

PD-AAT-968 PROJECT EVALUATION SUMMARY (PES) - PART I

Report Symbol 11-447

1. PROJECT TITLE 46317 Decentralized Development Management Project		2. PROJECT NUMBER 493-0315	3. MISSION/AID/W OFFICE USAID/Thailand
		4. EVALUATION NUMBER (Enter the number maintained by the reporting unit, e.g., Country or AID/W Administrative Code, Fiscal Year, Serial No., beginning with No. 1 each FY) EV/84/1	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR EVALUATION <input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL EVALUATION	

5. KEY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION DATES			6. ESTIMATED PROJECT FUNDING \$000		7. PERIOD COVERED BY EVALUATION	
A. First PRO-AG or Equivalent FY-81	B. Final Obligation Expected FY-86	C. Final Input Delivery FY-86	A. Total	\$ 14,400	From (month/yr.)	6/81
			B. U.S.	\$ 10,600	To (month/yr.)	6/84
					Date of Evaluation Review	9/5/84

B. ACTION DECISIONS APPROVED BY MISSION OR AID/W OFFICE DIRECTOR

A. List decisions and/or unresolved issues; cite those items needing further study. (NOTE: Mission decisions which anticipate AID/W or regional office action should specify type of document, e.g., airgram, SPAR, PIO, which will present detailed request.)	B. NAME OF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION	C. DATE ACTION TO BE COMPLETED
A. Obtain general consensus among project personnel concerning purpose and objectives of project.	RTG	FY 1984
B. Create a revised LOP workplan that is congruent with the project purpose and objectives. The workplan should include verifiable indicators for measuring progress towards achievement of project objectives.	RTG	FY 1984
C. Clarify roles and responsibilities of TAT and other key project organizations.	RTG/USAID	FY 1984
D. Require Quarterly TAT and REGP reporting utilizing verifiable indicators as measurements of progress toward achieving project objectives.	RTG/TAT	FY 1984

9. INVENTORY OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVISED PER ABOVE DECISIONS			10. ALTERNATIVE DECISIONS ON FUTURE OF PROJECT	
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Paper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implementation Plan e.g., CPI Network	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	A.	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue Project Without Change
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> PIO/T	_____	B.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change Project Design and/or <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change Implementation Plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Logical Framework	<input type="checkbox"/> PIO/C	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	C.	<input type="checkbox"/> Discontinue Project
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> PIO/P	_____		

11. PROJECT OFFICER AND HOST COUNTRY OR OTHER RANKING PARTICIPANTS AS APPROPRIATE (Names and Titles)
1. Dr. Gerald Sentell
  2. Dr. Gary Suwannarat
  3. Dr. Suchitra Punyaratabhandu
  4. Mr. James Dawson
  5. Mr. Chinda Suetrong

12. Mission/AID/W Office Director Approval

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Typed Name: Robert Halligan

Date \_\_\_\_\_

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION DATA

1. Country : Thailand
2. Bilateral Project Title : Decentralized Development Management
3. Bilateral Project Number : 493-0315
4. Program Implementation:
  - a) First Project Agreement : 8/31/81
  - b) Final Obligation : 8/31/86
  - c) Final Input Delivery : 8/31/86
5. Program Funding:
  - a) A.I.D. Bilateral Funding : \$10.6 million (\$7.5 m. L; \$3.1 m. G)
  - b) Other Major Donors : None
  - c) Host Country Counterpart Funds : \$14.4 million
6. Mode of Implementation : Project Grant Agreement between USAID/Thailand and the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation.
7. Previous Evaluations and Reviews :

First Annual DDMP Assessment Report  
Kasem Srinian, Suthee Somboon  
REGP/USAID/Thailand  
November, 1982

The Second Annual Assessment FY-83  
Richard Chamberlain,  
Kasem Srinian, Suthee Somboon  
REGP/USAID/Thailand  
October 15, 1983
8. Responsible Mission Officials:
  - a) Mission Directors : Robert Halligan
  - b) Responsible Project Officers : Jerry J. Wood  
Joseph Salvo
9. Host Country Exchange Rates:
  - a) Name of Currency : Baht
  - b) Exchange at time of Project : \$1:Baht 23.0

## DDMP EVALUATION REPORT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This has not been an easy evaluation to perform - as a number of persons familiar with the project indicated would be the case by their lack of envy in the task we had undertaken. The most difficult problem has been to properly define the nature of the project being evaluated. During the course of the evaluation interviews there were many times when we felt perceptions of project objectives were as different as the perceptions of an elephant offered by the three blind men after exploring different parts of the animal.

The AID mission was candid in its briefing of the team and was careful to point out there had been initial problems in developing a satisfactory technical assistance team (TAT). Two key personnel were replaced during the first year of the project and other members are currently operating under a probationary status. However, from the Mission's viewpoint, the project had begun operating effectively early this year (1984). Therefore, the evaluation team was expected to evaluate the project primarily on the basis of its performance over the past three or four months. Given these circumstances it should come as no surprise that our findings are not entirely positive.

During the course of the evaluation one of the key, senior host country officials was asked how he would grade this project if this were a mid-term examination rather than a mid-term evaluation. In his opinion the first year of the project rated no better than a D+ while the second year's performance rated a B. Thus, to date, project performance could be compared to a C average. The evaluation team's rating would not exceed that average. However, we have noted the trend of improvement and have attempted to structure our findings with that in mind. Nevertheless, it is the consensus of the team that there are serious conceptual, organizational and contractual problems confronting this project which, if not resolved, will prevent the project from attaining its intended purpose.

The conceptual problem can best be characterized by examining the difference in the title of the project. Its English title describes it as a Decentralized Development Management Project, its Thai title as a project "To develop efficiency of the Tambon and Amphoe in Planning". The fact that there has also been a change, albeit a subtle one, in the stated project purpose (Project Paper vs LOP Workplan)<sup>1/</sup> is equally indicative of the conceptual differences which seem to exist. The team found that perceptions of conceptual framework ranged from those who viewed the project as a mechanism for realizing efficiency and effectiveness within the existent

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<sup>1/</sup> These variants of project purpose are stated in the Background section of this report.

system to those who viewed it as a process to further decentralize development decision-making to the level of the tambon. The one common element bridging these two perceptions was a perceived need to strengthen the capacity of the tambon to plan and implement rural infrastructure projects.

The organizational problem can best be understood by examining the relationship between the technical assistance team (TAT) and the overall project framework. The project organizational chart appended to the technical assistance contracts (Figure 1-1) places the TAT under the supervision of and reporting to the REGP secretariat. A subsequent chart found under TAB 5 of the evaluation team's briefing book places the TAT in a completely different relationship. (Both figures appear in Annex A.) At worst this is indicative of a major organizational misunderstanding; at best, ambivalence on the part of some key players as to the placement of the TAT within the overall project organization. There also appear to be varying views among key project personnel as to the degree to which the TAT functions as an advisory body or performs an operational staff function within the overall project/program framework. This confusion has created friction among personnel both within the TAT, and between the TAT and other project members. Such friction will undoubtedly continue until the relationship is more clearly defined.

The contractual arrangements for the project are equally ambiguous. These arrangements call for three different contractors to provide qualified personnel who will make a "best effort" to act as a "catalyst" to achieve certain objectives that tend to be rather abstract. The contracts do not provide guidelines for measuring achievements, effective mechanisms for coordination, or a means for resolving conflicts among the various contractors. (These responsibilities have been placed with the project coordinator, who is himself a contract employee.) These arrangements call for three different contractors to provide qualified personnel who will make a "best effort" to carry out certain assigned duties in pursuit of vague and abstract objectives.

The team did find evidence the project was beginning to produce some quantifiable results. The changwat and amphoe officials interviewed felt that the assignment of an ARD engineer at the district level was a significant contribution to the quality and quantity of tambon-level projects. There were indications that tambons within the project area were gaining an increased capacity to plan and implement rural infrastructure projects. There was also evidence that information gained through the "learning laboratory" approach was starting to flow toward Bangkok and was being used to formulate broader development policies.

In view of these positive elements, the team believes the project has merit and can recommend project continuation if actions are taken to correct the conceptual, organizational and contractual flaws noted earlier. These actions should include:

- 1) Clarification of the purpose and objectives of the project and a resultant consensus among key personnel.
- 2) A revised LOP Workplan that is congruent with the agreed project purpose and objectives and that includes verifiable indicators for measuring the progress toward achieving these objectives.
- 3) Quarterly reporting by the TAT utilizing the verifiable indicators as measurements of progress toward achieving project objectives.

Detailed findings and recommendations are contained in Part Two.

FINDINGS

(All references are to subsections within Part Two of this document)

DDMP:

- The program is innovative in its structuring of a feedback system to relay policy-relevant information about local level realities to decision makers. [III.A.]
- Basic problems which plague DDMP may be linked to differences in perceptions of project intent, symbolized by inconsistency in project name: the Thai specifies efficiency of tambon planning; the English, decentralization of decision making. [III.A.1]
- Indicators of project performance are at a global, non-measurable level, not at the operationally concrete, verifiable level. [III.A.2]
- Because of the close link between DDMP and REGP, any decision regarding the future of DDMP must be made within the context of policy developments relating to the REGP and/or successor structures. [III.D.]
- A system of greater interdependency seems to be developing. Although tambons are increasing their capacity to plan and implement more projects, this is offset to some degree by increased demands upon the central government for increased technical and financial support. [III.A.3(A)]
- Plans to institutionalize the "learning laboratory" approach through the use of local resource institutions have not materialized to date and concerted action is required to maximize future prospects. [III.B.4]

USAID/RTG:

- Comingling of USAID and REGP funds is not happening and in most case these funds are clearly identifiable all the way down to the tambon. [III.C.1(D)]

Working Group:

- Effectiveness of the national working group is limited by time and bureaucratic focus, as well as by fundamental misunderstanding and lack of consensus regarding its functions and overall project purpose. [III.A.1]

REGP:

- Confining DDMP sub-projects to REGP guidelines constitutes a significant constraint on the generality of the project's value. [III.C.1(B)]
- Paperwork is bottlenecked as communications flow from TAT to the National Working Group, through the inadequately staffed REGP. [III.A.1]

RTG:

- It appears that DDMP end-of-project findings are unlikely to be utilized if they require substantial cross-ministry cooperation and coordination or additional RTG funding. [III.C.1(D)]

Contractors:

- Contracts were written at a level of generality which leave individual firm obligations unclear. [III.B.1]
- There appears to be a lack of contract supervision by the Project Agency (REGP Secretariat). Further, the terms of the contracts do not appear to provide a mechanism for this purpose. [III.B.1]

TAT:

- Serves highly valued staff functions for the REGP Secretariat, provincial governors, and district officers. [III.B.3]
- TAT value to RTG agencies represented on the National Working Group has not yet been established. [III.B.3]
- The data are not in regarding TAT ability to facilitate relationships serving the long-term goal of creating self-sustaining local development action. [III.B.4]
- Better management of the day-to-day operations of TAT in its first year would probably have made major differences in where DDMP stands today. [III.B.1]

TAT/Bangkok:

- Roles with regard to field monitoring lack clarity. [III.B.2]
- The question of the degree of adherence to the annual workplan remains an unsettled and unsettling issue affecting the Working Group, TAT/Bangkok, and TAT/field. [III.A.1]

TAT/Field:

Role definitions as reflected in recent TAT reorientation documents are consistent with the spirit of the project, but not with some provisions of the contract job descriptions. [III.B.2]

ARD Technicians:

Placement of ARD technicians at the district level is credited as an unqualified plus at all levels by our informants. This has relaxed a major local level constraint on undertaking relatively large construction projects: the lack of needed technical expertise. A by-product has been the ability to handle larger scale, including cross-tambon, projects (roads, dams, and bridges) meeting accepted technical standards. [III.A.1 (G)]

Maintenance:

Local approaches only are capable of handling projects of relatively limited scale. Tambon financial and technical constraints, as well as RTG regulations, limit expansion of tambon maintenance responsibilities to larger works, such as cross-tambon projects. Efforts have been initiated to begin to test new local maintenance approaches, but funded maintenance arrangements are not yet universally in place. [III.A.1(E)]

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Overall Recommendation

- That this evaluation report be used to initiate a process working toward fundamental agreement on the objectives and purposes of DDMP, a process involving both action and discussion.

### Recommendations Concerning on-Going Operations

#### DDMP Subcommittee and National Working Groups:

- Clarify and reach consensus on the ultimate goals and objectives of the DDMP Project.
- Clarify their roles with respect to (a) setting policy directions for DDMP/TAT and (b) monitoring TAT activities.
- Name a representative from the DDMP Subcommittee or National Working Group to chair the Contract Coordinating Committee, and empower the chair to resolve conflicts when the coordinating Committee cannot reach a consensus.
- Accelerate efforts to integrate Thai resource institutions into the "learning laboratory" system.

#### TAT:

- Determine which of its current activities are directly related to DDMP objectives, and which are peripheral. Proceed to allocate resources accordingly.
- Develop a comprehensive set of system performance indicators for internal and external management purposes. Monitor DDMP organizational and operating systems.
- Ensure production and distribution of materials for tambon council use in designing and implementing multi-year tambon development programs. The materials should include, at a minimum, identification of relevant information requirements, specification of project selection criteria, and implementation procedures.
- Provide clear and succinct definitions of the components of the learning lab, and specify when, how, and where these components are going to operate during the remainder of the Project.
- Submit regular reports summarizing the performance of the learning lab (based on verifiable performance indicators, rather than brief summaries of field reports) to DDMP participants and other interested persons and agencies of the RTG and AID.

- Develop a list of general priorities to apply to materials going before the National Working Group, which will reflect the ability of the Group to implement changes.
- Keep interested agencies informed of DDMP progress and developments on a regular basis, in a form congruent with current administrative practice.
- Establish stronger links between TAT/Bangkok and the TAT field teams. In order to do this, determine whether to supplement current Bangkok staffing, at the expense of terminating some of the field team personnel, if necessary.
- Provide a detailed phase-out plan that is acceptable to all parties no later than one year prior to phase-out of TAT staff.

AID:

- Take steps to see that USAID funds are not distinguishable from RTG funds, if the desire of the Project is to co-mingle funds.
- Provide the incoming Project Officer with sufficient operating expense funds to enable him to effectively perform his difficult assignment involving a non-traditional Project.
- Provide the Incoming Project Officer with sufficient time and resources to study the Thai language intensively.

Recommendations Concerning Policies

- Relieve DDMP from strict adherence to REGP project guidelines.
- Extend DDMP only if a set of generally acceptable objectives is produced, and appropriate strategies and organizational structures are created.
- Provide a technician (similar to the ARD technician) on a permanent basis at the Amphur level.
- Ensure that local-level maintenance arrangements are linked to provincial and national programs and policies.
- Give priority in maintenance planning to larger, cross-tambon projects, whose maintenance requirements will be more demanding in terms of organization, complexity, and funding support.

