

CBC 72025

B-3

SPECIAL EVALUATIONS

COMPARATIVE - POST PROJECT - PROBLEM

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2. REPORT OR STUDY TITLE: CARIS - Current Agricultural
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3. AUTHORS: Baird / Myrien
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7. TA/OFFICE: TA/AGR

CARIS

February, 1976

MEMORANDUM

TO AA/TA, Curtis Farrar
Thru TA/AGR, Leon F. Hesser
From TA/AGR, Guy B. Baird
TA/PPU, Delbert Myren
SUBJECT: CARIS

Summary:

Pursuant to our recent understanding, we and John Coulter made an assessment of CARIS during the week of the TAC Meeting in Rome (February 2-6, 1976). While favorably impressed by the progress made toward publication of the three directories projected within the two-year period under CGIAR funding, we were discouraged with the outlook of support for CARIS within the regular FAO budget. We concluded that AID support planned for CY 1976 should be withheld pending receipt of a revised budget which would reflect the substantial carryover of funds from CY 1975 and indicate the best estimate of requirements to complete and print the three directories. We also requested clarification of FAO's position on budgeting for continuation of CARIS as a regular program.

Discussion:

On February 4 we and Coulter met with Mr. Thevenin, who is coordinating the CARIS project. He seems to be making commendable progress in making arrangements for obtaining the data needed for the three directories that were to have been the specific products under the

two-year interim funding by the CGIAR. These directories consist of: a Directory of Research Institutions; a Directory of Research Workers; and a Directory of Research Programs. Coverage includes all LDCs. While a little behind schedule, Thevenin feels the directories can be printed by the end of March, 1977. This assumes he will be given authority by FAO to recruit the help envisaged under the CGIAR support.

The progress to date is remarkable in view of the limited assistance available to Mr. Thevenin. He has operated with supportive staff with less than desired qualifications. One effect of this arrangement has been a substantial savings. There was a carryover of about \$250,000 from CY 1975 to 1976. The plan for obtaining the data input for the directories (as well as for the continuing input to CARIS as an FAO regular project) was to identify liaison offices in each LDC. Already 51 have been confirmed and four more appear to be certain. He hopes the remaining ones will be identified in the very near future. Information forms have been sent to the liaison offices and are beginning to be returned with the information needed for the directories. This part of the work is expected to be completed, for the most part, by September 1976.

The plan for the continuing FAO-supported CARIS involves establishment of a network of regional centers which would have computer facilities to receive, process and distribute information. They would be linked to the main coordinating center at FAO Rome. Support for these regional centers would have to be on a special project basis. Assistance is anticipated from UNDP. The following were mentioned as prospects for these centers: Santiago, Chile for Latin America (possibly later a

second one might be located in Central America, (possibly at CATIE), Addis Ababa for Africa, one in the Arab countries, and one at SEARCA for Asia. We concluded that prospects of support for these regional centers were very uncertain at this time. This matter is further complicated by the uncertainty of FAO support for CARIS.

From 1977 (with the termination of the two-year support from CGIAR) FAO was expected to assume responsibility for CARIS as a regular program project. In essence, the role of FAO would be to support the coordinating center at Rome headquarters and to periodically update the three directories. As mentioned earlier, regional computer-based centers could be supported by special project funds. The coordinating center, regional centers and LDC based liaison offices would make up the network for a continuing CARIS.

The FAO CARIS need is estimated to be around \$200,000-\$300,000 per year. An amount of about \$220,000 was placed in the 1975-76 fiscal year budget of FAO. We learned, however, that this had been axed by the new Director General. We have asked for confirmation of the situation. Apparently this action reflects a decision by the DG to minimize or eliminate service activities of FAO in deference to an emphasis on its development projects. Reports are that AGRIS is apt to be viewed by the DG in the same light as CARIS.

Thus, on the one hand, we have the outlook of completion of the three directories pretty much according to plan. The total costs may be even less than estimated; but this will not be clear until we have the revised 1976 budget which will be submitted to the CGIAR Secretariat (Coulter). On the other, we have what appears to be a very uncertain

future for CARIS as a continuing activity of FAO. Again, confirmation of this matter has been requested by the CGIAR Secretariat.

