guide for establishing the evaluation framework. The outline contains a

suggested goal and objectives for the evaluation, poses sample evaluation questions, provides a list of indicators, and offers tips on methods for collecting and analyzing the data.

Specifically, the evaluation should consider the outcomes and impact of the SPA Program at three levels: the level of the community (where the activity takes place); the Peace Corps Project level; and the country level. Sample evaluation questions are provided for each level. **At a minimum**, post should focus on the evaluation questions for Objective 1, in order to answer the question, "what has changed at the community level because of the SPA Program?" In addition to the questions listed, post may add other questions as necessary in order to answer specific questions it may have with reference to the SPA Program. (Examples of how to approach the three objectives of the evaluation are mentioned later in this Appendix.)

Post can add to the outline, but is advised to consider the country evaluation as an opportunity to take a qualitatively different look at the SPA Program. Stated another way, PCVs report on the outcome of SPA Grants in the Activity Completion Reports that are submitted to the Center. Posts should strive not to repeat this information (except when warranted because of the time that has elapsed since the activity was completed), but rather to focus on *outcome* and *impact* questions that will provide information of a qualitatively different nature, for example, on the way in which SPA Grants relate to the implementation of a Peace Corps Project in a particular sector.

In developing an evaluation framework, it is important to keep in mind the following steps. (These steps are developed further in *Programming and Training Booklet 4: How to Assess a Project*, available from CEN/ICE.)

At the outset, post should decide what its information needs are and what it wants to evaluate. In this step, the goals and objectives for the evaluation are laid out.

Step two involves formulating the specific questions that will be addressed in the evaluation. In formulating questions, it may be helpful to consider that evaluation questions are really information needs, stated in the form of specific questions.

In step three, indicators are selected. Indicators are 'markers' that help measure change, and will help answer the evaluation questions. Once the indicators have been selected, the next step is to determine how the data will be collected. This step also involves deciding who will collect the data, where the data can be obtained, and the best method(s) for collecting the data.

The final step is to decide how the data will be analyzed and interpreted. In the analysis of quantitative data, usually simple descriptive statistics are adequate. Post could consider using percentage calculations, as well as frequencies, average/mean, or ranges in the analysis of quantitative data.

Data of a more qualitative nature is more difficult to analyze. One effective approach is to group data into categories of similar responses, and highlight common themes, patterns, and areas of difference.

EVALUATION OUTLINE

GOAL FOR THE COUNTRY EVALUATION:

What has changed in country X because of the SPA Program?**OBJECTIVES:****1. What has changed at the community level because of the SPA Program?**

- Assess the extent to which the SPA Program is supporting building capacity through the provision of Grants and Technical Assistance at the local community level.
- Assess the extent to which the SPA Program is supporting sustainable participatory development at the grassroots level.

2. What has changed at the Peace Corps Project level because of the SPA Program?

- Assess the extent to which the SPA Program advances the goals and objectives of Peace Corps Sector Projects within the country.
- Assess the extent to which Volunteer training (e.g., in community entry skills) affects their ability to use SPA Grant money effectively.

3. What has changed at the country level because of the SPA Program?

- Assess the extent to which the SPA Program furthers the mission and goals of Peace Corps at the country level.
- Assess the extent to which the SPA Program strengthens the relationship between Peace Corps and USAID in your country (where applicable).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS (questions are grouped according to the level where change occurs)**1. What has changed at the community level because of the SPA Program?** (Note: please refer to Quality of Life and Organizational Capacity indicators, as listed below, in collecting data to answer these evaluation questions.)

- What SPA activities were implemented? (list by sector, region, or both)
- Were SPA activities (projects) implemented as planned?
- How many of these activities are still on-going?
- What has changed within the local community (ies) as a result of SPA activities?
- What can community organizations do better now than before?
- Do community organizations and their members have the technical skills needed to undertake new activities?
- Are community organizations and their members becoming more self-reliant and self-supporting?
- Are community organizations exhibiting new attitudes and/or behaviors as a result of SPA activities?
- Are community organizations linked in any way, either formally or informally, with other community organizations and/or representative and trade associations?
- Are community organizations continuing to mobilize assets and resources for the implementation of development activities within their communities?
- Did women, children, or other populations benefit from the activity in any specific way?

2. What has changed at the Peace Corps Project level because of the SPA Program?

- In what ways has the SPA Program advanced Project(s) goals and objectives?
- What kinds of activities have been most successful?

- Are there appreciable differences in activity outcomes depending on sector?
- What relationship is there between the size of SPA grants and activity outcomes?
- Does/How does the SPA Program affect perceptions of PCVs on the part of HCNs? On the part of local communities and community counterparts?
- Has the SPA Program facilitated or otherwise affected integrated programming in the country?

