PD-AAU-518
ISN 52276

ECPR

PID ISSUES PAPER
October 23, 1986, 2:00 p.m.
Room 6941 N.S.

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| Country: | Sahel Regional |
| Project Name and Number: | Sahel Water Data & Management III (625-0973) |
| LOP Funding: | $4-10,000,000 |
| FY 86 Obligation: | To be determined |
| Authorization Venue: | AID/W |

1. Description: This is the third and final phase of a multi-donor effort to utilize agro-meteorological information and techniques to further Sahelian/donor development efforts in the CILSS member-states. Phase I (1975-81) created the AGRHYMET Regional Center in Niamey and strengthened the national agro-meteorological/hydrological services and linked them to a regional network. Phase II (1982-86) saw the installation of the national and regional computer systems, continued training and the initiation of operational data collection, analysis and diffusion. Phase III (1987-91) proposes to complete an operational crop/rangeland monitoring system (including provision of NOAA AVHRR satellite imagery) and to begin provision of useful data to end-users (famers, herders, national decision-makers) so as to have a positive impact on agricultural production and numerous other national development concerns. This phase will place increased attention on national-level operations (including the national interdisciplinary working groups). It should also witness a progressive shift from expatriate to Sahelian technical assistance and a progressive shift from donor to Sahelian responsibility for the costs of the system. To date, AID has focused its $13 million contribution to the AGRHYMET Program essentially on the support of the computer system (hardware, training, technical assistance).

A special AID evaluation in late 1985 found the AGRHYMET Program globally on-track in relationship to its initial expectations and noted strong support for a continued AID involvement in Phase III. This PID document proposes (a) continued hardware, training and technical assistance support for the computer system, (b) technical assistance to support the NOAA satellite monitoring activity and potentially (c) a minor role in the monitoring/evaluation of the field agricultural production objective.

2. Issues and Concerns

a) Issue No. 1: Can AID contribute to Phase III in the absence of a comprehensive management plan for the AGRHYMET

Discussion: As the AGRHYMET Program enters the critical "operational" Phase III it will become increasingly important to focus on a clearer delineation of specific Program objectives in Phase III and beyond and the manner in which those objectives will be achieved. The recent proposal document which defines the Phase III Program[1] does not provide sufficient information to AID to satisfy its basic feasibility criteria. Notably absent in the proposed program document are:

- a clear description of the Program's attainable objectives (including types of products and end-user groups) in the short, medium and long-term,

- a clear description of the costs of such a program,

- a basic understanding of the source, amount and scope of funds to be provided by donors and member-states respectively.

Further, in the absence of such basic planning information, it will be impossible for the AGRHYMET Program to deal with the important and already recognized issue of recurrent costs. A basic understanding of the recurrent costs of the AGRHYMET Program is, itself, vital to current discussions of the choice of program technology and the directions which future Program actions should take.

Recommendations:

- AID should immediately contact UNDP and WMO to encourage the completion of such a management plan, including anticipated Phase III and best estimate post-Phase III budget requirements. The management plan should be developed prior to completion of the PP team field exercise (expected in November), if at all possible.

- AID participation in AGRHYMET III can be fairly clearly circumscribed and can be developed progressively as Phase III operations build up. Should the management planning inputs noted above still be lacking in November, the PP design should plan to continue computer operations at minimal current levels until such a time when all parties can clearly ascertain the real computer "system" needs of AGRHYMET over the long-term.

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1/ AGRHYMET Programme: Proposals for Phase III (1987-91), dated 9/7/86.

- AID should be prepared to provide assistance to AGRHYMET leadership to complete the above-mentioned management plan, including special attention to the recurrent costs issue. The PP team would be the logical starting point for this effort and should be looked to for guidance as to total AID requirements in this area.

b) Issue No. 2: What is an appropriate funding level for the AGRHYMET III Project?

Discussion: The design of Phase III suffered a setback during the June ABS review when no funds were formally attributed to it. Since then, an improved funding outlook, combined with strong arguments raised by the CILSS and other donors at the September Donor Coordinating Meeting has encouraged AFR/SWA to locate funds to support the Phase III Program. Despite AFR Bureau commitment in principle, the exact level of funding cannot yet be determined. Current realistic estimates are at the $4-8 million level over the LOP but AFR/SWA emphasizes that final attribution will depend directly on the real need for funds as analyzed by the PP Team. While availability of funds in FY 87 and beyond is clearly a constraint to project design, AFR/SWA has indicated it will do everything possible to ensure an appropriate level of support once real needs are determined.

Recommendations:

- That the PP design team undertake an examination of a range of levels of effort, determine the advantages and disadvantages of each level and recommend to AID an appropriate, cost-effective, yet technically sound level of support based on its' investigation. It should be assumed for purposes of the PP design that the upper limit of AID support to the AGRHYMET Phase III Program will not exceed $10 million and that most probable LOP funding levels will be in the $4-8 million range.

