

EVALUATION
OF
THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
FOR FRAGILE LANDS PROJECT
(936-5438)

Prepared for:

S&T/RD/RRD
Agency for International Development
Washington, D.C.

by

Bob J. Walter and Lori Ann Thrupp

August, 1989



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Acknowledgements

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Though we listened to numerous suggestions and recommendations, and considered all seriously, in the end the ones we made are ours. We give credit to all but we alone are responsible for the report.

L.A.T.
B.J.W.
August, 1989

Preface

There is widespread and growing belief that the world's environment is in danger. Daily reports of water contamination, air pollution, ozone depletion, tropical forest destruction, and an endless host of other problems create an impressive record of evidence. Political spokespersons and government leaders issue persistent calls for action, often without adequate resources to implement. The litany of problems seems overwhelming.

In 1984, the Rural Development Office of the Science & Technology Bureau of the Agency for International Development started an initiative to address the increasing degradation of fragile lands, culminating in a joint effort with the Latin American & Caribbean Bureau to address these areas in Latin America. With the additional support of the Agriculture Office and the Forestry, Environment, and Natural Resources Office in the Science & Technology Bureau, they initiated a ten-year plan of action in an attempt to ameliorate some of the problems of fragile lands in Latin America. This activity represents an early focus on one serious environmental issue and a commendable effort to take action.

The initiative is significant in at least two other ways. It represents an effort at interoffice and interbureau cooperation that deserves special mention and replication. More substantively, it has led to the union of the Science & Technology Bureau, and its knowledge-building reservoir of projects, with the LAC regional bureau with its operational emphasis, and field missions with their focus on action and implementation. Ideally, this is how the Agency for International Development is to work; it seldom does. Here is a model for how it can. S&T gets improved access to the field and LAC's assistance in putting its ideas in practice. LAC gets the tremendous expertise in S&T to support the needs of the field. USAIDs get rapid attention to their substantive problems and technical and intellectual support in building programs and creating projects. The union is good for all. This combination of AID/W bureaus and missions in a unified effort is one significant contribution that deserves recognition.

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List of Abbreviations

AAAS	American Association for the Advancement of Science
AGR	Agriculture Office
AHV	Associated High Valleys Project
AID	Agency for International Development
AID/W	Agency for International Development/Washington
ARDO	Agriculture & Rural Development Officers
ASSIST	Associated S&T projects
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
DESFIL	Development Strategies for Fragile Lands
DR	Development Resources
EARTHSAT	Earth Satellite Systems
ENR	Environment & Natural Resources
EST	Environment, Science & Technology Office
FAD	Food and Agricultural Development
FENR	Forestry, Environment, & Natural Resources
FLAG	Fragile Lands Advisory Group
FLI	Fragile Lands Initiative
FLWG	Fragile Lands Working Group
GIS	Geographic Information System
GOH	Government of Haiti; Government of Honduras
GSK	Government of St. Kitts
HAD	Highland Agricultural Development Project (Guatemala)
HR	Human Resources Directorate
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
LAC	Latin American & Caribbean Bureau
LOE	Level of Effort
LOPIP	Life of Project Implementation Plan
LUMP	Land Use Management Plan

M/SER	Management Bureau/Office of Services
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NPA	National Program for Agroforestry (Haiti)
NZEA	Northern Zone Environmental Assessment (Costa Rica)
PID	Project Identification Document
PIO/T	Project Implementation Order/Technical Services
PP	Project Paper
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RENARM	Regional Environmental & Natural Resources Management Project
RD	Rural Development Office
RDO/C	Regional Development Office/Caribbean
ROCAP	Regional Office for Central America & Panama
RRD	Regional & Rural Development Division
SARSA	Human Settlements & Natural Resources Systems Analysis Project
S&T	Science & Technology Bureau
SCI	Social Consultants International
SECPLAN	Office of Territorial Planning, Ministry of Coordination, Planning, & Budget (Honduras)
SEP	Southeast Peninsula (St. Kitts)
SMSS	Soil Management Support Services Project
STAB	Technical Secretariat for Watershed Management (Haiti)
SUSS	Sustainable Uses for Steep Slopes
TFAP	Tropical Forestry Action Plan (Belize)
TOR	Terms of Reference
TR&D	Tropical Research & Development
USAID	A field mission of AID

Note: The text may contain some of the above abbreviations in combination; e.g., ST/RD or LAC/RD or ST/RD/RRD.

Executive Summary

The Development Strategies for Fragile Lands (DESFIL) project began in December, 1986 to address the range of problems associated with the increasing rate of environmental degradation and declining agricultural productivity on the steep slopes of Central America, the Caribbean islands, and the Andes and in the humid tropical lowlands of Latin America. It is jointly funded by the Science and Technology Bureau (S&T) and the Latin America and Caribbean Bureau (LAC) and is built around five substantive elements (see Project Summary). This mid-contract evaluation examines three broad issues. The first concerns an assessment of the performance of the contractors to date and the monitoring and oversight role of the S&T and LAC Bureaus. The second issue is to provide recommendations to improve the performance of the contractors during the balance of the contract (through September, 1991). The third issue concerns recommendations for adjustment or change in the project during its last five years (1991-1996). The primary purpose of the mid-contract evaluation is essentially forward-looking; that is, to assist in the performance of the project and contract. Findings of the performance assessment are found in Section A of the evaluation report; see it for details.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are major ones from the larger evaluation report and refer to the remainder of the contract and the final years of the project; for more specific recommendations, please refer to the full document.

- o **Emphasis on all five task areas should be continued.** In the balance of the contract, the DESFIL contractors should build a selective focus on the institutional arrangement issue and assert a leadership role on fragile lands within LAC. Greater attention should be given to technology development and local incentives. Additionally, dissemination of substantive results,

such as the SUSS conference report, is critical for DESFIL to receive full credit for its commendable work.

- o Planning should begin now for a major synthesis document which captures the significant findings of the contractors.

- o In asserting a more pro-active approach for a leadership role on fragile lands issues, the contractors, together with AID/ Washington officials, should develop a specific strategy to achieve the broad FLI objectives.

- o The level of effort of the contract should be expanded by increasing core funding.

- o The S&T project officer should be provided with the capability to assume a more active oversight role. The especially means increased funds for travel to LAC field sites and missions.

- o The S&T Bureau, working with the AID Contracts Office, should develop a mechanism to allow mission buy-ins to multiple projects simultaneously.

- o FLAG should be revitalized and restructured around a series of substantive foci, with the emphasis on FLI and not DESFIL. FLAG should decrease its operational/management role vis-a-vis DESFIL.

- o An overriding, mega-issue should be added for the last five years of the project. Possible ones might be resource bio-diversity, sustainability, or other appropriately broad topics. The limitation of steep slopes and humid tropic lowlands should be broadened to include all lands which are fragile. The same degree of breadth should be maintained but greater focus is needed on institutional strengthening of LAC natural resource institutions. A strong emphasis on creating a knowledge base is essential, with suggested partners between a U.S. university or PVO (which should be added in the second contract) and appropriate LAC institutions. There should be an early rebid for the second contract so that it is in place before the first expires. Terms of

reference (TOR) should be completed early in the 1991 fiscal year and competition for the contract finished no later than June, 1991. This will provide a three month overlap in the event of a change in contractors.

DESFIL EVALUATION

Recommendations:

- o Continue all Five Task Areas
- o Plan Now for a Major Synthesis Document
- o Assert a More Pro-active Approach
- o Increase Core Funding
- o Increase Travel Funds for the Project Officer
- o Develop a Multiple Project Mission Buy-in Mechanism
- o Revitalize FLAG With Series of Substantive Foci
- o Create an Overriding Mega-Issue

Project Summary

The Development Strategies for Fragile Lands (DESFIL) project began in October, 1986 to address a range of problems associated with increasing rates of environmental degradation and declining agriculture productivity on the steep slopes of Central America and the Caribbean islands and in the humid tropical lowland areas of the Andes. Project designers created DESFIL to achieve a variety of goals (outlined below), aimed at improving management of these fragile lands. The project is jointly funded by Rural Development (RD) offices of the Science and Technology Bureau (S&T), and the Latin American and Caribbean Bureau (LAC), with ST/RD being the primary provider.

Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), in association with Tropical Research and Development, Inc. (TR&D), won the contract for the first five years of the project, beginning in October, 1986. Two other firms have sub-contracts: Earth Satellite Systems (EARTHSAT) and Social Consultants, International (SCI). The contract provides for a core staff of three full-time professionals, a full-time administrative assistant, and twenty-one person months of short-term, technical/consultant assistance. The full-time positions were shared by DAI and TR&D on a 2/1 basis and DAI has the administrative assistant. The project has received buy-in support from eleven LAC Agency for International Development (AID) missions (see Appendix 6) and from the LAC Bureau for a variety of long- and short-term research, advisory, and technical assistance tasks related to the project objectives.

Background

The fragile lands problems arise when destructive patterns of use occur on a natural resources base highly subject to deterioration. Latin America's steep slopes and humid tropical lowlands are coming under increasing pressure from growing populations, new settlements, inappropriate

policies, adverse land tenure patterns, production of illegal drugs, and other economic changes. This pressure results in misuse and abuse of these fragile lands and in the decline, degradation, and destruction of the rural resource base. The depletion of soil fertility, increasing rates of soil erosion, decline of water resources, rapid and accelerating deforestation, and the loss of diversity in the ecological system under expanding agriculture, timber extraction, and other forms of development threaten the long term ability of the LAC countries to feed their people and increase rural incomes.

Although the specific nature and extent of the fragile lands conditions vary, it is clear that the problem of fragile land degradation has led to damaging environmental and socio-economic consequences throughout the LAC region. Without amelioration, the situation will worsen. Accelerated soil erosion has not only resulted in decreased agricultural productivity, but also increased sediment deposits have produced flooding, loss of hydro-electric capacity, damage to downstream crops and fields, and navigational problems. Loss of vegetation has increased runoff, contributing to landslides and flash floods. A less obvious but important consequence is the loss of biological diversity. The decline in the physical resource base has adversely affected the social and economic welfare of farmers and non-farmers who occupy these fragile lands and who are already largely marginal in their countries. Falling incomes coupled with the lack of alternative opportunities have forced farmers to move to even more marginal lands or to already overcrowded urban areas. Degradation of the ecological system and deteriorating soil quality has also limited the economic options open to farmers as poor soil cannot support many types of crops. Exceptions are cocoa and marijuana that produce extraordinary levels of short-term income. This has usually been at the expense of natural forests on steep slopes.