## I. BACKGROUND, DESCRIPTION AND STATUS

The Decentralized Development Management Project (DDMP) was initiated in August/September, 1981 with the signing of the respective grant and loan agreements. The primary raison d'etre for the project appears to have been a perceived need to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the large number of development grants being made available to local government units (tambons) under the Royal Thai Government's rural development programs. The project's study area in which new approaches are being tested consists of ninety-seven tambons (townships) located in ten amphoes (districts) in five Northeastern changwats (provinces)<sup>1/</sup>. This five-year project, which runs to August 31, 1986 is estimated to cost \$24.8 million, \$10.6 million of which is provided by A.I.D. in the form of loan and grant funds (\$7.5 million loan and \$3.1 million grant).

The project objective as originally defined was to strengthen and accelerate the Royal Thai Government's (RTG) system of decentralized development by (1) strengthening local capacities to identify, design, implement, and manage development activities; and (2) providing capital to expand local development grants to the Sapa Tambons (Tambon councils) in the project area.<sup>2/</sup> The principal project components are:

1. Strengthening the system and rationale on which sub-project funds are granted to the Sapa Tambons;
2. Building the capacity for planning and project management at the tambon;
3. Increasing the effectiveness of the district to provide technical support and coordination of local development programs;
4. Establishment of a maintenance fund for local projects; and
5. Construction of sub-projects in the 97 targeted tambons.

The original project purpose as stated in the Project Paper (PP) was "to strengthen and accelerate, in a replicable way, capability at the tambon and amphoe levels to design and implement project and program which are responsive to beneficiary indicated needs". This has subsequently been modified in the Life-of-Project Workplan to read "The purpose of DDMP is to promote the RTG policy of building the requisite capacities to plan and implement a decentralized rural development process." This process is further described in the workplan as the following:

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<sup>1/</sup> The provinces are Khon Kaen, Maha Sarakham, Si Sa Ket, Ubon Ratchathani, and Yasothon. DDMP districts within each province are listed in Annex B.

<sup>2/</sup> From project description in the loan agreement.

- To build the decision making and implementation capabilities of tambons;
- Encourage greater participation of the people in the rural development process;
- Promote more effective participation of government officials and private organizations in the rural development process;
- Increase incomes and employment opportunities of villagers;
- Develop useful infrastructure in the villages.

As a strategy to accomplish the above the DDMP will assist communities and government agencies in generating more effective forms of participation, decision making and implementation. By 1986 DDMP expects to achieve the following objectives (outputs):

1. To understand and explain, through a systematic documentation process, the on-going processes which affect the planning and implementation of development activities;
2. To develop comprehensive, integrated, and on-going learning and action systems which will continuously strengthen the planning and implementation capabilities of amphoes and tambons;
3. To involve top policy and operating officials on an on-going basis, in monitoring, assessing and supporting the learning and action systems;
4. To institutionalize at both the national and local levels the learning and action processes;
5. To create a valid and replicable capacity building model.

While the evaluation team recognizes that stated and working objectives may differ, and that some RTG officials share and have contributed to the development of USAID objectives, it is clear that REGP-stated purposes diverge from those taken from USAID documents. Current REGP directives state that DDMP goals are to:<sup>1/</sup>

1. Support policies distributing resources to rural areas in order to increase local efficiency;
2. Coordinate tambon and amphoe in order to become a system whereby each supports the other for local development; and

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<sup>1/</sup> Nayobai lae naew batibat khong ngan goh soh choh B.E. 2527 (Policy and Implementation Directives, REGP Program 1984), REGP Secretariat, Office of the Prime Minister, October 2526, p. 41.

3. Increase tambon and amphoe efficiency in planning, in order to achieve in the long-term more efficient use of resources by tambon councils.

At the beginning of the evaluation the team was requested to define the project being evaluated in terms that reflected its current status and for which there would be general agreement. After much consideration it was agreed that the project description in Annex 1 of the grant agreement is still a reasonably valid description, but that there are perceptual differences in two basic areas of focus and approach. The first relates to the question of end product vs. the process by which it is achieved. Basic program documentation tends to place primary importance on the end product, while the evolution of the "learning laboratory" approach places strong importance on understanding the process by which it was achieved. We happen to feel that both are highly interrelated and equally important. The second relates to the degree of decentralization the project is intended to achieve. Resolution of both of these issues is needed in order to maximize the impact of the project.

#### Project Description

The project is assisted by a contract technical assistance team (TAT) that works at all operational levels of the project, but focuses primarily on capacity building at the amphoe and tambon. The TAT is a joint Thai-US consortium of two Thai firms and one U.S. firm, with the leadership of the team vested in a Thai team leader. This seventeen-person team was mobilized and operating by the beginning of FY 1983, approximately one year after the signing of project agreements. However, early in the life of the contract there were serious problems in orienting key members of the team toward their intended role. This resulted in the departure of the team leader in April, 1983 and the organizational advisor in September, 1983. As a result, the team suffered from greatly impaired effectiveness and has only attained its expected level of efficiency over the past few months.

In addition to the TA team, the primary components of the DDMP project include working groups at the national, provincial, and district levels, and the REGP. RTG organization charts in Annex C show the relationship of these units at the national level. Working groups at the respective levels include officials of the four principal ministries involved in rural development (Agriculture and Cooperatives, Education, Health, and Interior). The working groups are intended to serve as forums for the discussion and resolution of issues raised through the learning laboratory.

As the dotted lines in the flow charts of Annex C indicate, DDMP and the Thai implementing agency, the Rural Employment Generation Project (REGP), are both temporary. The REGP, a politically-created unit which administers block grants to tambon councils, is scheduled for phase-out in 1986, at which time its activities are to be integrated into normal

line agency functions. While the REGP Secretariat is linked, through the REGP Committee (also a temporary entity), to the Secretariat of the Prime Minister (a permanent agency of the RTG), it has no permanent staff. REGP personnel are on loan from various permanent line agencies; their promotion and salary decisions continue to be made within their respective agency homes.

The relationship between DDMP and line agencies at the national level is demonstrated in Annex C. TAT issue papers are routed through the REGP Secretariat to the DDMP Working Group, members of which represent the four key ministries (Agriculture and Cooperatives, Education, Interior, and Public Health). The field to policy level links inherent in the project differ in important respects from normal hierarchical links: first, the link is relatively direct with few intervening layers; second, information flows are much more bottom-up than top-down; and third, in response to field problems, field staff are explicitly expected to identify policy alternatives for the consideration of central level officials.

Assuming the project demonstrates to the satisfaction of representatives of line agencies sitting on the Working Group the usefulness of the DDMP field to policy level linkage, its potential for institutionalization within existing systems is increased. However, this advantage is not without its costs: parochial agency interests, agency "culture," and established modes of operation differ markedly among the four line Ministries.

The impact of agency interests is reflected in Working Group member comments, suggesting that some of the DDMP funds might be better used by their own agencies. Agency "culture" affects the capacity to work with a nonconventional project, and indeed to accept the aim and implicit consequences of the project, whether the USAID aim of decentralization or the somewhat more modest REGP aim of increased tambon capacity. The effects of bureaucratic culture and established modes of operation within some agencies mutually reinforce a more rigid top-down orientation, conventional hierarchical chains of command and notification, and adherence to blueprint approaches than would appear to be appropriate within the DDMP context.

Stated REGP and USAID goals regarding the DDMP project differ. These differences are then overlaid by differing agency perspectives brought to the project by various actors, affecting their orientations with regard to how the project should be implemented and what end results are desired.

Project activities are now focused on achieving the stated purpose of providing support to the RTG in building the capacity to implement its policy commitment to a decentralized development process. Funding has been provided to utilize ten districts in five Northeast Thai provinces as a "learning laboratory" in which to analyze the local development process,

determine its requirements and develop effective approaches to local capacity building. Ten long-term consultants, posted full-time in the learning lab area, are engaged in these activities. Within each province the TAT team consists of one documentor and one advisor. The documentor, working primarily at the tambon and village levels, observes key processes and compiles the observations into a monthly documentation report. The advisor, working primarily with provincial and district officials, serves as a catalyst in focusing the attention of provincial working group members on key issues relevant to strengthening local capabilities.<sup>1/</sup> Bangkok-based consultants are responsible for analysis and presentation of findings and recommendations through a Working Group to the DDMP Subcommittee, chaired by the Minister of Interior, which is empowered to set policy for DDMP.

To date there have been two annual in-house assessments of the project. The evaluation team has reviewed these reports and is in general agreement with their findings. Of particular interest is a set of three questions in the first assessment which the team feels provides a valid basis for the measurement of end-of-project achievement. They include:

- Have RTG policies and funding levels reflected continuing support, in increasingly effective ways, for a process that places decision making for development in the hands of local institutions?
- Has the experience in the ten-district area of intense focus by the project affected national policy in positive ways consistent with greater autonomy for local authorities?
- Are tambons in the ten-district area utilizing a multi-year tambon improvement program that results in technically and socially sound sub-projects, for which appropriate levels of technical support and assistance are provided by the district and for which funded maintenance arrangements are operational; and is such a process broadly applicable in other areas?

#### METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The evaluation team reviewed relevant contracts and agreements, project documentation, field reports, and working group minutes. The team also interviewed RTG, TAT, and USAID officials and tambon council members. Bangkok interviews were conducted during May 25 and 28, and between June 7 and June 18; field interviews between May 29 and June 6. Details are reported in Annex D.

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<sup>1/</sup> The tambon/village level reports are now being used by the advisor in documenting issues raised at provincial working group meetings.

The team emphasizes that DDMP is a complex program. When working properly at the tambon level, tambon council members should be virtually unaware of the presence of TAT field staff. Intended "interventions" (coalition building, non-directive advice) are subtle. The rural development scene in Thailand is complex, involving various agencies within the four principal ministries, security programs, and other externally-funded projects. The combined subtlety of DDMP operations, the complexity of development programs and initial implementation obstacles makes it difficult to determine how DDMP is affecting decision making processes. When the determination of causality is particularly problematic, the evaluation team has so noted within the body of the report.

The evaluation team was directed to consider primarily indications of DDMP performance during the three months immediately prior to the evaluation. Hence, the evaluation team was faced with the task of assessing the potential for long-term social, institutional, organizational, and behavioral changes on the basis of short-term observations. The limitations of such an approach are severe and users of this report are cautioned to bear them in mind as they view these evaluations.

## II. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this mid-term evaluation of the Decentralized Development Project (DDMP) is stated in the "Purpose of Evaluation" section of the document A Mid-Term Evaluation of Decentralized Development Management Project (DDMP).<sup>1/</sup>

Scope of Work is "to help AID and the RTG:

1. Provide an independent assessment of Project's learning system methodology and the extent to which it is functioning to strengthen the role of the tambon in local development, improve the quality of local development projects and increase the responsiveness of central government authorities to local development needs.
2. Assess the technical assistance arrangements and the self-evaluation processes being used to strengthen performance of the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) for applicability of this mode and these arrangements to rural development program strengthening.
3. Assess where the project is in terms of its longer term decentralization and institution-building objectives and recommend future actions which may need to be taken, either to ensure institutionalization or to build upon capacities which are now in place.
4. Provide an independent source to document important lessons of this experiment with a learning process approach to project implementation."

To achieve this purpose the Evaluation Team was asked to address four major topics and answer a series of specific questions posed under each topic. These four topics include: (1) DDMP Supported Learning Systems and Progress Toward Decentralization; (2) Technical Assistance Contract; (3) Future Directions; and (4) DDMP as an Experimental Learning Process Project. The topics and associated specific questions are provided in the Scope of Work document which is included in this report as Annex E. The methodologies employed are described in Annex D.

## III. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The organization of the remainder of the report reflects the need to treat in detail each of the points raised in the Scope of Work. Each of the main topical areas is restated, major points summarized, and then associated questions and issues are addressed in the order in which they appear in the Scope of Work.

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<sup>1/</sup> Reproduced as Annex E.

A. DDMP Supported Learning Systems and Progress Toward Decentralization

The evaluation team finds that the DDMP-supported learning systems, including TAT and district, provincial, and national working groups, are now in place. Some issues have entered the process of consideration for policy recommendations, including the following at the national level:

- 20% fund
- maintenance arrangements: 2 models identified and described
- adjustments of REGP regulations and administration
- use of "comingled" funds for privately-held structures (water jars) within DDMP areas.

Provincial working groups are functioning in varying modes and with varying outcomes. Some provincial working groups are largely informal coalitions; others hold formal meetings; and still others are piggy-backed on other provincial committee meetings.

The efficacy of the system in strengthening supports for the tambon in local development and in increasing the responsiveness of central government authorities to local development needs, however, remains largely untested. Within the broad context of this question, the team was asked to:

1. Assess whether the systems are in place to generate valid performance indicators.

System is taken to include two fundamentally different aspects: organizational structures (including personnel, resources, and their linkages) and a set of generally understood and accepted goals and objectives which are internally consistent and easily identified. From these goals and objectives flow measures designed to reflect degrees of goal and objective attainment. The evaluation team finds both aspects deficient. Agreement on goals is lacking in the project; further, basic differences appear in the use of key terms. The organizational system, including working groups, the TA teams, and several REGP staff members, is in place.

However, whether these organizational components are structured in such a way as to generate valid performance indicators bears further examination. The following structural arrangements are problematic in that they may conceivably contribute to future system dysfunction:

- Bottlenecks - Insufficiency of and the temporary nature of REGP staff sometimes hamper communication flows.
- Members of the national and provincial working groups lack bureaucratic incentives and time to attend closely

to the project. Of twelve national working group members, for example, ten have civil service classifications of C7 or greater, many are division directors or above. Some provincial working group members consider DDMP as ngan fak.<sup>1/</sup>

- The National Working Group lacks authority to make policy; instead it relays recommendations to the national DDMP Subcommittee.

Furthermore, it appears that the National Working Group is not infrequently by-passed in policy decisions stemming from DDMP activities. It is not possible to ensure uniformity of outcomes, nor that institutional learning occurs in such a situation.

In the report of the Second Annual Assessment of DDMP dated October 15, 1983, the final recommendation offered was to "Clarify the ultimate goals and objectives of the DDMP project so that all TAT consultants are in agreement as to what direction they are proceeding towards." Although there are some indications of increasing agreement on objectives in the interim, confusion if not outright disagreement continues to plague DDMP. Disagreement persists regarding the following issues, leading to individual differences in task orientation.