3. What has changed at the country level because of the SPA Program?

- Does the country have a strategy for use of the SPA Program?
- If no country strategy currently exists, how might one be developed?
- What are the characteristics of SPA grant activities considered to have been most successful in the country?
- Are the characteristics of 'successful' SPA Grant activities consistent across different regions of the country? With regard to different populations and/or ethnic groups?
- Are there factors/issues at the country level that affect the SPA Program in the country?

INDICATORS

Once the evaluation questions have been determined, the next step is to select indicators that will help to answer the questions. There are different types of indicators that describe different outcomes. Indicators can be quantitative or qualitative, tangible or intangible, and direct or indirect. The type of indicators chosen should depend on the type of evaluation questions asked, but should always be relevant (given the expected outcomes) and feasible (relatively easy to collect).

The SPA Program focuses on building the capacity of local groups and communities to carry out sustainable development activities. Given this focus, most of the changes that occur from using SPA Grants will take place at the level of the individual, the family, or the community group/organization. (Some activities may also impact the community at-large.) In any event, change will most likely be expressed in terms of knowledge and skills.

Indicators which describe outcomes and change at the individual, family, and community levels can be found in Appendix G.

DATA COLLECTION

In developing methods of data collection, the indicators and sources of data should determine the method. For example, if measuring changes in attitudes and behavior among family farmers with low levels of literacy is important, conducting face-to-face interviews rather than relying on written answers to survey questionnaires would be more useful.

Possible data collection methods include:

- SPA Management interviews and/or written responses to questionnaires
- SPA documentation review, including Volunteer reports
- Community interview questionnaire -- for use in site visits
- Site visits -- observation with checklist (Can also include group meetings)
- PCV questionnaire
- Surveys

- Tests

In most cases, the Country Evaluation will be conducted as a separate, distinct activity. But it would also be possible to collect information of an evaluative nature at ISTs or other training workshops, at Sector meetings, and at COS conferences, among other events.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Post is urged to tailor this suggested evaluation framework to fit its own needs. For example, in a country where there is no USAID Mission, post would ignore the question which refers to USAID, and might choose, instead, to consider whether the Program has helped strengthen relationships between Peace Corps and other national or international organizations.

As mentioned above, it is recommended that post use a more qualitative, *process-oriented* evaluation approach focusing on the outcomes of the SPA Program. Process evaluations determine what approaches were used, what problems were encountered, and what strategies were successful and why. Using a process-oriented approach for the SPA country evaluation will also provide post with information of a more qualitative nature that will permit it to refine its strategy for using SPA funds, determine the effectiveness of a PCV's work within his/her community, and assess the effectiveness of training and the implementation of the Project plan(s).

Each country is also encouraged to select a sample that is significantly large enough to support the conclusions of the evaluation. The sample should also include SPA Grant activities funded throughout the years the Program has been in operation, and not only on more recent SPA activities. Geographic and sectoral spread is also encouraged.

While it is not necessary to repeat information already contained on the Activity Abstract and Activity Completion Reports (Attachments 3 and 4), post may choose to add a section on PCV feedback, perceptions, experience with the use of SPA Grants, and/or success stories. Use of a questionnaire to obtain such information from PCVs, however, should not be the principal evaluation tool. Information collected in site visits to communities where SPA Grant and Technical Assistance activities have taken place will surface information of a more qualitative nature that will permit each country to make assessments about their strategy for using the SPA Grants.

Given the more qualitative focus of the evaluation, it is not necessary to use complicated software packages for the statistical analysis of the data collected.

SPA Technical Assistance funds can support the cost of country evaluations. Requests should be submitted to the Center on a Center Activity Request Form, and should include an outline of the proposed Evaluation Framework for the country evaluation. Post can elect to conduct the evaluation on its own, consider inviting staff from another country to participate in the evaluation (for example, a SPA coordinator from a country in the immediate region), or request assistance from Center staff.

Finally, we request that the submission of the evaluation report include an Executive Summary. (A suggested report outline is included at the end of this Appendix.)

SUGGESTIONS FOR APPROACHING EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

(suggestions are grouped at each level where change occurs)

1. What has changed at the community level?

If a community decided to concentrate its SPA Grant activity around **latrine construction**, the following kinds of evaluation questions could be asked:

- is the community group continuing to maintain, replace or expand the use of latrines and community latrine construction?
- is the community group instituting other community health interventions?
- is the community group that coalesced around latrine construction now applying its acquired group decisionmaking and implementation skills in other community activities, other than health?

