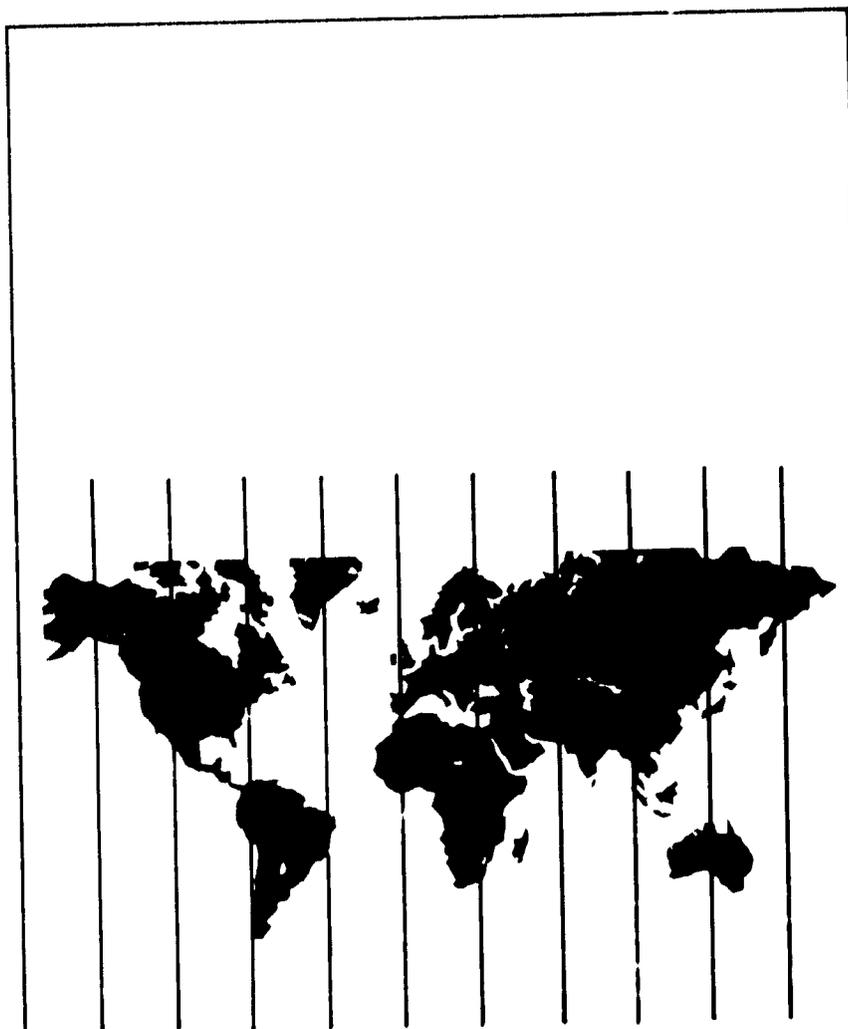


UNITED STATES
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE
INSPECTOR
GENERAL



POMP

CONTINUING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS
IN THE NORTH CAMEROON LIVESTOCK AND
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Audit Report No. 7-631-84-3
July 20, 1984

The North Cameroon Livestock and Agricultural Development Project has been plagued with design and implementation problems. The project, which began in 1978, was redesigned in 1980-82. A January 1984 evaluation report questioned whether the redesigned project will achieve any lasting benefits. USAID/Cameroon and the Government of the United Republic of Cameroon must decide on a course of action for the future - options range from early project termination to project extension, with commitment for a succeeding phase. Unless the project is soon terminated, actions are needed to solve the current design and implementation problems.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In 1974 the Government of the United Republic of Cameroon (GURC) asked for the United States' help to increase livestock production in the drought-stricken north province of the country as a means of improving the standard of living of the province's population. USAID examined the problem and, concluding that a project strategy based on livestock production alone would be inadequate, proposed additional activities for increasing crop production to reduce the need for farmers to encroach on grazing lands.

In May 1978 a grant agreement for the North Cameroon Livestock and Agricultural Development Project was signed under which USAID would provide \$6.2 million and the GURC the equivalent of \$2.2 million over a period of six years. The GURC contribution was later increased to the equivalent of \$4.3 million and the project was extended to April 1985. By December 1983 USAID had spent \$4 million on the project and the GURC the equivalent of \$1.4 million.

