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Rural Planning Project

Rural Planning Division

Ministry of Economic Planning and Development

Response to Mid-Term Evaluation

March 1980

15

Rural Planning Project

Response to Mid-Term Evaluation

The mid-term Evaluation was submitted in draft form in March 1979. It was reviewed by the Government and the Donor, and certain suggestions were made to the author in order to correct errors of fact and interpretations of Government positions. The revised and final report was submitted in August 1979. It has been reviewed by the Government, and this Response prepared for submission to the donor (USAID) and the contractor (the Harvard Institute for International Development)

The Evaluator was given wide access to documents and conducted a broad range of interviews with Project personnel, staff members of the Rural Planning Division, other Kenyan Officers within the Ministry of Economic Planning and Community Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture, plus a selection of field officers at District and Provincial level. He was encouraged to interpret his terms of reference broadly and to offer suggestions to Government, the Donor and Harvard on ways in which the process of decentralized planning can be improved. As a result, the Evaluation is useful on three levels: as a review of the Project activity to date, indicating both accomplishments and shortcomings; as a source of insight into future requirements for technical assistance, in the remaining months of this Project and by projection, potential needs for a second phase; and finally as a statement of the requirements on the Government side in order to facilitate the accomplishment of Project purposes.

This Response is divided into three sections:

1. Response to the specific recommendations made in the Evaluation.
2. Discussion of more general questions of policy, institutional capacity and staffing that relate to Project effectiveness, and
3. Presentation of Government's view that a second phase of the Rural Planning Project is warranted, and an outline of suggested component activities for such an extension.

PART IRESPONSE TO SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendation: that the annual meeting of Permanent Secretaries suggested in the Mule/Njuguna Report be established, and its scope expanded to include all issues raised in connection with the process of decentralization.

Response. The need for high-level attention to the requirements of decentralized planning is accepted. As an outgrowth of the present dialog between NEPCA and the Office of the President, a conference of Permanent Secretaries on the subject of decentralization is anticipated. The frequency of future meetings depends on the speed with which programmes and policies emerge, but there is agreement in principle that annual meetings are desirable.

2. Recommendation: that the Rural Planning Section be upgraded along the lines suggested in the internal organization report and that the Section be provided with adequate talented staff as soon as circumstances permit.

Response. The author of the Evaluation was pessimistic as to the possibility of realizing this recommendation in the short term (see page 8, para.2). However, since the date of his report, staffing has been substantially increased and the Rural Planning Section has been advanced to a Division. These changes are reviewed in Appendix C of the Evaluation. To summarize: the Head of the Division was elevated from Principal Economist to Deputy Chief Economist. The staff has increased from 8 Kenyan officers to 13, plus 3 more on temporary duty. By 15 August, 1979, the Division had in fact reached the strength suggested in the internal reorganization document referred to above, although the organization into functional groups and sub-units has not taken the suggested form.

A word of caution is needed as to further expansion. As a result of the present recurrent budget squeeze, it is very unlikely that the rapid expansion of the Division will be sustained.

A new internal organization paper has been prepared and is being discussed, which suggests filling the three posts currently authorized but unfilled, and creating a total of six additional posts. This paper will be useful as an indication of future needs, but will probably be well beyond the range of implementation during the next one or two years.

Of more immediate importance are the recommendations in the new organization paper as regards delegation of authority within the Division and the creation of sub-units to carry out the Division's expanded responsibilities. Without such reorganization and delegation, the Division's present size and varied activities make its operations cumbersome and reduce effectiveness and responsibility.

3. Recommendation: The District plans were behind schedule and had far to go before the exercise could be completed. The Evaluation recommended that additional help be considered, budget permitting, in the form of full-time advisers and/or short term consultants.

Response: It was the conclusion of the Senior Adviser, supported by the Ministry, that outside consultants and additional advisers would not be useful in speeding the completion of the District planning exercise. It would take too long for new personnel to gain the background and establish the field relationships that make them effective. Instead, two actions were taken to break the bottleneck of Plan preparation:

1) Three field officers (two DDOs and one Provincial Planning Assistant) were added to the Division on a temporary basis to work on District Plans. A total of 12 officer-months were added in this way by the end of 1979.