- TAT/field role: Some TAT field staff act more as expert advisors than intended. (See Focus Paper #1, Changing Role of TAT/Field and TAT/Bangkok.) However, it appears that TAT/field staff are making efforts to work in a less directive mode. It is difficult for the team to document this assessment on the basis of very brief exposure to field staff.
- National Working Group: Differences have yet to be resolved regarding the types of issues to be handled and the extent of the working group's role in monitoring TAT activities, and in approving item expenditures.
- Workplan: Both within TAT/Bangkok and TAT/field, basic disagreements emerge regarding the importance of adhering to the annual workplan.

Differences in perceived purposes and goals among working group members, TAT/Bangkok, and TAT/field hinder ability to generate valid performance indicators. Until there are common goals and objectives, there are not likely to be such performance indicators which are meaningful for either internal operations management or external evaluations.

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<sup>1/</sup> Work outside the scope of normal line agency responsibilities, and therefore deserving less than normal attention.

2. The team was asked to identify and address major problems and issues needing attention to improve performance such as the system of process documentation.

This directive is not independent of (1) above. If one cannot adequately measure performance--in this case because of the lack of shared objectives and accepted indicators of performance, etc.--then it is not likely that one can determine those areas where performance improvements are most required.

Questions of system performance lead to examining of the relationships between objectives, goals, strategies and structure. Figure 1, a flow diagram of the DDMP/RTG systems interface, suggests TAT has a considerably higher degree of centrality than does Figure 2, a brief outline of the organizational structure of TAT.<sup>1/</sup>

Examination of performance improvement generally begins with assessment of changes in overall performance on specific objectives. However, DDMP has yet to develop a full set of system performance indicators

Figure 3. DDMP Objectives, Indicators, and Measures

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Indicator</u>	<u>Measure</u>
Understand and explain ongoing processes	Study/learning	None Specified
Develop learning and action systems for strengthening planning and implementation	Design	None Specified
Involve top officials in the change process	Dissemination	None Specified
Institutionalize capacity building and system improvement processes	Adjustment	None Specified
Create replicable model for other communities	Design and Experimentation	None Specified

Source: Objectives, from Figure 1; Indicators from "TAT and DDMP Performance Indicators," undated internal TAT document.

<sup>1/</sup> The team notes that impact upon neither RTG nor REGP policy appears as an explicit objective in Figure 1. The involvement of top officials in the change process is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for policy change.

and appropriate measures for the five major objectives given in Figure 1. Figure 3 illustrates the gaps the evaluation team finds. The indicators are themselves processes, requiring specification of measurement operations--not an easy task. Nor is the link between indicators and objectives immediately apparent.

Upon refinement of performance measures for the DDMP objectives, the organizational and operating systems should then be monitored internally. The regular monitoring of both TAT and the entire DDMP system is viewed by the evaluation team as an operational management responsibility (that is, of the TAT). Such monitoring is viewed as an efficacious tool for achieving organizational and program objectives. Subsequent system modifications should be made as required.

The restructuring of process documentation within TAT has significantly sharpened the focus of issue papers and of documentors' reports. The standard applied in judging field documentation is, "Amount of information conveyed by reports." The evaluation team considers this a highly subjective standard. Furthermore, the condensation of field reports for transmittal to policy-makers appears to reduce information content. This task must be conducted carefully to ensure presenting concise but highly informative summaries.

One caveat should be offered here: structure and strategy must be codetermined. Putting in place the DDMP structures and TAT personnel has taken nearly one-half of the project life. Only within the past 1-3 months have they begun to function in anything like the manner originally planned. Therefore, it would probably be unwise to begin tampering with those structures again. It might be more effective to instead take the major outlines of the organization and its basic personnel as given and to then develop the best strategies possible within that set of parameters.

3. The scope of work then charges the evaluators to consider whether adequate progress is being made toward institutionalizing this process, especially as it relates to detection of and action on operational problems; the questions that should be asked deal with whether or not:

- (A) DDMP is adequately focused on a reduction in dependency by tambon/village organizations vis a vis the central government?

Based on interviews and observations in the field and in Bangkok, it appears as if there is less a reduction in dependency by tambon/villages vis a vis the central government than there is a change in the nature of that relationship to one which can more nearly be described as "interdependency." The increased interaction of the tambon council and representatives of the central government has tended to increase the council's dependency for budgets, technical advice, and planning support. However, this is at the same time countered by the increasing capability and self-confidence of the tambon councils. On the other hand, it appears as if

DDMP has in some cases substituted itself (i.e. members of the field teams) for the government in the dependency equation. In some areas the tambon councils might be depending too much on the TAT advisors. Examples of this include: cases in which TAT advisors are credited with generation of ideas (such as water jars), regarded as pii liang<sup>1/</sup>, or become too heavily involved in consulting. Job description, title, intended project and workplan-defined roles are not consistent.

From the field interviews and observations it is the consensus of the evaluation team that tambon councils appear more capable to plan and implement projects as compared to several years ago. Tambon council members reported that larger and more complex projects are being undertaken than in the past, although these reports were not verified with other data. Examples of these include the piped water supply project in Kuthong, Mahasarakam, and cross-tambon projects discussed under item (D) below. Within DDMP areas, the evaluation team observed a high degree of awareness of construction inputs and costs, and the availability to carry out more complex infrastructure. [See item (B) below]

However, it is not clear to what degree greater tambon capacity is attributable to DDMP. Prior and present efforts of the REGP and other external funding sources all have stimulated tambon capacity to imagine, plan and implement projects. For example, in Ban Siew, Mahachanachai District, Yasothon, 16 different occupational and interest groups were identifiable. These ranged from a medical supply fund to occupational, women's, and maintenance groups. Community Development, Health, Agriculture, and Self-Defense and Development projects all had been implemented in the village, as in many of the DDMP areas.

The most significant structural barrier facing the move toward less dependency on the RTG by the tambon councils is the legal structure. Legal changes are necessary to permit the tambon council to own land, execute contracts, and levy taxes, if their level of dependency on the central government is to subside. It must be noted that this change should not be made until tambons are ready to accept these responsibilities.

- (B) The evaluation team was further asked to assess whether the magnitude and nature of decision making at the tambon/village level is supportive of increased local authority or is it simply an extension of the traditional top-down system.

The view that decisions have not traditionally been made at the tambon/village level fails to take into account a range of activities at these levels. Village elders, local abbots and monks, the Wat councils, etc., have long been the guiding force for village and tambon level

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<sup>1/</sup> A pii liang is an elder brother/sister who cares for a younger sibling.

decision making for activities other than those controlled by the central government.

Tambon councils, Kamnan, and Puyaiban referred to their work as an outgrowth of traditions long associated with managing village and especially Wat affairs.

The REGP, DDMP and similar decentralization efforts are helping re-establish and modernize existing local institutions and traditions rather than establishing "new" institutions or concepts at the local level. Activities such as DDMP strengthen the link between village/tambon "grass-roots" government (or self-government) and formal RTG structures.

Decentralization is not being maximized through the present project. The enforcement of REGP criteria<sup>1/</sup> and of province-specific priorities limits tambon and village discretion. Irrigation facilities are given priority in some provinces this year. The evaluation team encountered only one serious effort to implement a project that did not conform to the project types specified by the REGP--and this was initiated by the District Officer rather than the tambon council.

- (C) The team was charged with considering whether "Kamnan" and "Puyaiban" are perceived more commonly by the people as representatives of the central government or as local leaders and the effects of these perceptions on decentralization.

The positions of Kamnan and Puyaiban have traditionally been the interface between the officials of the central government and the populations of the countryside. Because of the nature of such an interface under different conditions and in different places, the perceptions of the people have varied as to whether the Kamnan and Puyaiban were representing them or were actually local agents of the central government apparatus. The direct election of Puyaiban and of the Kamnan from among the Puyaiban within the tambon creates the feeling that these leaders are representatives of the people. However, since the Kamnan and Puyaiban are still subject to removal by the central government (for cause), the extent to which they can chart a course too different from that of the local RTG officials is still potentially constrained.

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<sup>1/</sup> The ten REGP project types include water containment and delivery systems, potable water systems, roads and bridges, and buildings such as markets, warehouses or drying sheds for agricultural produce, health stations, day care centers, or tambon halls. The tenth category is "others (if included in tambon plans)". Policy and Implementation Directives, REGP Program 1984, P. 90. REGP Secretariat, October 1983. (in Thai).

- (D) The scope of work directed the team to consider if there is any significant increase in local level cooperation and joint programming across village/tambol boundaries.

From the field interviews it seemed clear that in the DDMP areas there are significantly more cross-tambon and cross-village projects than might have traditionally been the case. Field interviews suggest that villagers have learned from experience that small projects do not usually produce such general benefits as larger ones, such as a road linking distant villages in 3 tambons, a large fish pond, etc. Tambon councils in several areas indicated a preference for durable projects. An example of this is the piped water supply system in Kuthong District, Maha Sarakham. (The REGP technical handbook stimulated the tambon council to consider this project). The extent such efforts could be sustained without considerable outside funding is surely open to question. For the first time, then, three factors have enabled tambons to plan and manage such large projects: TAT advisor influence, access to the ARD technician, and the necessary funding.

- (E) The evaluation team was asked to examine the sustainability of local maintenance approaches being tested are sustainable without a continuing flow of external assistance from central RTG resources or foreign donors.

Most of the local maintenance approaches being considered are at an early stage of conceptualization and/or implementation. In compliance with Section 6.2 (f) of the loan agreement, the DDMP submitted its initial maintenance report in December, 1983, suggesting several approaches. These included the use of the 20% fund for maintenance. The team did not find extensive evidence that many specific maintenance actions were yet underway in the field. This is partially due to the fact that many of the projects are relatively new and do not yet require extensive maintenance. Instead, the team found a rather general awareness of the maintenance issue at all levels of government.

For smaller projects, most tambon council members interviewed indicated concern about a willingness to undertake maintenance when repairs are required. In some instances, village maintenance funds have already been established; e.g. in several villages, by charging 100 Baht per household-sited water jar. One specific level of maintenance does not appear to be adequately covered by the present maintenance approaches/arrangements: the larger cross-tambon projects. Maintenance requirements for these are more demanding in terms of organization, technical complexity, and funding support. These projects often exceed local technical and financial capacity. We strongly recommend that the on-going maintenance planning give priority to these types of projects.

TAT personnel are aware of the need to link local-level maintenance arrangements with provincial and national programs and

policies. Such links have not at present been made, but would appear to require urgent attention of TAT and relevant RTG units. As the First Annual Maintenance Report emphasizes, an important aspect of this is the determination of scale of projects to be maintained by the various levels of government. At the national level there appears to be a widespread recognition that maintenance is in fact a major problem that must be dealt with. This is a positive first step.

- (F) The team was also directed to examine whether local council membership perceive their needs being better communicated, addressed and responded to than in 1981.

Local council members almost unequivocally perceive that their needs are being increasingly better met. However, some of this is attributable to programs other than DDMP. For example, in Rural Poverty Program areas, the tambon council advisory committee, consisting of tambon-level officials from the four principal ministries plus local members, has in some tambons been effective. Tambon Pra Sao of Yasothon Province is the only such example found by the evaluation team. The REGP program has also done much to make local level officials feel their needs being better met. Reference has been made elsewhere to other RTG programs, the cumulative impact of which should not be discounted.

This is not to say that DDMP has not also contributed to these changing perceptions of local council memberships. But with so many "decentralization" and rural development programs now underway it is difficult if not impossible to identify the effects of the DDMP project on the basis of brief discussions with TAT staff and tambon council members.

- (G) The evaluators were to find out if the application of technical criteria in project design and approval is becoming more generally accepted and increasing in quality.

The question assumes there were problems associated with the application of technical criteria in project design and approval: no such evidence was found. In fact, villagers and local officials were eager for technical assistance. However, until the ARD technician was assigned to the District level such technical assistance was virtually unavailable.

The ARD technician has made a profound difference in every district visited by the evaluation team. During our interviews at the tambon, amphoe, and changwat levels, as well as in Bangkok, the ARD technician was frequently singled out as DDMP's most important contribution to date. The quality of both planning and construction of small-scale village projects has improved since the ARD technician and proper technical

criteria have been available as a part of the DDMP.<sup>1/</sup>

Furthermore, tambon council members know when to seek higher-level technical help and are willing to do so whenever possible. The Kuthong piped water supply system is a good example; the kamnan visited both regional and provincial technical offices in Khon Kaen and Maha Sarakham, as well as consulting the district ARD technician.

- (H) The Scope of Work directed the team's attention to the absorptive capacity of rural communities. Is the level of financial resources available for development stretching capacity, particularly in terms of implementation and financial management skills?

The figures in Annex F appear to indicate that total resources available through the REGP have not substantially increased during the life of the project (Baht 74 million in 1981 vs. Baht 79 million in 1984). A.I.D. Project Implementation Letters (the latest in February 1984) indicate Missica's concern that overall funding levels in the DDMP area remain stable. This is the case, although in some amphoes the formula-driven REGP contributions have actually fallen. This is a result of more accurate data and more efficient calculation of amphoe-level grants, both outgrowths of TAT activities.

Notwithstanding the above, total REGP/USAID loan monies amount to roughly double the amount which jurisdictions would receive in the absence of loan funds. The team found no evidence that this level of funding exceeded local absorptive capacity. In all the tambons visited by the evaluation team, villagers were reported to be willing to contribute labor, in several cases without compensation, and have been able to complete all DDMP/REGP financed projects within a reasonable time. In terms of financial management skills, the district level officials in most cases provide "guidance" and assistance as "required" in order to assist the tambon council in issues related to financial management. Not surprisingly, it is in the area of financial management that district officers express the greatest reservations about the DDMP/REGP approach to decentralized development.

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<sup>1/</sup> One provincial ARD chief estimated that in non-DDMP areas over five times as many proposals are returned for tambon revision on technical points as in DDMP areas. Elsewhere, such estimates were not available. The point was also made that this could indicate that ARD technicians were preparing tambon proposals. If true, this runs counter to the DDMP intent of developing local capabilities which will remain in place assuming the ARD technicians are withdrawn at project termination.

The supervision of projects in most of the districts visited by the evaluation team was rotated among the tambon council members on a day-by-day basis. Most members of tambon councils express readiness to spend considerable time and effort on projects beneficial to the community. Current levels of expenditure do not seem to be overloading their abilities or their willingness to remain involved.

A paper work bottleneck appears to be developing at the tambon level with the demands placed upon tambon council secretaries. This position is usually occupied by a local teacher (sometimes the head teacher, sometimes not). The paper work required by the RTG is seen as a burden on these secretaries.

