

THE PRAGMA CORPORATION

REPUBLIC OF PANAMA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
NATIONAL SECTORAL PLANNING DIRECTORATE

QUARTERLY REPORT

MARCH 25 - JUNE 30, 1985

NO: I

USAID/PANAMA
AGRICULTURAL POLICY FORMULATION & MANAGEMENT PROJECT
(525-0247)

CONTRACT NO. LAC-0247-C-00-5030-00

THE PRAGMA CORPORATION

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President
Jacques Defay

Established 1977

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QUARTERLY REPORT

March 25 - June 30, 1985

Agricultural Policy Formulation & Management Project
(No. 525-0247)
Republic of Panama

This Quarterly Report of the Agricultural Policy Formulation and Management Project (No. 525-0247) replaces an earlier version of a report (covering the period March 25-June 30, 1985) submitted by the PRAGMA Team to the Pragma home office and to USAID/Panama Project Officer, Frank Conklin. This report has been rewritten using a Pragma standardized reporting format for overseas projects.

The new format, which emphasizes conciseness, divides the report into four sections. Section A presents a summary of the major events of the quarter, while section B relates those events to progress toward achieving project objectives. Section C highlights those major problems and constraints encountered during the quarter. The final section, Section D, consists of reports of the individual Pragma team members, again in a standardized format. It is noted that section D provides a quick check on the progress toward completion of individual work plans, by comparing the last section of the individual reports for any quarter with the first section of the report for the following quarter.


Tylío Arvelo Durán
Pragma Chief of Party

QUARTERLY REPORT

The PRAGMA Corporation
Panama, Republic of Panama

AGRICULTURAL POLICY FORMULATION AND MANAGEMENT PROJECT
(No. 525-0247)

March 25 - June 30, 1985

A. Summary of Major Events of the Quarter

1. The Team Leaders arrived in Panama the last week of March, 1985. Meetings were held with various USAID/Panama officials. We attended to domestic-related aspects of settling in with the new assignment, and were briefed on USAID's activities.

2. The USAID/Panama Agricultural Office Project Officer assigned to manage our Project arrived in country during the quarter. Dr. Frank Conklin is a "Joint Career Corps" (JCC) appointment. He has worked as a contractor on AID-funded projects. However, this is his first experience working directly for AID.

3. Initial meetings were held with principal counterpart personnel. We became acquainted with Reynaldo Pérez and Carlos Palacios, Director and Deputy Director, respectively of the Sectoral Planning Directorate of the Ministry of Agricultural Development (DNPS/MIDA). Throughout the quarter, relatively little of a technical nature was discussed with these gentlemen. Rather, the bulk of our conversations concerned organizational and administrative matters. Also during the quarter, we briefly met with Liliana de De la Penha, Augusto Herrera, and Leovigildo Otero, current Department Heads within the Planning Directorate of Specific Projects, Short and Medium-term Planning, and Information and Statistics, respectively.

4. The process of "policy" dialogue with public and private sector representatives organized in commodity-specific commissions was initiated. Both team members participated in working sessions of rice, corn and sorghum, and beef commodity commissions. The principal purposes of these meetings was

to achieve a consensus among public sector participants of these commissions on new support prices, and on possibilities of exporting beef. Participation in these commission meetings served to crystallize the current level of policy discussion, and the level of technical competence present within principal public sector agencies. In addition, the highly politicized nature of decisionmaking became very evident.

5. The team members prepared a preliminary draft of the Project workplan to be discussed with counterparts, and approved by the Project's technical committee. A copy was also provided to the USAID/Panama Project Officer for his comments.

6. The selection and contracting process for Pragma's Administrative Assistant was initiated. Discussions were held with USAID Agriculture Office Chiefs to ascertain the appropriateness of considering for the position an individual employed by USAID. After receiving their consent to interview this candidate, a determination was made that she was, indeed, the best qualified person for the job.