2) Responsibility for seeing that acceptable drafts are produced has been assigned to those three temporary officers plus the 6 planning officers in the Division. The advisers are in turn assigned to specified districts, to review the drafts and to join the planning officers in making suggestions for change.

The purpose of these two actions is to speed the production process and to emphasize that District plans are the primary responsibility of the DDO, with support from Kenyan staff and

advisers at the centre. They are not to be the product of expatriates.

4. Recommendation: That as soon as District plans are completed, the RPD review them in terms of content and process, as they relate to the National Plan. This is seen as useful both for implementation purposes and as preparation for a more fully articulated District planning exercise for the 1984-89 period.

Response. The Government fully supports this recommendation. Facilitating the implementation of the District plans, including the development of systems to provide the needed budgetary and other data, is seen as a major activity for 1980 and beyond. This activity will be an important aspect of the general effort to decentralize decision-making, monitoring of Ministerial programmes, resource allocation authority and medium to high level operating staff.

5. Recommendation: that a close analysis of the activity of the advisers for the balance of the Project period be undertaken, and that forward work plans be produced. Suggested high priority items for such work plans are:

1. Completion of the District plans.
2. Increasing genuine non-bureaucratic participation in planning.
3. Development of information flow systems between centre and District.
4. Preparation of a simplified system for local project identification, evaluation and implementation.
5. Participating in integrated development programmes as the coordinating and monitoring agency.
6. Improved organization, training and staffing for the Rural Planning Section.
7. Development of a system for monitoring through the DDC the Sectoral activities at District level.
8. Consultation with operating Ministries to develop effective means of producing district disaggregated budget information.
9. Develop a system for the identification and capture of district level information needed for planning and rural development.

Response: The Government agrees on the importance of defining project activities closely for the remaining months.

A work plan has been prepared and is attached as Appendix A to this report. The Government also agrees that the nine points specified above are important ingredients of an ongoing programme for technical assistance within the Rural Planning Division. Some of these points can be fully or partly accomplished by the end of 1980. Others represent long term goals and are more properly seen as part of a second phase programme. Points # 5 (as an ongoing activity) and # 4 (from an operational as opposed to an institutional perspective) can be completed or fully articulated by the end of 1980. All of the others, as reference to the work plan will show, will be commenced by the end of the Project but will clearly not be concluded. Some of the points require basic changes in Kenyan procedures and institutions, as with DDC monitoring of sectoral (Ministerial) programmes, development of District disaggregated budget data and establishment of a system for identifying and capturing District level information. The time frame for these activities is of the order of 3 to 5 years. If the necessary changes can be implemented in time for the 1984-88 planning period, it will be a substantial accomplishment.

Point # 2, the increase in non-bureaucratic participation in planning decisions, deserves special comment. The National Plan reaffirms the District as the fundamental planning unit. The DDC is identified as the principal planning institution at the District level. As the work plan suggests, the Project will address itself to the development of planning entities below the District level. However, the major participation in the divisional and lower level development committees will be ~~from field officers of operating Ministries and the Provincial Administration~~, plus elected Representatives and officers of Local Authorities. Popular participation, in the form of activist involvement of small farmers or landless workers, for example, is a fundamentally political question and beyond the competence of this Project. It will be a signal accomplishment if the existing structures (DDCs and subsidiary committees) can be assisted to function effectively enough to carry out their present broad mandates for participation in the planning and implementation processes.

6. Recommendation: that the implementation of District plans be actively pursued; that DDOs be involved in this process; that the responsibilities of DDCs be gradually expanded to cover all District level development activities; and that the necessary supporting budgetary and information changes be introduced.

Response: most of these points are stated as commitments in the current National Plan (see paras. 2.91, 2.92 and 2.93). The mandates are stated forcefully and the Project personnel, as indicated in the work plan, will devote a major part of their time to these functions. As with the previous recommendation, implementation cannot be expected by the conclusion of the Project, because of the basic structural nature of the changes that must be made in procedures and institutions.

7. Recommendation: that a programme for enhanced career opportunities be developed for DDOs, including provision for vertical and horizontal mobility, access to professional training and a sense of professional identity.