## B. Technical Assistance Contract

The Technical Assistance Team (TAT) which is supported as part of DDMP is provided through three contracts: two with Thai firms and one with a U.S. firm. Both "hard" (engineering) and "soft" (organization, management, and analysis) technical assistance is provided by these firms.

The Project Coordinator, the head of TAT, is a Thai national, giving Thai firms the lead role in the arrangement. Of the 17 contract staff, 15 are Thais, 5 of whom work in Bangkok. Aside from the Project Coordinator, responsible for overall project guidance and external communication with relevant Thai government agencies, the remaining 4 Bangkok-based Thai staff perform staff support functions including condensing field reports and channeling them to the National Working Group. The remaining 10 Thai staff are deployed in pairs in the 5 Northeastern project provinces. The American firm supplies 2 Bangkok-based advisors, in organization and management (O&M) and engineering.

A major problem faces the project in the issue of role definition of TAT/Bangkok staff and their relationship to TAT/field. Limited field exposure of centrally-based staff may hamper overall understanding of program dynamics. It appears inconsistent with learning process concepts that appropriate direction can occur largely without field visits. Furthermore, lines of authority from Bangkok to the field are not clearly drawn, nor are the original contracts unequivocally helpful in resolving these issues.

The recently instituted TAT self-evaluation processes appear well founded and potentially valuable. The evaluation team is concerned, however, that the assessment of individual performance has not been complemented by methods of "system" performance assessment.

The evaluation team was requested to assess four specific items with respect to TAT and its role in DDMP. Each of those four directives and the results of the evaluation team's inquiries and investigations are presented in this section of the report.

1. The evaluation team was requested to "provide a general assessment of DDMP's technical assistance arrangements and particularly of the decision to place Thai institutions in the lead technical role."

Given the nature of the project it would be difficult to envision a contractual arrangement that did not put Thai personnel in the lead roles. The interlocking organizational arrangements which involve the regular interaction of TAT personnel with RTG officials from the ministerial levels of government in Bangkok to tambon-level officials in the five test provinces is such that any organizational arrangement that did not involve Thai leadership would be unworkable. However, the evaluation team does question the effectiveness of some of the other aspects of the contracting

arrangements. They include (1) the need for greater contract supervision by both the RTG (DTEC) and the Contract Coordination Committee, (2) the wisdom of using three separate contractors, and (3) failure to develop implementation plans with verifiable indicators.

A review of the various contract documents reveals a situation whereby the contractors are required to do little more than provide qualified personnel to perform their "best effort" in acting as "catalysts" to achieve certain objectives for which there is a lack of verifiable indicators for judging progress. The contractual responsibility of the three firms is basically summed up in the third paragraph of Annex I to the contract which reads as follows:

DTEC shall establish a work-team called TAT. Several contractors (hereinafter referred to as Contributing Contractor) shall be separately and individually contracted and paid to assign its personnel (hereinafter referred to as Assigned Personnel) to TAT. Such assigned personnel shall be responsible for particular scope of work and each Contributing Contractor shall be responsible for the performance of their Assigned Personnel. The Project Organization and Estimated Staffing Schedule appears in Part II of this ANNEX. However, it is understood and agreed upon by all Contributing Contractors and DTEC that the success of the Project as a whole is the objective DTEC wishes to achieve.

While the evaluation team understands the contracting background that resulted in three separate contracts, we still feel that one can reasonably question the wisdom of using three separate contractors if their primary goal is only to supply qualified personnel. It not only creates a problem of coordination, but also tends to diffuse responsibility. While we have accepted this situation as a "given", we feel that it has created a situation that requires more, rather than less, supervision. As it is now constituted in Article III (Scope of Work) of the contract, DTEC has (1) established a Coordinating Committee on which it is not represented, (2) limited the authority of the Coordinating Committee to that of only advising the Project Coordinator, and (3) designated a Project Coordinator who is also a contract employee. Under such an arrangement the contractual responsibilities are at best rather diffuse and run contrary to good basic management principles. The fact that (1) two key contract personnel were replaced during the first year, (2) other personnel are currently on probation, and (3) the project is behind schedule in meeting certain key objectives presents a fairly strong prima facie case that the present contractual arrangements are less than fully effective.

Annex I of the respective contracts required the contractors to prepare certain project implementation plans containing "verifiable indicators of attainment of the objectives, against which its performance can be measured." Although several TAT and DDMP plans have been prepared,

it is the opinion of the evaluation team that none of these documents contains adequate indicators on which one can accurately assess project/contractor performance. We also feel that the lack of such indicators is to some degree indicative that arrangements for contract supervision are not adequate. Lacking such indicators, it is impossible for the quarterly progress reporting system to be a meaningful exercise.

2. The team was also asked to assess the appropriateness of the role definitions of TAT personnel in relation to DDMP purpose and strategy, and the extent to which the self-evaluation process is working as intended.

This item has two distinct parts. First is the issue of the role definitions of the TAT personnel in relation to DDMP purpose and strategy. By the general admission of most of those intimately associated with DDMP, the first year saw little in the way of movement toward ultimate project goals. This report notes earlier that current TAT/field actions are increasingly consistent with recently-developed role definitions. However, these differ significantly from contract job descriptions. The differences should be resolved, most likely through contract modifications.

Although there is too little experiential and performance data to assess the relationship between role definitions and practices, inconsistencies in contract definitions deserve attention. These have largely to do with lines of authority. Contract job descriptions specify that the O&M advisor "acts as a link between the Project Coordinator and the Amphoe-level advisors and documentors," but then specify that the development advisors report to the Project Coordinator, relying heavily on consultation with technical advisors. The only reference to lines of authority for process documentors specifies consultation with the Technical Writer/Editor. In fact, the O&M advisor shares the consulting role with regard to technical writing. The larger question of general supervision of the field teams has not, in practice, been resolved to the satisfaction of the parties involved.

The evaluation team observed a number of indications that there should be stronger links between TAT/Bangkok and TAT/field. These are needed to ensure that the field perspective is given adequate consideration and to validate the correctness of field inputs. The contract scope of work assigns this function to the O&M advisor who, according to the contract RFP, should spend approximately fifty percent (50%) of time in the field. This RFP provision was not incorporated in the individual firm contracts, nor is the person occupying this position spending that amount of time in the field. However, in fairness, it appears that the current O&M advisor has been assigned other important tasks that may prevent more extensive field travel. It would be worthwhile for TAT to execute a self-study to see if there is a need to supplement its current Bangkok staffing to fill this critical function, even at the expense of terminating one of the less productive field teams if necessary.

The second part of this directive is to assess the extent to which the self-evaluation process is working as intended. The current self-monitoring and self-evaluation system, in place only since early 1984, maximizes field-level discretion in carrying out assignments. The members of the TAT field teams have been provided mechanisms and instructions which should facilitate self evaluation of their materials prior to submission to TAT/Bangkok. The process also involves peer review, in which the field teams are sent copies of counterparts' reports from other provinces.

Most TAT field team members agree that the present system is both more effective and more productive than the traditional top-down supervision. TAT/Bangkok also seems to find the system more effective and efficient. It seems appropriate that an organization whose ultimate purpose is to foster decentralization should also use some of the same principles for purposes of its own internal management processes. A final judgment cannot be rendered until sufficient time has passed to determine if the self-evaluation process has in fact made a contribution to the achievement of DDMP's overall goals.

3. The evaluation team was asked to define the perception by user organizations of TAT and the degree of value they place on having access to the team.

DDMP structural arrangements have brought TAT into contact with a large number of government agencies and officials as well as with local authorities. At the national level there are the DDMP Subcommittee, the DDMP Working Group, and the REGP Secretariat. The REGP Secretariat, the administrative organization for the DDMP, administers project loan funds. All four major line ministries in charge of rural development programs (Interior, Agriculture, Education and Health) are represented on both the Subcommittee and the Working Group.

At the provincial level, TAT interacts primarily with the Governor's Office and with the recently formed DDMP Provincial Working Group. TAT personnel also sit as ex officio members of the Provincial REGP Committee. The nature of the task assignment of TAT field personnel requires them to develop close linkages with the Amphoe Office, with Tambon Councils, and with Tambon Development Groups (CD, Health, and Agricultural workers, Education officer, etc.).

Given these arrangements it is important to differentiate the various types of relationships that have arisen between TAT and the groups and organizations with which it interacts. From the evaluation team's field interviews, it is quite apparent that TAT field personnel are regarded by many Provincial Governors as valuable staff assistants, which are in short supply at the Changwat. Tambon Councils view TAT as advisors, not only in providing technical assistance when asked, but also in providing them with guidance and suggestions regarding identification and selection of projects. The fact that all but one of TAT field personnel possess graduate degrees and are called "Acharn" (Professor) no doubt has significantly affected role relationships that have developed.

Amphoe perceptions of TAT are less identifiable. Whereas TAT linkages with the changwat and tambons appear to be quite strong, they are far less developed at the amphoe level. This is not to say there is no personal contact. To the contrary, amphoe officials know the TAT team by name and by sight, but they are less clear as to TAT's function or role at the amphoe level. Amphoe officials' perceptions of the TAT role at the tambon level appears to be the same as that of tambon council members.

In Bangkok, TAT's task environment consists of three primary groups: the REGP Secretariat, which is the umbrella agency for DDMP; the DDMP Subcommittee; and the DDMP National Working Group. The original intention was for TAT to channel information to these groups, which would thereupon (it was hoped) use the information for policymaking purposes, as well as see that it was disseminated to relevant RTG agencies. By and large, this has not happened. It is true, however, that REGP has made certain modifications to its program based on TAT recommendations-- recommendations which coincided in part with those contained in REGP annual evaluation reports prepared by Thai universities.

The fact that DDMP has tended to focus almost exclusively on REGP projects, and is regarded by most Subcommittee and National Working Group members as part of REGP, perhaps explains why there has been little attempt to use information generated by TAT for general policymaking and dissemination purposes. Instead, the Subcommittee and National Working Group have tended to assume a regulatory or monitoring function with respect to TAT. From time to time, however, in compliance with ministerial wishes, they have issued directives to TAT. For example, TAT has been asked to look into the feasibility of setting up tambon revolving funds, maintenance systems, and information systems.

4. The evaluation team was further to assess achievements of the TAT to date in facilitating relationships that will serve the long term goal of creating self-sustaining local development action and in developing more effective approaches to local capacity building.

TAT, for all the many reasons already mentioned in connection with earlier items in this evaluation, has only recently begun to operate in a fashion consistent with its original intent--and even that seems to have been operationally if not conceptually modified. Therefore, the various levels of Working Groups have only recently begun to function--or have yet to begin. There still is not a substantial degree of working group membership's understanding and/or agreement of their purposes and roles. Such understanding is critical, especially at the national level, if DDMP is to function as originally intended.

Furthermore, one of the key assumptions upon which DDMP rests is the early and extensive involvement of Thai resource institutions. The basic contract (Annex I) calls for TAT to "Successfully and creatively

integrate Thai resource institutions into the decentralized planning and management process." To date almost no long-term involvement of such institutions has been obtained, although contacts have been initiated for this purpose.

Until the system truly begins to function and continues to function for a sustained period, any assessment would probably not produce useful results. In fact, at this time little could be pointed out beyond some local coalition building, team building and so on to suggest that the process has begun to have any potential long-term impacts. A period for nurturing and continuing the existing approaches is required if DDMP is to be even partially successful, in terms comparable to its aims at the outset of the project.

### C. DDMP as an Experimental Learning Process Project

As indicated in the Scope of Work, "DDMP is an experiment in using a learning process approach to achieve institutional and policy dialogue objectives relating to local development." There are important practical lessons to be learned from the first two years of DDMP. Many of the start-up problems were at least in part due to the uniqueness of the program and various environmental factors. However, a better job of planning the implementation of DDMP could probably have reduced these substantially. Tighter, more goal-directed, output-oriented management would have reduced the start-up problems.

During the course of the evaluation, the Evaluation Team was often assured that the inherent nature of the project was process not output. Therefore, the argument goes, one cannot manage on the basis of traditional output measurements. At the extreme of this point-of-view, some maintain that the purpose of the project is only process. As long as there is process, the system is working and, furthermore, is working as well as could be expected.

A simple analogy might involve an R&D operation in the private sector. The activities of any R&D function are also process. But, the corporate management has certain expectations for R&D outputs. These outputs may not be measured in the same terms as other outputs from their more traditional activities (e.g., sales, profit, share-of-market) etc., but they are measured. So too could the outputs from a socio-behavioral R&D operation (which in a sense DDMP is) be measured. The measurements may vary from more traditional operations, but so long as they are consistent with the organization's objectives and meet all the other relevant management criteria, they are useful--indeed essential--to the effective application of limited resources to attain organizational objectives--a critical mandate for management in general.

In this context, the evaluation team was directed to review DDMP's history and analyze the evaluation of objectives, strategy and scope, from the perspective of the experiment, in order to:

1. Provide an independent assessment of the validity of the concepts employed as they related the DDMP's purpose, the ways in which the concepts have been operationalized, the relevance of this strategy to Thai rural development requirements, and the strengths and limitations of the RTG and AID systems to support such an innovation."

There are four distinct parts of the above directive. In the following each is considered separately.

- (A) "... An assessment of the validity of the concepts employed as they related to DDMP's purpose"

The Learning Laboratory Concept is defined as follows<sup>1/</sup>:

One of the important distinctive features of the DDMP is that it is designed to provide the REGP with a learning laboratory site and special supporting technical expertise to use that site for the development, testing, and refinement of new concepts, procedures, and systems for later phased application outside the project area. At the same time it will provide the REGP and a variety of collaborating institutions experience in the applications of these new concepts, procedures, and systems and in providing training in their use. It goes beyond the usual pilot project concept in its systematic attention to building methods that can be applied within the basic constraints of existing programs and institutions, and its attention to building institutional capacities for dissemination.

In simple terms the "Learning Laboratory" has nothing to do with the traditional notion of laboratory as a place in which "scientific" experimentation is carried out. In this use learning laboratory essentially means the areas in which the TAT field teams are in place thereby providing via the TAT/DDMP network a flow of information relevant to tambon-level project planning and implementation as well as relevant related issues. These areas are supposed to serve as the test sites for the so-called five-step methodology of TAT/DDMP, that is study/learning, design alternative approaches, experimentation, adjustment, and dissemination.

At this stage of its implementation, the basic concept of the "learning lab" has not yet been subjected to stringent tests. The system has begun to function according to the basic tenets of the learning laboratory approach only since the first quarter of 1984. Although much progress has been made since then, it is likely to take until the end of 1984 before the viability of the concept and its applicability to the

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1/ The DDMP as an REGP Learning Laboratory

That situation can be fairly judged. Even then the value of the concept must be separated from the efficacy of its implementation. That is, even if DDMP does not seem to be fulfilling its original set of expectations, it is not certain that any degree of failure would necessarily be due to concept deficiencies. Instead, the implementation of the project might have been the primary cause for less than desired levels of performance.