Increased flooding and landslides have resulted in loss of life and property as well as economic disruption and unplanned financial burdens on national treasuries. Deterioration of the national

resource base is a primary obstacle to the improvement of the quality of life of both farmers and non-farmers in LAC and a threat to the capacity of LAC governments to attain food security.

The Fragile Lands Initiative (FLI) is a region-wide programmatic response to this problem, involving the projects and resources of AID missions in LAC, the Regional Office for Central America and Panama (ROCAP) and the Regional Development Office/Caribbean (RDO/C), and various offices of S&T and LAC Bureaus. It attempts to address the fragile lands issue in LAC in a collaborative, systematic, and focused effort, containing both research and technical needs. It incorporates the Foreign Assistance Act's and the Agency's policies on Food and Agricultural Development (FAD) and on Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) to assist developing countries attain self-sustaining economic growth while maintaining the resource base. Its goal/purpose is to improve national, regional, and international strategies for fragile lands management and implementation of these strategies.

The FLI was designed as a ten-year program. The Fragile Lands Advisory Group (FLAG) (originally called the Fragile Lands Working Group--FLWG) was developed to serve as an advisory group for FLI and to DESFIL in AID/Washington. It was/is a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral group, composed of project officers, or their representatives, from LAC/DR (Development Resources)--Rural Development (RD) and Education, Science, and Technology (EST)--and from S&T--Agriculture (AGR); Forestry, Environment, and Natural Resources (FENR); and Rural Development (RD). From these offices in S&T, FLWG identified eleven on-line projects that address one or more key elements of the fragile lands problem. These associated S&T projects (called ASSIST) were to work with DESFIL to address common fragile lands problems; to bring multi-disciplinary skills and perspectives to bear; to increase the resources available for study, design, and implementation, and to accumulate and disseminate knowledge. DESFIL was to act not only directly with missions to assist them in their needs but also as a broker to help missions

access the specialized skills and knowledge in the ASSIST projects. The FLAG and the DESFIL project officer were to keep the DESFIL contractors informed of the availability of ASSIST projects, changes in them, and procedures to access these projects.

Substantive Components: The DESFIL project concentrated on five substantive elements, aiming to assist missions and host countries in each of these task areas:

- (1) **Policy--national and donor awareness and support.** Develop public and donor awareness of the fragile lands problems and support for intervention. Create an understanding of:
 - o the context in which policy is developed and the public/private sector relationship in policy,
 - o policies that influence fragile lands,
 - o constraints to policy change, and
 - o incentives for decision makers and countries to change policies.
- (2) **Strategy--strategic approach within countries.** Identify the magnitude and nature of the fragile lands problem, select area(s) for strategy intervention, and suggest appropriate methodologies.
- (3) **Institutions--institutional arrangements between public and private sector.** Determine and devise appropriate mixes of public and private sector involvement. Identify opportunities for private and community initiative and increase the capacity of the private sector to do national resources management.
- (4) **Technology transfer--technology adaptation, spread, and development.** Select and adapt suitable available technologies for sustainable farming and managing of fragile lands. Develop a basic strategy to spread the technology which exists and identify gaps where new technology is needed.
- (5) **Incentives--farmer incentive requirements.** Explore incentive systems that govern

farmer behavior in designing effective fragile lands programs/projects and develop more effective policies for sustainable use of fragile lands.

Functional Areas: To work in these substantive task areas, the DESFIL contractors were to perform a number of functional activities. They were to:

- 1) act as the FLI secretariat in a broker capacity and to plan and hold donor consultative meetings;
- 2) conduct assessments for policy and strategy purposes at national and sub-regional levels (e.g., Andean America, Central America, etc.) for identifying problem areas and developing approaches;
- 3) select methodologies and technologies through case studies and disseminate this information widely via workshops, publications, and training through synthesis, thematic, and research networks to LAC institutions,
- 4) provide technical assistance and services, either directly or with ASSIST projects, for feasibility, design, or evaluation of fragile lands problems, or projects, and
- 5) conduct research on a variety of topics, ranging from policy, technology, and farmers incentives as well as specific country-level problems.

Throughout all these activities, the contractors were to build a knowledge base systematically, using a data base for countries, sub-regions, and the LAC region.

Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

The evaluators have organized the discussion below into three categories: performance assessment of the contractors and of S&T and LAC combined implementation and oversight of DESFIL; review and recommendations of the current contract for DESFIL (which ends in 1991); and review and recommendations about the project (which ends in 1996). These categories respond to the seven sets of questions in the scope of work (see Appendix 1), although they are grouped differently.

The evaluators understood the primary purposes of this evaluation to be forward-looking. The aims are, firstly, to assist in improving the performance of the contractors and to provide direction for the balance of current contract, based upon an assessment of where the contractors/project is now. Additionally, it is to provide the project officer with an understanding of what has been accomplished in the first half of the contract and what remains to be done. Thirdly and with this in mind, the latter two categories of this report are meant to assist ST/RD/RRD in providing guidance to the contractors for the remainder of the contract, and to indicate directions and possible emphases for the second, five-year contract which will complete the project. These recommendations should provide guidance to ST/RD/RRD for utilizing DESFIL as a key centerpiece in its agenda for sustainable natural resources management over the next five years.

A. Performance Assessment

1. Contractor

a. Quality of Work

Finding

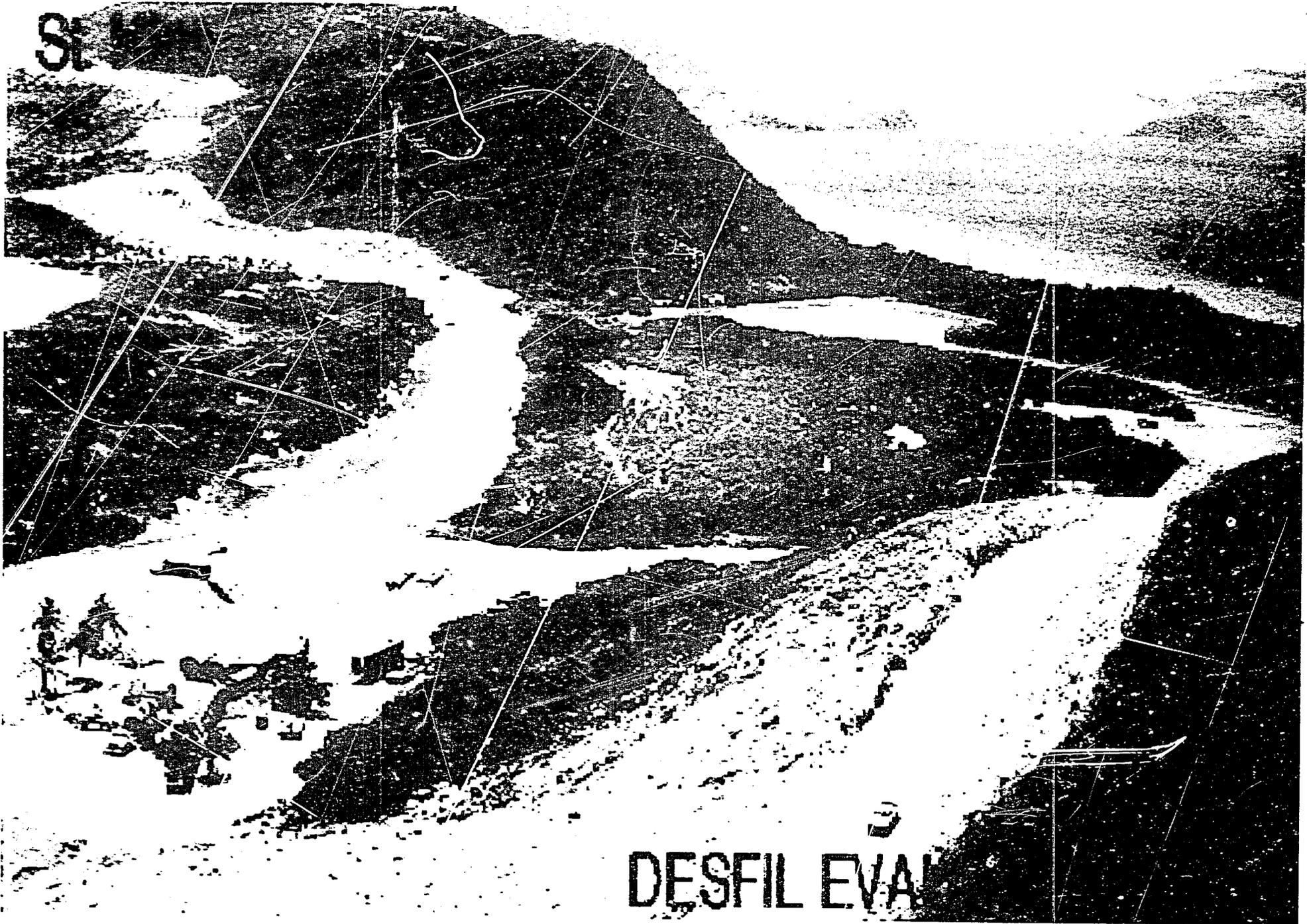
The contractors have generally provided high quality work, products, and/or advice and have provided appropriately skilled, professional personnel to accomplish tasks in the contract.

Evidence

In assessing the quality of work issue, the evaluation team examined the working papers and issues of the newsletter of DESFIL as well as miscellaneous other publications, interviewed AID/W and field officials with regard to adequacy of personnel provided and products produced, and visited field sites to examine ongoing efforts. The DESFIL contractors have worked in a variety of ways that demonstrate their capability.

In Haiti, St. Kitts, and Honduras for example, they have provided long-term advisory services to host country public institutions. The Government of Haiti (GOH) created a Technical Secretariat for Watershed Management (STAB) to provide a forum for coordinating watershed management activities/projects for GOH, donor, and nongovernmental organizations (NGO). DESFIL provided a long-term advisor from February, 1987 to December 31, 1987, when USAID/Haiti made a decision to terminate all projects in support of the GOH. The work of STAB and the advisor was very successful, as indicated in the working paper (see Appendix 9) and in the results achieved in establishing STAB as a viable institution in the GOH. The working paper is very well written, clear in its lessons learned, and a model for similar efforts. It deserves wide circulation as evidence of contractor performance. Funding for the Haitian counterpart was continued under PL 480 monies after AID funding for the DESFIL advisor ended, and other donors may continue the STAB effort with their own funding.

