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AUDIT OF THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
PROJECT IN CAMEROON

Audit Report No. 7-631-87-9

July 6, 1987

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR WEST AFRICA

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WEST AFRICA

July 6, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR USAID/Cameroon Director Jay Johnson

FROM: *R. Darcy*
Philippe L. Darcy, Acting RIG/A/Dakar

SUBJECT: Audit of the Agricultural Education Project
in Cameroon (Audit Report No. 7-631-87-9)

This report presents the results of audit of the Agricultural Education Project in Cameroon. Objectives of this program results audit were to (1) determine the project's progress in meeting its objectives and (2) identify factors restraining satisfactory performance.

Audit results showed that while progress was made establishing a revised curriculum and administrative structure, construction delays caused the project to be almost three years behind schedule. Also restraining project progress were the lack of (1) an adequate project implementation schedule and budget, and (2) Government of Cameroon key project personnel.

The university's academic and administrative structure had been successfully patterned after the U.S. land grant university system. A two-year core curriculum of basic science courses had been developed. Through the efforts of the university administration and the A.I.D.-funded technical assistance team, a teaching resources center, library, and language laboratory were established. However, USAID/Cameroon had not revised the project implementation schedule and budget to reflect long delays or significant cost increases, and the host country did not provide key project personnel.

The report recommends the Mission update the project implementation plan and budget and enforce the sections of the project agreement requiring the Government of Cameroon to provide key project personnel.

Your comments to the draft report were considered and changes were made as appropriate. We agreed with your position that A.I.D. was not responsible for assuring maintenance of facilities thus far constructed. As a

result, we have deleted the draft audit finding and recommendation from the report. However, since we are still concerned about the potential impact of poor maintenance, we have included the issue as "Other Pertinent Matters" on page 12.

We did not agree with your comments concerning Mission compliance with A.I.D. Handbook guidance on implementation plans and budgets, or on host government compliance to provide key project personnel. Audit evidence demonstrated that actions were still needed to ensure that an adequate implementation plan and budget were prepared, and that the host government provide personnel as agreed. We have noted your actions during and after the audit to update the project implementation plan and budget, and resolve the personnel issue. As a result, the two audit recommendations are now considered resolved. They can be closed when the Mission provides adequate evidence that actions have been finalized.

Please advise me within 30 days of any additional information relating to action taken or planned to implement the audit recommendations.

I appreciate the cooperation and courtesy given to my staff during the audit.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Agricultural Education Project was designed to help the Government of the Republic of Cameroon build and staff an agricultural university modeled on the U.S. land grant system. This system integrates teaching, research and extension to provide students with an agricultural education combining theory and practice. The project was part of an effort by the United States, Belgium, France and the World Bank to develop an agricultural institution in Cameroon which would provide improved knowledge and services to the agricultural sector.

The project agreement was signed on July 15, 1982, with project completion scheduled for September 30, 1988. The total cost of the project was estimated at \$136 million. A.I.D. funding included about \$17 million in grants and about \$26 million in loans to finance (1) U.S. technical assistance to revise the curriculum and the academic and administrative structure, (2) construction of teaching facilities, dormitories, a library, and three research and demonstration farms, and (3) the education of about 50 faculty members in master's and doctoral programs. The Government of the Republic of Cameroon and other donors were to fund the remainder of the costs.

The Office of the Regional Inspector General for Audit, West Africa, made a program results audit of the project. Audit objectives were to (1) determine the project's progress in meeting its objectives and (2) identify factors restraining satisfactory performance.

While progress was made revising the curriculum and administrative structure, the project was almost three years behind schedule because of construction delays, and costs had increased by about \$17 million. Additionally, lack of an adequate project implementation schedule and budget, and lack of Government of Cameroon key project personnel restrained project performance.

The university's academic and administrative structure had been successfully patterned after the U.S. land grant university system. A two-year core curriculum of basic science courses had been developed. Through the efforts of the university administration and the A.I.D.-funded technical assistance team, a teaching resources center, library, and language laboratory had been established.

However, USAID/Cameroon had not revised the project implementation schedule and budget to reflect long delays or significant cost increases, and the host country did not provide key project personnel.

A.I.D. Handbook 3 states that when significant delays occur, project implementation plans and budgets should be revised so that the Mission can anticipate critical activities and determine what can be accomplished within new timeframes and budgets. Project plans and budgets had not been revised even though the project had experienced a three-year delay and costs for construction had escalated by 65 percent, from about \$26 million to \$43 million. Revisions had not been made because the Mission did not follow A.I.D. Handbook guidance. As a result, the Mission lacked adequate information to determine what could be accomplished with remaining time and budget. The report recommends the Mission update the project implementation plan and budget.

The grant agreement required the Government of the Republic of Cameroon to provide employees for two key positions early in the project -- a Director of Research and Extension and an assistant to the U.S. technical assistance team's Administrative Specialist. At the time of audit, the grantee had not filled these positions. By not enforcing the grant agreement, USAID/Cameroon allowed the two positions to remain vacant for several years. As a result, certain project activities were not conducted, and the U.S. technical assistance team's Administrative Specialist position had to be extended for 35 months at a cost of about \$132,000. The audit report recommends the Mission enforce the project agreement.

In responding to the draft report, USAID/Cameroon disagreed with the findings. The Mission believed it had complied with A.I.D. Handbook guidance on updating the implementation plan and budget and in ensuring that the host government provided personnel as necessary. The Mission also took exception to a draft report finding on maintenance of facilities and provided additional evidence to show that A.I.D. was not responsible for assuring adequate maintenance. In spite of its disagreement with the report's issues, the Mission cited specific actions taken to update plans and budgets and resolve the personnel issue.

