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Agriculture Sector Development Grant II
(Project No. 683-0257/0265)

Midterm Evaluation

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United States Agency for International Development
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Submitted by:
Tropical Research and Development, Inc.
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(ASDG II)

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Team Members

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ASDG	Agricultural Sector Development Grant (SDSA)
AGRYHMET	Agrometeorological, Hydrological, Meteorological Program
CFA	Communauté Financière Africaine
CLUSA	Cooperative League of the U.S.A.
CPSP	Country Program Strategy Plan
DG	Director general
DPM	Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation program of USAID
FCFA	Franc Communauté Financière Africaine
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
FSN	Foreign Service National
GAP	Groupement des Aides Privées
HAPLEX	HAPLEX
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
NPA	Nonproject assistance
PAIP/PID	Program assistance initial proposal, project identification document
PNGRN	Programme National de Gestion des Ressource Naturelles
RFP	Request for proposal
SDSA	Subvention au Développement du Secteur Agricole (ASDG)
UNSO	United Nations Sahel Office
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WRI	World Resources Institute

Preface

The evaluation team would like to acknowledge the excellent cooperation it received from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Hydrology and Environment, the Ministry of Finance and Plan, the International Resource Group technical assistance team, the Land Tenure Center personnel, and USAID Niger. Without this splendid collaboration, it would not have been possible for the team to complete or even attempt the many tasks established in its terms of reference.

Executive Summary

The Agricultural Sector Development Grant II (ASDG II) is a \$28.2 million grant to the Government of Niger. It consists of a \$20 million nonproject assistance sector grant and an \$8.2 million project component. The program's purpose is to enhance the ability of individual rural inhabitants to gain control over resources they habitually use and to manage and profit from them in a sustainable manner. The grant will contribute to the project goal of increasing agricultural production and individual income in rural Niger. This will abet the USAID Mission's strategic objective of increasing opportunities for sustainable agricultural production and rural enterprises and the USAID's mission goals for sustainable market-based economic growth and locally managed resources.

Although the five-year grant program was planned to end in December 1995, the technical assistance team did not arrive until March-May 1993. Given this delay, the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II has satisfied the conditions precedent for one of four planned tranches of program funds as of July 1994 and has disbursed only those funds. It cannot satisfy the conditions precedent for the three remaining tranches by the program assistance completion date, nor could \$15 million be disbursed and used in a rational manner in the remaining eighteen months of the project life. The project's original objectives remain valid, and the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II appears to have the potential to meet many of them. The evaluation team proposes that the project assistance completion date be extended to December 31, 1998, to place the program back in a five-year project time frame.

There has been good progress in the four areas of intervention targeted by the natural resources management component of the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II: (1) the development and coordination of a national natural resources management strategy and program, (2) the development and implementation of the Code Rural (resource tenure), (3) decentralization of natural resources management activities, and (4) revision of the role of the forester. There is some controversy about how to integrate the support of the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II and the World Bank First Phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project in support of the Programme National de Gestion des Ressource Naturelles. The recent successful experience in integrating different donor programs and approaches creates optimism that these two can be successfully integrated.

The Gestion, Administration, et Réformes Institutionnelles (GARI) institutional subcomponent needs to be eliminated or seriously revised. It is problematic in terms of the appropriateness of the project design, feasibility of achieving the conditions precedent, and implementation. Due to erroneous assumptions in the project design, there is little chance that the GARI activities can achieve the conditions precedent or meet the policy objectives of the subcomponent. Other donor programs have undertaken a fundamental restructuring of the technical services and will do more to improve service delivery at the field level than was ever envisioned in the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II. The GARI subcomponent has had difficulty implementing even the activities that appear feasible. The institution responsible for most of the GARI activities, the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière (DAAF) of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, has a recent history of personnel turnover and disorganization, and there are

indications that these problems have not been resolved. The proposed revision of the GARI subcomponent indicates that it will be a separate project activity rather than a component contributing to policy reform. The proposed revision also implies the need for a different combination of skills than those possessed by the current technical advisor for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles.