Response: the DDOs, while selected by MEPCA, are seconded to the Office of the President, which is thereafter responsible for their promotion and mobility. The Ministries have agreed that MEPCA shall participate in decisions relating to external and in-service training for DDOs. The project's involvement will be primarily through one or more seminars to be held in 1980, plus the continuing training aspect of partial counterparting with DDOs. Advanced degree and short term training for DDOs would be a desirable component of rural planning technical assistance over the next several years, but is beyond the budgetary limits of the present project.

8. Recommendation: that an appropriate and rigorous series of seminars and conferences be developed to increase the professional competence of the DDOs. Implementation of District development plans or small project analysis techniques are suggested as appropriate topics.

Response. It is agreed that in-service training is an important part of Project responsibilities. At least one formal seminar for DDOs is planned for 1980. In addition, a broad study of rural development training facilities is scheduled, which will lead to the selection and placement of a number of DDOs for short terms courses. GOK is also considering positively the establishment of an examined and graded course for planning officers, DDOs and others involved in rural development activities. The course will be of value substantively and as a screening mechanism to identify officers for further specialized or degree training.

9. Recommendation: That a cadre of District Planning Officers (DPOs) be formed to assist in local level planning.

Response. DPOs were suggested in the public Service Commission Report of 1974, together with DDOs. The proposal regarding DPOs was accepted on a limited basis, with the intention of placing three DPOs in each Provincial Headquarters to work on a sectoral basis within the Provincial Planning Office. This mandate was not implemented, due in part of manpower constraints and to the higher priority given to the establishment of DDOs during the 1974-78 National Plan.

The Government has decided to move ahead with the establishment of DPOs, but with some important changes from the original concept. DPOs are now seen as relatively senior officers, who will serve at District level, with geographic rather than sectoral responsibilities. The ASAL programmes offer a means of establishing a number of DPOs, who will serve initially as field planning and coordinating officers for these programmes.

The Evaluation is doubtful that such officers can be found, trained and placed, given the existing manpower constraints. The Government feels that this pessimism is excessive and that if access to professional training is made part of the programme for DPO development, it will be possible to identify and begin to form a substantial cadre of competent experienced officers over the next four years.

10. Recommendation: that the Government and donors seriously consider major training programmes to increase the supply of junior planning officers and ultimately to provide leadership cadres.

Response: The Government is indeed aware of the need to review and improve its professional training approaches. During the next twelve months two major efforts in this direction will be mounted. An agency will be established within MEPCA for the overall coordination of manpower training, one purpose being to rationalize the process of selection and funding for overseas advanced degree training. Second, a study will be undertaken of the present Scheme of Service for Economists and Statisticians, in order to determine ways in which the programme can be improved to attract, train and retain a larger number of competent officers. In respect to the Rural Planning Project, the Government favours including in any extension or second phase, a substantially larger training component, covering short-term courses both overseas and in Kenya, as well as advanced degree work.

II. RELATED QUESTIONS OF GOVERNMENT POLICY, INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND STAFFING

1. Government Commitment

The Evaluation states in its introduction that it does not intend to inquire into the meaning or the extent of commitment on the part of the Government to a policy of decentralized planning. While this may be a necessary limitation, given the short time available for the evaluation, any continuation of Donor support to rural planning must consider the question of Government commitment.

Analysis of the planning documents and the actions taken to implement them during the last decade shows clearly that the Government's commitment to a process of decentralized planning is real and growing. The 1970-74 Plan committed an increased proportion of resources to the rural areas, the strengthening of District and Provincial Development Committees and the establishment of the Special Rural Development Programme as an important and innovative initiative in decentralized planning.

The 1974-78 Plan committed the Government to a further strengthening of decentralized planning and the District was identified as the fundamental unit for development planning and implementation. During this period, the cadre of DDOs was created and fully staffed, and Planning Assistants were added to Provincial Planning Offices. District development plans were produced for all Districts, including a disaggregation of major Ministerial programmes to the District level. The DDCs were strengthened and their responsibilities increased. The Rural Development Fund was established, adding labour intensive rural works projects to the existing District Development Grants. Other programmes, including the Rural Access Roads programme and the Rural Water Supply programme relied increasingly on the DDCs to establish priorities and select project components for implementation.