In view of the foregoing, we (and Coulter) conclude that further support for CARIS should be deferred pending clarification of: the requirements to complete the directories and intent of FAO to employ the needed consultants; and of the position of FAO on inclusion of CARIS as an activity in the regular program.

Recommendation:

That further AID support to CARIS be deferred pending determination of needs and plans for completion of the three projected directories; as well as clarification of FAO position on its own support for continuing CARIS activities.

Approved: _____

Disapproved: _____

Date: _____

February 11, 1977

MEMORANDUM

TO : See Distribution

FROM : TA/AGR, Guy B. Baird *GB*

SUBJECT: CARIS

While at the TAC meeting in Rome, and at the suggestion of Mr. Mahler of the TAC Secretariat, I had a meeting with the following on CARIS -

1. Mr. Harold Mandefield
Assistant Director General
Department of General Affairs and
Information
2. Mr. Gerald Du Bois
Chief,
Branch of Systems and
Project Development
3. Mr. N. St. Dumitrescu
Director
Division of Library and
Documentation Systems

Apparently reasonably good progress is being made toward bringing out the directories on current agricultural research information of the LDCs. Some 50% of the returns have been received from questionnaires sent to the research institutions. At a cut-off date later this year (date still to be determined) all information received will be processed, and the directories "... will be delivered by the end of the year."

The budgetary position for the work leading to and including publication of the directories (that interim support provided by the CGIAR) is not clear. The feeling was expressed that donors have not come through with the amount originally requested, and thus there may be a problem before the end of the year. On the other hand, expenditures have been much slower than planned and there seems to be considerable uncertainty as to how much really will be required to bring out the directories. Ostensibly FAO was operating on the assumption that we

were making three contributions for the interim period support -- \$90,000 for 1975, and \$110,000 both for 1976 and for 1977. I made it explicit that our support was limited to the \$90,000 already provided in 1975 plus \$110,000 in 1977 which was planned for 1976 but deferred pending clarifications of progress and intent. The real problem is lack of CGIAR interest in this project; there are just a few donors. I suggested that FAO keep the CGIAR Secretariat fully informed as to progress and the budget situation.

I was informed that FAO now has assurance of funds in its 1978/79 regular budget for CARIS - about \$120,000 per year. This is considered barely adequate if - 1) the regional centers are adequately supported, and 2) if the CARIS directories can be published commercially on a non-support basis. There would seem to be considerable doubt on both points. Thus, I conclude that the future of CARIS is rather uncertain at this time.

It is interesting to note that the AGRINDEX (of AGRIS) is now being published without FAO support, by APIMONDIA (International Beekeepers Association) in Bucharest. The first issue under this arrangement has been published.

Distribution

TA/AGR, LHesser
PPC/PDA/SPA, DDalrymple
TA/PFJ/EUI, DMyren
USDA/ARS, Chester Gordon

February 1 , 1977

MEMORANDUM

TO : TA/AGR, Leon F. Hesser
Earl Leng
Ned Raun
Dillard Gates
AFR/DS, Lloyd Clyburn

FROM : TA/AGR, Guy Baird *gmb*

SUBJECT: FAO - Cooperation

While at the TAC meeting in Rome, I met with Dr. A. Bozzini, Chief Crop and Grassland Production Service (AGP Division) and Dr. C. Poulton of his staff. Bozzini expressed much interest in developing more effective cooperation between his office and AID (probably due, at least in part, to earlier discussions between him and Leng). Kinds of cooperative activities mentioned were meetings, joint projects and training. Specific areas included: 1) seed (already under consideration via Leng), 2) forage and pasture management, and grain production in the Sahel. Poulton referred to discussions with Clyburn on the EMASAR program (arid land grazing). He was anxious for further discussions on the latter, which have been planned.

I believe we and FAO can profit by a more deliberate effort to periodically and informally discuss projects and plans of mutual interest. Leng will be following up with Bozzini later this month during the meeting of the IBPGR Board in Rome.