The second institutional subcomponent, the nongovernmental organization and private-sector program, appears to have high potential but has not yet begun. It will strengthen local participation in natural resources management by funding the natural resources management activities of nongovernmental organizations and other local, private-sector organizations. It will also support the institutional development of these local organizations to increase their capacity to contribute to local natural resources management. Because the expected startup of this subcomponent is near the end of 1994, four years into the five-year life of the project, the evaluation team recommends extending the program and project for an additional three years.

Access to funds made available to eight Government of Niger agencies as budget support under tranche IA is completely blocked due to administrative problems. This blockage has existed for six months, since December 31, 1993, and it is uncertain when it will be resolved. The slowness of the accounting and disbursement procedures for the ASDG II program funds also hinders program progress. This problem of financial administration must be resolved if the ASDG II is to have a chance to meet its program objectives. To simplify the administrative procedures, the Government of Niger and USAID need to negotiate a compromise status for these funds so that they are not constrained by criteria applied to Government of Niger budget support or by criteria applied to USAID project funding.

The program design assumed that attaching a condition precedent concerning each area of implementation to each tranche of program funding would promote effective program implementation. This resulted in 61 conditions in 48 conditions precedent. Program-related personnel spend as much time tracking and administrating the process of satisfying conditions precedents as implementing the technical programs and activities that the conditions precedent were supposed to engender. Improving program implementation requires streamlining the conditions precedent and identifying Government of Niger institutions and personnel who are responsible for tracking and administrating the process of satisfying conditions precedent. The evaluation team recommends the elimination of a few specific conditions precedent. However, serious streamlining is only possible if USAID rejects the design assumption that a condition precedent for each area of implementation should be attached to each tranche.

One important element in an effort to reduce administrative problems and facilitate improved program implementation is the establishment of a position of national Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program coordinator. This position should be responsible for the administration of the program and project. Another element is the merger of administrative responsibility and official coordination instead of locating them in two different ministries as is presently the case. Official coordination should be made the responsibility of the national program coordinator or, if that is not possible, of the office responsible for administrative supervision of the program.

Administration of program components and their respective technical assistance will be simplified and more effective if the program office is located higher in the organization than where the program components are now located. The evaluation team believes that the administrative supervision of the program should be moved either to the Office of the Prime Minister or to the Office of the Secretary General of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. Program components and their respective technical assistance should be located in the organizations responsible for the targeted activities, if administratively feasible (see chapter 11 for specific recommendations).

1. Overview of progress in the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II Program

1.1. Chronology of the development and implementation

The Agricultural Sector Development Grant II project was authorized August 21, 1990, as a five-year project with a project assistance completion date of December 31, 1995. The original authorization was for a \$20 million dollar program component and a \$5 million project component. The project component authorization was amended August 25, 1992, to increase it to \$8.2 million.

The Grant Agreement was signed and the initial obligation of tranche 1 for \$5 million was made on August 24, 1990. The Grant Agreement was amended on July 29, 1991, to increase the program component authorization to \$10 million and to increase the project component authorization from \$2 million to \$3,472,000. Both the Program Grant Agreement and the Limited Scope Grant Agreement were amended a second time in 1992 (August 21 and 31, respectively). Amendment Number 2 to the program component split tranche I of program funding into two tranches of \$2.5 million each, and also allocated the conditions precedent for tranche IA and tranche IB. This was accomplished by applying the conditions precedent that had already been met to tranche IA, allowing the release of the first \$2.5 million in August 1992. At the same time the project component obligation was amended to add \$2.5 million, increasing it to \$5,972,000.

A third amendment to the project component, signed April 21, 1993, added another \$1 million for a total obligation of \$6,972,000. A third amendment to the program component (about August 1994), will split tranche II. The amendment allocates the six or seven conditions precedent that will be satisfied by July-August, 1994, to tranche IIA so that the budget support can be released more rapidly. This budget support will be divided, 60 percent for investment and 40 percent for operational support.

The conditions precedent for tranche IIB may be satisfied near the end of 1994 if the existing financial blockage is lifted so that funds are accessible to finance condition-precedent-related activities.