7. Office furniture and equipment for the Pragma/MIDA project offices were purchased during the month of June. Due to time constraints, the direct participation of the Pragma team in the preparation and processing of internal AID purchase order documentation was required.

8. The process to select the remaining five (5) long-term technical advisors was initiated during this quarter. Even though Pragma's prioritized list of candidates had been received the first week in May, the screening process could not be initiated until the Condition Precedent regarding adequate office space had not been met.

9. A solution to the condition precedent regarding adequate office space for the Project team was found. On June 15, 1985 MIDA signed a lease to rent a small building within close proximity to the central Panama City offices.

B. Progress Toward Project Objectives

With the exception of the meetings with the Commodity Commissions and the first draft of the workplan, the Pragma team members were not involved in any significant technical work during the quarter. Thus, progress toward project objectives was insignificant. The principal factors limiting progress were: the lack of working conditions, and the need to devote most attention to administrative matters.

C. Major Problems and Constraints Encountered

The major constraint affecting Pragma team members' activities during the quarter was the lack of adequate work space. This affected the activities of the Pragma team in-country, as well as prevented selecting in a timely fashion the remaining team members. Not only was there no space available for the Chief and Deputy Chief of Party; there was no meeting room available either. Furthermore, the existing working conditions within the DNPS are deplorable. This fact is readily acknowledged by the DNPS. Their offices are overcrowded, noisy, and lack sufficient desks, chairs and files for the personnel assigned. Thus, working sessions with counterparts were practically impossible.

The USAID Agricultural Office graciously provided temporary space while the Pragma team awaited a definite solution. Nevertheless, the Pragma team remained in relative isolation from our counterparts.

The responsibility for providing adequate office space rested with the Government of Panama (MIDA). Due to recently imposed austerity measures, the public sector was restricted from increasing its rental bill or incurring expenses for items not specifically included in the 1985 budget. The solution finally taken (in June) required the intervention of the USAID/Panama Director, the Minister of Agricultural Development and the Controller General of the Republic.

Another complication, affecting Project implementation, was the change within the Cabinet in early May. The Minister of Agricultural Development was changed. This contributed to an atmosphere of uncertainty regarding political decisionmaking processes, the continuity of project personnel, and delayed solving the problem of finding immediate office space.

The selection of the five (5) long-term technical advisors was delayed until the Condition Precedent on adequate office space had been met. Thus, the process of MIDA's candidate review did not commence until late June/early July. Since planned Project activities were predicated on a full complement of seven persons, the ability to fulfill such expectations within the contemplated timeframe must be questioned.

QUARTERLY REPORT

March 25 - June 30, 1985

Agricultural Policy Formulation & Management Project
(No. 525-0247)

D. INDIVIDUAL TEAM MEMBER'S QUARTERLY REPORTS

Agricultural Policy Formulation & Management Project
PRAGMA team - USAID Project No. 525-0247
Ministry of Agricultural Development
Republic of Panama

D. Individual Team Member's Quarterly Report

Name: Tulio Arvelo Durán

Position: PRAGMA Chief of Party

Period Covered: March 25 - June 30, 1985

I. STATUS OF ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE PAST QUARTER

As it was the first quarter of the project activities in Panama, the planned activities for this quarter were tentatively listed in Washington in our debriefing at Pragma's home office.

Due to the unplanned situation encountered in Panama upon my arrival, some of this activities were not accomplished during this quarter. The status of these planned activities are presented in the following chart.

Tentative List of Activities to be Performed by Chief
and Deputy Chief of Party during the First Quarter

<u>Activities to Be Performed</u>	<u>Status at the End of the Quarter</u>
- Meet appropriate USAID/Panama people ASAP.	Accomplished
- Meet DNPS, MIDA and other GOP personnel ASAP.	Accomplished
- Give priority attention during first two weeks to find housing, school, etc. and to other aspects of living and getting settled in a new location.	Accomplished
- Submit quarterly reports to DNPS and USAID.	Not accomplished
- In consultation with DNPS, revise Implementation and Financial Plans; have revised plans approved by technical committee and USAID/Panama.	Not accomplished