The Office of Inspector General considered the management response and revised the report as appropriate. The audit clearly demonstrated that the project implementation plan and budgets were not updated as necessary and that the host government failed to provide personnel as agreed. Corrective actions outlined by the Mission in its response should remedy these problems and address the concerns raised by the audit report's recommendations. The draft audit report finding and recommendation on maintenance were deleted in the final report based on information provided by the Mission. However, the issue of maintenance is discussed as

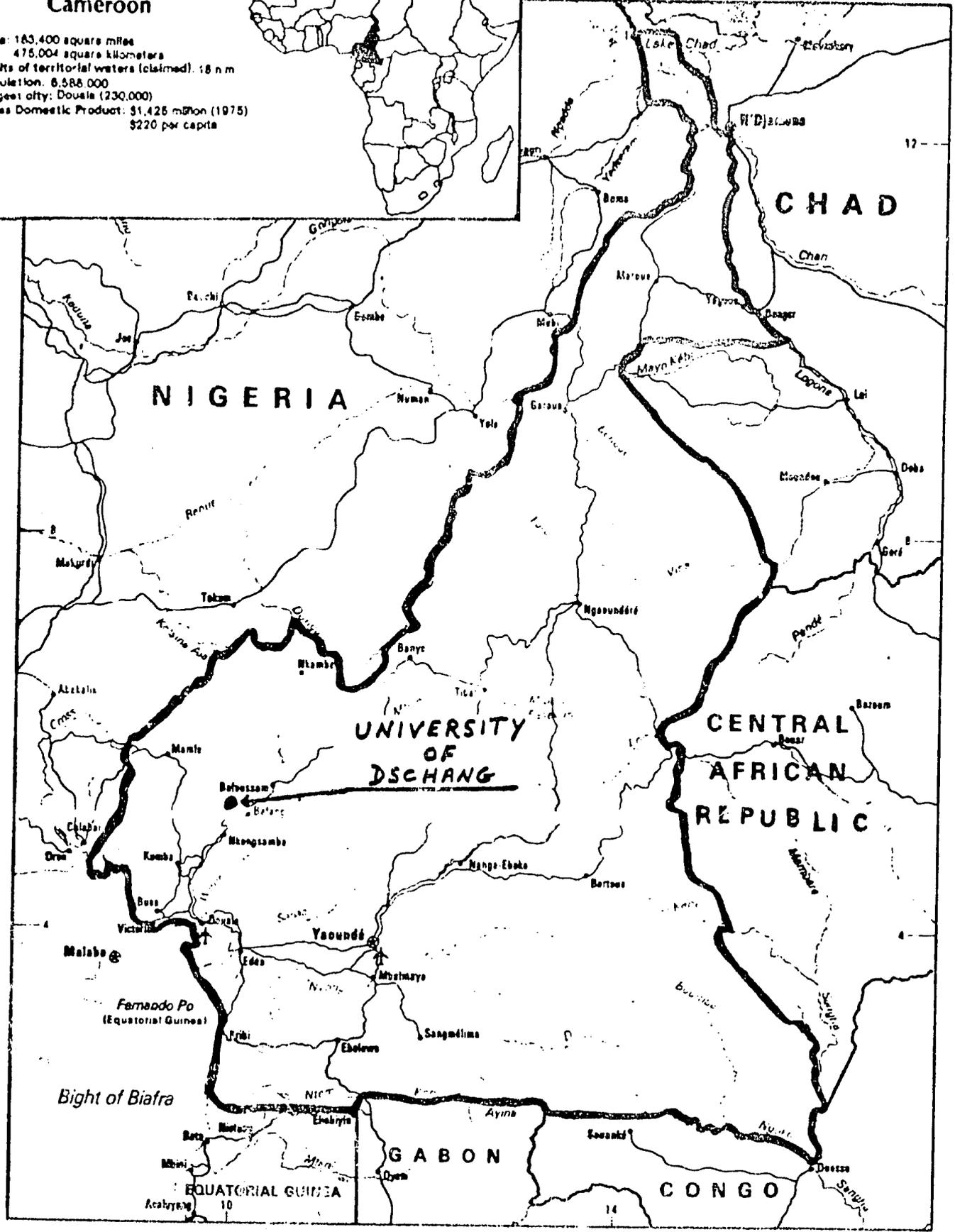
"Other Pertinent Matters" on page 12 of this report. The text of Mission management comments is included as Appendix 1.

Office of the Inspector General

Cameroon

Cameroon

Area: 183,400 square miles
475,004 square kilometers
Units of territorial waters (claimed): 18 n.m.
Population: 6,586,000
Largest city: Douala (230,000)
Gross Domestic Product: \$1,426 million (1975)
\$220 per capita



AUDIT OF THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
PROJECT IN CAMEROON

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AUDIT OF THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
PROJECT IN CAMEROON

PART I - INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The Agricultural Education Project was designed to help the Government of the Republic of Cameroon build and staff an agricultural university modeled on the U.S. land grant system. This system integrates teaching, research and extension to provide students with an agricultural education combining theory and practice. The project was part of an effort by the United States, Belgium, France and the World Bank to develop an agricultural institution in Cameroon which would provide improved knowledge and services to the agricultural sector.

The project agreement was signed on July 15, 1982, for about \$136 million with project completion scheduled for September 30, 1988. A.I.D. funding was approximately \$17 million in grants and \$26 million in loans, totaling about \$43 million. The host government and other donors agreed to provide the balance. As of December 1986, A.I.D. obligations totaled \$36.6 million of which about \$7.7 million had been spent.

A.I.D. funding was to finance (1) U.S. technical assistance to revise the curriculum and the academic and administrative structure, (2) construction of teaching facilities, dormitories, a library, and three research and demonstration farms, and (3) education of about 50 faculty members in master's and doctoral programs.

B. Audit Objectives and Scope

The Office of the Regional Inspector General for Audit, West Africa, made a program results audit of the project. Audit objectives were to (1) determine the project's progress in meeting its objectives and (2) identify factors restraining satisfactory performance.

The audit was conducted at USAID/Cameroon, the University Center of Dschang in Cameroon, and at the Regional Economic Development Service Office, West and Central Africa, Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Members of the University of Florida A.I.D.-funded technical assistance team and the University of Dschang administration were interviewed. Meetings were held with A.I.D. officials at USAID/Cameroon and the regional office. Budget presentations and project files were examined at USAID/Cameroon and at the university site

in western Cameroon. Review of internal administrative controls and compliance was limited to the issues raised in this report.