Niger traversed a period of political instability shortly after the project was designed. A National Conference was held intermittently from July through November 1991 to determine Niger's political future. A transition government ruled from December 1991 to April 1993, when a new government was democratically elected. First the transition government, then the newly elected government, had many preoccupations other than the conditions precedent of this program and project, including a financial crisis that still existed in July 1994. By partitioning the first tranche and its conditions precedent, the Government of Niger was permitted to qualify for a first disbursement of funds two years after the project design (August 1992).

USAID encountered difficulties establishing the terms of reference for the technical assistance contract, delaying the awarding of the primary technical assistance contract until January 1993. The technical assistance team was put in place from March to May 1993, just as the democratically elected regime was coming to power. More than half of the original five-year

program and project timeframe had expired before the technical assistance team arrived. Tranche IB financing the nongovernmental and private-sector subcomponent was released in late May 1994. USAID has again had difficulty establishing the terms of reference for a technical assistance contract for the new component. The contractor is waiting for the scope of work to be finalized so that it can respond with a proposal. Thus, this major subcomponent, which is to receive one third of the total program funding, had not yet started in July 1994.

1.2. The relationship between the ASDG II program and the USAID mission strategy

The goal of the mission strategy is to "promote sustainable market-based economic growth while emphasizing locally managed resources and reduced population growth." Agricultural Sector Development Grant II responds to the mission's second strategic objective: "increase the opportunities for sustainable agricultural production and rural enterprises." Specific targets under this objective are to "increase individual and community control of natural resources and increase participation in and output of private-sector activities." Agricultural Sector Development Grant II is designed to improve the policy environment with regard to natural resource management in order to promote improved local resource management and use. Policy reform is expected to relieve constraints to or provide incentives for improved natural resource management. The Government of Niger and donors agree that some of the important areas where policies are a constraint include land and resource tenure, decentralization of natural resources management and other activities, more effective coordination of natural resources management and development programs, the incorporation of biodiversity concerns, transformation of forestry field agents' roles, broadening the role for nongovernmental organization participation and private-sector participation in natural resources management and development activities, and improved delivery of technical services by agencies of the government. Agricultural Sector Development Grant II has an intervention in each of these areas where policies are considered to be a constraint. While there is a heavy focus on policy, the nongovernmental organization and private-sector subcomponent will fund field-level activities. These activities will focus on increasing productivity while maintaining or improving the natural resource base, which will increase rural incomes and well-being.

1.3. Project component inputs

The two areas in which there have been problems with project component inputs are these:

- (1) the slow pace at which program funds have been disbursed (discussed in Section 4 under "Conditionalities," and in Section 3 under "Finances," respectively);
- (2) the fact that a monitoring and evaluation system is not yet established (discussed in Section 9 under "Monitoring and evaluation.")

2. Progress related to priority outputs and activities identified in the program assistance approval document and project paper

2.1. Natural resources management component

2.1.1. Strategy and action plan

Numerous donor-sponsored activities have contributed to the development of a national natural resources management strategy for Niger, including the World Conservation Union, UNSO, United Nations Development Programme, Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dan le Sahel, the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, and the World Bank. USAID prepared a Natural Resources Management Action Program and Action Plan under the centrally funded the Natural Resources Management Support strategy. The Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles was created in 1991 by the Government of Niger to develop and coordinate natural resources management strategy and to help harmonize these diverse donor-supported strategies. Integration under the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles has helped eliminate duplication of staff and mandates and to combine resources in the development of the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles.

At present, there is considerable controversy regarding the role and the organization of the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the relationship of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II to both the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the first phase of the World-Bank-financed Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project (discussed in more detail in the institutional section). The past success in coordinating divergent donor approaches to natural resources management creates optimism that these organizational problems can be worked out and that the development of an effective national natural resources management strategy will continue.

2.1.2. Specific International Resources Group team activities

The International Resources Group team has participated in a number of natural resources management activities in the fifteen months of project activity. A partial listing includes:

- collaborated with the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles to conduct an informal meeting to coordinate donor activities related to the Natural Resources Management support project (December 20, 1993).
- Collaborated with the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles in preparing a workshop on the monitoring and evaluation of natural resources management projects (November 29 to December 2, 1993)
- Assisted International Center for Research in Agroforestry and Institute National pour Research Agronomique au Niger in conducting a national workshop on farmed parklands (August 13, 1993). Participated in a workshop on agroforestry in Ouagadougou.
- Helped prepare a workshop on resource economics (to be held in late 1994).

