

The Agribusiness Council, Inc.

2550 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

Telephone: (202) 296-4563

Telex: 440041

Fax: (202) 887-9178

QUARTERLY REPORT
APRIL - JUNE 1992
MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRY ASSOCIATION DEVELOPMENT

Summary

Anticipated program development activities in coordination with PRE and various regional bureaus stalled during this period due to several factors: (1) transition of project management to new officer (Gary Kinney) assigned in April, and corresponding need to provide program orientation; (2) decision reversal by PRE not to survey USAID missions or convene inter-bureau coordination meeting with ABC/AER, resulting in lost opportunity to follow-up/determine USAID interest levels and coordinate with AID/W bureaus; (3) reversals by Africa Bureau on exploratory grant package, which would have provided follow-up to selected African middle-income countries.

In contrast to AID/W centered difficulties, the ABC/AER program response from the field, including USAIDs and nascent AER formation groups, continued to register strong momentum. ABC was able to provide staff and office support to answer a growing number of inquiries reflecting interest in "agribusiness" from a broad range of callers.

ABC provided staff/volunteer management to AER during this period, enabling the U.S. linkage with the international network to strengthen. The ABC staff grew with the addition of Frances B. Johnson, a former AID veteran professional, and others.

Highlights

ABC continued gathering survey responses from state/local agribusiness groups as a step toward increasing communication and awareness between concerned agro-industry sectors and the public. Preliminary survey results indicate an opportunity to work with local groups in promoting international agribusiness outreach. ABC briefed representatives of the Agribusiness Council of Oregon.

On the international front, ABC completed an effective exploratory mission to Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland (funded by EUR Bureau) and initiated plans for a regional agribusiness conference in Eastern Europe. Visits in all three countries sparked and/or rekindled interest among indigenous organizers in establishing ABC/AER counterpart groups.



ABC also back-stopped successful AER missions and workshops in Jamaica (April 27) and Costa Rica (May 4) which are expected to generate further local steps in the formation process for indigenous counterpart associations (see attachment). Both Jamaica and Costa Rica are middle-income countries with considerable concern for agro-environmental issues (which fits the AER model well).

During this period, ABC fielded a steady stream of interest inquiries from AID/IQC consulting firms seeking to learn more about the Council's program approach, as well as researchers and officials from other USG agencies interested in the Council's work (see attached).

ABC received positive messages on program continuation from USAIDs in Botswana and Gambia, which will probably lead to follow-up missions in the next quarter of the grant. In addition, ABC/AER received considerable encouragement from Israeli, Gabonese, Zambian, and Filipino leaders interested in developing stronger ties with the network.

Following the Rio Environmental Summit, ABC/AER received word from Brazilian AER organizers that a special agro-environmental program might be developed to attract agro-investors and ecologists to the Amazon rainforests. A Brazilian delegation was received at ABC/Washington offices for preliminary discussions on the project (June 23). Brazil is an important middle-income country.

Other Noteworthy Activities

- * On April 2, USAID/Kenya Director John Westley wrote AER expressing an upbeat message for AER cooperation in Kenya. USAID forwarded a check for cost-overruns which had been in dispute since 9/90. Later, several leading Kenya agribusiness executives wrote AER expressing hope that the earlier process could be rekindled with new Kenyan leadership.
- * May 8 - AER/Uganda Chairperson Dr. S. Wandira Kazibwe wrote AER seeking assistance in identifying funding sources for the local Uganda organization (see attachment).
- * AER/Nigeria organizers appear determined to officially register the previously inaugurated association (see attachment).
- * ABC/AER have been approached by a non-profit foundation (registered PVO) with a proposal for cooperation in developing indigenous agricultural training activities and model pilot farms in developing and middle-income countries (where the PVO and ABC/AER have established local activities).
- * ABC is working with AER to develop an African Agribusiness Roundtable Conference, in cooperation with leading African business groups and local AER counterpart associations/formation groups. The conference will take place in December 1992.

* ABC/AER staffer Regine Beauboeuf received a graduate scholarship to pursue work/study on behalf of ABC/AER in West Africa. Ms. Beauboeuf will be based in Dakar, Senegal and will travel to several other West African countries. Her activities are expected to accelerate local organizers' efforts to establish AER/ABC programmes.

* ABC has received interest from Chemonics International to join its bid proposal for agribusiness work with USAID/Jakarta. The proposal will be discussed within the ABC Board and with key advisors. Previous AER difficulties encountered with the same consulting firm will be a factor in the decision. Acceptance of the proposed role offered ABC would not assure any financial participation in the project, but would enable Chemonics to "access" ABC membership/grassroots resources and "task" ABC with various specific research assignments needed to "facilitate" trade/investment contact between Indonesian and U.S. agribusiness communities (the old "carrot and stick" approach may not be enough).

* ABC submitted a proposal to the N.I.S. Bureau to enable exploratory missions and follow-up to various independent republics which have shown steady interest in ABC/AER since the September 1990 ABC workshop held in Moscow.

* Following ABC's February meeting with Zambian President Frederick J.T. Chiluba and his Minister of Commerce and Industry Ronald Penza, AER/Zambia coordinator Dev. K. Babbar, a long-standing member of AER's International Advisory Board, advised that plans are accelerating for the official launch of an indigenous Zambian agro-industry association.

* ABC filed a detailed report (June 17) with AID/EUR containing findings of its three-country mission to Bulgaria, Hungary, and Poland. A summary memo on this important activity is attached. It is likely that ABC will be involved on a number of follow-on activities with Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States (NIS).