(B) "The way in which the concepts have been operationalized."

The concept of learning lab as used in DDMP implies certain activities which have not been carried out. For example, operational definition of the experiment and what constitutes control are required; plans should be established for further testing of a model (or models) which has been subjected to an initial test (how many tests are required before recommended shifts in national policy can be justified?); and a priori criteria to be used in rendering judgements of success or failure should be set. Other similar issues of importance to be dealt with as a part of the implementation of the concept should be included as well.

The evaluation team reiterates the obstacles to operationalizing the "learning lab" posed by lack of agreement regarding what the learning lab is, and the functions of its components. There remain considerable differences of interpretation among those involved in DDMP (i.e., TAT members of working groups, relevant government agencies, and so on) as to what the purpose of DDMP and the role of TAT is. These differences can result from several sources, including inadequacy of TAT's communications with all those involved in DDMP (since that appears to be a responsibility of TAT). Also, the communications flows among the members of the various bodies outside of the domain of TAT are faulty. Furthermore, players represent differing bureaucratic interests and activities, neither designed to coincide with other agency or with DDMP interests. The evaluation team believes all these reasons contribute to the continued uncertainty about project purpose, scope, and responsibilities even though the half-way point of the project's term has been reached.

The concepts upon which the DDMP project rests have not been adequately defined for operational/implementation purposes. The key in implementing a project such as this is to develop simple, effective operational definitions, which are easy to understand and measure. A review of the TAT O&M literature suggests that a foundation for such definitions has been laid. Simplification and clarification would probably aid in the communication of these concepts to others involved in the project.

The learning lab as now operating is severely constrained by the various requirements which force DDMP projects to conform to the same guidelines and limitations as regular REGP projects. This necessarily implies that the potential rewards are limited because the scope of experimentation is restricted. Furthermore, at this stage, certain "learning lab" activities have yet to be widely implemented. For example,

the use of "experiments" (unless this too is a special definition of a commonly used term), or dissemination (unless this means simply sending a written report to various parts of DDMP such as the working group or the REGP).

(C) The relevance of this strategy to Thai rural development requirements.

Thai rural development requirements are taken here to refer to tambon planning capabilities and to decentralization, clearly not exhausting the list of possible requirements. Decentralization is mandated by evolving RTG policies, as expressed in the Sixth Five-Year Plan. As development continues it is likely to prove essential to continued growth.

DDMP has had an input on the REGP program as it has evolved from year to year. The increasing attention now being focused on the project at the highest levels of the Thai government suggests that if DDMP is properly implemented and managed (especially TAT) over the remainder of the project life, the project could provide information and recommendations to aid the RTG in formulating nation-wide rural development policies and programs.

Likewise, the DDMP project appears to be properly oriented to improve tambon and amphoe planning capabilities. DDMP also has high potential for affecting central government policies intended to support local-level planning. Involving central level decision makers is essential to ensure the capabilities being developed at the tambon and amphoe levels function beyond the life of the DDMP project.

(D) The Strengths and limitations of the RTG and AID systems to support such an innovation."

Systems are made up of people. DDMP represents a relatively new concept in development administration. That the RTG and USAID have in fact put this program in place suggests a greater degree of flexibility than might have been expected. However, contracts have not been amended to reflect the evolution of the project. This is due in part to the difficulty in making contract changes, resulting from the complexity of AID and RTG procedures. Hence, some parties adhere to original provisions, especially in regard to tangible product outputs. Other parties argue that findings from the learning lab begin to suggest alternate directions not envisioned at the outset.

The degree to which a continuation of the learning lab might be fully funded by the RTG beyond the life of the project is at best problematic. Thus, as long as DDMP's results indicate that improvements can be made by "fine-tuning" existing activities, by providing new materials or methods, etc., progress can probably be achieved. Operating budgets in the various ministries of the RTG are very tight. To the extent that implementation of DDMP's findings requires substantial (in RTG terms) funds or cross ministry cooperation and coordination, necessary action is not likely to be forthcoming.

AID too suffers from structural rigidity. The nature of this program is substantially different from traditional AID programs in many ways, especially the heavy emphasis on social interaction and group decision-making, etc. Yet, AID policies and procedures are not entirely supportive. For example, the AID Project Officer should have a functional command of the Thai language in order to be effective in this program. AID has not taken steps to provide the new project officer with those skills even though he will assume responsibilities for DDMP in July. Furthermore, the travel budget is too tight to permit him to spend time familiarizing himself with the program in the field including the locations, projects, and personnel involved.

In another vein, even though the funds were to be co-mingled, AID/RTG disbursement practices have resulted in clear identification of the AID portion of the monies down to the village level. This suggests that AID itself needs to consider its abilities to carry out such non-traditional programs. To effectively implement projects such as DDMP, AID will most likely have to make substantial internal policy and procedure changes.

2. Identify the lessons of both positive and negative experiences generated under DDMP as they may be relevant to future efforts of AID and the RTG to achieve important institutional development and policy dialogue objectives

DDMP has provided a flow of field-generated information which passes directly into the REGP organization as well as to the various ministries involved in that Program. This information flow has been of assistance to policy-makers as they have sought to improve the performance of REGP from year to year.

However, this easy access to information does not insure that effective policy decisions will necessarily follow. The early and obvious success of the placement of a qualified technician at the amphoe level in the DDMP test districts led to the decision to deploy volunteer technicians nation wide at the amphoe level. This approach, using recent, but as yet unemployed, technical school graduates, has not been successful according to those interviewed as a part of this Evaluation. Here, apparently good and generally accurate information led to a faulty decision to place inexperienced youth in temporary posts where technical demands exceeded their capabilities.

In addition to the policy recommendations and decision-making data that have flowed from DDMP, the work of the TAT Engineering advisor has strongly influenced the various technical manuals produced by the REGP. These materials have apparently proved useful at the tambon and village levels. The need for similar materials to be produced in socio-technical areas (e.g. project identification and implementation guidelines) seems apparent. As yet there are no concrete plans for such materials even though DTEC officials fully expect such materials to be produced as a part of the relevant contracts in force.

Another positive contribution of DDMP involved the decision to place Thai consulting firms in the lead. The two Thai consulting companies and various individual members of the TAT will probably have gained valuable experience that can be used later and in other projects. However, the lack of direct involvement of the firms themselves minimizes the extent of the impact. In any amendment to this program or the establishment of later programs the team recommends that an active operating role be defined for the Thai consulting firms, with contractually specified performance indicators to be met.

There are many practical lessons to be learned from the first two years of the project in order to avoid important mistakes in subsequent programs. Undoubtedly many start-up problems were at least in part due to the uniqueness of the Project, the fact the proposed structure and relationship did not have a precedent in Thailand, and that there was much to be learned by all involved. However, many of these difficulties could have been ameliorated or overcome if the implementation of the Project had been carefully planned. When an organization is led to believe that management controls cannot be applied, it often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. More rather than less care in planning and executing the operations of unusual projects is called for.

The looseness of the organization in its first year of operation, the many personnel selection mistakes made in forming the TAT organization, the one-year delay in getting the operating system functioning somewhat according to original expectations, etc. should encourage both the RTG and AID in the future to expect more of the consulting companies involved (if they are operating according to contract, it is the contract which is in need of major modifications for future applications). Better management of the day-to-day operations of TAT in its first year of operation would probably have made major differences in where the project stands today. In potential future programs, better management should not only be expected, but should be demanded in specific contract terms.

#### D. Future Directions

Given the policy decision to merge the REGP and the Rural Poverty Program in 1986, DDMP could make a significant input as regards the shape of the merger through its documentation activities and reports on tambon administrative capabilities. It would be difficult to justify extending the Project unless consensus is reached on its objectives, and strategies and organizational structures are modified so as to relate directly to the objectives. If DDMP is allowed to phase out on schedule, existing RTG programs appear to have the potential for carrying on local-level DDMP-type activities. The decision to extend the Project or to permit it to phase out is, of course, a matter to be decided by the RTG and AID.

DDMP has been so clearly linked to the REGP that any decision about its future must be taken within the broader perspective of policy developments relating to the REGP. Quite specifically, account should be

taken of the RTG's stated intention of merging the REGP and the Rural Poverty Program in the Sixth Development Plan period starting in 1986. A committee was recently appointed to study the matter. Chaired by Dr. Damrong Boonyuem, a member of the DDMP Working Group, the committee has met once and is expected to submit recommendations by the end of the year (1984).

In regard to DDMP's future, the Evaluation Team was directed to:

1. Review with senior RTG officials current policy thinking and major program initiatives relating to rural employment, poverty alleviation and decentralization, and assess the position and relevance of DDMP within this larger program and policy environment.

From interviews with senior RTG officials, it is apparent that despite policy initiatives to merge the REGP and Rural Poverty Program in two years, little substantive progress has been made in terms of specifying how this is to be accomplished in practice. A major problem requiring immediate attention is how to reconcile two programs that are fundamentally at odds in many respects. For example, the REGP seeks to increase tambon administrative capabilities by giving decision making authority to tambon councils in project specification and selection. The REGP seeks further to strengthen these capabilities by assigning the responsibility of project management and implementation directly to tambon councils. By contrast, the Rural Poverty Program gives far less authority to tambon councils: line ministries determine policy priorities and design and implement projects.

Other differences exist between the REGP and Rural Poverty Program. While they are not irreconcilable, a viable solution is not immediately obvious. The REGP is a nationwide program designed to generate rural employment and increase tambon administrative capabilities. The Rural Poverty Program is targeted on only the poorest villages in 286 Amphoe and King Amphoe (sub-districts) in 38 Changwats. Its primary objectives are to raise living standards to minimally acceptable levels and to provide basic services in designated poverty areas, while encouraging self-help initiatives on the part of rural populations. One final difference: REGP funds are allocated to, and are disbursed out of, the Changwat; the Rural Poverty Program allocates funds to the central line ministries in Bangkok.

On the assumption, however, that a merger between the REGP and the Rural Poverty Program is conceptually feasible and operationally viable, examination of the DDMP's position and relevance within this broader context is appropriate. Two separate issues should be considered here. First, in what ways can DDMP assist in providing information that could be used to establish how best to effect a merger? Second, after the merger, what should happen to DDMP itself? The evaluation team will attempt to address both questions.

DDMP's scope of work and activities should make it an important primary data source regarding tambon administrative capabilities. Since merger deliberations presumably must take tambon capabilities into account, DDMP could make significant input through its documentation activities and reports.

Moreover, if DDMP succeeds in attaining the objectives stated in the Project Description, it should have considerable impact on the form and conditions of the merger, at least as far as allocating decisionmaking authority to tambon councils is concerned. According to Annex 1 of the Loan Agreement, DDMP coverage areas will have:

institutionalized processes for the effective allocation and distribution of development resources, implementation of technically and socially sound sub-projects, and institutionalized use of a systematic multi-year tambon development program.

In addition, the DDMP has been charged to produce:

plans and systems for use in other districts and tambons throughout the Kingdom. At a minimum this will include proven and "packaged" systems and materials for use by sapa tambon in designing and implementing multi-year tambon development programs.

Clearly, if DDMP succeeds in its task of improving tambon planning capabilities, a strong case may be made for retaining decisionmaking authority by tambon councils, no matter what the form of the merger between REGP and the Rural Poverty Program.

The second question has to do with the future of DDMP itself. At present, the DDMP is a temporary program funded entirely by a USAID grant and soft loan. The so-called "counterpart" funds come out of the REGP budget. They are funds that would have in any case been allocated to tambon under the regular REGP program. Nevertheless, because of these funding arrangements, DDMP can be considered to fall under the aegis of the REGP. Most REGP and other RTG officials interviewed by the Evaluation Team agreed that DDMP would be terminated at the end of the contract period in 1986, which coincides with the scheduled merger between REGP and the Rural Poverty Program.

To terminate DDMP as a project is not equivalent to terminating DDMP activities or discarding DDMP products. In fact, the potential for carrying on tambon-level DDMP activities and utilizing DDMP products exists, but within the Rural Poverty Program rather than within REGP. For example, in 1981 (before DDMP was created), the Rural Poverty Program established advisory groups for tambon councils consisting of the kamnan, the tambon agricultural worker, the tambon health worker, the tambon community development worker, a local school teacher selected by the tambon council,

and two villagers also selected by the tambon council, one of whom was required to have technical skills and experience. This group performs an advisory function similar to the services provided by the TAT field team, but is still at an early stage in most areas. The geographical scope of the program is limited to the 38-province Rural Poverty Program area, whereas REGP scope is national.

No formal structure comparable to TAT exists to carry field findings before policy makers from various ministries. This relationship of the project largely to temporary agencies (outlined earlier and depicted in Annex C) suggest that institutionalization cannot occur within the DDMP implementing agency, REGP. To the extent that institutionalization can be expected to occur, then, it must be through the relationship with line agency units. One possible mode which this could take would be the development, within agencies of the four principal ministries, of field-policy level links similar to those which TAT develops. It remains for TAT and the DDMP National Working Group to demonstrate the utility and effectiveness of the field to policy level linkage to a degree that would lead policy makers (at the National Sub-committee level and higher) to adopt similar functional mechanisms within permanent line agencies.

One of the more visible accomplishments of DDMP has been to install an ARD technician at the Amphoe Office, as mentioned elsewhere in this report. However, concern was expressed over what would happen to the ARD technician once DDMP was terminated. Accelerated Rural Development Officials are in disagreement as to whether ARD has either the staff or the budget to continue this activity on an expanded scale. A further problem is the indeterminate status of ARD<sup>1/</sup> and the perception by central government officials that ARD is part of provincial administration and should be funded out of the Changwat Administration budget, rather than by the central government. Given this context, it is urgent that the RTG examine alternative means of providing similar technical expertise at the district level.

Interestingly, the Regulation issued by the Prime Minister's Office creating the Rural Poverty Program (signed July 25, 1981) contains relevant contingency provisions. For example, Article 22, Section VI, of the Regulation stipulates that the Civil Service Commission shall supply personnel to agencies participating in the Rural Poverty Program as necessary. If such provisions are retained when REGP and the Rural Poverty Program are merged, there should be no difficulty in personnel procurement--i.e., in assigning technicians to the Amphoe Office. At such

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<sup>1/</sup> The Committee on Reorganization of the Thai Administrative System has formally recommended the dissolution of ARD, the Community Development Department, and the Public Works Department, and has recommended the creation of two new Departments, one to be in charge of community development, the other to be in charge of public works activities.

time as REGP and RPP may be merged, the relevant Regulation could also contain a provision requiring the Budget Bureau to provide per diem and other expenses for the technician.

