

**THE LESSONS LEARNED SYSTEM**

**WORK PROPOSED FOR 1980**

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## SUMMARY

This proposal seeks the continued development and implementation of The Lessons Learned System for the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. Four interrelated components of work are proposed: expansion of historical record, current disaster evaluations, management roundtable discussions, and system refinement. This proposal sets forth the statement of work for the contractor plus the requirements to be placed on OFDA staff which are necessary for the successful implementation of The Lessons Learned System in 1980.

## BACKGROUND

In an initial 60 day contract in 1978, Research Alternatives developed the concept behind The Lessons Learned System for OFDA and designed the system and evaluation techniques which are currently operational. In a 144 day contract throughout 1979, the computer system was completed and tested. Evaluation of nearly 50 disasters was undertaken and over 300 Lessons Learned were placed on the computer.

The Lessons Learned System, as a technical tool of the Office is quite satisfactory. Certain operational refinements are desirable, but the computer system works. The techniques of evaluating disasters are well developed. As it stands today, for any routine request made of Lessons Learned, there is better than an 80% chance that some previous experience will be available.

The Lessons Learned System has yet not become an integral part of routine decision-making in the Office. In a couple of notable uses, for example in researching use of field hospitals during Hurricane David, Lessons Learned has provided valuable information. In the Management Roundtable use, Lessons Learned resulted in a clear definition of ways to improve OFDA use of aerial reconnaissance. However, the limited quantity of information available causes staff to rely on other sources. While it was stated above that 80% of all requests can be filled, it must be noted that only one disaster experience may be found. As a result, Lessons Learned is only one of several information resources sought by staff. And it is not the primary one.

All indications from the staff are that the techniques of information retrieval are satisfactory. Simply more information is required. This problem was stated most directly in the recent Management Roundtable by Weston Emery. He said that Lessons Learned should be used in every decision the Office makes, but that it would not be used until much more information is available on the system. The dilemma faced by the contractor is

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that OFDA staff participation has been inadequate. The historical record has been evaluated through review of many documents filed long ago. While there is a considerable body of documents still to be reviewed, the core of the future Lessons Learned resides in each new disaster. And each current disaster can only be entered with effort made by the staff.

This proposal addresses the key problem of information availability on The Lessons Learned System by proposing expanded contractor effort to (a) complete the historical record, (b) evaluate every document available for each ongoing disaster, and (c) better utilize a newly mandated OFDA staff participation during primarily ongoing disasters. Additionally, the use of The Lessons Learned System in Management Roundtables will become a monthly activity.

### PROPOSAL

In each of the four categories of work defined below in this proposal there are two sections. The first identifies the work to be undertaken by the contractor. The second identifies the obligations of OFDA which are necessary for successful completion of the contractor's efforts.

#### 1. Historical Disasters

The contractor will continue the evaluation of past disaster performance, initiated under the previous contract, to expand the workable body of data to be manipulated in The Lessons Learned System.

a. The contractor will survey the OFDA staff to identify pre-1976 disasters (a post-1976 survey having already been conducted) deserving evaluation.

b. The contractor will concentrate on completing the data base from the point of view of Activity/Resources rather than disasters, themselves. That is, when a body of information on one activity is sufficient (i.e., equal to that currently available for damage assessment), other activities will be the foci in disaster reviews.

c. The contractor will also concentrate on the entry of personnel and materiel resource lists to be provided from documents of past disasters and individual staff members.

#### OFDA Staff Requirements

Whenever the document review of a disaster has been

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completed and the evaluations placed on the system, a printout of all statements will be available for staff comment. All such comments will be voluntary except for one. It is requested that the action officer for the past disaster (if available) be required to review the data on The Lessons Learned System.

Staff members will also be required to make available for Lessons Learned all their current resource lists in order that this new category of information be available on the System.

OFDA will provide for use of xerox facilities for copying documents and will permit documents retrieved from Suitland to be reviewed at the offices of Research Alternatives.

## 2. Current Disaster Evaluations

The contractor will evaluate each disaster which occurs during 1980 using the Lessons Learned format as promptly as practical.

a. Lessons Learned will be made an addressee for all incoming and outgoing unclassified cables, for all trip reports, for all reading files, for all Mission Final Disaster Summary Reports, and for all meeting summaries, and any other unclassified documents pertaining to disasters in 1980.

b. Each such document will be reviewed for potential Lessons Learned input and appropriate data will be prepared for entry on the system.

c. The contractor will conduct interviews up to one hour in length with each staff member working on disasters in 1980. These interviews will be scheduled regularly and each staff member will be required to provide up to one hour each month for these Lessons Learned interviews.

### OFDA Staff Requirements

1. One junior staff member should be designated as Lessons Learned liaison. For 8 months of 1979, Joyce Brooks served this function, notifying the contractor of meetings, trip reports, and passing on notes of meetings unable to be attended by a Lessons Learned representative.