The purpose of the project is to demonstrate in a pilot zone the feasibility of implementing, through local organizations, actions to integrate and improve livestock and agricultural production through five project activities: 1) grazing land management and conservation; 2) animal health; 3) increased association of agriculture and livestock production; 4) training; and 5) extension.

Purpose of Review

USAID Cameroon initially requested an IG audit of this project in April 1981. Due to staffing limitations and workload, an audit could not be performed until 1984. Prior to our audit, a comprehensive field evaluation was performed of all project activities in November-December 1983. Our review was therefore limited to reviewing:

- the results of the evaluation;
- AID-provided technical assistance; and
- Mission management of the project.

Findings

The project has been continuously plagued by design and implementation problems. It was redesigned in 1980-82 amid concerns that the geographic area to be covered was too large, goals were overambitious, and planned resources were insufficient.

The recent evaluation now poses serious questions concerning the feasibility of the redesigned project. There is doubt that the reduced pilot zone is sufficiently representative of North Cameroon to apply the project to other areas of the north -- a key purpose of AID's assistance.

The evaluation report also raised questions relative to GURC commitment to the livestock sector, citing the lack of an overall government strategy for natural resources and land use planning. Additionally, the GURC has not completely fulfilled its training and counterpart responsibilities.

Technical assistance problems have contributed to delays in project progress. Early in the project the technical assistance team was involved in construction activities and redesign, which detracted from scheduled project activities. At the time of our review, problems included:

- unreliable data being collected on cattle population. There is a need to develop a data collection and analysis system for grazing land management;
- no coherent strategy for waterpoint development. Also, the GURC may not be able to fund the high cost of waterpoint development in other areas; and
- two critical technical assistance positions being prematurely terminated. These positions should be reinstated so that socio-economic data required for good project monitoring and evaluation can be developed.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Mission Comments

AID's experience in this project demonstrates the complex development activity involved in attempting to integrate and intensify both livestock and agricultural production. Either one of those objectives is a complex task. To attempt to do both simultaneously is an exceptional and, perhaps, impossible challenge.

AID and the GURC must decide upon a course of action to deal with the many problems currently faced in the design and implementation of this project. The evaluation report provides options ranging from early termination to an AID commitment for the next phase. However, it recommends that the present phase be extended until December 1987, with the possible future design of a second phase. If this is accepted, the report recommends a series of actions necessary to correct current problems to improve the project's chances of success. In addition, technical assistance problems need to be addressed.

Our draft report recommended that AID determine where the project is headed and what adjustments are necessary to focus on project objectives. AID/Cameroon comments allowed us to eliminate one recommendation concerning GURC financial support by showing that GURC allocations were in accord with the project agreement. The Mission admitted, however, that due to slow project implementation, disbursement and annual budgets had not kept pace with allocations. Our other recommendations require the Mission to 1) act on the evaluation report findings, and 2) correct technical assistance problems. The Mission is preparing for discussions with the GURC in mid-July 1984 on the future of the project. They stated that once a definitive plan is decided upon, action would be taken to close the audit recommendations.

BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Cameroon, a nation of approximately nine million people, is 67 percent rural and 33 percent urban. The northern region of the country, the poorest, borders Nigeria and Chad. Livestock is raised by one-third of the families in the north.

In June 1974 the Government of the United Republic of Cameroon (GURC) requested U.S. assistance to help improve livestock production in the northern province. AID agreed to this request based on:

- its compatibility with AID's congressional mandate to help the poorest of the poor;
- the emphasis placed by the GURC on reducing regional income disparities; and
- the similarity of planned activities to those being financed by AID in Sahelian countries sharing North Cameroon's semi-arid environment.

One project developed by AID to assist this region was the livestock and agriculture development project. Range and agricultural lands had been adversely affected by animal pressures on the land and continued use of rangelands for crops. AID considered the basic problem to be broader than livestock alone. Therefore, project strategy included activities to improve both livestock production and to integrate livestock and crop production.