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DESFIL EVA

In St. Kitts, a two year, long-term advisory effort began in September, 1987. The advisory service was in support of a Planning Board established by the Government of St. Kitts (GSK) to plan the development of the southeast peninsula (SEP) on the island.

Unlike many of the other efforts of DESFIL, the St. Kitts activity involved coastal resources, focused on a fragile terrestrial and marine ecosystem (beaches, reefs, etc.) which were to support the development of a tourist industry. The location of the development was at the end of a ten kilometer peninsula which is narrow and has steep slopes of great fragility. A road was being built along the length of the peninsula to connect the capital (Basse Terre) to the tourist development site.

The advisory effort has had considerable impact in at least three specific ways. The team assisted in altering the road alignment to a developmentally better one, ecologically more sound, less disruptive of the peninsula's natural beauty, and providing better viewing vistas. Consultants provided to the SEP Board with a set of documents (resource management studies, a set of development guidelines, a land use management plan (LUMP), and a developer's handbook) to guide their decisions. Finally, the team initiated an environmental education program, one which reached out to the elementary and secondary schools as well as the general public using newsletters, videos, and informational material. The purpose was to sensitize the St. Kitts public to the ecological character of their environment and the need to safeguard it for the future.

More generally, they sought to create a natural resource management planning capability in the Ministry of Development. The LUMP provides a plan for the phased development of the SEP that preserves its environmental integrity, species diversity, and scenic quality without being overly restrictive. Combined with the development guidelines and handbook, these documents provide a highly useful framework for the development of SEP. Uniformly, the evaluation team was told of the excellent advice and services provided by the personnel of DESFIL's team. Our

review of the St. Kitts's documents and an on-site visit confirm this. The SEP Board felt their advice was first-rate and at the time of our visit was requesting an extension of the advisory effort.

In a slightly different fashion, DESFIL is providing advisory services to the Government of Honduras through a DESFIL coordinator who works with a local counterpart in the Office of Territorial Planning in the Ministry of Coordination, Planning, and Budget (SECPLAN). The main purpose of the advisory service is to enhance and improve the institutional capacity of SECPLAN for environmental management. The work involves coordinating a large number of people from as many as twenty institutional homes. Thus far, the DESFIL effort has managed to get the various people to work together producing an updated environmental profile, holding seminars on a variety of topics, researching a case study on watershed management and improving their knowledge and technical skills. Though institutional members come with different agendas and each has multiple responsibilities, DESFIL's coordinator has been very successful in producing cooperation and directing a highly useful resource management effort. An on-site visit plus interviews with USAID and GOH personnel strongly commend her for her dedication, commitment, and professionalism.

In a technical assistance role, DESFIL has provided personnel to Haiti and to Costa Rica on major activities, and to Guatemala and Belize on smaller tasks. DESFIL fielded a team in Haiti to produce a project identification document (PID) and a project paper (PP) to design a national program for agroforestry (NPA). NPA's purpose is sustainable increases in on-farm productivity and farmer incomes through the integration of agroforestry and appropriate soil conservation measures. The team functioned well, produced a quality PID & PP, and strengthened institutional cooperation in Haiti. In Costa Rica, the DESFIL team conducted an environmental assessment for the Northern Zone Consolidation project, evaluating and describing the resource conditions and possible environmental consequences that might result from the implementation of the project.

The report proposed two types of mitigative measures: activities for environmental support and stringent natural resource management. The excellent quality of the report and skillful negotiating enabled the team to resolve differences with the mission and to gain acceptance of DESFIL recommendations. In Guatemala, DESFIL designed a Geographic Information System (GIS) component for the Highland Agricultural Development (HAD) project and in Belize, it assisted in preparation of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP). Both reports have been accepted and are being incorporated into each country's respective institutional base.

DESFIL has sponsored or organized two workshops and currently is planning another--a donor's conference to be held in November, 1989. The first workshop was the Sustainable Uses for Steep Slopes (SUSS), held in Quito, Ecuador. Its purpose was to report on applied research and implementation experiences for the development of sustainable uses of steep slopes, to draw conclusions and lessons learned, and to develop a body of development information useful for such slopes. The workshop was very successful, highly praised, and well planned and organized. Fifty-three practitioners of development participated in the workshop. They had a wide variety of experiences with activities involving fragile lands. These range from projects on soils and soil loss, to low-intensity, low-impact agriculture, to land reclamation, to institutional conflict in resources management, to economic effects of off-site degradation. Proceedings of the conference are available in DESFIL's Working Papers series (see Appendix 9, DESFIL Working Papers, July, 1988).

The second activity was DESFIL's contribution to the design and development of a USAID strategy for environmental and natural resources management in Central America, organization workshops at Zamorano in Honduras and CATIE in Costa Rica, and assistance to USAID/ROCAP in preparing a PID and PP for a Regional Environmental and Natural Resources Management (RENARM) project. RENARM is a Central American project focusing on

components of Forestry, Wildlands Management, Watershed Management, Integrated Pest Management, and Environmental Education. These are critical issues in fragile lands management and the RENARM project incorporates experiences gained by DESFIL in these areas and expands on these in ways DESFIL cannot, given RENARM's link with CATIE. The project will attempt to build CATIE into the major regional research institution in natural resources management and create effective linkages among other research institutions, extension programs, and non-governmental organizations helping ensure participation of farmers and development practitioners. This will contribute greatly to successful results in reducing degradation in fragile lands areas of Central America. DESFIL's activity involved collaboration with NGOs/Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO), with other centrally funded projects, and with USAIDs in Central America. The DESFIL team established all the logistics and maintained good working relationships throughout the project development effort. At the time of the evaluation, the PID had been approved and the PP was in preparation. Much of the activity in this effort was outside DESFIL's control (e.g., arrival and departure of individuals). The DESFIL team was well prepared for all elements and handled logistics efficiently.

Finally, given the delayed start of activities (partially due to the normal startup lag of a project and a contractual problem) in DESFIL and that it has been in existence only three years, it has produced a substantial list of publications (see Appendix 9) and a quality newsletter. The latter serves as a running notebook of DESFIL activities.

The evaluation team found that not all products were of the same useful, high quality, although we did not find them without merit. One example is the June, 1988 paper, "Beyond the Project. . ." While interesting, it has little direct applicability to the fragile lands focus of DESFIL, is too academic in tone, and is concerned with issues (integrated approach) that are outside DESFIL's scope. A second example is the July, 1988 paper, "A Management Information System.

. ." It too is peripheral to DESFIL's purpose and, insofar as we are aware, has had no in-country impact.

Recommendations

The following list of recommendations include both specific and general ones and are based on our assessment of advice, technical assistance, workshop/ conference activity, and publications. They are listed below in order of the discussion above and are intended to provide guidance for improvement of performance in the remainder of the contract.

- o Prior to or at the acceptance of a long-term advisory effort, we recommend that a brief workshop be held to explain responsibilities and activities of different parties in the effort. This will contribute to clarification of roles and responsibilities and assist in building team collaboration.

This recommendation is based on the DESFIL activity in St. Kitts. The SEP and, to a lesser degree, the GSK had unrealistic ideas about what they could control (especially budgets), a lack of understanding of the responsibilities of a contractor, and a poor knowledge of the procedures and mechanisms of AID and its various components. This led to unreasonable expectations and some difficulties in communication because of different perceptions. These problems did not hinder DESFIL's substantive contribution, but it did produce unnecessary grumbling. A pre-activity workshop would eliminate this.

- o Early in a long-term advisory effort, we recommend that DESFIL make a systematic assessment of the probable status of the effort at termination. This will assist in the phase-out, help anticipate problems, and make relevant parties aware of the potential difficulties of the effort in its larger context prior to its termination.

- o In strengthening institutions, we recommend that increased emphasis be given to developing local/ national capacity for environmental assessment and for environmental impact

studies. This would be best done with in-country training, as in Honduras. This is primarily a mission's responsibility, but DESFIL can assist with identification of environmental problems, selection of appropriate institutions and the right public/private mix, and provision of advisory services.

- o There also needs to be greater emphasis on identifying incentives for institutions, decision makers, and technical specialists for incorporating natural resource management issues into their operations.

- o We recommend that important lessons learned from technical assistance efforts be captured in a broader context, (e.g., a synthesis paper or a lessons-learned case study book), disseminated widely throughout LAC, and systematically applied to future efforts.

- o With the buildup of a substantial publications list and a very successful, substantive conference (SUSS), we recommend increased effort on dissemination of results and of knowledge gained. This should start with a dissemination strategy and the development of mechanisms to deliver information. The strategy should include training (workshop, seminars), conferences, and publications distribution. The most critical group to receive the information is natural resource managers, planners, and decision makers in LAC. A network of these needs to be developed in a systematic fashion and regular channels of communication established to insure that they are the primary beneficiaries of DESFIL's experience. A second group that needs to be reached are AID mission personnel who have natural resources management responsibilities.

Action

The contractors should implement the above recommendations into activities of DESFIL during the balance of the contract, under guidance of the ST/RD Project Officer.

b. Task Areas

Finding

The contractor has addressed all five task areas as specified in the DESFIL contract, although unevenly as might be expected. The greatest attention has been given to strategies and assessments (#2) and institutional factors (#3) with national donor awareness and policy support (#2) receiving slightly less along with technology adaptation (#4). Local incentives (#5) has received the least attention. However, we have noted in our evaluation and several interviewees have pointed out to us that there is overlap in the task areas, as described below.

Major outputs and substantive results are the long-term advisory roles (and the institutional strengthening), the two major conferences/workshops in Ecuador and Costa Rica, and the working papers of DESFIL. In addition, various project documents (PIDs and PDs) have been completed for missions (Haiti, Bolivia, Costa Rica, ROCAP) or components of projects have been designed (Guatemala).