If the SPA activity supported **skills development** as part of a community construction activity such as the fabrication of furniture for use in the community school, and part of the activity included a master craftsman teaching local community members the skills needed to construct desks, chairs and tables, evaluation questions might include:

- are the skills learned from the initial activity still being used?
- have any members of the initial group who were trained in furniture-making used those skills for income generation?
- have those skills been passed on to others?

If the SPA activity supported the introduction of a community **woodlot and fruit tree cultivation** operation, you might consider evaluation questions that explore:

- is the operation still viable?
- is the community group that initiated the activity still active in the operation?
- how has the management structure of the group organization evolved?
- has the activity itself evolved, and/or has it fostered the development of other opportunities within the community? For example, if fruit is now being produced, is there a single marketing operation or is the fruit independently marketed? Has the activity spawned a “cottage industry” of food processing?
- if income has been generated from the activity, how has the income benefited the group and the community? How are these benefits in evidence?
- how has locally-available fruit affected the health and nutrition habits of the community?
- how has locally available firewood from the woodlot changed the life to community women?

2. What has changed at the Peace Corps sector project level?

If the file review of past and present SPA Grant activity data for the evaluation identifies a substantial number of SPA Grant activities focusing on **community schools or village vegetable gardens**, and those activities were also facilitated by PCVs attached to a Peace Corps Agroforestry project with a goal of “assisting local communities to adopt improved gardening techniques to meet their nutritional needs and for income generation”, additional evaluation questions might explore:

- the types of activities that communities identify as their priority and how these relate to the overall Project plan;

- how, given the community interest in and ownership of the activity, can the Project goals be accomplished either directly with SPA Grant support, or as an enhancement to the SPA activity, i.e., in addition to assisting the community establish a garden, an enhancement might be a community-level training on basic nutrition and how to prepare nutritious meals with the garden produce.

Should, for example, the school vegetable garden become part of the sample for the field evaluation, the activity might be explored within the context of the Agroforestry Project with regard to:

- How has this activity contributed to achieving the goal of the Project?
- Did the activity foster a more conducive environment for the PCV and counterpart to continue working with the community?
- Was the PCV sufficiently prepared in community entry and in technical areas? What additional PST and IST skills training would be useful?
- Did this activity remain functional after the PCV COSed?

3. What has changed at the country level?

Again, if the data study of past and present SPA Grant activities for the evaluation identifies a substantial number of SPA Grant activities focusing on a particular demonstrated community need, the following questions might be explored with Peace Corps post staff:

- Whether and how SPA Grant activities are contributing to overall Peace Corps strategy in country;
- Whether and how SPA Grant activities are contributing to the stated priority areas of the host government;
- whether the “sector” areas of SPA Grant activities are consistent with the priority areas of the Peace Corps program in country, and if not, whether they should become a priority area;
- do the evaluation findings indicate that SPA Grant activities contributed toward sustainable development at the community level;
- do the evaluation findings on community satisfaction with SPA Grant activities and the community interaction with PCVs contribute toward satisfying the goals of Peace Corps and the partner host government agencies.

Similar questions might also be explored with host-country Ministry or agency staff where PCVs have been assigned as well.

SUGGESTED EVALUATION REPORT FORMAT

(adapted from *P&T Booklet 4: How to Design and Assess a Project*, pg. 33)

Table of contents

1. Executive Summary

- Include the most vital information from each section of the report. This section should be
- 2 - 4 pages in length.

2. Introduction and Background

- Background of the evaluation, including brief description of the SPA Program and its history, and any special circumstances that led to a decision to conduct the evaluation.
- Evaluation objectives, including the evaluation questions to be answered, and how and for what the information will be used.

3. Methodology

- Describe the methods used to collect and analyze the evaluation data (include any other instruments as appendices to the report).
- List activities, evaluation participants, interviewees (if extensive, the list should be appended to the report), documents or other resources used (append copies of key documents to the report when feasible).

4. Findings

- Present factual information obtained, such as responses to questionnaires, without interpretation.
- Include disaggregated data (presented in the capacity building framework insofar as possible).

5. Analysis

- Interpret the qualitative and quantitative information obtained, noting major trends or issues revealed.
- Compare actual results to those anticipated, using the Evaluation framework and indicators.
- Note any constraints or problems encountered (e.g., lack of data, insufficient time to interviews, lack of adequate sample, absence of key project participants, etc.). Discuss the effect these constraints and problems had on evaluation outcomes.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

- Summarize the lessons learned and the resulting recommendations.

Note: Include any pictures, volunteer "success stories," etc.