In May 1978 agreement was reached whereby the U.S. would provide \$6.2 million over a period of six years, and the GURC the equivalent of \$2.2 million. In July 1982 the GURC contribution was raised to the equivalent of \$4.3 million and the project was extended to April 1985. As of December 31, 1983, obligations totalled \$5.4 million for AID, and \$2.6 million for the GURC. AID had spent \$4 million, and the GURC \$1.4 million.

The purpose of the project is to demonstrate, in a pilot zone, the feasibility of implementing through local organizations actions to integrate and improve livestock and agriculture production. The project also aims to reverse the process of resource degradation, while improving the resource base in the zone.

Five activities were planned:

- grazing land management and conservation;
- animal health;
- increased association of agriculture and livestock production;
- training; and
- extension.

Project implementation was to be through a seven-person, AID-financed technical assistance team under the overall management of a GURC organization, the Provincial Committee for the Struggle Against the Drought. AID mission monitoring and oversight responsibilities included all aspects of the project -- conceptualization, design, approval, funding, implementation and evaluation. Oversight mechanisms, as assigned to the project officer, include

approval of activities, liaison with the intermediaries, progress reporting, problem identification, site visits, and approval of disbursements of AID funds.

Soon after the project began, the project team, USAID and the GURC recognized that it was overly ambitious and needed to be redesigned. This task began in 1980 and was completed in 1982. USAID Cameroon also requested an audit by the Inspector General in April 1981. IG workload level and staffing limitations precluded an audit until early 1984, when this review was performed.

In November-December 1983, a comprehensive field evaluation of the project was performed by a six-person team comprising three contract staff, two GURC officials, and the USAID project officer. The final report was issued in January 1984.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Because of the recent comprehensive field evaluation, we limited the scope of our audit. The evaluation included all project components; its methodology was logical and thorough, and was composed of qualified team members. We discussed the findings and recommendations of the evaluation with AID and contract staff. We also selectively reviewed AID-financed technical assistance and Mission management in order to assess the extent to which assigned responsibilities were carried out.

Our review was performed in accordance with the Standards for Audit of Governmental Organizations, Programs, Activities and Functions and included tests of internal controls as we considered necessary. We reviewed the project papers and other documentation, including the recent evaluation. We held discussions with USAID/Cameroon officials, members of the USAID-financed technical assistance team and GURC officials. Our review included a visit to the project site in the extreme northern province of Cameroon.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

AID's attempt to assist in the development of the livestock sector in Cameroon entails profound social and economic changes. The North Cameroon Livestock and Agricultural Development Project demonstrates the difficulty faced by AID in attempting to influence this sector. The project has been continuously plagued by design and implementation problems.

The initial project redesign in 1980-82 reduced the geographic area to be covered, thus responding to concerns that the original project (1) covered too large an area, (2) was overambitious, and (3) was incompatible with available resources. Project implementation was also limited due to involvement of the technical assistance team in project redesign and reorganization and construction of a project center and housing.

The recent evaluation now poses numerous questions concerning the feasibility of the redesigned project. One of the questions raised in its redesign is whether the reduced pilot zone truly represents a significant portion of North Cameroon so as to allow extension of results to other areas -- one of the prime purposes of AID's assistance.

The evaluation also raised major questions relative to GURC commitment to the livestock sector, citing an absence of an overall strategy for natural resource and land use planning. In addition, the GURC has not completely fulfilled its training and counterpart responsibilities.

Our review also disclosed that technical assistance problems continue to delay project progress. These include inadequate data collection systems, lack of strategy for waterpoint development, and premature termination of two key technical assistance positions. On the other hand, early problems in Mission management have been corrected, and the current project manager is satisfactorily carrying out his responsibilities.

Notwithstanding these problems, the five project activities have generated successes:

Range Management - Three grazing blocks have been established and deferred grazing and pasture management has begun. Two of nine waterpoints have been constructed.

Agriculture Production - Thirty farmers are participating in crop rotation trials and testing the use of crop residues for livestock feed.

Animal Health - Three veterinary posts are in operation, and medication has been provided against parasites.

Training - Three Cameroonians are receiving long-term training, and four of the present AID-financed technical assistance team members have GURC counterparts.