Evidence

The contractors for DESFIL have structured their work by activities/areas (e.g., Haiti STAB, St. Kitts SEP, etc.) and did not separate out work performed by task areas. In interviewing, reading documents and visiting field sites, the evaluation team found that each area specific activity had a number of task areas incorporated in it to a greater or lesser degree. Additionally, we found that many people collapsed these five substantive areas into three or four categories; that is, they did not perceive these as different. In large part, we believe this was a result of an unconscious priority system with which both AID personnel and the contractors operated; that is, activities involving policy, for example, had a higher priority than former incentives. This overlap of task areas in a specific activity and the tendency to collapse these made assessment a bit more difficult.

The following table, however, is an attempt to indicate the primary emphasis/emphases of

specific activities completed by the DESFIL contractors. We base this table on our sources which are listed in earlier paragraphs.

We recognize the danger of simplifying complicated and complex activities to a simple matrix but use this device only to indicate the major emphases in each of these activities, while recognizing that much more may be occurring. It should be interpreted cautiously.

TABLE 1

Primary Emphases on Task Areas in DESFIL Activities

<u>Specific Activities</u>	<u>Task Areas</u>				
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Haiti STAB	x	x	x		
St.Kitts-SEP	x	x	x		
Honduras-SECPLAN	x	x	x	x	
Haiti NPA			x	x	x
Bolivia-AHV	x	x	x		
Costa Rica NZEA		x	x	x	
Guatemala HAD-GIS		x		x	
Belize TFAP	x	x			
Ecuador SUSS	x			x	
Central America RENARM		x	x		x
	-	-	-	-	-
	6	8	7	5	2

It should also be pointed out that there are additional activities, funded by core monies, which would expand the specific activity list. For example, the DESFIL core (see Appendix 7) has the following activities, among others: Local Organizations and Natural Resources Management and Stream Corridor Management. These are not included in the matrix below because the evaluation team's survey did not include them and they lack independent documentation (see Appendix 9).

Currently, the DESFIL contractors are providing logistical and technical support for a donor's conference on fragile lands in LAC which AID expects to cohost with the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank. This activity will be primarily directed at task areas #1.

Recommendations

- o Emphasis on all five task areas should be continued, with additional efforts devoted to technology adaptation (#4) and local incentives (#3). If this needs additional resources for the core, such monies should be provided. Additionally, the ASSIST projects should be utilized to address these two areas because some may be especially well suited to do so (for example, the SMSS project in STAGR and SARSA in STRD).
- o In the balance of the contract, DESFIL should begin to develop a selective focus on the institutional issue and to assert a leadership role within the context of FLI and LAC.
- o Greater attention should be given to dissemination of substantive results. For example, the SUSS conference report has valuable lessons and technologies which need wide circulation, especially to LAC institutions (ministries, NGOs, etc.) and resource managers (see recommendation above, in prior section).
- o Planning should begin now for a major synthesis document which captures the major findings of the DESFIL contractors during the contract.

Actions

The Project Officer has the responsibility to monitor the workplans for the last two years of the contract to ensure the above activities are incorporated.

c. Life of Project Implementation Plan (LOPIP)

Finding

There is a reasonably good match between the planned outputs in the LOPIP and the actual activities and products produced by the contractors.

Evidence

The evaluation team had two sources for comparing the expected activities under the contract: The project paper and the LOPIP prepared for this contract (dated May, 1987). Using the project paper first (see therein table 2, p. 15 and Figure 1, following p. 31) the team found that many of the country level planned outputs had been exceeded, especially in terms of specific projects assisted, mission/country strategies assisted, and strategy evaluations. At the regional level, there was some deviation from planned outputs. For example, the contractors have delayed building a data base (which they are just now beginning to establish) and have completed few special/case studies of appropriate technology (such as the terracing study of Venezuela--see Appendix 9--Human Settlements, . . . publications). If the papers of the SUSS conference were available individually, they would constitute such special/case studies.

The donor consultative meeting, planned for the second year, is to be held at the end of the third year of the contract. The proposed activities in the LOPIP are even a better match with actual events. Mission visits, provision of core and noncore technical assistance, and organizing workshop and donor meetings have been critical activities since the beginning. The applied research consists of a number of efforts supported by core funds and includes topics such as stream corridor management, awareness and involvement, local organizations and natural resources management, etc. None of these topics focus on incentives for farmers, one of the five substantive

task areas.

The evaluation team found two primary reasons for the mismatch between actual and planned outputs in implementation of the contract: a) There was the inevitable start-up delay. Although the contract was signed in 1986, the LOPIP was not ready until May, 1987. In addition, during much of the first year the contractors focused on contacting missions and educating them on how to use DESFIL via a buy-in. The DESFIL contractors even prepared a document for this purpose (see Appendix 9, Administrative Papers). This need to acquaint the missions and AID officials with DESFIL's existence, objectives, and capabilities delayed the expected outputs and created more reactive type work than originally intended (i.e., the contractors reacted primarily to mission needs). b) There was a problem with the contract which was not discovered until January, 1988 and produced a hiatus of about eight months in terms of core funded activities. The original contract had core monies and buy-in monies identified, but did not have a level-of-effort (LOE) attached to them. A potential buy-in from Bolivia crystallized the problem and created the necessity for correction.

These difficulties are not a reflection on the performance of the contractor; that has generally been quite good. Nonetheless, they have had the effect of delaying some of the DESFIL activities which address the issue of fragile lands in LAC.

Recommendations

- o The contractors should develop a more assertive, pro-active approach for establishing a clear leadership role in fragile lands issues. This would give DESFIL greater visibility.
- o They, together with AID/W officials (ST/RD/RRD and LAC/DR/RD), should develop specific strategy to achieve FLI objectives, especially with mission documents, programs, projects, etc. This is particularly critical with those missions where DESFIL has had little impact. Given the current level of demands for DESFIL services, the present staffing level of

the project may not be sufficient.

- o The contractors, while retaining all five substantive task areas, should focus on two or three areas for special emphasis; based on this evaluation, we recommend policy/strategy and/or institutions.

Actions

The ST/RD/RRD Project Officer has the responsibility to see that these new elements are incorporated in the next workplan as an integral part and should not accept the plan until they are.

- d. Level of Effort (LOE)

Finding

The level of effort in the contract has generally met the needs of the project to date although the contractors experienced some problems because of limited core, consulting (or short-term) funds. Additionally, the fields of technical expertise have been adequate, but some have suggested a broadening in a second contract. Given the problem of linking with the Associated S&T (ASSIST) projects (see below--FLI Objectives), other fields would have been useful.

Evidence

In addition to interviews with various AID and contractor personnel (see Appendix 2), the evaluation team looked at the Labor Analysis (see Appendix 7) and the collaboration with other projects (Appendix 8). An analysis of the labor in person hours expended by various personnel for core and specific project activities (usually funded by buy-in monies) indicates two things. First, only one short-term activity had occurred by late 1988, nearly two years after the start of the contract; it was in Bolivia. This delay was a result of the core team having little flexibility in short-term consulting hours to travel to missions and perform tasks on the mission's behalf but paid for by DESFIL. It was only after the core team had demonstrated the value of DESFIL to

the FLI that missions began buying into the project/contract. If the DESFIL contractors had had greater core funds to indicate their contribution and to develop a collaborative agenda, the two year lag could probably have been shortened. Once this threshold was crossed and buy-ins started, and the contract corrected to allow more short-term work by core personnel, the contractors had greater flexibility.

Second, early in the contract the core team expended its efforts in central administrative tasks and had little ability or flexibility to develop DESFIL's agenda with missions. Given more buy-ins and the contract correction, this situation changed and the DESFIL core team could build a common agenda when working with missions. The development of a common agenda often requires short initial work with missions on programmatic, feasibility, or design efforts. Missions are often reluctant to invest resources of their own at this stage but following a small input of DESFIL core staff, missions often make large investments as they see the value of joint collaboration. An initial period of diverse activity, such as the contractors had, is needed to raise awareness on the part of missions, to develop confidence, to devise lines of authority, and to detail operational procedures. However, it seems the period was too long in the case of this contract primarily because of limited short-term core funds.

Evidence that the technical specialities in the contract were sufficient and adequate is apparent in the work of the contractors (see a. above). The ability of the contractors to satisfy mission needs is even more remarkable given the limited use of ASSIST projects (see Appendix 8). As originally designed, ASSIST projects were to provide expertise outside the core team of the contract and to bring multi-disciplinary skills to bear. As the chart in Appendix 8 indicates, there has been limited contractual collaboration with Assist projects.

Recommendations

- o The level of effort should be expanded by increasing the core funds which ST/RD puts

into the project (see Issue 4 of Contract discussion which follows). There are two primary reasons for this recommendation. One is that the need for DESFIL services is increasing (see Appendix 6) and can be expected to grow even more as missions not yet active with DESFIL become so. To respond to these mission needs effectively (and this is one of DESFIL's primary functional activities) will require additional resources, we believe, given the workload of the current contract personnel. At least one additional person will be needed. The second reason for additional funding is the need to develop and expand sub-regional and regional level activities. Within the current LOE, this does not seem possible. Yet this is crucially important given the thematic nature of fragile lands problems. Having the choice between mission/country needs and regional issues, the former will almost always have higher priority because of its constituency within the AID structure.

DESFIL, through the current contractors, has established a successful record. To maintain and widen that leadership role, to expand the present successful track record, to respond to the increasing pace of demand for project services, and to broaden the impact of the FLI to missions with which DESFIL has had little contact (Dominican Republic, Panama, El Salvador, and Belize) requires additional core monies. The return to investment should be high.

o The fields of technical expertise should be kept as is within DESFIL. Additional specializations outside DESFIL's mandate should be obtained from the ASSIST projects; this project should not duplicate efforts nor capabilities of other S&T Offices/projects. This means that some mechanism needs to be found to increase the contractual access to the ASSIST projects. Should this not be possible, then an option would be add one or more of the following specialities to the DESFIL core team: a natural resource economist, a natural resources institutional specialist, and/or an environmental impact assessment specialist.

Actions

The ST/RD Office has the responsibility for increasing core funds. This may be difficult in times of tight budgets, but the ST/RD Office has a demonstrated success in DESFIL, one which could be even more successful with a modest increase in funding.

2. Project Implementation

a. S&T and LAC

Findings

ST/RD/RRD and LAC/DR/RD have had good oversight and management relationships with the contractors. Although LAC has a subsidiary role in the funding of the project, both the Rural Development and the Environmental Divisions have been very supportive of DESFIL activities and officers have worked in a highly collaborative way. The S&T Project Officer would have benefited from additional travel monies to visit field activities.