Taking into account policy developments regarding the merger of REGP and the Rural Poverty Program and their implications, the evaluation team was asked to:

2. assess the relative merits of allowing the DDMP assistance to phase down and terminate according to the present schedule, versus continuation either on the same or a revised basis; and provide recommendations regarding the preferred course of action and its implementation.

During the period when this evaluation was being conducted, there were on-going discussions about a possible amendment to the basic DDMP Loan Agreement which would add approximately \$3 million to the Loan and extend the period of the Project by two or three years. Given the existence of these talks, the evaluation team sought and received permission from Mission Management to make two sets of recommendations about the potential future of DDMP.

Therefore, rather than responding to Item 2 directly (as shown above and in the Scope of Work), the evaluation team assumes that the decision to extend the Project or to allow it to phase out on schedule is a matter to be decided between the RTG and AID. Consequently, the team considers both contingencies: phase-out or provide follow-on action. The emphasis of the evaluation team in both of these responses is placed on the initial word "If".

- (A) If phase-out is recommended, guidance should be given as to actions which might be taken, in the course of so doing, to sustain whatever useful momentum and capacities may have been put in place as a result of DDMP.

Assuming the decision is made to terminate the DDMP according to schedule, there appears to be the potential for carrying on local-level DDMP-type activities. The evaluation team recognizes that DDMP may be unable to deliver all the end-products specified in the Loan Agreement between the RTG and USAID, either because of internal management difficulties or because the initial objectives were perhaps overly ambitious. Nevertheless, it is hoped that by the close of the project, a sufficient number of products will have been generated for use by RTG agencies and tambol councils.

Some key members of the RTG indicate that the Project Description contained in the Loan Agreement accurately reflects RTG expectations concerning DDMP. USAID and TAT understanding of project objectives, as they have evolved, deviates from initial contracts in

some important respects. The most important of these is the relative importance of process versus discrete outputs. A resolution of these differences should be given high priority. In the remaining two years, therefore, the team recommends that the DDMP focus on the production of materials for use by tambon councils in designing and implementing multi-year tambon development programs. The materials should include, at a minimum, identification of relevant information requirements, specification of project selection criteria, and implementation procedures. If the DDMP has not yet begun such work, it should start to do so within the next few months. It should be determined whether production of materials should be undertaken independently by TAT, or in collaboration with relevant line agencies. This decision should take into account the effect of the production mode on the likelihood that materials will actually be used.

At the same time, DDMP should continue to develop and test models in its learning lab areas. Until recently, the DDMP was so loosely structured and shifted direction so frequently that its operating principle could best be described as, "Anything goes." While some degree of flexibility is generally encouraged in experimental settings, the chief danger which must be constantly guarded against is to lose sight of the original objectives of the program. Flexibility with respect to means does not mean flexibility with respect to ends. The DDMP should therefore determine which of its current activities are directly tied to its objectives, and which are peripheral, and it should proceed to allocate its resources accordingly.

Once the final decision is made to phase-out DDMP, then it would seem advisable to ask for the Contractors<sup>1/</sup> to provide a detailed phase-out plan that would be acceptable to all parties concerned. This plan should embody the elements included in the discussions above, as well as providing for the maximum sustainability of the contributions made by DDMP.

- (B) If follow-on action is recommended, guidance should be given regarding desirable modifications in DDMP structure and strategy. For example, is continued USAID funding for Tambon level sub-projects necessary and/or desirable in any follow-on AID funded support project? Should any major changes in the structure and composition of technical assistance be considered? Should Project scope be redefined and should any adjustment in the locus of responsibility within the RTG be considered?

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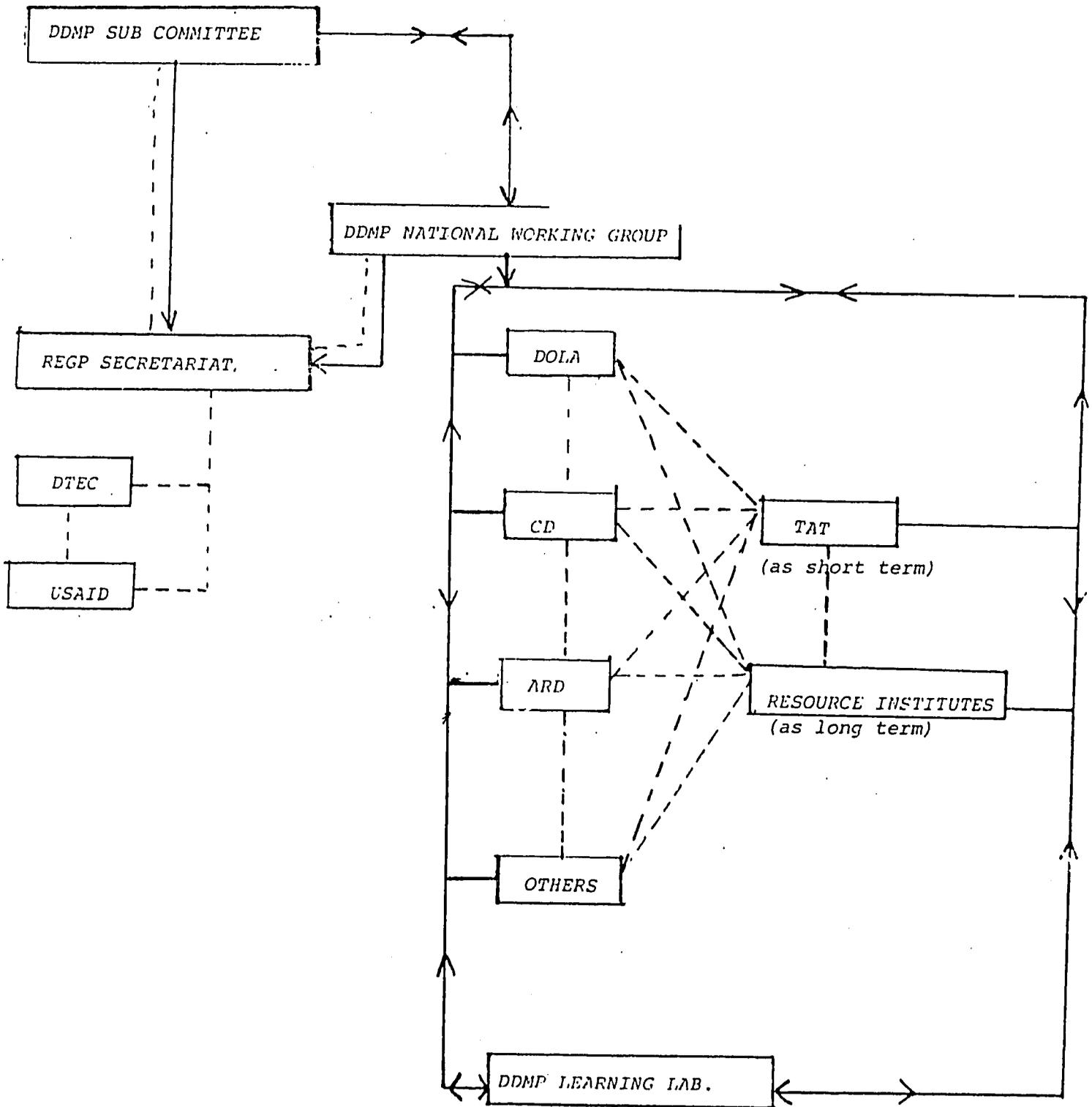
<sup>1/</sup> which in practice would probably mean TAT, based on experiences thus far reviewed

It would be hard to justify any follow-on action in the Project which does little more than extend DDMP for an additional period of time. The particular issues addressed in this item cannot effectively be answered unless one begins with a complex set of assumptions about the objectives and expectations for any follow-on action. These objectives would seemingly have to be established jointly by the RTG and AID. In fact, such objectives should be clear to all parties before the decision to undertake follow-on action is implemented. Continuing education of parties involved is required to maintain consensus, once established. At this time the multiple interests seem unable to produce a set of clear objectives for DDMP acceptable to all parties. The formally established objectives stated in the workplan are not universally held. Similarly, there seems to be no clear set of objectives to justify an add-on.

If and when a set of generally acceptable objectives is produced, then and only then can issues related to major structural changes be addressed. First objectives, then strategy, then structure; otherwise implementation problems are virtually assured. Assuming the project terminates according to the original schedule in 1985, the evaluation team reiterates its recommendation that no major changes in structure be undertaken. Instead, the focus should be on balancing ambition and realism in developing strategies which can be implemented given the present structure.

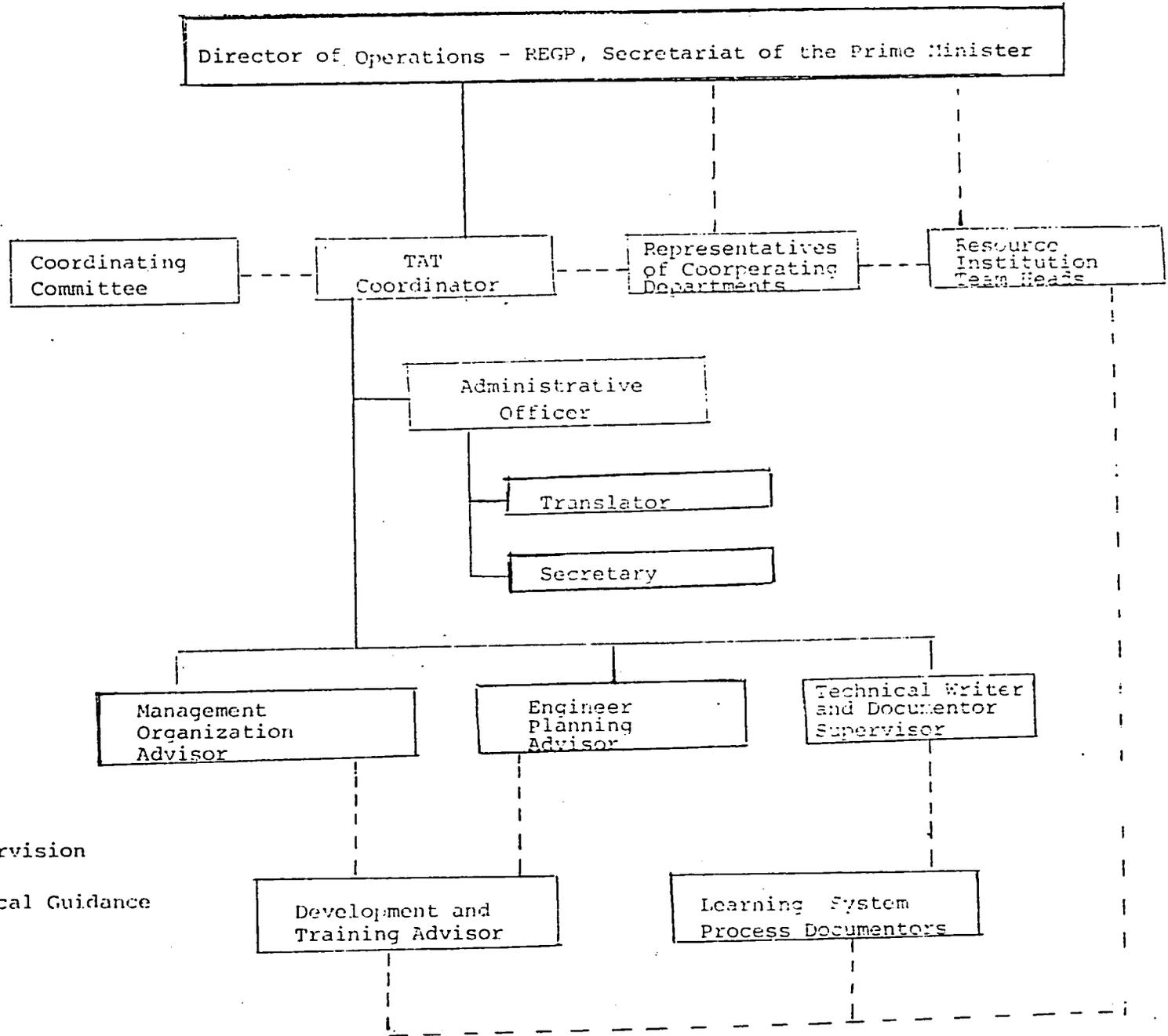
DDMP ORGANIZATION CHART

BY KASEM/USAID



PROJECT ORGANIZATION

ANNEX A.2



Administrative Supervision

Professional/Technical Guidance

44

DDMP Provinces and Districts

Project provinces were selected in accord with Thai government objectives focussing on poverty areas mainly in Northeastern Thailand. Within each of the five selected provinces, two districts were chosen for project operations; according to the following criteria:

- Poverty area
- Non-security area
- Ease of transportation between project areas

The districts thus chosen include:

Ubon Ratchatani:	Amnat Charoen Hua Tha Phan
Si Sa Ket:	Uthumporn Pisai Huey Thab Than
Maha Sarakham:	Chiang Yun Kosumpisai
Khon Kaen:	Manchakiri Chonnabot
Yasothon:	Maha Chanachai Koh Wang