Extension - Information and coordination meetings and seminars have been held with local government agencies and parastatals.

The evaluation report stated that these successes may be limited:

"While the project will likely achieve the output targets established in the reorganization by the scheduled completion date, it may still be no closer to having a valid and replicable approach to the problems of improving livestock and associated agricultural production in the extreme north province."

We believe the project is now at a crossroads, with its future in doubt due to continuing design and implementation problems. We believe there is a need to reconsider the merits of AID's assistance in this highly complex and long-term project.

The following sections discuss the evaluation report findings and recommendations, as well as our review of technical assistance and Mission management. Our overall conclusion and recommendations follow.

Evaluation Report Issues and Recommended Actions

The January 1984 evaluation report was thorough and comprehensive. Many of its recommendations are contingent upon a future course of action which was not decided as of July 1984. The Mission and GURC must decide whether to:

- terminate the project on or before the scheduled April 1985 termination date; or
- continue the project through the present termination date and begin design of a second phase; or
- extend the project through December 1987, with the possible future design of a second phase; or
- extend the project through December 1987, with a definite commitment to a second phase.

Two of the basic overall conclusions of the evaluation report are that:

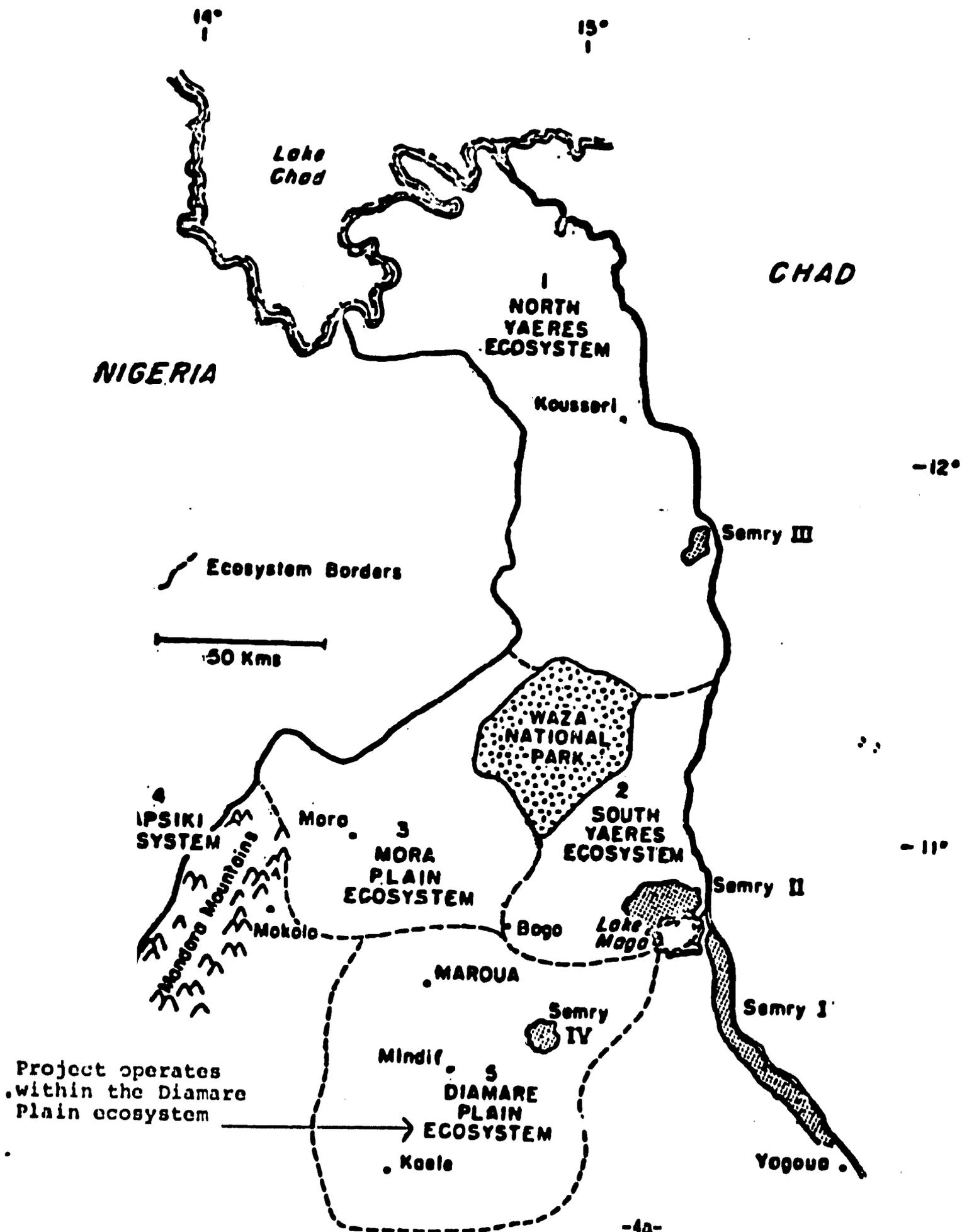
- Any serious attempt to intensify and integrate livestock and associated agricultural production in North Cameroon requires 15 to 20 years' continuous hard work to make a creditable start. This is due to the complex nature of the elements with which the project is dealing: livestock, crops and traditional ways of life.
- In the absence of a general program policy developed in conjunction with the GURC, the successes of the project run the risk of being irrelevant. Experience gained to date needs to be well documented so that it may be used as input to develop such a policy.