The audit covered project activities from July 1982 through March 1987 and expenditures of \$7.7 million. The audit was made in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

AUDIT OF THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
PROJECT IN CAMEROON

PART II - RESULTS OF AUDIT

While progress was made revising the curriculum and administrative structure, the project was almost three years behind schedule because of construction delays, and costs had increased by about \$17 million. Additionally, lack of an adequate project implementation schedule and budget, and lack of Government of Cameroon key project personnel restrained project performance.

The university's academic and administrative structure had been successfully patterned after the U.S. land grant university system. A two-year core curriculum of basic science courses had been developed. Through the efforts of the university administration and the A.I.D.-funded technical assistance team, a teaching resources center, library, and language laboratory had been established.

However, USAID/Cameroon had not revised the project implementation schedule and budget to reflect long delays or significant cost increases, and the host country did not provide key project personnel. The audit report recommends USAID/Cameroon revise project implementation plans and budgets, and enforce host government compliance with the project agreement.

A. Findings and Recommendations

1. Implementation Plans and Budget Needed To Be Revised

A.I.D. Handbook 3 states that when significant delays occur, project implementation plans and budgets should be revised so that the Mission can anticipate critical activities and determine what can be accomplished within new timeframes and budgets. Project plans and budgets had not been revised even though the project had experienced a three-year delay and costs for construction had escalated by 65 percent, from about \$26 million to \$43 million. Revisions had not been made because the Mission did not follow A.I.D. Handbook guidance. As a result, the Mission lacked adequate information to determine what could be accomplished with remaining time and budget.

Recommendation No. 1

We recommend the Director, USAID/Cameroon, update the project implementation plan and budget. In doing so, the Director must:

- a. determine the impact of construction delays and budget shortfalls on curriculum development, teaching, research, and extension at the university;
- b. prioritize construction of facilities and negotiate these changes with the host government;
- c. coordinate construction of related facilities with other donors; and
- d. clarify responsibility for site preparation costs, the provision of utilities, and sewage disposal facilities.

Discussion

A.I.D. Handbook 3 requires that project officers revise budgets and implementation plans whenever significant delays occur. Without periodic updates, it is difficult to determine progress, anticipate problems, or judge what can be accomplished with the time and budget remaining. In line with Handbook guidance, the project agreement stresses that implementation strategies, workplans, and budgets be reviewed carefully and modified when appropriate. It also recognizes the interdependence of the various facets of the project (revised curriculum, academic and administrative structure, construction of new facilities and education of faculty members) in achieving the project's purpose.

By early 1987 the project was almost three years behind schedule and construction of A.I.D.-financed facilities had not started. When the audit began in January 1987 the Mission had not revised project implementation plans and budgets, including construction costs. By February 1987 the Mission obtained a revised construction schedule and new construction cost estimates. The Mission found that construction could not be completed until mid-1990 and that costs had risen 65 percent, from \$26 million in 1982 to \$43 million in 1987. To remain within the approved \$26 million budget, the Mission decided that only 8 of the 15 planned facilities could be built. In March 1987 the Mission advised A.I.D./W of its plans, extended the project completion date, and requested an additional \$6 million for the project.

Although it revised the construction schedule and costs, the Mission still needed to incorporate the revised construction cost estimate and schedule into an overall project implementation plan and budget. The Mission had begun to tackle some of the problems caused by project delays and funding shortfalls, but several issues still needed to be resolved before an adequate project implementation plan and budget could be prepared. Specifically, the Mission needed to (1) consider the impact of construction delays on curriculum development, teaching, research and extension at the university, (2) decide what could be constructed with the available budget and negotiate required changes with the host government, (3) coordinate the construction of adjacent facilities with other donors, and (4) clarify responsibility for site preparation costs, the provision of utilities, and sewage disposal facilities.

The Project Officer was responsible for overall supervision of project activities and should have periodically evaluated the impact of construction delays on the overall project implementation and budget. However, the Mission did not require the Project Officer to regularly revise overall project plans and budgets. The fact that responsibility for project implementation was divided between the engineering staff and the Project Officer created some confusion as to who was responsible for the revisions.

Without current project implementation plans and budgets, the Mission lacked adequate information to determine what could be accomplished within the remaining time and budget. When construction cost estimates finally became available in February 1987, the Mission was faced with problems it had not anticipated. As a result, additional analyses and negotiations were necessary which could further delay project implementation and increase costs.

Management Comments

USAID/Cameroon believed it had complied with Handbook requirements for construction plan and budget revisions throughout the life of the project. The Mission argued that revisions are useful only when critical activities can be anticipated and appropriate steps taken. Generally, according to the Mission, plans and costs should be updated at three levels of design development -- sketch submission, comprehensive preliminary plans and specifications, and final design plan. Mission officials recognized that revised estimates were not prepared at certain stages, but indicated that accurate cost estimates would not have been possible even if they had.

The Mission suggested the recommendation be closed at report issuance because of action taken between time of audit and issuance of the draft audit report, to determine the impact of construction costs and delays, reach agreement with the host government, and clarify various construction priorities.

Office of Inspector General Comments

Audit evidence does not support the Mission's contention that adequate plans and budgets had been maintained throughout the project. Mission action to revise the construction budget is a positive step since construction is a major project component. However, it is only one of several project activities which need to be reassessed when major changes occur. For instance, construction delays and significant cost increases or decreases have an impact on what the project can achieve in terms of (1) constructing facilities and (2) conducting teaching and research extension activities. When faced with significant delays or cost increases in one part of project activities, such as construction, the Mission must consider the impact such delays have on the rest of the project activities. By doing this, as the Handbook suggests, the Mission can better anticipate critical activities and determine what can be accomplished.

The Mission's suggestion that construction plans and budget be revised at certain levels of design development may be adequate if the project involved construction only. But this approach does not ensure that the impact of delays or cost increases is considered in the overall decision-making process in a complex project such as the Agricultural Education.