Evidence

The positive relationships between S&T and LAC and the DESFIL contractors are demonstrated in a number of ways. One of the chief mechanisms DESFIL has for providing assistance to missions is the buy-in. This is a method for using mission financial resources to obtain DESFIL's technical and substantive knowledge relatively quickly and easily. This assumes that all missions know how to do a buy-in. In the early period of the DESFIL contract, it became apparent that the assumption was not correct. Through collaborative effort, the DESFIL contractors and S&T and LAC developed mechanisms for speeding the buy-in process. As mentioned earlier, an important product was a description of how to do a buy-in (see Appendix 9--Administrative Papers), but a buy-in requires prompt attention by the S&T Project Officer (PO), and guidance to the field missions from the LAC Associate Project Officer. Whatever differences arose between AID/W and the contractors were resolved in a mutually consultative way. The

evaluation team heard of numerous examples of close and positive collaboration.

During the hiatus from January, 1988, when the problem of the core/buy-in LOE was discovered and until its solution, the S&T PO assisted the contracts officer (SER/OP/W/R), who also was most helpful, in resolving the problem.

One limiting factor in implementation was the inability of the S&T PO to travel, especially when the LAC Associate PO was not limited. The single most common complaint mentioned to the evaluation team was this absence of the S&T PO from the field. In our interview with the previous one, we were told he was able to travel only once in nearly three years.

Recommendations

The following recommendations focus on changes needed to improve the implementation of DESFIL by S&T. They overlap in part with the next section on FLI.

- o The S&T Project Officer should be provided with the ability to assume a more active leadership role. In large part, this means providing sufficient travel funds for the PO to visit missions, attend DESFIL related conferences, and participate in FLI planning activities in the field.
- o There should be increased consultation with the ASSIST Project Officers in developing issues, agendas, and other substantive concerns. FLAG has been the mechanism in the past but it needs to be revitalized (see next section).
- o The S&T PO should have the management of DESFIL, the coordination of FLAG, and the development of FLI as prime (if not only) responsibilities. Developing FLI and DESFIL is a large and complex effort, requiring high levels of coordination and management. It requires the full attention of a project officer to develop properly.

Actions

ST/RD Office has the responsibility for allocating adequate travel funds for the PO and

assigning only DESFIL and related activities to the PO. S&T should initiate discussions with M/SER to establish the task force, with the initiative being taken by ST/HR.

b. FLI Objectives

Finding

FLAG was initially a useful, information-sharing group which had oversight functions, but over time has lost its effectiveness. The ASSIST projects have been underutilized thereby hindering the attainment of the FLI objectives.

Evidence

FLWG, later FLAG, began in 1984 as an interoffice group to share information and initiate the FLI. When DESFIL was first being implemented in 1986, FLAG assumed an operational role and met regularly to resolve issues which arose in development and launch of DESFIL. Over time, FLAG attendance declined, the group met irregularly, regular agenda were lacking, and often FLAG did not reach closure on issues. Members of FLAG were institutional representatives and thus specific individuals frequently changed; participants in FLAG developed different views about its purpose and role. In addition, they often had other duties and always numerous time constraints. In the face of a poorly perceived role for FLAG, some did not see its necessity. As a result, interest declined.

As originally envisioned in the PP, the ASSIST projects were to increase resources for addressing the fragile lands dilemmas in LAC and to improve interoffice cooperation on common problems. With the exception of the SARSA project in ST/RD, there has been little cooperation or utilization of ASSIST projects in a formal sense (see Appendix 8 and Appendix 9--Human Settlements and Natural Resources Systems Analysis (SARSA) Papers). One principal reason for this failure to utilize ASSISTs is the contractual requirement that a separate PIO/T must be prepared for each project to be utilized by a mission when executing a buy-in even though they

might all be working on a common activity (e.g., project design). PIO/T preparation is a very time-consuming activity and the preparation of multiple ones for a common activity presents a tremendous bureaucratic impediment to collaboration. By requiring mission personnel to prepare multiple PIO/Ts, the use of ASSISTS is effectively stifled.

Recommendations

- o FLAG should be revitalized and restructured around a series of substantive foci, with the emphasis on FLI and common interests rather than on DESFIL. The S&T PO, in consultation with the LAC Associate PO should establish clear agenda, responsibilities, and purposes prior to each meeting.
- o The members of FLAG should each be assigned responsibility for developing and presenting to FLAG at least one substantive issue each year, under the generic umbrella of FLI.
- o FLAG should reduce, if not eliminate, its operational/management role vis-a-vis DESFIL.
- o FLAG should assume more of a consultative/coordination role among AID/W offices and projects therein. This would make it more of a 'pot of projects' activity for FLI instead of dwelling on DESFIL primarily. This would also facilitate effective cross-disciplinary learning, enhance information exchange among members/offices, and reduce competitiveness ('turf' struggles).
- o S&T and Bureau of Management, Office of Services (M/SER) need to develop mechanisms to allow mission buy-ins to multiple S&T projects with a single Project Implementation Order/Technical Services (PIO/T). At the bureau level, the Assistant Administrator should appoint a Task Force to resolve this dilemma.
- o In addition, alternative mechanisms to a mission PIO/T buy-in to an ASSIST project

needs to be explored for increasing relevant S&T Office participation in DESFIL activities and ASSIST participation. One might be the use of AAAS fellows who could be assigned by their Office to work on FLI/DESFIL activities. Another would be the designation of a set amount of person-days/year in ASSIST projects for FLI/DESFIL issues and assignments. This would allow the DESFIL contractor to incorporate ASSIST personnel (at least in a minimal way) and do so without cost to the mission. If the recommendation immediately above is effected, then this one could be phased out.

Actions

The S&T PO should assume leadership to bring the above recommendations into force.

B. Contract

This section (and the succeeding one) are structured somewhat differently than above sections which emphasized assessment of performance. These two sections discuss key issues the evaluation team discovered during our research which will have impact in the balance of the contract and project. At the end of each section, we suggest recommendations derived from these issues. The recommendations are meant to provide guidance to the contractors for what we feel are needed emphases in the remainder of the contract and to provide guidance to ST/RD and the S&T PO for the second contract in the balance of the DESFIL project.

Issue 1: DESFIL was built around five substantive foci or task areas, as well as several functional activities (see Project Summary above). This breadth provides great flexibility and has allowed the contractors wide latitude in addressing mission needs. It proved especially useful during the early time of the contract when the contractors were trying to get established and needed this flexibility. However, it has created the impression of DESFIL being overly broad and diffuse, and acting like a 'grand Indefinite Quantity Contract (IOC).' There are arguments to be

made on both sides as to whether the breadth should be maintained (and this is discussed again below in the Project section). However, that debate is not necessary here. The contract between AID and the contractors specifies that they work in all these areas. Yet, we see a need to establish a focus and provide leadership by the contractors on one or two of the five task areas that are most important. It is clear from DESFIL's experience thus far that institutional questions arise in every activity. Natural resources institutions are often weak, relatively new, and lacking skills and power. There is a critical need for strengthening them. DESFIL can play a valuable role in this area, and the contractors can provide assistance and expertise, if this became a priority in the last two years of the contract.

Recommendation

- o The contractors should assume a strong leadership role on one, or possibly two, substance areas during the balance of the contract. We recommend the institutional (#3) one, but either strategies (#2) or policy (#1) would also suffice. The significant issue is for the contractors to provide greater leadership and expertise on at least one area while retaining the flexibility of all five task areas.

Issue 2: The DESFIL contract was awarded in September, 1986 and is now nearing the end of its third year. Although the contract had at least one significant interruption, DESFIL has been successful in producing valuable products in a variety of ways. It has worked in most countries of LAC, it has established a substantial and generally impressive list of publications, it has provided highly successful advisory teams in two long-term efforts, and it has held two very productive workshops/conferences. Yet, several interviewees, especially decision makers at AID, were largely unaware of the contractors' successes. In addition, the evaluation team found only limited evidence of networking with appropriate LAC institutions.

Recommendation

- o The DESFIL contractors must give much greater emphasis to dissemination, networking, and linking with appropriate LAC institutions in the last two years of the contract. We recommend that a specific dissemination strategy and multiple mechanisms be established and implemented to accomplish this. Similarly, the S&T PO and the LAC Associate PO need to take more seriously the need to disseminate. Success stories of DESFIL must be communicated within the AID bureaucracy, especially to the higher administration. More conscious efforts for sharing lessons learned must be made within LAC-to USAIDs and to LAC institutions. The DESFIL contractors should initiate a specific series of case studies (as called for in the PP and as exemplified by the SARSA publication on terracing--see Appendix 9).

Issue 3: The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the contract calls for a synthesis paper to be produced at the end of the contract reflecting the experience of the contractors to date. Given the breadth in the task areas and the reactive type work performed by the contractors during the early part of the contract, there is concern that the contractors are giving insufficient attention to the synthesis and to the intellectual knowledge-building which is to occur. The issue is when this synthesis is to happen. Some interviewees felt that the DESFIL should be more aggressive in defining the framework for the synthesis (i.e., develop a normative model) while others felt that the synthesis would develop as a consequence of review and assessment of the multitude of activities performed by DESFIL. The evaluation team leans toward the latter perspective, feeling that synthesis is the product of integration of diverse elements and that any attempt to develop synthesis prior to experience both limits it and produces a narrow view.

Recommendation

- o During the last two years of the contract, there should be a conscious and sustained focus on synthesis/overview within the core team. One core team member should be assigned

this as a primary responsibility. One possible way to initiate this would be to combine it with the recommendation in Issue 2 above which suggests a series of case studies on lessons learned or specific technologies. The final report could be produced in the form of a book or major monograph, with both English and Spanish versions. Wide dissemination is essential.