Other major points included in the evaluation report are:

1. Project results have limited applicability to other areas of North Cameroon due to:

- project activities being confined to a portion of only one of five ecosystems existing in North Cameroon (see map next page);

PASTORAL ECO-SYSTEMS



- flaws in the original design and subsequent reorganization, which seriously underestimated the time required to carry out the project; and
 - project staff working on significant and complex livestock and agricultural problems in isolation and without links to current GURC programs.
2. The project lacks a systematic management approach to deal with major changes occurring in land-use patterns.
 3. The project lacks an overall strategy, as shown by:
 - lack of agreement within the technical assistance team on plans for the grazing year; and
 - differences between AID and the GURC, including traditional leaders in the area, on waterpoint development.

The evaluation report set forth several options, ranging from early termination to an AID commitment for a second project phase. It recommended, however, that the present project be extended until December 1987 to complete work on the activities of the current phase and to prepare the way for a Phase II project. If the project is extended, a series of actions is needed to correct current problems, including:

- reorienting project activities to consider one entire ecosystem;
- rewriting the project logical framework, including objectively verifiable indicators of project progress; and
- revising the overall project strategy to include a detailed workplan for the technical assistance team.

Technical Assistance Problems and Mission Management

There have been continued problems in the use of AID-financed technical assistance, which constitutes \$2.5 million of the \$6.2 million AID commitment to the project. In addition, AID management of the project was inadequate in its early stages. Since reorganization, however, and particularly at present, mission management has improved, and the current project officer is in close contact with the project.

Early technical assistance problems included the assumption of GURC project management responsibilities by the contract team Chief of Party, team involvement in project construction activities, project redesign and reorganization, and lack of continuity of technical assistance services. These factors contributed to a delay in project implementation.

Our review disclosed that improvements are currently needed in technical assistance; namely, to develop data collection and analysis for grazing land management to resolve the controversy concerning the development of waterpoints, and to restore key positions previously eliminated from the project team.

Need for Grazing Land Management Data Collection and Analysis

A data collection and analysis system has not been developed for grazing land management. The absence of these data is largely due to the discontinuous way in which range management specialists have been assigned to the project. Without this information, the project's impact, or lack thereof, cannot be ascertained, and practices cannot be modified accordingly.

The pilot zone should serve as a demonstration and proving ground for improving livestock production. Detailed information is to be obtained on the current use of land allocated to the range for livestock numbers currently supported to design range and livestock management units. Higher levels of livestock production are expected.

We ascertained that such data as had been collected were not reliable, chiefly due to herders' unwillingness to declare their total number of cattle for fear of incurring tax liabilities. Early in the project period, contract staff developed range-use planning dossiers from villages in the pilot zones. Comparison of GURC livestock numbers with a small sample of 15 herds indicated discrepancies ranging from .17% to 70% more animals than the residents had reported to the livestock service.