Based on Mission action to implement report recommendation No. 1, the recommendation is considered resolved. It can be closed when the Mission provides appropriate evidence that actions outlined in the recommendation have been implemented.

2. The Host Country Did Not Fill Key Positions

The grant agreement required the Government of the Republic of Cameroon to provide employees for two key positions early in the project -- a Director of Research and Extension and an assistant to the U.S. technical assistance team's Administrative Specialist. At the time of audit, the grantee had not filled these positions. By not enforcing the grant agreement, USAID/Cameroon allowed the two positions to remain vacant for several years. As a result, certain project activities were not conducted, and the U.S. technical assistance team's Administrative Specialist position had to be extended for 35 months at a cost of about \$132,000.

Recommendation No. 2

We recommend that the Director, USAID/Cameroon, enforce the terms of the project grant agreement and not approve further extension of U.S. technical assistance positions until qualified host country personnel are officially appointed.

Discussion

A.I.D. policy emphasizes the need for trained host country employees who can ensure the effectiveness of project activities and the continued viability of the program after assistance ends. Signed in July 1982, the grant agreement required the host government to (1) appoint a Director of Research and Extension to create a program with the help of U.S. technical assistance, and (2) train an assistant to work with the technical assistance Administrative Specialist and to assume that position after 42 months. In March 1987, almost five years after the project agreement had been signed, the host government had not filled the two positions.

The position of Director of Research and Extension was important as it encompassed two fundamental requirements for a land grant university -- research and extension. At the time of audit, the host government had yet to approve and fill the position as required by the project grant agreement. The position was to be filled as part of a revised university administrative structure which could not be implemented until a Presidential Decree authorizing it had been issued. In November 1986, an A.I.D. project evaluation called attention to the problem and recommended timely approval of the university's revised administrative structure and appointment of the Director of Research and Extension. As of March 1987, approval had not been obtained.

In responding to the draft report, the Mission stated that a qualified person had been nominated for the research and extension position. He had moved to the University and was working although his nomination would not be official until the position had been approved by Presidential Decree. Therefore, the Mission believed the university had complied with the grant agreement. Furthermore, it did not believe that project progress was impaired when the director position was vacant.

The auditors did not consider nomination for the research and extension position compliance with the grant agreement. At the time of audit, the nominee was still not working with the technical assistance team in a director's role, as expected under the agreement.

Furthermore, the auditors disagreed with the Mission's views that project progress was not impaired when the director position was vacant. A November 1986 A.I.D. evaluation noted that only modest progress had been made in the area of research, and even less in the area of extension, partially because research results had not been developed. The evaluation's concerns were echoed by the U.S. technical assistance Research and Extension Advisor. He stated that little had been accomplished in promoting project research and extension since the technical assistance team arrived at the university four years earlier. He said that without a host country director, there was no guarantee that the research journal or experiments he had been working on would continue when he left.

By not appointing a working Research and Extension Director for four years, the project left it to the technical assistance team to perform that role. While the host government's nomination of a director in 1987 is a partial solution to this problem, it falls short of the expectation raised in the project paper that the director would be an integral part of the research and development program for the project.

At the time of audit, USAID/Cameroon intended to extend the technical assistance Research and Extension Advisor position for 26 months. The auditors concluded that without the official assignment of a host country director to work with the advisor, there would be limited benefit in continuing A.I.D. funding for this position for another 26 months at an estimated cost of \$230,000.

The university had also not provided an assistant to the technical assistance team's Administrative Specialist. The assistant was to help the team for 42 months, and then assume the post of Administrative Specialist.

USAID/Cameroon raised this issue with the university administration in January 1986 and the university provided a counterpart. However, the counterpart was promoted to another government post and left three weeks later. There was no evidence further discussions between the Mission and university had been held.

At the time of audit, an assistant was still needed, according to technical assistance team members, especially when construction began and related procurement activities increased. The U.S. technical assistance Administrative Specialist was not replaced with an assistant after 42 months, as called for by the project agreement. Instead, a 35-month extension for the U.S. technical assistance team position was being proposed by the Mission at a cost of about \$132,000.

In its response to the draft report, the Mission stated that a decision had been made not to have a Cameroonian counterpart for the Administrative Specialist. It stated that the function of this position was to provide logistical and operational support for the technical assistance team and once the team departed there would be no further need for the position. The Mission also indicated that extending technical assistance for this position would not result in additional project costs because sufficient funds were available under the contract between A.I.D. and the University of Florida.

The auditors contend that if an assistant had been provided by the host government as planned, and properly trained by the Administrative Specialist, there likely would have been little need to extend the Administrative Specialist's contract for another 35 months; therefore, technical assistance costs could have been reduced.

The ability of the project to meet its long-term objectives was based on the assumption that host country personnel would be operating the university's programs when the technical assistance team departed. By not providing key counterparts for several years, the host government did not comply with the terms of its agreement with A.I.D., project activities were impaired, and technical assistance costs were increased.

Management Comments

The Mission disagreed with the finding and believed the university had complied with the grant agreement provisions regarding host country personnel.

Office of Inspector General comments

The auditors do not agree with the Mission position. As noted in the report, the agreement called for the university to provide a Research and Extension Director and an assistant to the U.S. Administrative Specialist early in the project. Because required personnel were not provided by the university, they were not available to the project when needed. As a result, technical assistance was not as effective as it could have been and costs were increased.

Based on the Mission's proposed action to finalize the research and extension position and eliminate the assistant administrative specialist position, recommendation No. 2 is considered resolved. It can be closed when the Mission provides evidence that a decree has been signed and the Research and Extension Director is officially working in that capacity.

B. Compliance and Internal Controls

Compliance

The Government of Cameroon did not comply with the terms of the grant agreement. Finding Number 2 discusses the government's need to comply with requirements for host country counterparts. The audit review of compliance was limited to the findings presented in this report.

Internal Controls

USAID/Cameroon needed to improve internal controls. Finding 1 discusses the need for Mission management to oversee the periodic revision of implementation schedules and budgets to reflect the project's three-year delay and cost increases during that period. The audit review of internal controls was limited to the findings presented in this report.