(Also see Issue 2 in Project Section below)

Issue 4: DESFIL is a regionally focused project, funded by S&T and LAC to initiate certain elements in a larger Fragile Lands Initiative. The problem was identified by LAC Agriculture and Rural Development Officers (ARDO) as crucial to development issues of the region, and the core funds input was to provide regional coherence to the initiative and to leverage buy-in monies from missions for substantive and technical needs in this area. The contractors have demonstrated a professional commitment to the effort and have established a commendable record. Yet most of their work has been national in scope; i.e., country specific as in Haiti, Honduras, etc. These country level efforts have provided the contractor with valuable experience and allowed them to make significant contributions. Nonetheless, many of the fragile lands problems are sub-regional (i.e., Andean) or regional (LAC) in character. In at least two activities, DEFIL has assisted this larger context—the SUSS Conference and the RENARM development. The issue is how to build on this successful base, assume responsibilities for added activities and emphases mentioned above in the evaluation report, and widen the impact of the project, both nationally and regionally.

Recommendation

o ST/RD should increase the core funds to the DESFIL contractors, even if only modestly. We recommend a minimum of \$150,000 per year, over and above the planned expenditure levels of the project, which we assume are being met. We would see the original levels as minimal and worthy of increase. It would be recognition of past performance, but more importantly, would produce an even better chance for increased impact, would enhance

the quality of output, and garner to S&T high visibility for an innovative project which is being emulated in other regions. The additional core monies would likely provide a high return on investment. The increased funds would also allow the contractors to address larger, sub-regional and regional issues, ones receiving too little attention currently because of country level demands on DESFIL's contractors. If no additional funds are available, then we recommend the contractors exert particular effort to disseminate the results of their national experiences region-wide.

C. Project

This section focuses on the last five years of the DESFIL project (1991-96) and the second contract which will implement it. There is some repetition with the prior section, but is included because of the evaluation SOW questions and for emphases.

Issue 1: As structured, DESFIL was to provide two major types of products: 1) mission driven, service oriented, technical assistance activities and 2) intellectual, knowledge-building, "common theme" activities. Ideally, this dual approach is desirable and can be highly useful because it fulfills two mandates (of the missions and of S&T). It has and does create a dilemma because it often spread resources too thinly and has created confusion (by those outside) about what DESFIL is and what it should be. The service oriented tasks are valuable and important because most of these address immediate problems of resource degradation and the needs of the field in LAC-- both USAID and host country needs. If DESFIL is to have practical relevance, its experience must be grounded in the reality of the region. The intellectual tasks are also crucial to sustain knowledge-building and will constitute the long-term intellectual legacy of the project when captured in a secure knowledge base. The issue is how to maintain a healthy balance in the final five years of DESFIL.

Recommendation

- o Both categories of activities should be kept in the second contract. However, the service related ones should be chosen more selectively and should closely adhere to the fragile lands focus and the task areas of the project.

Issue 2: As discussed above under the Contract section, the breadth of DESFIL's mandate poses concern. Some see the project as overly broad, unfocused, a collection of tasks without coherence, and lacking clarity and purpose. Others recognize the breadth as flexible, responsive, not agenda setting, framework-like, and respectful of field needs. In addition, considerable change has occurred in the LAC region since the inception of DESFIL with new projects, new emphases, and new concerns. The issue is whether DESFIL should retain the same scope in the last five years.

Recommendation

- o We recommend that the same degree of breadth be kept in the second contract. To provide greater coherence, we recommend adding an overriding or mega-issue to the fragile lands focus. This might be sustainability (of land, institutions, etc.), resource biodiversity, or other such topics. Specific DESFIL activities within this last five year period should be chosen with this mega-issue in mind, as well as the particular task areas. We recommend that reports on each specific country activity be written with the final synthesis product in mind. We believe an updated and revised edition of the first contract's synthesis product should be an end product of the second contract or project, incorporating cumulated knowledges, changes, and experience. Furthermore, we recommend that the limitation to steep slopes and humid tropical lowlands be broadened to include all lands which are fragile as defined in the Theme Paper (see Appendix 9--AID Documents).

Issue 3: DESFIL was designed as a ten-year project to further the objectives of the FLI by

carrying out specific activities. In the process of accomplishing these activities, considerable experience is gained and much knowledge should be generated. The issue is how is this knowledge-building to be retained after the end of the project, either in the U.S. or in LAC or both. Some feel that consulting firms concentrate on a project during implementation but have little or no incentive to continue after the demise of the project. Universities, by their nature, are better as repositories of knowledge. Others feel that many times universities are little different from consulting firms and see projects simply as money generators, unless the university already has a long-term institutional commitment to the substance of the project. On the other hand, LAC institutions have advantages as potential repositories, partly because of their proximity to the problems/actions and their initial need for developing knowledge and capacities. However, using LAC institutions as contractors/repositories has disadvantages because there are few (especially if the focus is on natural resources management), they are weak institutionally, the staff needs considerable training, their support base is fragile, and their effectiveness is usually constrained or limited. Additionally, they are where the need is greatest, they will remain after the project, and there is a critical need to transfer this knowledge to the region.

In our evaluation of the contractors of DESFIL, we found that they do have a long-term perspective and do have considerable capacity for knowledge-building. All the professionals on the team have a long-term professional and intellectual commitment. Nonetheless, these professionals are employed by the project and once it ends will be employed by another one. In addition, the consulting firms will be competing for and implementing other projects.

Recommendation

- o We have a three-fold recommendation.
 - 1) A U.S. university, one strongly committed to LAC and to resources management, or a similarly identified PVO should be included in the next contract in such a way as to

constitute the long-term repository of knowledge from the project, over and above what AID would retain. The university or PVO, from its previous linkages to LAC institutions or/and with the guidance of the DESFIL contractors in the second five years, should establish a strong commitment to the strengthening of the LAC institutions, both technically and financially. We see the role of the university or PVO essentially as a long-term storehouse of information which the project has built during its existence; in addition, the university or PVO would provide its own expertise on and interest in the region. The role could be larger if sufficient financial resources are available to enable it to participate actively in the work of DESFIL; that would be an added incentive. Nonetheless, we believe the university or PVO will see advantages for such cooperation if it has a long standing commitment. In making this recommendation, we want to be clear that it should be done without reducing the resources to the DESFIL contractor; that work must have priority.

2) The DESFIL contractors should support this institution building effort through the use of personnel from relevant LAC institutions as a training effort.

3) Finally, emphasis and incentive should be given in the second DESFIL contract to create LAC institutions strong enough to sustain the FLI after the end of the project.

In sum, forming these links between a committed U.S. university or PVO, one which has its own, independent program of interest, and LAC institutions would help fulfill FLI aims.

Issue 4: In recent years, AID has been extending the time of projects so that today ten-year projects are common. DESFIL was an early, prototype ten-year project. Contracts to implement such projects are only given for five years, however; this necessitates two contracts for each ten-year project. There is often an interruption between the first and second contract, for a variety of

reasons. For example, the contractors change because of poor performance in the first contract; the evaluation of the first contract delays the awarding of the second; or the rebidding process took too long. The issue is how to grant the second contract in the DESFIL project in time to prevent any interruption.

Recommendation

- o We recommend an early rebid for the second contract, so that it is in place before the first expires. This first contract ends in September, 1991. We recommend that the new TOR for the second contract be completed early in the 1991 fiscal year and that the competition for the second be finished no later than June, 1991. This would provide a three month overlap in the event of a change in contractors.

In sum, this evaluation suggests that DESFIL is a unique and highly successful project which is helping in the attempts to ameliorate, slow, and prevent serious problems of environmental degradation and the consequential socio-economic adversities in the marginal, and steeply-sloped and humid tropical lands of Latin America and the Caribbean. Its focus on these fragile lands seems even more important today, three years after the project began, given the enormity of the problems these areas possess. The contractors have delivered appropriate services and in a timely manner. Furthermore, there is evidence that the pace of demand is increasing (see Appendix 6). Additional support is needed to meet this demand and to develop regional and sub-regional strategies for the continuation and expansion of effective endeavors in working towards sustainable development of the region. During the remainder of the project, the challenge will be to meet this goal.

Methodological Note

This evaluation was conducted during the period of April, May, and June, 1989 on an intermittent basis by the two consultants, both of whom were involved in the other activities. Lori Ann Thrupp is a post-doctoral fellow with the Energy and Resources Group at the University of California, Berkeley. She was conducting research, writing, and lecturing on topics of sustainable development and resource management during this period. Bob J. Walter is a professor of Geography at Ohio University and was teaching a regular schedule of classes through May. Each consultant traveled to AID/W on a number of occasions (Thrupp-two times; Walter-five) for stays of one to five days and also visited field sites. Thrupp went to Honduras and Costa Rica and Walter went to St. Kitts and Costa Rica; the total length of the TDY was eight days for each.

During visits to Washington and in the field the consultants interviewed officials, participated in meetings, and read project and other documents (see Appendix 2, 3, and 8). Most interviews were individual ones (i.e., the two consultants with one official), although occasionally more than one person would participate. A few interviews were done by telephone; one was a conference call. A loosely structured questionnaire, based upon the questions in the SOW (see Appendix 1), formed the basis for the interviews. On May 12, DAI, TR&D, and EARTHSAT held an all day briefing on the project. The consultants prepared written summaries of each interview and meeting as well as written evaluations of the sites visited during the TDY. We read in varying detail all the relevant project documents and other documents listed in the bibliography (Appendix 8). A brief analysis of the allocation of hours by project activity represents our attempt to assess quantitatively the level of effort (LOE) (see Appendix 7).

The findings stated in this evaluation and the recommendations made are based on the above methodology.

Appendix 1
Scope of Work

ARTICLE III - STATEMENT OF WORK

The evaluation will analyse the activities of the first twenty-four months of the DESFIL project, and review the work plan for the third year of the project. The evaluation will provide AID with suggestions for changes in project activities which might improve its long-term performance. The findings of this mid-term evaluation will constitute an important input to the preparation of the contract for the second five years of the project. The analysis and evaluation will address and report on the following issues:

- A. How well has the DESFIL contractor addressed the five task areas specified in the DESFIL project contract: (1) national and donor awareness and support; (2) strategies and assessments of fragile lands issues; (3) institutional factors; (4) technology adaptation; and (5) local incentives? What have been the major outputs and substantive results of the project so far with regard to each of these task areas? What actions are now in process to address them? What additional actions should be taken by AID and/or by the contractor to achieve the purpose of the DESFIL project over the long term?
- B. How have the activities undertaken by the contractor related to the Life of Project Implementation Plan? What changes in substance, or in relative emphasis, have taken place, and why? What are the effects of these changes upon implementation of the project?
- C. Has the contractor performed in a timely and professional manner in the delivery of plans, reports, studies, and other documents? Has the contractor provided field services on a timely basis? What has been the quality of these services? What has been the quality of research reports, studies, project design documents, and other material produced through activities undertaken by the contractor?
- D. How have S&T/RD/RRD, and LAC/DR/RD, monitored the implementation of the DESFIL project? What changes might improve project implementation in the future?
- E. How has the DESFIL project assisted in furthering the objectives of AID's Fragile Lands Initiative? What actions by the contractor or by AID would strengthen this initiative? What relationship has the joint S&T-LAC Fragile Lands Advisory Group had with the DESFIL project? What changes might result in enhanced activity by the FLAG in support of the Fragile Lands Initiative? How does the DESFIL project relate to S&T/RD/RRD's agenda for sustainable resource management?