The problem is further compounded by the complex relationships between owners and herders and by seasonal transhumance practices. The project sociologist, in his end-of-tour report in July 1982, noted "there remains a dearth of quantifiable information to serve as any kind of statistical control." He noted more intensive monitoring was needed of pasture use and livestock numbers. In another report he indicated the complexity of the problem as to herd ownership, herd management and livestock distribution in the project pilot zone. For example:

"Livestock owned by an individual does not exactly correspond with livestock managed by that same individual. For purposes of manageability and, simultaneously, security, livestock is distributed throughout the social network of the herding community. Animals managed by an individual will invariably include livestock owned by him, though the greater part of any herd could, in fact, belong to a range of other individuals: kin, clients and neighbors.

"The distribution of livestock in human settlements and on the range is capable of fluctuating greatly, both on a season-to-season basis or from year to year. Herd owners and managers are responsive to changes in the availability of pastoral resources and are inclined toward adapting themselves to changing situations through strategies of herd mobility and a redistribution of livestock throughout their social networks. The herd evolves from season to season, undergoing both fission and fusion in response to ecological opportunity or constraint.

"As a result of the above factors, any herd will represent multiple livestock 'owners' while, at the same time, any individual livestock owner may have continuing interest in the well-being of the several herds in which his own stock is distributed."

The project has experienced livestock number trends increasing beyond the capacity of the range to effectively support. In 1983 a resurvey of project

Grazing Block No. 1 indicated cattle producers had not declared the true numbers of cattle to be grazed in the block. Based on corrected information to accommodate the higher number of cattle actually using the block, it was expanded by 2,200 hectares. The same situation applied to Grazing Blocks 2 and 3, which were found to have estimated numbers of cattle greater than their initial pastures could support.

We noted an instance requiring analysis in that a location in Grazing Block No. 1 was reported to have 450 cattle during the 1983 rainy season, but close to 1,339 in February 1984 (dry season), when the cattle level is expected to be markedly lower due to some 70-75% of the cattle leaving the area to graze on the floodplains.

The project sociologist believed that controlled monitoring of sample herds or animals throughout the project zone will ultimately yield more reliable information than any global estimates for some unknown total of livestock periodically on and off the range.

We discussed this situation with GURC officials. who stated that probably the only way to take a reasonable cattle census would be to examine annual vaccination data over a three-year period.

Mid-1983 project reports mention the "initiation of an owner/cattle registration system which is still in the preparatory stage." In March 1984 this system was not fully operational; it remains to be seen whether the data collected will be reliable in view of the problems outlined above.

Waterpoint Development Construction not Supported by
Livestock Carrying Capacity Data or Agreed Project Strategy

The project paper called for appropriate data to be built up before decisions were made as to waterpoint design and placement. However, the project began waterpoint construction in 1983, based on data which were only estimated. This was in response to pressure for these points exerted by the GURC and local officials and residents of the pilot zone since early in the project. Consequently, the validity of these two sites is uncertain.

From inception of the project, the GURC and project zone residents were highly interested in livestock waterpoint construction. Continued delay was not accepted, thereby creating pressure and a credibility problem for the project. When we discussed the problem with local officials, they again stressed their view of waterpoint construction, preferring deep ponds holding water all year round, as being the most important aspect of the project. They countered the argument that the surrounding land could not support year-round grazing by suggesting that ranges might be irrigated. Since they had no experience of such practices, however, they could not say if the proposition would be technically or economically feasible.

Nine waterpoints are to be constructed by the project by its completion in April 1985. Heavy equipment needed for this construction was delayed due to the project redesign and reorganization and did not arrive at the project site until April 1983. The project team began construction of the initial two waterpoints, although verified data on livestock range carrying capacity was not on hand.

The GURC project director expressed concern about the cost of the waterpoints being designed by the project, which he estimated will average \$20,000 each. He is concerned about GURC ability to duplicate these after project completion. The range management specialist is primarily concerned that these points be established in accordance with range carrying capacity and distributed to promote uniform grazing. Although complete data were not available to satisfy these conditions, waterpoint construction was begun and two points were completed in 1983.