2. The revised AID Handbook on Mission Final Disaster Summary Reports prepared by the contractor should be refined and enacted as a mandated procedure for filing all mission reports so that they will be readily adaptable to Lessons Learned.

3. An After Action Report, representing a complete review

of OFDA disaster performance using the Lessons Learned format, should be mandated. A single individual on the staff should be responsible for assessing all contractor materials prepared from disaster documents and ensuring that appropriate staff comments are available.

4. Each staff member should be required to allocate one hour each month to work on Lessons Learned. The majority of this time will be spent in personal interviews with the contractor about past or recent disasters. Each staff member should be required to schedule this time in advance and offer complete cooperation during the scheduled time. This represents less than 0.6% of each staff member's annual work assignment and certainly should not be considered a burden by anyone.

5. OFDA will continue to be responsible for data entry because of the problem of security clearance. However, unlike in the past when only overtime typing services were available, OFDA is requested to make available data entry services during the regular working day for three hours each week. Additional overtime may be necessary, but with an assured three hours per week we shall avoid the considerable backlog (18 disasters at the end of 1979) of unentered data. At the present time, two OFDA secretaries are trained in data entry.

### 3 Management Roundtables

The contractor will conduct a monthly Management Roundtable discussion among OFDA staff for the purpose of summarizing findings from The Lessons Learned System and facilitating staff preparedness for future events.

The contractor will prepared a working paper in advance of each Roundtable discussion which briefly reviews the Lessons Learned findings and serves to stimulate staff discussion.

The contractor will prepare a brief paper, to be called "The Lessons Learned System One Pager," which describes the outcome of Roundtable discussions and identifies management improvements resulting from the Roundtable. These summaries are intended to eventually be placed on the computer system as an additional display of The Lessons Learned System (see section on System Refinement below).

### OFDA Staff Requirements

OFDA will make available to the contractor the operations center for Management Roundtables and will encourage individual staff participation by not scheduling conflicting meetings.

#### 4. Computer System Refinement

Four specific refinements in the computer system have been identified. The contractor is prepared to write specifications for each of these for either (a) an OFDA programmer or (b) a programmer hired by the contractor. Either way is satisfactory with the contractor, but these refinements should be made promptly, in the order identified below.

First, the speed of the system must be improved by the change in operation from Configuration 5 to Configuration 3, and a keyword index should be considered if further speed improvement is necessary.

Second, several enhancements which will make use easier must be made: return from the activity/resource list (key F2) to the main request menu without reading all entries; print at the beginning of a request rather than only at the end, etc.

Third, summary programs must be developed which would permit statistics on frequency of occurrence of activity/resources to be generated; performance characteristics across disasters to be listed easily; multiple disaster summaries to be printed, etc.

Fourth, the additional display for the Management Roundtable results (The Lessons Learned System One Pager) must be developed.

#### OFDA Staff Requirements

OFDA must either provide a programmer capable of completing the above or must provide for the contractor to hire an outside programmer.

#### **CONTRACTOR STAFF**

Two separate work programs are proposed for the contractor, the first of which is conducted largely by the Research Alternatives staff and the second of which is conducted by the Director of Research Alternatives, James W. Morentz, Ph.D.

1. Document reviews (cables, reports, etc.) for historical disasters and current disasters will be conducted by members of the research staff of Research Alternatives. In the past, all such work was conducted Morentz. During 1979, Morentz trained one of the OFDA junior staff members in the techniques of document review and evaluation for Lessons Learned. As a result, the contractor is confident that his research staff (consisting

of four members, three of whom have previous disaster research experience) will be able to quite quickly become competent in this form of research. In this way, OFDA will receive the equivalent of one full time staff analyst on Lessons Learned (divided among 2-3 of the Research Alternatives staff). On documents alone, this will provide for an increase of nearly 90% over all past research time. Morentz will continue to personally approve each entry and will be responsible for writing all summaries.

2. With document reviews conducted by Research Alternatives staff members, Morentz will be free to devote his time to two activities, both designed to improve the quality and use of Lessons Learned. First, three days per month will be spent conducting staff interviews about past and recent disasters and attending OFDA meetings, reviews, etc. These 24 interviews represent far more time than available previously and the anticipated results are an increase in quality of information. Second, Management Roundtables will be held monthly on a subject suggested by the staff or developed from Lessons Learned. Briefing papers, "One Pagers," and other related Roundtable efforts will be conducted exclusively by Morentz.

#### BUDGET AND TIME ALLOCATION

Morentz @ \$150* per day x 100 days =	\$15,000
Research Alternatives staff @ average of \$60 per day x 250 days =	\$15,000
Overhead @ 35%* of salaries =	\$10,500
Total	<u>\$40,500</u>

If programming support is not available from OFDA, Research Alternatives will provide a programmer on a cost reimbursable basis, without overhead charges.

\*Estimated for 1980. The calculation will be based on a final accounting of 1979 to arrive at daily rate and overhead.