C. Other Pertinent Matters

Operating budgets -- The university's ability to operate and maintain the campus during the next two years could be hampered by a limited operating budget. As a result of current economic trends in Cameroon, the government has adopted a fiscal austerity program, which, according to the Director of the university, will result in a freeze of the university's operating budget for the next two to three years at the present level. Given current inflation rates and projected cost increases due to the construction of new facilities, freezing the operating budget would, in effect, reduce the amount of resources available for the functioning of the university. Though the audit could not determine the impact of the austerity plan on the operation of the university, the Mission should closely monitor the university's budget to ensure that adequate funding is available.

Maintenance -- Maintenance of existing non-A.I.D.-funded facilities by the university was poor. The audit found lack of lighting, chronic plumbing problems, backed-up septic tanks, and unsafe electrical lines. Although the university seemed to have adequate funds budgeted for maintenance, it did not have a superintendent for maintenance, adequately trained staff or an effective maintenance plan.

Good maintenance was important to the project; otherwise, (1) current project activities could be impaired and (2) maintenance of future A.I.D.-funded facilities may be inadequate. The university needs good plans and well-trained personnel in place when the A.I.D.-funded construction is completed. The Mission should closely monitor campus maintenance to ensure that (1) existing facilities do not unduly deteriorate and (2) a good maintenance capability is in place. The Mission has indicated it had recommended the university hire a short-term consultant to prepare maintenance plans and budgets. The auditors agree with this suggestion.

AUDIT OF THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
PROJECT IN CAMEROON

PART III - APPENDICES

ACTION: RIG-2 INFO: DC

VZCZCTAA9647SA712
 CC RUTADS
 DE RUEHYD #4835/01 1471220
 ZNR UUUUU 22H
 O 271211Z MAY 87
 FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
 TC AMEMBASSY DAKAR IMMEDIATE 2096

LOC: 249
 27 MAY 87
 CN:
 CHRG: AID
 DIST: PIC

BT
 UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 YAOUNDE 04835

AIDAC

FOR RIG/A

F.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: N/A

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO DRAFT AUDIT REPORT ON AGRICULTURAL
 EDUCATION PROJECT (631-0031)

FOLLOWING IS USAID/CAMEROON'S RESPONSE TO SUBJECT DRAFT
 REPORT. RESPONSE IS BEING SUBMITTED MAY 26, AS MAY 25 WAS
 A HOLIDAY.

I. IMPLEMENTATION PLANS AND BUDGET NEEDED TO BE REVISED

THE DRAFT AUDIT REPORT CONCLUDES THAT USAID/CAMEROON
 FAILED TO COMPLY WITH AID HANDBOOK 3 REQUIREMENTS TO
 REVISE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLANS AND BUDGETS WHEN
 SIGNIFICANT PROJECT DELAYS OCCUR. THE REPORT CLAIMS THAT
 AS A RESULT, USAID/C DID NOT HAVE ADEQUATE INFORMATION TO
 DETERMINE WHAT COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH THE REMAINING
 TIME AND BUDGET WHICH CAUSED FURTHER DELAYS AND COSTS OF
 TOIS 200,000 PER MONTH. RECOMMENDATION NO. 1 REQUIRES
 USAID/C TO UPDATE THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND
 BUDGET BY TAKING FOUR SPECIFIC ACTIONS.

USAID/C MAINTAINS THAT IT COMPLETELY COMPLIED WITH AID
 HANDBOOK 3 REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION PLAN AND BUDGET
 REVISIONS THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THE PROJECT.
 FURTHERMORE, THE AUDITORS' CLAIM THAT USAID/C CAUSED
 CONSTRUCTION DELAYS AND COST INCREASES IS BASED ON A
 MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE EVENTS OCCURRING DURING THE
 PRECONSTRUCTION PHASE.

USAID/C UNDERSTANDS THE NEED TO REVISE CONSTRUCTION PLANS
 AND BUDGETS. HOWEVER, SUCH REVISIONS ARE USEFUL ONLY IF
 DONE WHEN CRITICAL ACTIVITIES CAN BE ANTICIPATED AND
 APPROPRIATE STEPS TAKEN. GENERALLY, CONSTRUCTION PLANS
 AND COSTS SHOULD BE UPDATED AT EACH STAGE OF DESIGN
 DEVELOPMENT, I.E., THE SKETCH SUBMISSION LEVEL (APS), THE
 COMPREHENSIVE PRELIMINARY PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS LEVEL
 (APD), AND THE FINAL DESIGN PLAN SUBMISSION LEVEL (PEO).

USAID/C PERFORMED PLAN AND BUDGET REVISIONS AT ALL
 CRITICAL PRE-CONSTRUCTION PHASES AS SET OUT BELOW.

(1) THE APS WAS SUBMITTED IN NOVEMBER 1983 BY THE

CONSORTIUM OF A&P FIRMS UNDER CONTRACT WITH THE GRC. THIS INCLUDED A PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE BASED ON UNIT COST PER SURFACE AREA OF PIPILINES. (THE DRAFT AUDIT REPORT IS IN ERROR IN ITS ASSERTION ON P. 9 THAT COST ESTIMATES PROVIDED BY AN OCTOBER 1982 PIL WERE NOT OBTAINED.) AT THIS POINT, A ONE-YEAR DELAY IN PRE-CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES HAD OCCURRED. THE ESTIMATED COST OF 5,692,422,000 FCFA (DOLS 14,231,200), HOWEVER, WAS WELL WITHIN THE PROJECT CONSTRUCTION BUDGET, AND THERE WAS THEREFORE NO NEED TO REVISE CONSTRUCTION PLANS.

(2) DESIGN RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONSORTIUM WERE NOT COMPLETED AT THE APD AND PDC LEVELS DUE TO THE COLLAPSE OF THE CONSORTIUM AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF THE AMERICAN MEMBER WHICH WAS PROVIDING A LEADERSHIP ROLE. FIRM COST ESTIMATES WHICH WERE TO HAVE BEEN PROVIDED AT THE END OF THE DESIGN PHASE COULD THEREFORE NOT BE MADE. THIS EVENT WAS COMPLETELY BEYOND THE CONTROL OF USAID/C AND THE GRC AND CAUSED MAJOR DELAYS TO THE CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE. NO AMOUNT OF SCHEDULE OR COST UPDATES WOULD HAVE PREVENTED OR CORRECTED THE SITUATION.