- In consultation with DNPS, prepare work plans for each Group. Not accomplished
- Meet with Technical Committee. Not accomplished
- Meet with each Group (or Department) in DNPS to discuss Work Plans and the expected contributions and responsibilities of each staff member and the kind of support and assistance the Pragma team can provide. The Director of DNPS should probably chair these meetings and lead the discussions.
- In cooperation with DNPS, prepare a list of current agricultural policies and programs. Not accomplished
- Based on Work Plans and in consultation with DNPS, identify work to be finished in the first quarter. These may be largely requests from policy makers. It is important that some analyses are completed the first quarter even if they are very minor. Not accomplished
- Based on Work Plans and in consultation with DNPS, identify short, medium and long term projects to be initiated in 1985 and subsequent years. Not accomplished
- Arrange for a Policy Workshop for DNPS during first 6-8 weeks. Not accomplished
- Chief and Deputy Chief of Party will each prepare a list of activities to be accomplished in first quarter, plus any medium or longer term activities that will be started in the first quarter. Ongoing
- These Work Plans should indicate what will be done if expected DNPS cooperation is forthcoming and what will be done in the absence of such cooperation. Ongoing

- Prepare similar Work Plans for 1985 and future years. Ongoing
- Develop criteria for selection and select persons to start long term training beginning the fall of 1985. Not accomplished
- See that purchase orders are prepared and issued for computers and vehicles. Not accomplished

II. UNPLANNED ACTIVITIES DURING THIS QUARTER

During my stay at Agriculture Office at USAID I performed, by request, several unplanned activities that are listed below:

- Preparation of a position paper on World Bank Strategy for the Panamanian Agricultural Sector.
- Attended USAID Action Plan deliberations.
- Written and verbal input to an Agricultural Strategy Statement.

Also during my stay at USAID quarters, I performed for DNPS the following activities:

- Participation in the First Public Agricultural Sector Meeting.
- Assisted the Department of Planning in preparing a document (on the Current Status and Perspective of the Panamanian Agricultural Sector) to be presented at a Ministry of Planning meeting.

III. COMMENTS ON SPECIAL PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED (be brief).

The normal problems to a family that is settled in a foreign country needed to be added to the major constraints listed in item B of this report. The lack of adequate space, the absence of the administrative assistance and the impossibility to meet with the counterpart team in a regular basis were the major problems encountered in this quarter.

IV. ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR NEXT QUARTER

The main activities planned for next quarter are:

- a) Submit Quarterly Reports to DNPS and USAID.
- b) In consultation with DNPS, prepare work plans for each Department involved in the project.

- c) Meet with each Head of DNPS's Departments to discuss work plans and the expected contribution and responsibilities of each staff member and the kind of support and assistance the Pragma Team can provide.
- d) Participation in the Technical Committee.
- e) In cooperation with DNPS, prepare a list of current agricultural policies and programs.
- f) Based on Work Plans and in consultation with DNPS, identify work to be finished in the second quarter.
- g) Based on Work Plans and in consultation with DNPS, identify short, medium and long term projects to be initiated in 1985 and subsequent years.
- h) Arrange for Policy Workshop for DNPS during first 6-8 weeks.
- i) Initiate the Commodity Policy Studies.

Agricultural Policy Formulation & Management Project
PRAGMA team - USAID Project No. 525-0247
Ministry of Agricultural Development
Republic of Panama

D. Individual Team Member's Quarterly Report

Name: Robin I. Zeitz

Position: PRAGMA Deputy Chief of Party

Period Covered: March 25 - June 30, 1985

I. STATUS OF ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE PAST QUARTER

This was the first quarter of PRAGMA Project activities in Panama. A tentative list of activities for the quarter had been prepared during orientation in Washington, D.C. This first quarter found both the Chief and Deputy Chief jointly engaged in similar activities. Due to circumstances beyond PRAGMA's control regarding lack of office space, many activities which required sustained communication with counterpart personnel could not be undertaken, but had to be postponed for subsequent quarters.