The present National Plan substantially extends the Government's commitment to decentralized rural planning with the District as the primary focus. Many of the Plan initiatives have already been mentioned. They include further increases in the responsibilities of the DDCs. The DDCs are now charged with monitoring the implementation of Ministerial programmes and all locally defined self-help projects, as well as assuming leadership for all District level committees involved in development activities. Specific mandates are given for changes in Ministerial procedures and budgetary and financial information flows in order to produce the disaggregated information needed for effective District level planning. Local control over resource allocation will increase through expansion of the programmes in which the DDC has responsibility for project component selection.

In summary, a review of the last decade shows clearly that the Government commitments in this area have been substantial and that the major mandates incorporated in planning documents have been implemented. The current Plan will continue the extension of rural development initiatives with the District as the basic planning unit.

2. Appropriate Time Frame

The Donor project paper under which the Rural Planning Project operates notes the long term nature of the changes that must be made to establish an effective system of decentralized participatory planning. These include basic structural changes in institutions, financial procedures, rural-urban balance and Ministerial staffing patterns. A useful start has been made, but a ten year time horizon is not excessive for the accomplishment of the stated project purposes.

3. District Planning Exercise.

The preparation of District plans has been a major focus of the Project. The Government agrees with the Evaluation's comments that the exercise strained the capacity of both the centre and the field by its breadth and the ambitious nature of the District plan format. The emphasis throughout the exercise has been as much on process as on content. The results, while uneven, represent an important advance over the previous District plans, particularly in terms of the degree and effectiveness of local involvement in their preparation.

It is important now to turn from the production of 1974-78 District plans to the more important concerns of implementation within a difficult budgetary constraint, and the strengthening of institutional, informational and staff capacity for the next planning period.

4. Counterpart Staffing

Counterpart staffing has not been a problem for the Rural Planning Project. The Kenyan staff has more than doubled during the past three years, providing opportunities for multiple counterparting, both at the centre and in the field. Recurrent budget limitations will contain staff expansion for the immediate future, but further growth is anticipated as fiscal reality permits. The present staff position is reviewed in Appendix C of the Evaluation report.

5. Need for Flexibility

The work of the Project is by definition inter-Ministerial, requiring integration and coordination among many Ministries and agencies. As the Evaluation points out, both the opportunities and the constraints encountered are frequently beyond the control of the Project or of MEPCA. There is therefore a need for flexibility in the nature and the timing of Project activities in order to take advantage of the movement of Government policies on a wide range of issues. An example is the emergency of Arid and Semi-Arid Lands programmes. This development was not envisaged in 1976, but has provided an excellent vehicle for project initiatives. Similarly, the climate for a direct approach to decentralized planning has improved markedly in the last year, and should provide opportunities for more activist interventions over the next several years than were possible in the immediate past.

RURAL PLANNING PROJECTPHASE II PROPOSAL

The present Rural Planning Project in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development terminates on 31 December 1980. Under section 1.3(b) of the Agreement dated 1 April 1976 between the Government of Kenya and Harvard, "On or about the month of December 1979, the Government and Harvard will review the project and consider whether and in what way to extend or modify this Agreement."

The Government and Harvard have reached agreement on the desirability of extending the project and on the outline of activities that they wish to include in a second phase. This memorandum represents a request from the Government of Kenya to USAID to provide financial support for a second phase, as described below. The Government's decision that the project should be extended is based on the following three conclusions:

1. The results of the project to date, during the first three years of operation, have been encouraging. The mid-term evaluation Report summarizes the activities, the accomplishments, and the problems encountered during this period.
2. The project's goals are long term and require continued effort. Institution building and institutional change in the direction of decentralized, participatory planning are the overall project aims. These are long term processes, and a time frame of perhaps a decade is necessary in order to see the development of the necessary institutions, in terms both of process and of structure.
3. Kenyan capacity is increasing, but there is still need for outside technical assistance. The Response to the mid-term Evaluation report describes the growth of the Rural Planning Division, of related field staff, and the proposed creation of a cadre of District Planning Officers. If the Project is not renewed, it is doubtful

whether the present initiatives, let alone the new and increased activities that are sustained. An extension of the project will provide time for the expanded Rural Planning Division to become able to do its job without substantial outside assistance. That time is not yet here.