(3) DESIGN STUDIES RESUMED IN EARNEST IN EARLY 1985 WITH THE GRC APPOINTING A REPLACEMENT FOR THE AMERICAN FIRM. THIS EFFORT HAD TAKEN A YEAR TO COMPLETE. THE MISSION REVISED THE CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE AT THIS POINT IN MAY 1985, AND CONTRARY TO THE STATEMENT IN THE DRAFT REPORT, WAS WELL AWARE OF THE EFFECT OF INFLATION VIS-A-VIS THE RISING DOLLAR. AT THIS TIME, THE RATE OF THE DOLLAR WAS 500 FCFA/DOLLAR, WHICH WAS AN APPRECIATION OF 100 PERCENT FROM THE RATE OF 250 FCFA/DOLLAR USED FOR THE INITIAL BUDGET ESTIMATES, AND COMPOUNDED INFLATIONARY LOSS DUE TO DELAY WAS APPROXIMATELY 24 PERCENT. ALTHOUGH THE PROJECT WAS TWO YEARS BEHIND SCHEDULE, COSTS WERE STILL WELL WITHIN THE BUDGETED AMOUNT. USAID/C DID NOT NEED TO RE-PLAN OR REVISE CONSTRUCTION PLANS AT THIS POINT, NOR WOULD SUCH PLANS HAVE BEEN OF ANY CONSEQUENCE AS FURTHER DESIGN WORK HAD NOT YET TAKEN PLACE UPON WHICH TO BASE REVISED ESTIMATES.

(4) IN DECEMBER 1985 AND EARLY 1986, DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD WITH THE GRC REGARDING THE SIXTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR 1986-1991. AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCTION BUDGET OF DOLS 26 MILLION SHOWED A LOCAL CURRENCY BUDGET OF 10.5 BILLION
BT

UNCLASSIFIED

YAOUNDE 204835/01

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FCFA AT THE RATE THEN IN EFFECT OF 400 FCFA/DOLLAR. THIS AMOUNT WAS SUFFICIENT TO PERFORM PLANNED CONSTRUCTION WHEN COMPARED TO AN UPDATE OF COSTS BASED ON SURFACE AREAS (ESTIMATED COSTS 300,000 M2 X 200,000 FCFA/M2 6.0 BILLION FCFA). THE DRAFT REPORT ON P. 9 ATTRIBUTES TO THE ASSISTANT GENERAL ENGINEERING OFFICER (AGEO) THE STATEMENT THAT REVISIONS TO THE CONSTRUCTION BUDGET COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MADE WITHOUT COST ESTIMATES FROM THE A&E FIRM. THE AGEO'S STATEMENT WAS MISUNDERSTOOD. HE DID NOT STATE THAT NO COST ESTIMATES COULD BE MADE BUT THAT THE ACCURACY OF SUCH COST ESTIMATES WOULD HAVE BEEN QUESTIONABLE AS THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN BASED ONLY ON A SURFACE AREA CALCULATION. THERE ARE MANY ADDITIONAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO COST ESTIMATES, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH IS QUANTITIES, SUCH AS VOLUME OF EARTHWORKS, VOLUME OF ROCK EXCAVATION AND REINFORCING STEEL, SPECIAL CONCRETE MIXES DUE TO SEISMIC CONSIDERATIONS. AS DESIGN PLANS HAD NOT BEEN COMPLETED, SUCH DETAILED AND ACCURATE ESTIMATES WERE NOT POSSIBLE.

(5) IN SEPTEMBER 1985, A CONTRACT WAS SIGNED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MASTER PLAN FOR THE CAMPUS WHICH WAS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL BEFORE PROCEEDING FURTHER WITH THE DESIGN OF THE AID-FINANCED BUILDINGS. UNTIL THE MASTER PLAN WAS DEVELOPED, NO REVISION OF COST AND PLAN ESTIMATES COULD HAVE BEEN MADE.

(6) THE DOLLAR DECLINED RAPIDLY LATE IN 1986 FROM 400 FCFA TO 300 FCFA, AT WHICH TIME USAID/C REVISED ITS IMPLEMENTATION PLANS AND BUDGETS. AT THIS TIME, THE FINAL DESIGNS WERE BEING COMPLETED (NOVEMBER 1986), AND THE MISSION WAS AWAITING FIRM COST ESTIMATES FROM THE A&E CONSULTANTS BASED ON QUANTITIES AND ACTUAL WORK UNITS TO REVIEW AND REVISE BUDGET AND CONSTRUCTION PLANS AS NECESSARY. THESE PLANS WERE RECEIVED BY USAID/C IN EARLY FEBRUARY 1987, AND BY THE END OF FEBRUARY, THE MISSION HAD WORKED OUT A REVISED CONSTRUCTION PLAN THAT DID NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE PROJECT. NEITHER USAID/C NOR FINANCIAL EXPERTS COULD HAVE PREDICTED THIS RAPID DECLINE IN THE RATE OF THE DOLLAR WHICH CAUSED SUCH A DRAMATIC CONSTRUCTION COST INCREASE. HOWEVER, USAID/C RESPONDED QUICKLY BY REVISING CONSTRUCTION PLANS AND BUDGETS. CONTRARY TO THE DRAFT AUDIT REPORT'S ASSERTION, THIS REVISION DID NOT FURTHER DELAY CONSTRUCTION NOR CAUSE COSTS OF DOLS 200,000 PER MONTH. THIS DOLS 200,000 COST WAS OBTAINED BY THE AUDITORS FROM A MISREADING OF A MARCH 1987 YAOUNDE CABLE WHICH STATED QUOTE WE HAVE ESTIMATED THAT IF THE CONTRACT SIGNING IS PUSHED BACK BEYOND SEPTEMBER, EACH MONTH DELAY FROM THAT POINT WILL ADD DOLS. 200,000 PER MONTH TO CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT COSTS UNQUOTE. AS IT IS NOT YET SEPTEMBER 1987, THIS DOLS 200,000/MONTH HAS NOT COME INTO PLAY. IN ADDITION, PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES IS MOVING AHEAD SMOOTHLY WITH THE TARGET DATE OF SEPTEMBER 1987 WELL WITHIN REACH.