- Design of AID funding support for Phase III computer activities should be undertaken in a manner which will permit progressive AID disengagement from this activity, as deemed appropriate by all parties, over the course of Phase III implementation.

c) Issue No. 3: How can AID optimize its involvement in AGRHYMET so as to deal with the broadest possible range of AFR Bureau program interests?

Discussion: Three separate AFR Bureau programmatic interests have been raised in relationship to the Phase III Project, to whit:

1) NOAA/AISC support for East and Southern Africa. As envisaged in the PID, NOAA/AISC would be supported by OFDA to provide basic Africa-wide climate impact assessment information to AID/W; further support would be provided by AFR/SWA to contribute to the development of a crop/rangeland monitoring system in Sahel West Africa. This does not deal with the potential needs of AFR/EA nor AFR/SA.

2) CRTO/AGRHYMET relationship. AID is in the process of phasing out its support to the Regional Remote Sensing Center (CRTO) in Ouagadougou but we would like to encourage any reasonable relationship between it and the AGRHYMET Program.

3) Locusts. While AID/W has yet to clearly define its nascent locust/grasshopper control project, it already seems clear that technically it will emphasize early warning of pest infestation and geographically it will have a major focus in the Sahel. As locust early warning is essentially rainfall driven, it would seem logical that close links will eventually be forged with the AGRHYMET Program.

Recommendation:

1) AFR/EA and AFR/SA should be formally brought into the PID/PP design process upon completion of the 10/23 ECPR. While development of the Phase III Project is not dependent on support from those AFR Bureau offices, the PP should be designed to as to permit an eventual non-Sahel buy-in once the project has developed useful field techniques.

2) AID/W has recognized the primary value of the CRTO Center to be as a trainer of Sahelians in remote sensing principles and use. AGRHYMET-sponsored training such as that undertaken by NOAA/AISC in Columbia, Missouri this year could usefully be attributed to CRTO. The PP team should examine this option as part of its overall training plan.

3) Clearly, the potential linkages between locust prediction and AGRHYMET are real. USAID/Niamey reports, for example, that its contract pest management specialist is currently working on such an early warning technique at the AGRHYMET Regional Center. Lacking a clearer definition of the proposed locust project, it is only recommended here that AFR/SWA and AFR/EO coordinate their respective design efforts through PD/SWAP and that the PP design team provide basic conceptual analysis of this topic.

d) Concern No. 1: Has the AGRHYMET Program demonstrated the technical capacity to receive, process and then re-diffuse, in

a cost-effective manner, the data necessary to attainment of its key objectives?

Discussion: The AID evaluation and subsequent reviews of the AGRHYMET Program have noted technical deficiencies in the area of telecommunications and computers.

Within countries it has proved difficult to maintain the system which transmits information from the multitude of rural meteorological/hydrological/agricultural stations; internationally the ASECNA air traffic control system has not given optimal support to transmission between national centers and the regional center in Niamey. Finally, it is not yet clear how vital AGRHYMET advice will be diffused to wide-spread rural users (farmers, herders). The current AGRHYMET plan for Phase III assigns responsibility for telecommunications to WMO/FAO with backing from France and Italy. Their proposal is essentially to reinforce the existing ASECNA telecommunications system while keeping an eye to future solutions such as transmission through satellite telephone links or the continent-wide satellite communication system currently being discussed by the World Bank. Phase III should bring major improvements to the current telecommunication problem.

Secondly, current discussions have generated numerous potential options for development of the computer system, all which require a broader "systems" analysis as well as better information about the new, more cost-efficient directions in computer technology now being developed and which could be available to the AGRHYMET Program prior to the end of Phase III. All sides agree on the utility of such systems oriented and forward-looking analysis. WMO and AGRHYMET require this information to ensure proper long-term technical management of the Program.

Recommendation:

- The PP team should examine the concern over telecommunications with key donor and technical groups and factor that informtion into its overall assessment of project feasibility.

- PD/SWAP should immediately contact WMO and attempt to arrange for a competent computer systems analyst to be provided by that organization. Such a specialist would augment the PP team's capacity to deal with broader planning of computer needs as well as introduce a more international perspective into the analysis.

e) Concern No. 2: Can the AID activity in crop monitoring contract with NOAA/AISC on a sole-source basis?

Discussion: Because of the NOAA/AISC track record in climate impact assessment in the Sahel since 1979 and because they were deemed to have a unique capacity to supply the type of services requested under this project, AID had been developing Phase III design on the assumption that a sole-source PASA with NOAA/AISC was the most appropriate contracting mechanism. Since then, however, AFR/TR specialists have identified at least one additional qualified candidate.

Recommendation:

- That special attention be paid by the National Academy of Sciences evaluation team (currently studing NOAA/AISC technology) to compare NOAA/AISC with that of other potential competitors.

- That the PP design team undertake a "generic" technical analysis which outlines the technical needs of the AGRHYMET Program and that it avoid any reference to a specific implementation party until an appropriate determination can be made by AFR Bureau on this topic.

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