SUGGESTED PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The experience with the project for the last three years suggests two general principles that should guide the selection of project activities. First, activities should be defined as closely as possible and kept relatively narrow, with specification of desired outputs where possible. The purpose of such close definition is to avoid the temptation to involve the project personnel in a wide range of corollary activities, all of which can be defended as useful, interesting and relevant in an overall sense to project goals, but which divert energies from essential tasks. The second general principle may appear to contradict the first. Namely, project purposes must be expressed with sufficient flexibility that new activities can be added if they are of substantial and direct importance to project goals. An example is the development of Arid and Semi Arid Lands programmes over the last three years. This is an activity that was not contemplated when the Project document was drawn up. However, the involvement of project personnel and the use of a substantial proportion of project time and funds is justified since the ASAL programmes are intimately associated with the basic project interest in decentralized participatory planning.

The following are clearly indicated as important components of a second phase for the Rural Planning Project.

1. Implementation of District Development Plans.
Production of District plans was a major responsibility during the first phase. Strong efforts were made to involve the district level staff in plan preparation, rather than to

write the plans at the centre as has been done in the past. The principal responsibility was assigned to the District Development Officer. Sub-committees were formed on sectoral lines to prepare chapter drafts and to encourage multi-Ministerial attention to common sectoral problems. The results were predicably mixed, but in some Districts were very positive.

Each District has been assigned to a Kenyan planning officer backstopped by an adviser. It will be their responsibility to work with "their" districts during the implementation stage to help the DDC discharge its new responsibility for overseeing the implementation of Ministerial programmes within its borders.

The Project's contribution will be at the District level and at the centre. At District level, there will be a need for guidance in establishing a standard review process, which will involve questions of organization, procedure, and information. At the centre, the Project personnel will work with operating Ministries to develop systems and channels for feedback of information from District to centre, the use of that information at the centre, and the communication of changes in activity or process back to the District.

Help in this process will be available through the Kenya Institute of Administration. KIA is engaged in a basic redesign of their standard management development course, with the assistance of Project personnel. Fully a third of the three month course will be devoted to questions of District level planning and implementation. It is the intension at present to involve as many as fifteen officers from a given district in a single course, so that there will be a substantial nucleus of District officers with a common experience in planning for implementation responsibilities.

B. Decentralization of Development Decision Making. The current National Development Plan commits the Government to a programme of decentralization with respect to development activities. Helping to define, shape and organize that decentralization process will be an important project responsibility over the next several years. A dialogue has been started with the Office of the President, and it is anticipated that the discussions will be expanded to include the operating Ministries during the next several months. While no firm decisions have been taken to date on the extent and form of the decentralization programme, the following aspects will clearly be emphasized.

- Institutional. Institutional changes will be required both at local and central levels to permit the decentralization of development decision. DDCs will require assistance in improving their capability for sharing in decisions on programme and project activity. At the centre, it will be necessary for operating Ministries to revamp their planning and programme formulation processes to provide for an iterative process with the Districts.

- Budgetary and information. For decentralized planning to become a reality, there will have to be fundamental changes in the present systems of budgetary and financial information flows. Ministerial budgets and the entire forward budget process will require revamping to provide the automatic disaggregation of expenditure information, both proposed and actual, to District level.

- Staffing. It is Government's desire to create more flexibility in Ministerial staffing patterns in order to increase the calibre of its officers serving at decentralized levels. Some functions that are being discharged in Nairobi could be more effectively handled in the field. Deciding on the appropriate degree of staffing decentralization will require a Ministry by Ministry analysis, and is obviously a long term process.

C. Preparation for the 1984-88 Plan. The lead time between the commencement of the first phase of the project and the preparation of the National and the District Plans was very short. While important advances were made over previous District Planning efforts, organizational, informational and personnel resources were limited. An extension of the Project will permit a more orderly approach to the 1984-88 planning exercise, including the specification of information and District data needs, and the further development of District level institutions to facilitate the planning process.