THE ABOVE DISCUSSION CLEARLY SHOWS USAID/C ADEQUATELY REVISED CONSTRUCTION PLANS AND BUDGETS AT ALL CRITICAL PHASES OF PRECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES. ADDITIONALLY, THE

REPORT'S CLAIM THAT USAID/C CAUSED CONSTRUCTION DELAYS AND INCREASED COSTS IS COMPLETELY UNFOUNDED AND UNSUPPORTED BY THE FACTS.

THE DRAFT AUDIT REPORT RECOMMENDED FOUR ACTIONS FOR USAID/C TO TAKE TO REVISE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLANS. THIS REPORT WAS ISSUED AFTER ACTIONS HAD ALREADY BEEN TAKEN BY USAID/C ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE WHEN FINAL DESIGN PLANS BECAME AVAILABLE IN FEBRUARY 1997. THESE PLANS ENABLED USAID/C TO COMPLETE THE PRECONSTRUCTION PHASE AND MAKE TIMELY REVISIONS IN CONSTRUCTION COSTS AND SCHEDULES. THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN, AMONG OTHERS, TO REVISE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLANS AND BUDGETS:

(1) DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF CONSTRUCTION DELAYS AND BUDGET SHORTFALLS ON CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND EXTENSION AT THE UNIVERSITY. THE CONSTRUCTION DELAYS HAD NO IMPACT ON THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF UCD, THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT. THE MANDATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA TEAM WAS TO DEVELOP UCD INTO AN AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY MODELED ON THE AMERICAN LAND GRANT AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY SYSTEM WITH CAPABILITIES IN AGRICULTURAL TRAINING, RESEARCH, AND EXTENSION. SUBSTANTIAL STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO REVISE

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THE ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY CENTER, REVISE ITS CURRICULUM, UPGRADE THE FACULTY AND DEVELOP STAFF CAPABILITIES, AND INSTITUTE AN INTER-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WITH LINKAGES WITH OTHER AGENCIES. THE THRESHOLD EVALUATION CONCLUDED THAT THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF UCF WAS WELL ADVANCED. ADDITIONALLY, LABORATORY EQUIPMENT, LIBRARY HOLDINGS, AND OTHER MATERIALS HAVE BEEN ACQUIRED AND INSTALLED IN EXISTING FACILITIES. NEITHER TEACHING NOR RESEARCH/EXTENSION WAS IMPEDED BY THE DELAY IN CONSTRUCTION.

BUDGET SHORTFALLS HAVE OCCURRED ONLY IN THE LOAN-FINANCED CONSTRUCTION COMPONENT. NO BUDGET SHORTFALLS HAVE OCCURRED IN ANY GRANT-FUNDED ELEMENTS, INCLUDING THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA CONTRACT, NOR IN THE LOAN-FINANCED COMMODITIES.

(2) PRIORITIZE CONSTRUCTION OF FACILITIES AND NEGOTIATE THESE CHANGES WITH THE HOST GOVERNMENT

UPON THE COMPLETION OF THE MASTER PLAN, BUILDING DESIGNS, AND SOIL SURVEYS BY FEBRUARY 1987, USAID REVISED THE CONSTRUCTION PLAN AND BUDGET, PRIORITIZED CONSTRUCTION ITEMS, AND REACHED AGREEMENT WITH THE GRC CONCERNING THOSE ITEMS IN EARLY MARCH 1987, PRIOR TO THE DEPARTURE OF THE AUDIT TEAM.

(3) COORDINATE CONSTRUCTION OF RELATED FACILITIES WITH OTHER DONORS

THE IBRD PORTION OF THE CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES IS CONCLUDED, LEAVING THE BELGIANS AS THE ONLY REMAINING DONOR WITH WHOM TO COORDINATE. THEIR CONTRIBUTION OF ONE TECHNICAL BLOCK IS VERY SMALL COMPARED WITH THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE IBRD, USAID, AND THE GRC. THE MISSION HAS COMMUNICATED WITH THE BELGIANS ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS; HOWEVER, IN THE ABSENCE OF A BELGIAN ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING REPRESENTATIVE IN CAMEROON, IT CANNOT HOLD MEANINGFUL TALKS WITH THE BELGIANS CONCERNING THEIR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES. THE SITE PREPARATION IS FUNDAMENTAL FOR BEGINNING CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES. THUS, THE MISSION AND THE GRC HAVE DETERMINED THAT THEY WILL PROCEED WITH THE NECESSARY EXCAVATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION SINCE THE BELGIAN CONSTRUCTION IS INDEPENDENT OF THESE ACTIVITIES. ONCE A BELGIAN A/E REPRESENTATIVE HAS ARRIVED IN CAMEROON, CLOSE COORDINATION WILL TAKE PLACE.

(4) CLARIFY RESPONSIBILITY FOR SITE PREPARATION COSTS, THE PROVISION OF UTILITIES, AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL FACILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE BEEN CLARIFIED. AS AGREED BETWEEN USAID/C AND THE GRC, AID WILL FINANCE 70 PERCENT OF THE ENTIRE SITE PREPARATION COST, AND THE GRC WILL PROVIDE THE REMAINDER. AS CALLED FOR IN THE PROJECT AGREEMENT, THE GRC WILL PROVIDE ELECTRICITY, WATER, TELEPHONE, AND OTHER FACILITIES. SEPTIC TANKS FOR THE BUILDINGS WILL SUBSTITUTE FOR A SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT UNTIL THE LATTER

CAN BE CONSTRUCTED.