Planned Activities Performed During the First Quarter

- Met appropriate USAID/Panama people.
- Met DNPS, MIDA and other GOP personnel.
- Gave priority attention to settling in; assisted Chief of Party in settling in process.
- Kept Pragma/USA informed via telephone and memoranda as to events and Project team status.
- Developed a (revised) list of critical activities to be accomplished during the first quarter.
- Tentatively programmed longer term activities to be initiated as soon as working conditions permit.
- Prepared preliminary Project Workplans to be discussed with counterpart personnel.
- Initiated selection and contracting process of Pragma's Administrative Assistant.

II. UNPLANNED ACTIVITIES DURING THIS QUARTER

Most activities undertaken during the quarter were unprogrammed ones. Both the Chief and Deputy Chief of Party spent an inordinate amount of time in resolving administrative matters -- particularly associated with the problem of office space for the team of technical advisors and counterpart personnel. Both the Chief and Deputy Chief of Party became involved in searching for, and reviewing possible rental spaces. In addition, the administrative tasks regarding the purchase of office furniture and equipment were handled by the Pragma team.

Since we were temporarily using USAID office facilities, we were accessible to the Agricultural Office staff for various consultations -- related to both project-specific and program development activities. At the request of the Chief of Agriculture, we provided written comments on: the World Bank agricultural policy recommendations, ideas and background material for developing a USAID agricultural strategy. Furthermore, assistance was provided in developing the USAID Mission's Action Plan. At the request of the Chief of Agriculture, I attended two staff meetings (initially open only to senior staff).

More directly related to Project objectives were a series of activities undertaken at the request of the DNPS/MIDA Director. These included:

- Attending working sessions with the official (government) component of rice, maize and sorghum, and beef commodity commissions. Of major concern were: the establishment of support prices (for basic grains), and the possibilities of exporting beef.
- Participating in the first "Encuentro Nacional del Sector Público Agropecuario" (Public Agricultural Sector Meeting) April 8-9 to hear descriptions of activities realized by public sector institutions as well as the intended strategy and objectives for the institutions.
- Assisting in the preparation of a briefing document (on the Current Status and Perspectives for Development of the Panamanian Agricultural Sector) to be presented at a Ministry of Planning meeting.

III. COMMENTS ON SPECIAL PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

The major problem of the quarter was the lack of adequate working space. This prevented frequent communication with counterpart personnel, and precluded beginning the screening process for Pragma's remaining long-term technical advisors. Furthermore, it served to highlight the apparent lack of decentralized decisionmaking authority. The solution to the problem was achieved at the close of the quarter -- only after the direct intervention of the USAID/Panama Mission Director, the Minister of Agricultural Development and the Controller General of the Republic was solicited.

IV. ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR NEXT QUARTER

The main activities planned for next quarter are:

- Settle in to new office space.
- Have orientation/organizational meetings with the Departments of Short and Medium-Term Planning, Specific Projects, and Information & Statistics.
- Submit Quarterly Reports to USAID.
- Convene the Technical Committee.
- Orient new Administrative Assistant.
- Hire other local support staff.
- Assist in drafting terms of reference and devising a selection process for local contract personnel within the Department of Information & Statistics.
- In consultation with DNPS, prepare work plans for the major Departments involved in the Project.
- Assign individual tasks to DNPS personnel.
- Assist in initiating the preparation of a list of current agricultural policies and programs.
- Assist in identifying longer term policy issues to be studied, including those which require short-term consultancies.
- Begin arrangements for regular (quarterly) policy workshops.
- Develop Training Program -- for both short and long-term training.
- Prepare needed specifications for PIO/C on Project vehicles.
- Review existing documentation on public agricultural sector project planning systems (including development, monitoring and evaluation).
- Review existing practices employed to inventory and report on projects (in all phases of development).
- Formulate preliminary recommendations to improve project planning systems.
- Review existing information reporting procedures -- for program and project information.