D. Small Project Identification, Analysis and Monitoring. A start will be made in the first phase toward instituting a standard system for the District level analysis of small projects, particularly Rural Development Fund projects, as specified in the present Project Agreement. The DDCs have been given a mandate in the current Development Plan to assume responsibility for all locally defined projects. During phase II, Project personnel will therefore work with District officers to extend the application of the small project approaches to include all harambee, women's group and other local projects which now come under DDC supervisory control.

E. District Planning Officers. The Public Service structure and Remuneration Commission Report of 1970-71 called for the creation of District Development and District Planning Officers. The DDOs have been established and are now functioning in each District. The Government has now decided to move ahead with the formation of a cadre of District Planning Officers. In the initial stages, DPOs will be designated to work in those Districts where an integrated district development programme is in force, such as the ASAL programme Districts. A phase II responsibility will be to aid in the specification of the role of the DPO and to develop and implement selection and training criteria.

F. District Planning Offices. As a long range goal , it is desirable to create in each District a Planning Office which will act as the focal point for planning activities in the District. Such offices would include the DPO and the District Statistical Officer, and would also house the proposed District Information and Documentation Centres.

G. Infrastructure Development. The development of rural infrastructure, both economic and social, involves the coordination of efforts from many sources. The RDF and other locally defined projects help build the rural infrastructure network, as do projects within operating Ministries such as Agriculture, Health, Water Development and Community Development. The newly formed Ministry of Local Government and Urban Development will be responsible for the implementation of the designated service centre policy. It is anticipated that the Rural Planning Division will have a coordinating and liaison role in helping to plan for a coherent rural infrastructure, including the orderly development of designated service centre facilities.

H. ASAL Development. The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development is assigned the coordinating role for the development of ASAL programmes. ASAL areas represent 80% of the surface of Kenya and are the home for about 20% of the nation's population. The project personnel will continue to assist in all stages of ASAL programme activity from planning through evaluation, particularly with respect to inter-Ministerial coordination.

SUGGESTED PROJECT COMPOSITION FOR PHASE II

A. Advisers. It is suggested that the number of advisers be increased from three to four by adding an adviser to work specifically with infrastructure development and coordination. It is assumed that an ASAL adviser, financed by USAID under the Kitui Agreement, will also be added to the Rural Planning Division and that he/she will serve as an integral part of the Project. The four advisers will be:

1. Senior Adviser - No change from the description in the present project agreement.
2. Project Specialist - No change from the description in the present project Agreement.
3. Management and Financial Systems Adviser - To replace the present Information and Organisation Specialist, who is leaving 1 Feb. 1980. Harvard is seeking to recruit for the balance of phase I, and it is anticipated that the person recruited would continue to serve in a second phase.
4. Infrastructure Specialist - To work with the Districts and the relevant operating Ministries in planning for the coordinated development of economic and social infrastructure.

B. Consultants. A substantial increase in the use of consultants is anticipated during a second phase. Consultant support will probably be needed in the areas of financial and budgeting systems, planning for decentralization of administration and of staffing, and ASAL programme review and analysis. It is suggested that provision be included for 30 months of consultant services.

C. Training: The training component should be increased to provide more support for short term, degree and in-service programmes. The training goals for a second phase include:

1. Strengthening the professional capacities of DDOs (and DPOs when they are selected) and other headquarters and field staff in relation to project and programme planning, implementation and evaluation. Short term non-degree programmes will be used as well as degree courses. In addition, strong consideration will be given to the creation of a formalized in-country training course to be offered on an examined and graded basis, to become part of the personnel record of the participant. Such a course would have two main objectives: to impart useful skills to the officers and to act as a screening and evaluating device to select candidates for further training, including advanced degrees.

2. Creation of DPOs. The usual procedure for identifying, recruiting and training officers who would be likely candidates for DPO posting, would require a five to seven year period following University. Alternatively, the DPO cadre can be developed more rapidly through lateral entry, followed by advanced degree or non-degree training as needed. Realistically, the maximum number of DPOs that could be recruited and trained in a second phase is not above 20.

CHOICE OF CONTRACTOR

The Government recommends the selection of the Harvard Institute for International Development to continue as the contractor for a second phase of four years duration to commence 1 Jan. 1981. This recommendation reflects satisfactory experience with the contractor to date and the development of a body of knowledge and experience regarding the rural development process in Kenya that is unique and which will be highly relevant to phase II activities.