The evaluation team recommended the reassessment of waterpoint strategy and that consideration be given to digging a large number of shallower waterpoints to be seasonal in nature. These would disperse the livestock traffic and be less expensive for the GURC to maintain and reproduce.

USAID recommended that construction of waterpoints be suspended in January 1984, pending completion of the team reassessment recommended by the evaluation.

During our visit to the project area, we noted various instances of soil erosion in the grazing blocks. Project activity to conserve soil and water has been limited to grass reseeding; a reforestation of severely eroded land, which did not succeed due to lack of rain; and some diversion channels along roads. In February 1984 USAID commissioned a study by a waterpoint construction engineer of soil conservation practices, stockwater pond construction, proposed sites, and the ability of the GURC to meet the cost and technical needs of constructing similar ponds. After the completion of our review, the project submitted a stockwater development strategy to USAID Cameroon in April 1984.

Premature Elimination of Key Positions in Project Reorganization

The contracts of the agricultural economist and the sociologist, who were planned to have a significant and continuing role in the project, were not continued upon the completion of their initial tours of 24 months. This action was at the request of the GURC and agreed to by USAID. Consequently, the project has not had the use of these services to help develop the socio-economic information required for continuing evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness and beneficiary acceptance of livestock and agricultural production interventions.

When the project was designed, there was provision for the technical assistance team to include an agricultural economist to assist the GURC implementing organization in its planning of activities and provide economic guidance and analysis for project activities. A sociologist was also required for studies of the human population and to identify local organizational structures for managing range and land use.

Handling of this matter is illustrative of the USAID/GURC lack of agreement on the purpose and use of these functions. The GURC took the position that these services were no longer needed and contended it did not want specific data on project beneficiaries. Since many of the GURC personnel directly involved with the project were from the pilot area and, therefore, familiar with the needs of the residents, we were informed that in the negotiation over the various issues involved in redesign and reorganization, USAID agreed to terminate these positions. No other services in these categories were subsequently

obtained, nor did the GURC provide any replacements. Subsequent review of project staffing has questioned this action. An AID/W agricultural economist advised USAID in May 1982 that dropping of these positions was a serious mistake, since these specialties are critical to ensure that interventions are continuously monitored and evaluated for economic and social merits.

Mission Management Improved

During the initial years of the project, Mission management of the project was inadequate. USAID had limited contact with, and follow-up on, operations at the project site. It did not participate in early project site selection or building plans. The contract team Chief of Party and USAID did not agree on responsibility for project administrative support matters, and relations were often exacerbated by lack of communication.

However, since 1982 Mission oversight has greatly improved. Through informative reports from the contract team and daily radio contact, USAID is in much closer touch with project activities. The project officer makes frequent trips to the field and appears to have a good working relationship with the project team.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

AID's experience in this project amply demonstrates the complex development activity in attempting to integrate and intensify both livestock and associated agriculture production. Either one of these objectives is a complex task. To attempt to do both simultaneously is an exceptional and, perhaps, impossible challenge. We believe that AID must determine where the project is headed and what adjustments are necessary to better meet project objectives. Consideration should be given to:

--whether a long-term involvement in integrated livestock/agriculture is worth the effort; and

--the chances for success in view of the project's limited results in its first five years.

AID and the GURC must decide upon a course of action to deal with the many problems currently faced in the design and implementation of this project. The options included in the evaluation report provide a good menu from which to choose. If the project is again extended and further funds committed, we believe AID needs to specifically address the overall strategy and more specific technical assistance issues currently impeding progress.

Accordingly, unless the project is terminated, we recommend:

Recommendation No. 1

AID/Cameroon:

a) discuss the evaluation report findings with the GURC;

b) together with the GURC, select a course of action consistent with the options set forth in the study;

c) prepare an action plan to correct the current design and implementation problems; and

d) justify any significant departure from evaluation team recommendations by demonstrating how the decision will contribute to AID objectives.

Recommendation No. 2

AID/Cameroon:

a) implement a system to collect and analyze reliable grazing land management data;

b) resolve the current controversy over waterpoint development; and

c) seek to restore key technical assistance team positions as soon as practicable.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF REPORT RECIPIENTS

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