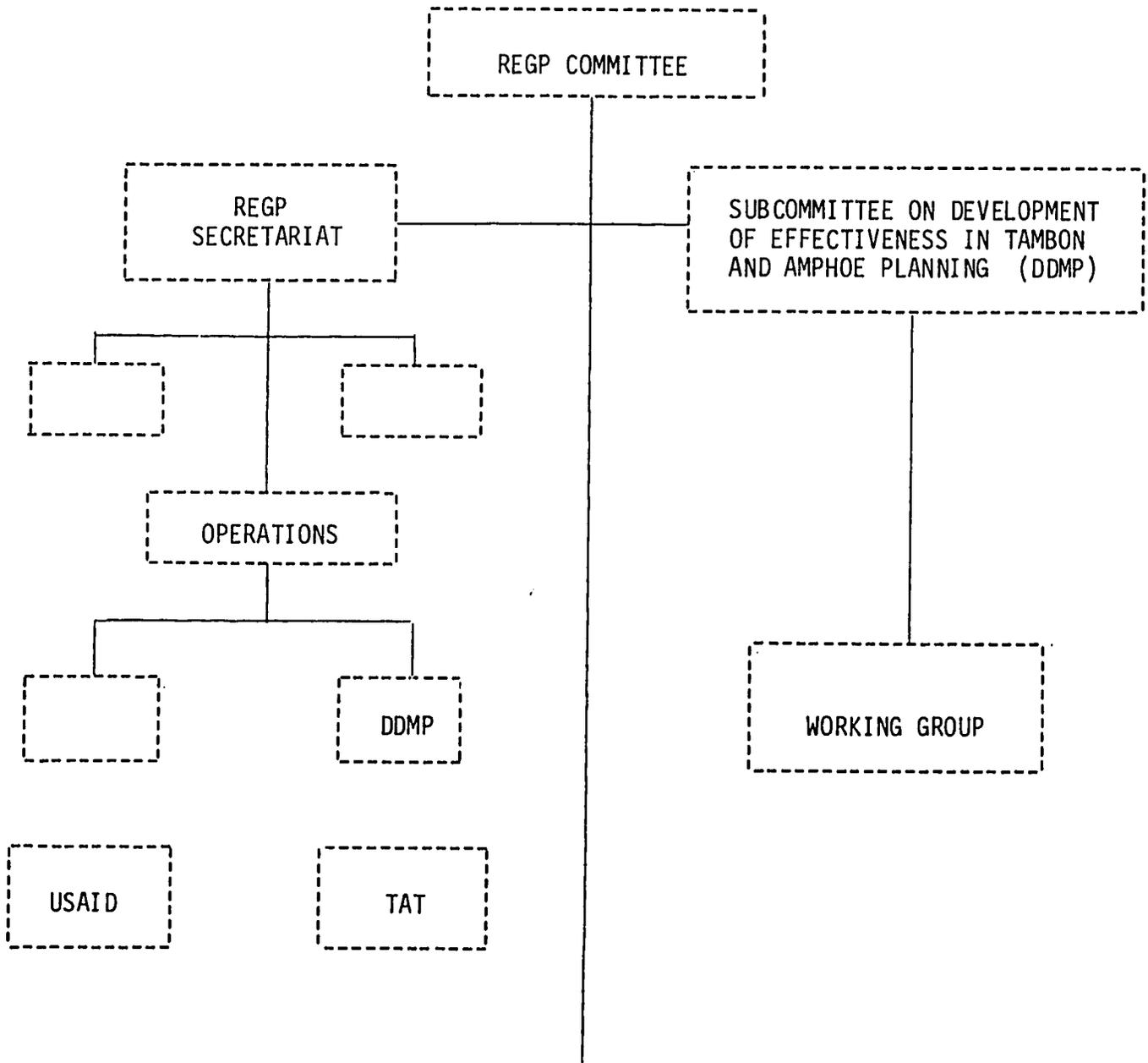
DDMP loan funds are disbursed to all 97 tambons within this 10-district area.<sup>1/</sup> TAT activities at the local level, however, focus on only 20 tambons (2 per district).

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<sup>1/</sup> Recent boundary changes resulted in the creation of one additional tambon, bringing the number to 98.



REGP - DDMP ORGANIZATION CHART



(Dotted lines indicate temporary status.)

EVALUATION TEAM PERSONNEL

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### Evaluation Site Selection

In an initial planning session with TAT and REGP representatives, the evaluation team requested that TAT/Bangkok, in cooperation with TAT/field, handle up-country scheduling. The team expressed the intent to interview individuals involved with DDMP at provincial, district, and tambon levels. With regard to tambon selection, the team asked TAT to select sites according to these criteria:

- 2 DDMP tambons/province to represent "weak" and "strong" tambon council types
- 2 or 3 non-DDMP tambons

Of the 10 tambons selected, 1 was inaccessible.<sup>1/</sup> Of the 9 remaining tambons, where the team visited 10 villages, several had been "model" villages in various provincial and regional programs not related to DDMP. The single non-DDMP site, Ban Non Sin, Si Sa Ket, is a UNICEF project village. This hardly constitutes the "control" site dictated by the Scope of Work; The evaluation team takes the responsibility for this, in that the team did not clearly communicate to TAT the aim for inclusion of non-DDMP sites.

The sites visited by the evaluation team include:

Ubon Ratchathani	:	Amnat Charoen District, Dong Bang Village.
Yasothon	:	Mahachanachai District, Tambon Pra Sao
Si Sa Ket	:	Uthumphorn Pisai District, Tambon Siew, Chong Laeng Village
	:	Rasri Salai District, Non Sin Village
Maha Sarakham	:	Kosumpisai District, Tambon Kuen Chiang Yun District, Tambon Kuthong
Khon Kaen	:	Chonabot District, Tambon Kud Pia Khom Manchakiri District, Tambon Tha Sala

The up-country phase of the evaluation included interviews with the following personnel in each of the five DDMP provinces:<sup>2/</sup>

1/ Tambon Kengyai, Amnat Charoen District, Ubon Ratchathani

2/ All interviews were conducted in the Thai language

- Governor, Chiefs of CAO, ARD, CD, Agriculture, Education, and Health (or their assistants<sup>1/</sup>); and other provincial working group members as arranged by TAT.
- District Officers, and district officials of the 4 key ministries in DDMP districts.
- Tambon council members, including the Kamnan, Puyaiban, and elected village elders; and tambon advisory group members.
- In one tambon, members of other village groups.

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<sup>1/</sup> When provincial chiefs of these offices were not available (particularly in Khon Kaen)

### Interview Methodology

In-depth interviews were conducted in the central Thai dialect. All American evaluation team members had prior experience in Thailand and varying degrees of Thai Language proficiency. When necessary, Thai team members briefed their colleagues on points covered in interviews.

Interviews were generally conducted by the team as a whole in a manner structured by the Scope of Work. Where time restrictions did not permit this, the team split into sub-teams or, on some occasions, conducted one-to-one interviews. No printed questionnaires were used.

Bangkok interviews with RTG, AID, and TAT officials connected with the project are detailed in the evaluation team schedule. The evaluation team observed members of the National DDMP Working Group (DDMP NWG) meeting with TAT and provincial officials in Ubon. At that time, individual team members interviewed Khun Pairote Suwanchinda, DDMP-NWG member and Chief, Rural Development Policy Division, NESDB. Khun Muangchai Tacharoensak and Khun Manote Suksapcharoen, DDMP-NWG members from the Ministry of Education and DTEC, respectively, accompanied the team during the field phase.<sup>1/</sup> The team interviewed a total of 9 DDMP-NWG members, 2 members of the National DDMP Subcommittee, and both the present and former Directors of REGP Operations.

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<sup>1/</sup> Three REGP officials assigned to DDMP also accompanied the evaluation team during portions of the field work: Misses Wantana Kongmetham, Pachara Dantirapakul, and Jittapan Jaempat.

Schedule for DDMP Evaluation TeamThurs., May 24

- 0830 - 1000 - Project Overview and Focus of the Evaluation - USAID
- 1030 - 1200 - Logistics and scheduling - Government House  
Bangkok Interviews  
Field Work  
Report Preparation
- 1400 - 1500 - Meet DTEC, REGP and TAT personnel on RTG expectations  
- Government House
- 1530 - 1630 - Meet Mr. Robert Halligan, USAID Mission Director,  
and Ms. Carol Peasley, Deputy Director, on Mission  
expectations - USAID

Fri., May 25, 1984

- 0800 - 0900 - Finalize plans and schedules for Field Work - USAID
- 0900 - 1200 - Discussion on evaluation, status and potential of  
DDMP - USAID (Jerry Wood, USAID Project Officer,  
and David Korten, USAID Regional Officer)
- 1330 - 1430 - Interview with Charn Kanchanakabhand, Deputy Permanent  
Secretary, MOI, and National Working Group Chairman<sup>1/</sup>

Mon., May 28, 1984

- 1030 - 1130 - Interview with Sirjmalaya Ratanavorapongse, Director  
of REGP Operations<sup>1/</sup>
- 1300 - 1530 - Discussion with Dr. Pairat Decharin, Governor of  
Chainat and former Director of REGP Operations

Tues., May 29, 1984

- 0700 Leave Bangkok Airport
- 0345 Arrive Ubon Airport
- 0930 - 1300 Observe DDMP Working Groups Meeting
- 1300 - 1400 Lunch
- 1400 - 1700 Observe WG meeting with Tambon council members at  
Dong Bang Village, Amnat Charoen District
- 1830 Back to Pathumrat Hotel - Overnight

Wed., May 30, 1984

0800 Leave for Amnat Charoen district office  
 0900 - 1030 Meet and interview target group at amphoe level  
 1030 Leave for Kengyai Tambon council office (Inaccessible)  
 1100 - 1200 Meet and interview target group at tambon level  
 1200 Leave for Ubon Governor's Office  
 1400 - 1530 Meet and interview target group at changwat level  
 (including 2 District Officers who also attending  
 Changwat Meeting on that day)  
 Overnight

Thurs., May 31, 1984

0830 - 1130 Continue interviewing target group at changwat level  
 1215 Leave for Yasothon  
 1300 - 1630 Arrive Yasothon Governor's Office  
 Interview target group at changwat level  
 Overnight Yose Nakorn Hotel

Fri., June 1, 1984

0730 Leave for Mahachanachai District Office  
 0830 - 1000 Meet and interview target group at amphoe level  
 1000 Leave for Pra Sao Tambon Council Office  
 1100 - 1200 Interview target group at tambon level  
 1200 Lunch and leave for Governor's Office of Si Sa Ket  
 1400 - 1530 Interview target group at changwat level  
 1530 - 1700 Interview target group amphoe level at TAT office  
 Overnight Prom Pimarn Hotel

Sat., June 2, 1984

0800 Leave for Uthumporn Pisai District, Si Sa Ket  
 0900 - 1100 Interview target group at Tambon Siew and Ban Chong Laeng  
 1200 Lunch at Uthumporn Pisai District  
 1300 Leave for Rasri Salai District Office (non-DDMP area)  
 1330 - 1430 Interview target group of some tambons in Rasri Salai District - Non Sin, UNICEF village  
 1430 Leave for Khon Kaen  
 1830 Arrive in Khon Kaen  
 Overnight Rose Sukhon Hotel

Sun., June 3, 1984

Free

Mon., June 4, 1984

0800 Leave for Maha Sarakham TAT Office  
 0900 - 1000 Interview TAT Maha Sarakham  
 1000 - 1200 Meet and interview changwat target group  
 1200 Lunch and leave for Kosumpisai district office  
 1330 - 1400 Interview Kosumpisai District Officer  
 1400 - 1630 Interview Amphoe target group  
 Overnight at Vasu Hotel

Tues., June 5, 1984

0800 Leave for Tambon Kuen, Kosumpisai District  
 0900 - 1000 Interview tambon target group  
 1000 Leave for Tambon Kuthong, Chieng Yun District  
 1030 - 1200 Interview tambon target group  
 1200 Lunch and leave for Khon Kaen  
 1400 Meet and interview Chairman of Khon Kaen Working Group  
 1430 - 1630 Interview changwat target group  
 Overnight Rose Sukhon Hotel

Wed., June 6, 1984

0800 Leave for Chonabot District Office  
 0900 - 0930 Interview Chonabot District Officer  
 0930 - 1200 Interview amphoe target group  
 1200 Lunch and leave for Tambon Chonabot  
 1300 - 1400 Interview tambon level target group  
 1400 Leave for Tambon Kud Pia Khom  
 1430 - 1530 Interview tambon target group  
 1530 Leave for Tambon Tha Sala, Manchakiri District  
 1600 - 1700 Interview tambon target group  
 1800 Arrive at Hotel  
 Overnight (or fly back to BKK on last flight at 18:25)

Thurs., June 7, 1984

1020 Leave Khon Kaen Airport  
 1100 Arrive Bangkok Airport  
 1530 - 1730 TAT O&M Briefing, Ron Krannich, TAT O&M Advisor

Fri., June 8, 1984 Evaluation Team meetingSat., June 9, 1984

1400 - 1700 Interview with Governor Chit Nilpanich,  
 DDMP Project Coordinator<sup>1/</sup>

Mon., June 11, 1984

1700 - 1830 Meeting with TAT Contract Committee, PDA Offices  
 In attendance: Dr. Apichart Anukulampai, A&R;  
 Don Micklewaite, DAI; and Meechai Viravaidya and  
 Tanothai Suthit, PDA

Tues., June 12, 1984

1530 - 1630 Interview with Kanok Katikarn, Division of Agricultural Policy and Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives<sup>1/</sup>

Wed., June 13, 1984

0830 - 0930 Interview with Minister Meechai Ruechupan, Office of the Prime Minister

1100 - 1200 Interview with Preena Leepattanaphan, Director, Division of Engineering Operations, Office of Accelerated Rural Development<sup>1/</sup>

1400 - 1500 Interview with Dr. Damrong Boonyuem, M.D., Director, Division of Public Health Planning, Ministry of Health<sup>1/</sup>

Thurs., June 14, 1984

0830 - 1100 Interview with Jim Ogata, TAT Engineering Advisor

1500 - 1600 Preliminary progress report, USAID Mission Officials

Fri., June 15, 1984

0930 - 1030 Interview with Kittiphan Kanchanapipatkul, Director, USAID Sub-Division, Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation and member, National DDMP Subcommittee

Mon., June 18, 1984

1000 - 1100 Interview with Amorn Anantachai, Director, Division of Technical Services, Ministry of Interior<sup>1/</sup>

Thurs., June 21, 1984

Debriefing for DTEC, USAID and REGP staff.

Jun. 22 - Jul. 12 Preparation of final report.

<sup>1/</sup> Indicates interview with member of National DDMP Working Group.

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A MID-TERM EVALUATION OF DECENTRALIZED DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROJECT (DDMP)  
SCOPE OF WORK

Project : Decentralized Development Management Project (DDMP)

Number : 493-0315

Agreement Date : 8/31/84 (G); 9/24/81 (L)

Completion Date: 8/31/86

Costs : Total Project \$25,045,000  
AID Fund \$10,600,000  
RTG Fund \$14,445,000

Obligated : \$7,500,000 (L); \$3,100,000 (G) (As of 12/31/83)

Accrued Exp. : \$3,407,000 (L); \$ 909,900 (G) (As of 12/31/83)

I. Project Purpose: To support policies of the Government (RTG) aimed at increased decentralization of the rural development process.

Working through the structures of the Rural Employment Generation Program, DDMP will achieve the following objectives:

1. to develop on-going learning and action systems which will strengthen the planning and implementation capabilities of amphoes and tambons;
2. to institutionalize the capacity to understand and explain, through systematic documentation, the on-going processes which affect the planning and implementation of development activities at the local level;
3. to involve policy and operational officials in an on-going process of monitoring, assessing, and supporting development action at the local level; and
4. to create a capacity building model for replication in communities throughout the country.

## II. Summarized Status of the Project

Key project resources, including a 17 person contracted technical assistance team, were mobilized and operating by the beginning of FY 1983, one year after signing of project agreements. Project activities have focused on achieving the stated purpose of providing support to the RTG in building the capacity to implement its policy commitment to a decentralized development process. Funding has been provided to utilize ten districts in Northeast Thailand as a "learning laboratory" in which to analyze the local development process, determine its requirements and develop effective approaches to local capacity building. Ten long-term consultants, posted full-time in the learning lab area, are engaged in these activities. Bangkok-based consultants are responsible for analysis and presentation of findings and recommendations through a national working group to an inter-ministerial policy making body chaired by the Prime Minister.