AS USAID/C HAD TAKEN ALL ACTIONS REQUIRED BY RECOMMENDATION NO. 1 PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE REPORT AND ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE, THIS RECOMMENDATION SHOULD BE CLOSED.

II. HOST COUNTRY WAS NOT MEETING PROJECT OBLIGATIONS
THE DRAFT REPORT STATES AS RECOMMENDATION NO. 2 THAT USAID/CAMEROON QUOTE ENFORCE THE TERMS OF THE PROJECT GRANT AGREEMENT BY:

A. NOT APPROVING FURTHER EXTENSION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE UNTIL QUALIFIED COUNTERPART PERSONNEL ARE APPOINTED; AND

B. DESIGNING A YEARLY MAINTENANCE PLAN, ASSURING THE SUPERINTENDENT OF MAINTENANCE IS HIRED AND TRAINED MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL ARE IN PLACE, AND DEVELOPING A MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR UNIVERSITY FACILITIES. END QUOTE.

USAID/C MAINTAINS IT HAS COMPLETELY COMPLIED WITH GRANT AGREEMENT PROVISIONS REGARDING COUNTERPARTS AND

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MAINTENANCE.

A. COUNTERPARTS

USAID/C AND THE UCD RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING TRAINED CAMEROONIANS READY TO ASSUME THE FUNCTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS WHEN THEY DEPART. THE MISSION HAS LONG BEEN CONCERNED WITH THIS MATTER, CONTRARY TO THE REPORT'S ASSERTION OF P. 14 THAT QUOTE THE MISSION HAS NOT STRESSED THE NEED FOR COUNTERPARTS. END QUOTE. THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THIS PROJECT, USAID/C HAS PURSUED THIS ISSUE WITH UCD OFFICIALS.

THE DRAFT AUDIT REPORT NAMES TWO POSITIONS FOR WHICH COUNTERPARTS HAVE NOT BEEN APPOINTED--A DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND EXTENSION AND AN ASSISTANT TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST--AND IMPLIES THAT THE UCD AND USAID/C HAVE NOT BEEN ACTIVE IN FINDING INDIVIDUALS TO FILL THESE POSITIONS. THIS IMPLICATION IS UNFOUNDED, AS CONSIDERABLE STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY BOTH PARTIES. A QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL HAS BEEN NOMINATED FOR THE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION POSITION. ALTHOUGH HIS NOMINATION HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE OFFICIAL PENDING A DECREE FROM THE PRESIDENT, HE HAS MOVED TO THE UCD AND IS WORKING IN THIS CAPACITY. REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST, THE DECISION HAS BEEN MADE NOT TO HAVE A CAMEROONIAN COUNTERPART. THE FUNCTION OF THIS POSITION IS TO PROVIDE LOGISTICAL AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE U.F. TEAM, AND ONCE THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM DEPARTS, THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER NEED FOR THE POSITION. PROJECT EXPERIENCE HAS PROVEN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HAVING A MEMBER OF THE U.F. TEAM AS ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST.

THE REPORT CRITICIZES USAID/C'S PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THESE TWO POSITIONS AND FURTHER CLAIMS THAT COSTS INCREASED BY AT LEAST DOLS 362,000 BECAUSE OF THIS DECISION. THESE POSITIONS WERE EXTENDED BEYOND THE TERMS WHICH HAD BEEN DETERMINED APPROPRIATE IN THE PROJECT DESIGN PHASE PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE PROJECT. USAID/C IS REVISING ITS IMPLEMENTATION PLANS AND BUDGETS BASED ON PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. THE LACK OF CAMEROONIAN COUNTERPARTS FOR THESE TWO POSITIONS IN THE PAST IS NOT THE REASON FOR THE EXTENSION OF THESE POSITIONS. THE ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST IS BEING EXTENDED BECAUSE OF THE DECISION TO RETAIN THIS POSITION AS PART OF THE U.F. TEAM. THE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION POSITION IS BEING EXTENDED NOT SO THAT TRAINING CAN BE PROVIDED TO THE CAMEROONIAN COUNTERPART BUT TO WORK FURTHER TOWARD ACCOMPLISHING THE FUNCTIONS OF THIS POSITION AS STATED IN THE GRANT AGREEMENT, WHICH INCLUDE PLANNING OF SEMINARS AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMS, PLANNING AND COORDINATION OF AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS, AND DEVELOPING A SYSTEM TO INTEGRATE FARM MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES WITH RESEARCH AND TEACHING SCHEDULES. THE COUNTERPART CURRENTLY WORKING IN THIS POSITION IS NOT IN NEED OF TRAINING FROM THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANT, AS HE HAS EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE AS THE DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AT A RESEARCH STATION IN CAMEROON.

THE EXTENSION OF THESE TWO POSITIONS WILL BE MADE WITH NO INCREASED COSTS TO THE PROJECT. THESE POSITIONS ARE FUNDED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA CONTRACT WHICH CONTAINS SUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR CONTINGENCIES AND FLEXIBILITY AMONG BUDGET LINE ITEMS TO PROVIDE FOR THESE EXTENSIONS AT NO INCREASE IN COST. WHEN LONG-TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONTRACTS ARE SIGNED, THERE ARE ALWAYS VARIATIONS MADE IN LEVELS OF EFFORT, LENGTH AND NUMBER OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE POSITIONS, COST ESTIMATES, ETC. USAID/C AND THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REVISE THE IMPLEMENTATION PLANS WITHIN THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT AMOUNT.

USAID/C MAINTAINS THAT THE ISSUE OF APPOINTING COUNTERPARTS FOR THE DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND EXTENSION AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST HAS BEEN ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED. ADDITIONALLY, THE AUDITORS' CLAIM THAT THE COUNTERPART ISSUE IMPAIRED PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS AND CURTAILED PROJECT ACTIVITIES IS COMPLETELY WITHOUT BASIS.

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INFORMATION NO LONGER PERTINENT
TO REPORT CONTENT

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AUDIT OF THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
PROJECT IN CAMEROON

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