

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20523

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MEMORANDUM

June 14, 1987

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FROM: ANE/PD, Peter Bloom

SUBJECT: INDIA - Plant Genetic Resources PID (386-0153)
Asia and Near East Project Advisory Committee
(ANPAC)

The ANPAC meeting to review subject PID will be held on
Thursday, June 18, 1987 in Room 6660 NS from 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Participation in accordance with ANE Bureau guidelines is
invited.

Attachments: Issues Paper

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15

Issues Paper for ANPAC Review
PID

India: Plant Genetic Resources

LOP Funding: \$12.7 million; FY 87 Obligation - \$1 million

Account: ARDN: PACD FY 1994

Project Descriptions:

The goal of this project is to assist the GOI in the conservation and preservation of India's biological diversity. This will preserve valuable plant germplasm for mankind's use while helping to prevent further loss of endangered species. In so doing, the project will create a valuable collection of plant genetic resources which can be drawn upon by scientists for future crop improvement. Technical experts believe that such a base is essential to create sustainable agricultural systems and increase agricultural efficiency and production.

The purpose of this project is threefold. First, it provides the GOI with the means to complete a comprehensive, national plant genetic resources network which will strengthen, enhance and coordinate the facilities and research activities required for conserving, collecting, evaluating and exchanging plant genetic resources. Secondly, it will provide for the exchange of these genetic resources by developing a safe and efficient plant germplasm quarantine system. Finally, it will assist India's participation in the international community supporting germplasm exchange.

This project provides USAID the opportunity to support the development of a system which will become a source of national, regional and global importance. Additionally, U.S.-based participation, as envisioned in this project, will help facilitate India's commitment to the reasonable and free exchange of its germplasm with the rest of the world. A decision to adopt a national policy of open exchange has been emphasized in a draft Memorandum of Understanding with the NBPGR. This decision will have far-reaching impact throughout the developing world.

USAID/India will work directly with the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), through the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), as it is India's nodal institution with responsibility for establishing a comprehensive, national plant germplasm system. In this regard, the project provides direct support to germplasm collections under the purvue of NBPGR and will indirectly assist collections held independently at various universities or institutions by developing the Bureau's base collection

The purpose will be achieved through five major project outputs: (1) implementation of a fully operational, efficient germplasm storage facilities, (2) enhancement of existing germplasm collections by acquiring, evaluating and utilizing plant genetic resources, (3) implementation of a computerized germplasm information system which will link the collections into a network, (4) improvement of India's plant germplasm quarantine system to insure the rapid dissemination of pathogen and insect-free germplasm for international exchange, and (5) provision for international research collaboration through scientific exchange. Where appropriate, training in management development and administrative support will be provided for within these outputs.

Project Issues: The ANE Bureau Project Review Committee met on June 11, 1987 to review the subject PID. Joel Cohen, S&T/AGR/ENR who wrote the PID and John Pino, National Academy of Sciences, who will lead the PP team also attended. The following issues and concerns were identified for ANPAC consideration:

1. FY 87 vs FY 88 Obligations:

The project was listed on page 31 in the USAID/India 1987 Action Plan as a proposed FY 88 new project. The Mission was instructed in the India Action Plan Review Cable (State 168510) not to fund proposed FY 88 projects until the new CDSS is submitted and approved. The decision cable also called for an Agricultural Sector Strategy to be submitted to AID/W by September 30, 1987 and a Research and Technology Development Strategy by December. The Mission has now prepared the PID, is planning to develop the PP in July and obligate \$1 million for the project in FY 87, assuming the GOI approval can be obtained in time.

Various members of the PRC made compelling arguments for and against advancing this project for a possible FY 87 obligation but no consensus was reached. On the one hand it would be useful to be able to review the PID in the light of

one or both sector strategy statements mentioned above. Of particular interest would be the relation of this project and the program thrust towards employment generation and the alleviation of poverty in rural India. On the other hand, advancing the fiscal year of obligation may be justified on grounds that this originally was going to be funded as a sub-project under the existing Agriculture Research Project, and therefore the Program Week restriction should not apply. This also appears to be a project of considerable interest to the GOI (in fact they requested it). The Mission would like to be as responsive as possible to such a GOI initiative. Absent a consensus, the PRC finally decided to let the higher authorities in the ANE Bureau hammer out a decision.

Recommendation: That the ANPAC determine whether the project may be prepared for a possible FY 87 obligation or whether obligation should await AID/W approval of the Agriculture Sector Strategy.

2. Anticipated Slow Disbursing Project

Given the very slow rate of disbursement of the on-going \$20 million Agriculture Research Project (only \$1.3 million in accrued expenditures over the past four years) it was questioned why the Mission is optimistic that the proposed project with the same counterpart agency, ICAR, which has been so difficult to work with, will disburse any faster than ARP, especially since the proposal includes the construction of storage facilities.

The Mission feels that the Director General of ICAR seems to have a personal interest in this project and can be expected to give it higher priority than other research subproject proposals for ARP funding.

Recommendation

The Mission should leverage the Director General's personal interest in this project to solve whatever administrative problems exist which are impeding smooth implementation of ARP and ensure that they won't similarly slow implementation of this project. As a minimum, the ICAR should be required to prepare an implementation plan for the ARP as well as the proposed project which would include TA, training and evaluation against which project funds will be disbursed.

3. Institutional Analysis:

The PID guidance cable asked a number of institutional questions which were not addressed in the PID. These include: (a) How does the project link into the National Research System? (b) What institutional options were considered and why was the NBPGR selected over other organizations currently engaged in germplasm collection in India? (c) Why was it

decided to put all the funds through one institution? Why not use a consortium of institutions, e.g., NBPGR, Agricultural Universities, IRRI, ICRISAT, and other regional entities? and (d) What are the institutional capacities/weaknesses of NBPGR, and how will the weaknesses be corrected to meet the objectives for this project?

Recommendation:

The PP guidance cable should instruct the Mission to conduct an institutional analysis of the NBPGR and respond by cable to the above questions before authorizing the project.

Concerns

1. Need for an Initial Environmental Evaluation: Because of the construction of storage facilities and the disease implications of the quarantine activities, the project is not categorically excluded from further environmental action. An Initial Environmental Evaluation will have to be completed.
2. Recurrent costs: The PP should estimate in suitable detail the recurrent costs associated with the program and describe how the GOI and more specifically the implementing institutions propose to deal with them. Will the program be self-sustaining at its PACD?
3. New Contract for TA: Since this is a new project it will not be possible to simply expand the present Winrock contract for the ARP to include the required TA for this project.
4. Embassy Excess Rupees for local costs. The Mission should explore the possibility of using some of the Embassy's excess rupees for the local costs associated with this project.

Clearances:

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