- F. What difficulties have been experienced in the implementation of the DESFIL project thus far? Have communications and relationships among AID/W offices, USAID missions host country institutions, and the contractor proceeded as planned in the project design? What actions may be recommended to facilitate project implementation in the future?
- G. Has the Level of Effort, as specified in Amendment 13, (short and long-term) met the requirements of the project? Were the fields of technical expertise which have been required for project activities adequately identified and planned for? What additional types of expertise may be recommended for implementation in the future?

ARTICLE IV - SPECIFIC TASKS

A. The contractor will:

1. Review DESFIL project documents and research products.
2. Prepare appropriate research instruments and use them to interview AID/W and LAC mission staff as well as other professionals active in fragile lands research.
3. Conduct a limited number of site visits to active DESFIL field support locations in Latin America and the Caribbean, including, for example, Haiti, Honduras, St. Kitts, Guatemala, Costa Rica, or Ecuador.
4. Analyse the findings of these investigations and produce a report of satisfactory professional quality to guide AID project management and other AID staff in more efficient and effective implementation of the DESFIL Project, both in the short run (through completion of the current contract) and in the long run (through the remaining life of the DESFIL project).
4. The contractor will recommend specific ways the DESFIL project may be utilized as a key element in S&T/RD/RRD's agenda for sustainable natural resources management over the next five years.

ARTICLE V. EVALUATOR QUALIFICATIONS

The evaluation team will be composed of a team leader, who will have overall responsibility for design and execution of the evaluation and for preparation of the evaluation report, and a fragile lands specialist with complementary technical skills who will carry out specific investigations and writing assignments under the direction of the team leader.

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Appendix 2

Interviewees

Interviewees

- A. Bureau of Science & Technology (S&T)
 - 1. Office of Rural Development (RD) -- Eric Chetwynd, John Grayzel, Sher Plunkett, Dan Dworkin, Mike Yates
 - 2. Office of Agriculture (AGR) -- David Bathrick, Vince Cusumano, Ray Meyer, Bill Goodwin
 - 3. Office of Forestry, Environment, & Natural Resources (FENR) -- Carl Gallegos, Lou Higgins, Dan Deely
 - 4. Directorate for Energy & Natural Resources (EN) -- Twig Johnson
 - 5. Directorate for Human Resources (HR) -- John O'Donnell
- B. Bureau for Latin America and Caribbean (LAC)
 - 1. Office of Development Resources (DR)
 - a. Rural Development Division (RD) -- Steve Wingert, Ray Waldron, Richard Meganck, Raul Hinojosa, Gale Rozell
 - b. Education, Science & Technology Division (EST) -- Jim Hester, John Wilson
- C. Forestry Support Program (FSP) -- Kathryn Hunter, Leroy Duvall
- D. Bureau for Asia & Near East (ANE) -- Molly Kux (formerly in FENR)
- E. Bureau for Management (M)
 - 1. Office of Procurement (OP)
 - a. AID/W Projects Division (W) -- Ed Thomas
- F. Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) -- Michael Hanrahan, David Gow, Doug Poole, Tobey Pierce, Gary Hartshorn, Christine Haugen
- G. Tropical Research & Development (TR&D) -- Sally Dickinson, Josh Dickinson, Dennis Johnson, Sandra Russo, Isabel Valencia
- H. Earth Satellite Corporation (EarthSat) -- Bill Brooner
- I. USAID/Barbados -- Brenley Selliah
- J. St. Kitts -- Ralph Fields, Patrick Williams, Randy Walters, Ralph Gumbs, Larkland Richards, Eldon Jones
- K. USAID/Costa Rica -- Jamie Correa
- L. ROCAP/Costa Rica -- Ron Curtis, Jack Vaughan, Frank Zadroga, Henry Tschinkel, Angel Chiri
- M. USAID/Honduras -- Peter Hearne
- N. Honduras -- Jim Barborak, Alberto Vega, Rafael Bolanos, Horacio Martinez, Keith Andrews (Zamorano)

Appendix 3

Field Sites

Possible Site Visits:

- A. Sher Plunkett (ST/RD/RRD)
- St. Kitts*
 - Haiti*
 - Honduras
 - Guatemala* (USAID & ROCAP)
 - Costa Rica (ROCAP)
- B. Mike Hanrahan (DAI)
- Ecuador
 - Costa Rica* (ROCAP)
 - Honduras
 - Guatemala* (USAID & ROCAP)
 - Haiti
 - St. Kitts*
- C. Ray Waldron (LAC/DR/RD)
- St. Kitts*
 - Haiti
 - Ecuador
 - Guatemala* (USAID & ROCAP)
- D. Josh Dickinson (TR&D)
- St. Kitts*
 - Costa Rica* (USAID & ROCAP)
 - Ecuador
 - Honduras (problematic)

*Denotes priority

The evaluation team visited three field sites: 1) St. Kitts, which represented a long-term advisory effort; 2) Honduras, which represented a technical advisory effort in an institutional strengthening capacity; and 3) Costa Rica, which provided the team with a dual opportunity -- to talk to AID officers from all the Central American countries where AID has missions as well as ROCAP officials, and to observe the DESFIL contractors as they organized a meeting on the proposed ROCAP project for Central American on natural resources management, the Regional Environmental and Natural Resources Program for Central America (RENARM). No sites in the Andean countries was visited because of limited time and funds.

/bjw
6/22/89(revised)

Appendix 4

Summary of DESFIL's Terms of Reference

DESFIL'S Mandate, Means to Achieve It, and Action Needed

DESFIL's MANDATE	MEANS TO ACHIEVE IT	ACTION NEEDED
<p>1. Strategic Medium- to Long-Range Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Fragile Lands Development Strategies, for and with LAC. - Bilateral Regional Strategies for USAID Programs or the Programs of other donors - CDSS E/NR annexes (5-year outlook) - Action plan reviews (1-2 year outlook) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Preparation of Natural Resources Development Strategies for LA Countries * Preparation of Donor Strategies * Awareness & Involvement reporting * Work with Missions * Meetings & workshops and policy dialogue * Case and applied studies * Profile, case study, and plan preparation * Involvement of USAID, other Donors * Interest of Countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mission Interest * Recognition of DESFIL as the mechanism to do the strategy * Country and other donor interest * Short conferences & workshops as a mechanism for planning, involvement, and collaboration * Dissemination of findings and results from ongoing work * Case Studies
<p>2 Technologies, Incentives, Institutional Arrangements, Local Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context, history of issue, idea or problem; background - Approach on idea: what was tried - Indicators: what was measured, how was progress defined - Before, during, and after measurements or descriptions of the indicators - Lessons, conclusions, policy implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Applied studies, modest research, fragile lands assessments * Papers, reports, articles, evaluations * S.O.A.P. * Workshops, meetings, proceedings * Design, evaluation, and implementation work with Missions * Newsletter (DESFIL) * Attendance at Professional Meetings * Dissemination of above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Shelf and gray case studies * Staff time devoted to studies, SOAP, conference preparations * Indexed Library materials * S.O.A.P. papers, chapters, pieces * Newsletter contributors * Papers and talks for meetings

3. Awareness, Involvement, and Policies (Washington and LAC)

- Donors, NGOs, banks
- LAC government agencies
- USAIDs
- Policy statements, programs, projects, funds
- Procedures: EAs, full cost accounting

- * Public, government, donor education & awareness
- * Newsletters, correspondence, information dissemination
- * Meetings, conferences, brown bags, workshops
- * Travel
- * Data bases
- * Policy analysis, fragile lands assessments
- * ASSIST & donor collaboration
- * Make policy statements and directives known

- * Information on projects, persons, institutions
- * Core staff involvement
- * Mailing Lists
- * Work with other donors, centrally funded projects
- * Attendance at events
- * Donor, NGO, Bank, professional meetings
- * Case studies, applied research
- * Correspondence

4. Networking

- Washington:
Donors, USAID, banks, NGOs; scholars, scientists, practitioners
- LAC:
Donors, USAID, banks, LAC public institutions, NGOs; scholars, scientists, practitioners

- * Public, government, donor education & awareness
- * Newsletters, correspondence, information dissemination
- * Meetings, conferences, brown bags, workshops
- * Travel
- * Data bases
- * Policy analysis, fragile lands assessments
- * ASSIST & donor collaboration
- * Make policy statements and directives known

- * Information on projects, persons, institutions
- * Core staff involvement
- * Mailing Lists
- * Work with other donors, centrally funded projects
- * Attendance at events
- * Donor, NGO, bank, professional meetings
- * Case studies, applied research
- * Correspondence