- Collected some preliminary data and established a database on natural resources management program and projects (ongoing).
- Participated in organizing studies and workshops on the role of the forester.
- Participated in organizing a study on environmental information systems in preparation for a workshop that the team will help organize in July 1994.
- Participated in the organization of a study on natural forest management in Niger.
- Helped organize a follow-up study on decentralization to explore issues not developed in the original study.
- Helped prepare a workshop on the experience and future of indigenous nongovernmental organizations in Niger.
- Helped prepare a workshop on management by objectives.

2.1.3. Resource tenure

Since the publication and distribution of the *Principes d'Orientation du Code Rural* (Comité National du Code Rural, 1993), two draft complementary texts, *mise en valeur* and *terroirs d'attaches*, have been released. Two of the seven proposed test Commissions Foncières have been funded by DANIDA and are being established. The Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural (SPCR) is largely dependent on ASDG II non-project assistance funding to meet its budget. Progress in SPCR activities have been delayed by the financial blockage in the use of ASDG II program funds (see financial section). Given the use ASDG II funds for the preparation of complementary texts, it is not clear if the SPCR allocation can be stretched to also cover the funding of additional Commissions Foncières.

2.1.3.1. Land Tenure Center activities

The Land Tenure Center has done well in fulfilling the objectives identified in its collaborative agreement under Agricultural Sector Development Grant II.¹ It produced four major studies,

1. USAID's Agriculture Sector Development Grant II contract with the Land Tenure Center specifies that the Land Tenure Center "shall be responsible for the following activities: [to]

- (1) undertake relevant studies ...,
- (2) design and implement a system to monitor the progress of the Rural Code process ...,
- (3) set up and implement a training program for six individuals ...,
- (4) assist the Rural Code development component to incorporate the findings of the study into an effective Rural Code,
- (5) provide collaborative support to [the International Research Group], which has the lead responsibility, to: (a) assist the Rural Code Committee in communicating Rural Code legislation to the rural population of Niger; (b) develop a natural resources management training program for local authorities,
- (6) assist USAID in drafting the conditions precedent relating to security of tenure for the second, third, and fourth tranches of ASDG II,
- (7) submit an annual work plan ...,
- (8) coordinate activities"

(Ngaido, 1993a; Loofboro, 1993; Terraciano, 1993a and 1993b; Ngaido, 1993b), a commissioned paper (Leiz, 1993), report on a forest code workshop (McLain, 1993), and an issue paper (Ngaido, 1994), which are directly related to Nigerian resource tenure and usufruct issues.

The Land Tenure Center's research assistant is presently conducting research in Niger (November 1993 to October 1994) and is backstopping the Land Tenure Center as its representative in Niger (e.g., by providing resource tenure information to World Bank representatives for the development of the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles). His research includes the development of a monitoring system that can be used by the Government of Niger to help guide development of the Rural Code texts and monitor the impact of implementing the Rural Code. In addition to his Land Tenure Center research, he was a major contributor at the national popularization workshop in Dosso and at several of the subsequent regional workshops. not received

The Land Tenure Center supported a three-day workshop for members of the ad hoc Comité de Réflexion sur la Popularisation du Code Rural. It has funded translation of the Rural Code into eight languages and the printing of the Rural Code in Hausa, Djerma, Fulfulde, and Tamashek. The Land Tenure Center will also assist the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural in organizing a training program for the members of the Commissions Foncières.

2.1.4. Decentralization of natural resources management

The International Resources Group team prepared a terms of reference and helped organize a follow-up study on decentralization to explore issues not developed in the original study funded by Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dan le Sahel. The International Resources Group team also helped Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dan le Sahel organize a regional conference on decentralization and land tenure in Praia, Cape Verde. Administrative reforms that are necessary to support decentralization are being studied through the International Resources Group's support of the regional forestry role workshops and a nongovernmental organizations workshop, ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities, a planned international study tour for forestry role, and a planned nongovernmental organizations roundtable. The training program for the Commissions Foncières supported by the Land Tenure Center will include aspects on improving training in natural resources management for local leaders at the arrondissement level.