The project also supports the extension down to the district level of technical support services for local development projects. Existing government personnel have been redeployed and assigned to district offices to fill what was previously a critical gap. In addition to advice on design, siting, technical choice and construction support, the engineering technicians at the district have given priority to the identification and testing of a variety of maintenance arrangements to prolong the useful life of local projects.

These institutional development components are backed up by project loan funds for financing of local development projects. These funds are co-mingled with RTG development funds targetted on the learning lab area and are provided to guarantee a multi-year level of financing to carry out local plans.

Project staff provide policy and operational type recommendations to the Government on a regular basis. Late in FY 1983, the findings and recommendations to date were presented to the National Committee for Rural Employment Generation, chaired by the Prime Minister. The report focused

on seven major areas from national allocation processes, through technical assistance and training requirements, to procedures for project screening. These recommendations resulted in several changes in policy guidelines for national operations of REGP in FY 1984 -- most notably in regard to more thorough technical screening of proposed projects at the district level and greater allocation flexibility at the provincial level.

In FY'84, particular emphasis is being placed on strengthening coalitions and working groups at provincial and sub-provincial levels, improvement of the data base at district and sub-district levels, increased participation, implementation of a variety of funded maintenance arrangements, and integration of regional universities into the project to provide long term technical assistance for local development beyond the life of the DDMP Project. A more detailed statement of project status and strategy is contained in Annex A of this Scope of Work.

### III. Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of this mid-term evaluation is to help AID and the RTG:

1. Provide an independent assessment of Project's learning system methodology and the extent to which it is functioning to strengthen the role of the tambon in local development, improve the quality of local development projects and increase the responsiveness of central government authorities to local development needs.
2. Assess the technical assistance arrangements and the self-evaluation processes being used to strengthen performance of the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) for applicability of this mode and these arrangements to rural development program strengthening.
3. Assess where the project is in terms of its longer term decentralization and institution - building objectives and recommend future actions which may need to be taken, either to ensure institutionalize or to build upon capacities which are now in place.

4. Provide an independent source to document important lessons of this experiment with a learning process approach to project implementation.

This evaluation will provide input to a mid-project review, re-focus and realignment that has been underway since December, 1983. The evaluation is expected to provide important policy guidance, as well as to verify and document lessons from a project that is recognized as a social experiment, in that it departs radically from classical approaches to development management. Indeed the evaluation itself has an experimental dimension as it is intended to be consistent with the nature of a learning process project. It is expected for example that the evaluation team will work closely and interactively with DDMP staff throughout the evaluation, and that staff will be open and candid in communicating their experience and their views regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the approach being taken and the successes and failures which have resulted from efforts to date.

To achieve the purpose of this evaluation a joint Thai/U.S. team will be asked to address the following four topics and answer the questions posed under each topic:

1. DDMP Supported Learning Systems and Progress Toward Decentralization. As outlined above, the major focus of attention in DDMP to date has been on getting systems in place to support a learning process within the REGP and related units of the Ministry of Interior that will result in more effective local development action, backed up by enlightened policy and operational level support. Systems are now in place and should be fully operational by the time of the evaluation. It is expected that these systems will be strengthened by the effective involvement of Thai resource institutions working outside the original technical assistance contracts. While still in the early stages, it is felt that enough progress has been made to make an initial assessment. Thus, based primarily on performance during the three months immediately prior to the evaluation, the Evaluation Team is requested to:

- \* assess whether the systems are in place to generate valid performance indicators;
- \* identify and address major problems and issues needing attention to improve performance such as the system of process documentation;
- \* consider whether adequate progress is being made toward institutionalizing this process, especially as it relates to detection of and action on operational problems; the questions that should be asked deal with whether or not:
  - a) DDMP is adequately focused on a reduction in dependency by tambol/village organizations vis a vis the central government?
  - b) the magnitude and nature of decision making at the tambol/village level is supportive of increased local authority or is it simply an extension of the traditional top-down system?
  - c) "Kamnan" and "Puyaiban" are perceived more commonly by the people as representatives of the central government or as local leaders and the effects of these perceptions on decentralization?
  - d) there is any significant increase in local level cooperation and joint programming across village/tambol boundaries?
  - e) local maintenance approaches being tested are sustainable without a continuing flow of external assistance from central RTG resources or foreign donors?
  - f) local council membership perceives their needs being better communicated, addressed and responded to than in 1981?

- g) the application of technical criteria in project design and approval is becoming more generally accepted and increasing in quality?
- h) the level of financial resources available for development is stretching the absorptive capacity of rural communities, particularly in terms of implementation and financial management skills?

The question is not whether all critical problems have been identified and solved, but rather whether effective progress is being made and whether there is reason to believe that this progress will be sustained.

2. Technical Assistance Contract. DDMP supports a Technical Assistance Team (TAT) provided through contracts with an American and two Thai firms. The head of the TAT is a Thai contracted by one of the Thai firms, giving the Thai firms the lead role in the arrangement. Another innovative feature of the arrangement is that the roles of the technical assistance personnel are defined in terms of facilitating learning within the participating institutions, rather than with implementing a project in conventional terms. Furthermore the TAT has introduced a self-assessment process by which its members assess their performance against two criteria: a) TAT's ability to gather and process useful information for decision-making; and b) the degree to which TAT promotes and sets in motion new and productive relationships among individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions at all levels concerned with the rural development process. Thus the Evaluation Team is requested to:

- \* provide a general assessment of DDMP's technical assistance arrangements and particularly of the decision to place Thai institutions in the lead technical assistance role;

62

- \* assess the appropriateness of the role definition of TAT personnel in relation to DDMP purpose and strategy, and the extent to which the self-evaluation process is working as intended;
  - \* define the perception by user organizations of TAT and the degree of value they place on having access to the team;
  - \* assess achievements of the TAT to date in facilitating relationships that will serve the long term goal of creating self-sustaining local development action and in developing more effective approaches to local capacity building.
3. Future Directions. There have been important program and policy developments within the RTG relating to decentralization and rural development policies since DDMP was initiated. Most importantly, a new Rural Poverty Program is functioning which attempts to integrate a range of government development efforts in rural areas and make them more responsive to local needs; secondly, plans are proceeding to merge the REGP and the Rural Poverty Program.

Any decision with regard to the future of DDMP must be taken within the perspective of these developments. The evaluation team is therefore directed to:

- a. Review with senior RTG officials current policy thinking and major program initiatives relating to rural employment, poverty alleviation and decentralization, and assess the position and relevance of DDMP within this larger program and policy environment.
  - b. Taking into account these developments and their implications, assess the relative merits of allowing the DDMP assistance to phase down and terminate according to the present schedule, versus continuation either on the same or a revised basis; and provide recommendations regarding the preferred course of action and its implementation.
- 63

- \* If phase-out is recommended, guidance should be given as to actions which might be taken, in the course of so doing, to sustain whatever useful momentum and capacities may have been put in place by as a result of DDMP.
  - \* If follow-on action is recommended, guidance should be given regarding desirable modifications in DDMP structure and strategy. For example is continued USAID funding for Tambol level sub-projects necessary and/or desirable in any follow-on AID funded support project? Should any major changes in the structure and composition of technical assistance be considered? Should Project scope be redefined and should any adjustment in the locus of responsibility within the RTG be considered?
4. DDMP as an Experimental Learning Process Project. As described above, DDMP is an experiment in using a learning process approach to achieve institutional development and policy dialogue objectives relating to local development. It has generated a good many lessons to date of both a positive and a negative nature. The evaluation team is requested to review DDMP's history and analyze the evolution of objectives, strategy and scope, from the perspective of the experiment, in order to:
- a. provide an independent assessment of the validity of the concepts employed as they relate to DDMP's purpose, the way in which the concepts have been operationalized, the relevance of this strategy to Thai rural development requirements, and the strengths and limitations of the RTG and AID systems to support such an innovation;.
  - b. identify the lessons of both positive and negative experiences generated under DDMP as they may be relevant to future efforts of AID and the RTG to achieve important institutional development and policy dialogue objectives.

#### IV. Methodology

Many mid-project evaluations are structured on the assumption that the evaluation itself is the primary mechanism for project learning and correction. An underlying premise of a learning process project is that the most important use of project resources is to support the development of self-corrective learning capacities within the program and/or institution being assisted. Operating on this premise, the DDMP staff has initiated a process of internal assessment and adjustment that is manifest in both daily operations and formalized procedures such as the annual joint assessment and review of project progress. On a regular basis, special issue and agenda papers are generated by the TAT to facilitate this process. Consequently, in its methodology, this evaluation will focus on the broader strategic topics outlined in Section III of this scope. Background information on specific operational matters will be available in the form of reports, documentation and special studies generated by the project.

By the time of the evaluation the TAT expects to have available for use by the Evaluation Team a comprehensive inventory of what they believe to be the major accomplishments and failures of the effort to date. They will also have completed a comprehensive assessment of REGP operations, with a particular focus on how the program is actually functioning in tambon and village levels and the quality and utility of the sub-project activities as currently being implemented.

In carrying out its assignment, the Evaluation Team will be expected to visit central offices of relevant RTG agencies, the five provincial offices involved, approximately five districts and eight or ten councils in order to:

- \* Interview TAT members, project management personnel, including key officials of the REGP and members of the National Working Group as well as selected field personnel of the RTG and members of local councils;
- \* Observe field work by TAT, government officials and local councils;

The team will also be expected to visit a small sample of districts outside the learning lab that have not been directly effected by DDMP project activity in order to make a comparative assessment of progress in generating greater local capacity to manage development.

In addition to the field work, the team will be expected to:

- \* review the evolution of DDMP strategy, objectives and methodology as contained in the PP, working papers, implementation plans and any other relevant documentation; Prepare summary of any and all substantial changes in project outputs, methods or scope and cite existing justification for any such changes.
- \* use available documentation, including reports, issue papers and accumulated data to supplement understanding of the Project's approach to capacity building.

Among the types of documentation that will be available are:

- \* work plans
- \* issue papers
- \* field advisors' reports
- \* process documentation reports
- \* special reports on issue specific topics prepared by TAT at the request of the RTG
- \* policy papers
- \* joint annual assessments of DDMP completed in 1982 and 1983.

6/1

## VII The Evaluation Team

The evaluation team should consist of a talented group of professionals who are skilled in:

- 1) public policy issues relevant to the local level in Thailand;
- 2) the management of experimental and innovative projects;
- 3) the conduct of process evaluation studies.

The group will consist of two American and two Thai professionals, experienced in evaluation research and rural development.

The team leader (An American) must have substantive experience in Thailand, have strong evaluation skills, be expert in management development processes, and have skills to quickly create a team effort.

The second American member of the team should have recognized credentials in development management and public policy issue analysis. This individual should have substantial experience in Thailand, including a knowledge of the Thai language. Skills in analytical and clear writing are essential.

One of the Thai members of the team should have in-depth understanding of rural development systems, government programs and policies in the field, trends in the relationship patterns between central and local authorities and the basic issues that will effect the further decentralization of responsibility for development action. The second Thai member of the team should be highly skilled in process evaluation methodology.

67

It is estimated that up to four weeks will be required to complete the draft report, followed by Mission review and revisions as required.

#### VIII. Reporting Requirements

##### a) Format of the Report

The report will contain the following sections:

- Executive Summary (approximately two pages, single spaced);
- Project and Evaluation Data Facesheet (form provided by ASIA/DP/E)
- Statement of Major Findings (short and succinct with topic, or subject, identified by subhead);
- Recommendations (corresponding to major findings and worded, whenever possible, to specify who, or which agency, should take the recommended action);
- Body of report (which provides the information on which the major findings and recommendations were based and which includes a description of the country context in which the project was developed) and
- Appendices as necessary (including, minimally, evaluation scope of work and statement of methodology used).

##### b) Language of the Report

The report and its appendices will be in English. In addition, a Thai language version of the main body of the report will be submitted together with the final report.

60

c) Submission of Report

The Evaluation Team will submit a draft of their report to the Mission 2 days prior to debriefing and draft review by the Mission. The final report will be submitted within 15 working days after the team receives Mission comments from the debriefing.

After the Mission has reviewed the final draft, the team leader will be responsible for following through on changes, and assuring that two designated members of the team complete and deliver 30 copies of the Report to the Mission for distribution.

Financial Status  
REGP & DDMP Grants to the Project Area  
(Baht)

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>REGP</u>	<u>DDMP</u> <sup>3/</sup>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1981 <sup>1/</sup>	74,139,894	-	74,139,894
1982	44,344,868	25,300,000	69,644,868
1983	44,765,700	32,172,000	76,937,700
1984 <sup>2/</sup>	39,796,024	39,860,000	79,656,024

- 1/ PRE - Project
- 2/ Budgeted
- 3/ A.I.D. Loan Proceeds

Illustrative Comparison of FY 1981 and 1982 RTG Fund  
for DDMP Targeted Districts

No.	Changwat/District	REGP Fund 1981	REGP Fund 1982		
			REGP	Other Projects	Total
1.	<u>Ubon</u>	14,381,520	13,025,000	5,270,548	13,295,548
	- Amnat Charoen	10,752,520	9,385,000	2,084,420	11,469,420
	- Hua Tha Phan	4,129,000	3,640,000	3,186,128	6,826,128
2.	<u>Si Sa Ket</u>	21,986,000	10,259,800	3,513,763	13,873,563
	- Uthumphon Phisai	17,597,000	8,222,300	2,757,312	10,979,512
	- Huey Thap Than	4,339,000	2,037,500	856,451	2,893,951
3.	<u>Maha Sarakham</u>	18,899,650	9,522,400	3,753,068	13,275,468
	- Chiang Yun	6,367,390	4,251,000	1,431,660	5,682,660
	- Kosum Phisai	12,532,260	5,271,400	2,321,408	7,592,808
4.	<u>Khon Kaen</u>	12,299,555	6,271,168	9,844,552	16,115,720
	- Manchakiri	7,795,555	4,082,890	2,806,025	6,888,915
	- Chonnabot	4,504,000	2,188,278	7,038,527	9,226,805
5.	<u>Yasothon</u>	6,073,169	5,266,500	7,473,847	12,740,347
	- Maha Chanachai	4,575,342	4,665,500	1,595,732	5,261,232
	- Khowang	1,497,827	1,601,000	5,878,115	7,479,115
	<u>Grand Total:</u>	74,139,894	44,344,868	29,955,778	74,300,646