5. Work on Emerging Themes

- Environmental assessments

- Land Use Planning, GIS, GIS

- Sustainable uses for reserves and wildlands

- Environmental education

- Other emerging themes

- * Meetings, conferences, campaigns

- * Policy analysis

- * Case and other studies

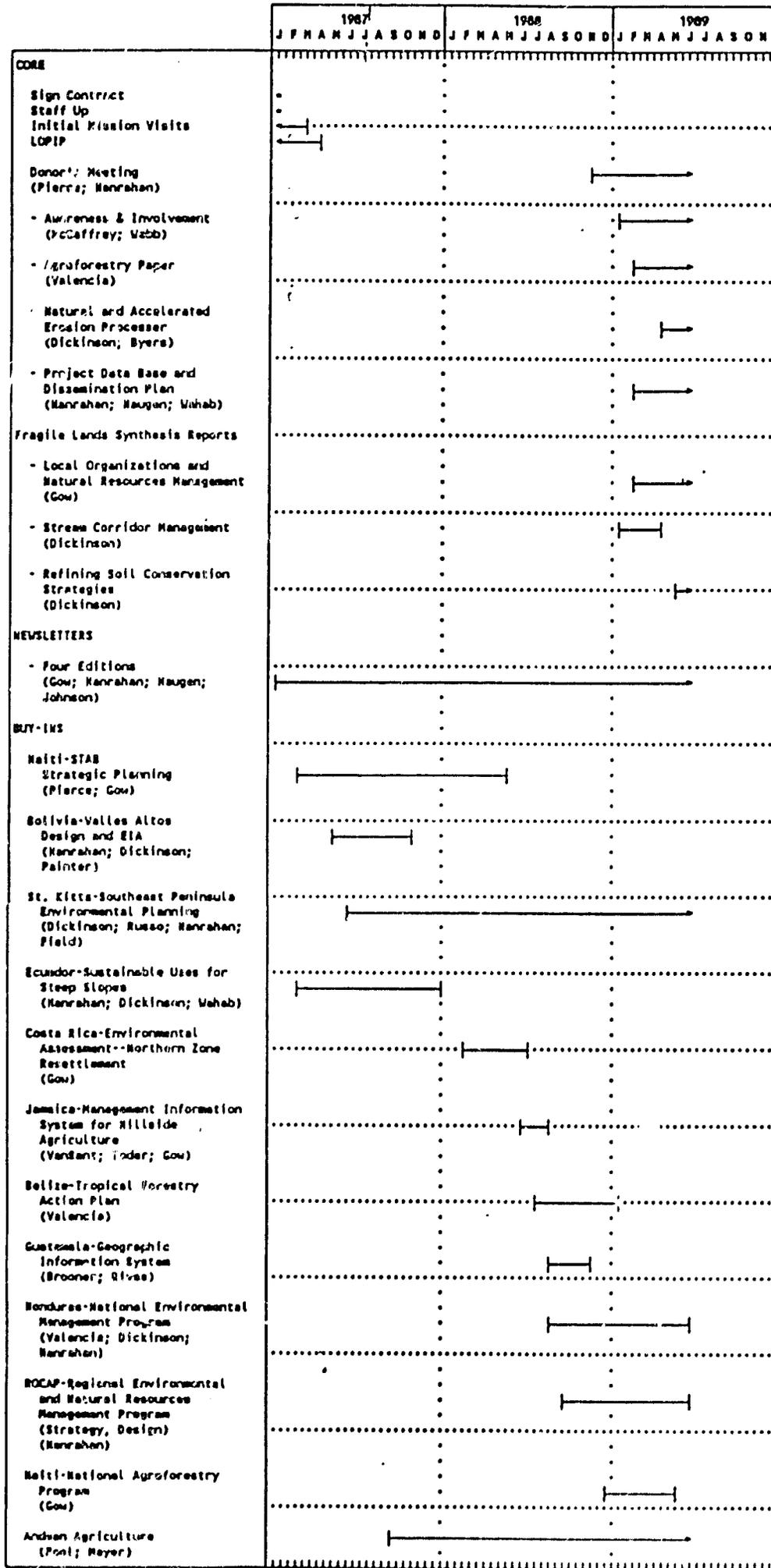
- * Work with Missions

- * Other similar to work in strategies, technologies, incentives, etc.

- * Same actions as strategies, technologies, incentives, etc.

Appendix 5

DESFIL Activities Timeline



Appendix 6

Summary of Core & Buy-in Activity: 9/30/86-1/31/89

DESFIL: SUMMARY OF CORE AND BUY-IN ACTIVITY,
SEPTEMBER 30, 1986 - OCTOBER 1, 1989

Date	Item	Funds		Purpose
		Authorized	Obligated	
[In Thousand Dollars]				
1. Sept 1986	Core No. 1	3,176	570	Support core contract operations
2. Sept 1987	Core No. 2	-	650	Support core contract operations
3. Aug 1988	Core No. 3	-	650	Support core contract operations
4. Sept 1989	Core No. 4	-	329	Support core contract operations
5. Sept 1987	Andean Ag.	30	30	Study and design for Andean Agriculture initiative
6. May 1987	Bolivia-V.A.	114	114	Project design and EA for Valles Altos area
7. Aug 1987	Ecuador-SUSG	31	31	Support Steep Slopes workshop
8. Mar 1987	Haiti-STAB	362	362	Advise on development strategy for the Hillside Secretariat
9. Sept 1987	St. Kitts-SEP	966	966	Advise on non-engineering aspects of the South East Peninsula Development
10. Feb 1988	Costa Rica EA	107	107	Prepare Environmental Assessment
11. June 1988	Jamaica-MIS	19	19	Design Management Information System
12. June 1988	Belize-TFAP	42	42	Tropical forestry
13. Aug 1988	Honduras- SECPLAN	422*	422	Update Profile, SECPLAN workshops, case studies, development institutions

DESFIL: SUMMARY OF CORE AND BUY-IN ACTIVITY
 SEPTEMBER 30, 1986 - OCTOBER 1, 1989

Date	Item	Funds		Purpose
		Authorized	Obligated	
[In Thousand Dollars]				
14. Sept 1988	ROCAP	295*	295	Workshops, design strategy, PID and PP for RENARM
15. Oct 1988	Guatemala-GIS	27	27	Design GIS for HAP project
16. Jan 1989	Haiti Agroforestry	163	163	PP design of national NGO-PVO forestry program
17. June 1989	Costa Rica Northern Zone Bridging	96	96	Implement first stage EA monitoring program
18. Sept 1989	Ecuador Workshops	66	66	Conduct a series of natural resource awareness workshops
19. Sept 1989	Ecuador Sumaco	181	181	Prepare a land use plan for Sumaco region
20. Sept 1989	El Salvador Natural Resources	29	29	Develop a natural resources management strategy for El Salvador
21. Sept 1989	Guatemala TFAP	395	395	Prepare a Tropical Forestry Action Plan
Totals	Core	3,176	2,199	
	Buy-Ins	3,345	3,345	

*Amended totals, September 1989

Note: Life of contract authorized totals are \$3,176,000 for core; and \$9,741,000 for buy-ins.

Appendix 7
Labor Analysis for LOE

Labor Analysis

<u>DESFIL Buy-ins</u>	<u>Period</u>		<u>Persons</u>	<u>Person Hours/Days</u>	
Haiti-STAB	2/87-1/88	2	Fierce	2368	296
			Trembly	1816	227
Bolivia-CHAPARE	5/87-9/87	7	Erhlich	376	47
			Osterkamp	352	44
			French	336	42
			Goitia	192	24
			Durana	190	23+
			Withpott	119	14+
			Brooner	83	10+
St. Kitts-SEP	9/87-2/89	15+	Field/Knowles	3000	375
			Walters	2904	363
			Guttman/Brown/Morris	917	114+
			Misc. T.A.	875	109+
			Norton/Dempsey/Odum	504	63
			Baker/Orme	487	60+
			Russo	232	29
Dickinson	134	16+			
SUSS	9/87			No hours	
Andean Agriculture	3/88	1	Mayer	216	27
Costa Rica-NZEA	2/88-4/88	8	Bonnefil/Norman	372	46+
			Tosi/Laarman/Tolisano	336	42
			Gow	272	34
			Hartshorn	200	25
			Donato	176	22
Belize-TFAP	5/88-11/88	2	Bender	272	34
			Brokow	194	24+
Jamaica-MIS	6/88-7/88	2	VanSant	128	16
			Toder	120	15
Guatemala-GIS	9/88-11/88	2	Brooner	200	25
			Rivas	160	20

Labor Analysis cont'd

<u>DESFIL Buy-ins</u>	<u>Period</u>		<u>Persons</u>	<u>Person Hours/Days</u>
			Valencia	484 60+
			Antenuci/Daugherty/Sherrill	352 44
			Casteneda	330 41+
Honduras-SECPLAN	7/88-2/89	11	Tracy	192 24
			Kraljevic	176 22
			McCaffrey	144 18
			Dickinson	120 15
			Baborak	80 10
			Dodwell	13 1+
			Andrews	120 15
			Hanrahan	96 12
			Randall	80 10
ROCAP-RENARM	9/88-2/89	8	Vaughan	56 7
			Webb	56 7
			Gow	48 6
			Alberti	48 6
			Smith	16 2
			Lowenthal/Van Eysinga	408 51
Haiti-NAP	1/89-2/89	6	Demooy	216 27
			Koehn	192 24
			Gow	144 18
			Clement	40
<u>DESFIL Core</u>				
Chief of Party			Hanrahan	4988 623+
Administrative Assistant			Wahab	4776 597
Social Scientist			Gow	3808 476
Pooled position			Pool	2296 287
	10/86-2/89	12	Dickinson	2206 275+
			Valencia	1262 157+
			Heilman	192 24
			Donato	104 13
			Byers	80 10
			Tran	47 5+
			Wood	31 3+
			Do	28 3+

Note: The last month the evaluation team could get LOE data was February, 1989

Appendix 8
DESFIL Collaboration

COLLABORATION: ASSIST, USAID, OTHER DONORS AND SUB-CONTRACTS

<u>Activity</u>	<u>ASSIST-Contract</u>	<u>USAID, ASSIST and other Donors (not contracts)</u>	<u>Non-DESFIL Sub-contract or NGO or both</u>
AHV (Design)	SARSA	REMS (Clark)	
AHV (Implement)	SARSA	FSP SMSP	
BIO-D			TSC WWF
SUSS		REMS (Clark) FSP FAO IICA ST-HR LAC/DR LAC/E IIED Peace Corps Public & private institutions, universities and international research centers.	SCS - Chile SCS - Ecuador F.C. - Ecuador
HAITI AF	FSP	LAC/LR (USDA)	WWF
CRNZ	FSP	REMS (Zadroga) LAC/DR LAC/E	TSC
RCCAP	APAP III FSP CIQ	REMS (Zadroga) TNC CATIE WWF LAC/E Partners LAC/DR PPC-WID 6 others	Chemonics ARD EAP FAO IICA
SECPLAN		REMS (Zadroga) CATIE FAO	AHE TSC

CORE

G. Mason Univ.
MIT
ERS-USDA

ST.KITTS

ST-HR
IRF
UFLA
LAC/E
REMS (de George)

TFAP

FAO
CIDA
ODA

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