2.1.5. Forester roles in natural resources management

Activities in this area of intervention are progressing very well. Three workshops on the role of forestry agents have been designed; the first was conducted in Tahoua in May 1994. The International Resources Group funded a short-term consultancy to produce a methodological guide

and to facilitate the first workshop. Agricultural Sector Development Grant II funds also financed per diem expenses for approximately thirty participants. The first workshop is being evaluated to help improve the remaining two that are planned. These workshops, related study tours, and national seminars planned by the International Resources Group team will help define approaches to test potential new roles for forest agents.

2.2. Institutional component

The institutional component consists of two subcomponents: the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles (Management, Administration and Institutional Reform) subcomponent, and a nongovernmental organizations and private-sector subcomponent. The objective of the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent is to improve the delivery of technical services at the field level through a combination of policy reform and institutional strengthening. Working with the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage,² the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent strategy is to improve resource management by the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage through improvements in the ministry's administrative and management procedures and policies. Attainment of the objectives is complicated by the fact that most of the important policies in question are government wide and not under the specific control of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The program assistance approval document, project paper and conditions precedent suggest an implementation strategy that would replace existing administrative and management methods with procedures based on high-tech, computerized, U.S.-style management and administrative tools. This strategy erroneously implies that such tools as computerized inventories, personnel files and accounting will result in the same type of management improvements that would be achieved under U.S. conditions. Lack of internal control by the ministry over budgets, salaries, and personnel recruitment, rewards and policy, along with other technical and social constraints, limit the results which realistically might be expected.

The nongovernmental organization and private-sector subcomponent is devoted to strengthening local participation in natural resource management. The implementation strategy is to make a minimum of 30 percent of the program funds (or approximately \$5.5 million) available to support the natural resources management activities of nongovernmental organizations, cooperatives, village associations, and private-sector organizations. A grants management unit will be established under the International Resources Group contract to manage these program funds and to promote natural resources management activities by these local institutions. Recent Government of Niger policy is to support such institutions and lessen restrictions on grassroots activity. Participatory local institutions are a recent development and require support for

2. The program assistance approval document clearly expected the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement to be integrated into a single ministry. The institutional advisor has also tried to work on similar activities with the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement.

institutional development if they are to take on an important role in local natural resources management and development activities.

2.2.1. Information systems for better resource management, Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage

The 1993 work plan for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles institutional subcomponent was extremely ambitious. Many of the activities have not been completed. One of the major activities of the institutional advisor has been the preparation of a questionnaire on job descriptions and job holders. It provides data on the responsibilities and activities of personnel positions and on the career experience and training background of the human resources filling these positions. It also includes an evaluation by the hierarchical supervisor of personnel competency and training needs to allow personnel to better accomplish their duties in relation to each post. The questionnaire would allow the establishment of databases that would permit better personnel management, including derivation of training plans, career path tracking, and the distribution of personnel by region and by categories such as area of functional-skill, age, grade, and the like.

In the Directorate of Environment, one hundred personnel successfully completed this questionnaire and returned the forms to the institutional advisor for processing (another two hundred are expected to be completed shortly). A database containing the information from these questionnaires on Direction de l'Environnement personnel was established by the institutional advisor. The questionnaires distributed among Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage personnel in the Tillabéri arrondissement were not completed. Since November 1993, there has been no progress in retesting the questionnaire or other follow-through on the part of Direction des Études et de la Programmation, the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière, and the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.

Preparation of terms of references for a study of (1) information systems on human resources, equipment, infrastructure, and financial resources, and (2) human potential and personnel assignment policy in Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage were finalized in March, 1994. International Resources Group and its subcontractor have experienced delays in finding and fielding consultants to complete these studies, but implementation is scheduled for July-August 1994.

Another important activity of the institutional advisor was an analysis of the financial system, that is, the process of accounting and disbursement of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program funds. He documented the 22 steps in the fund disbursement process for Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program funds and many of the problems working through this system. He also provided a report on expenditures to date in September and again in November 1993.

The GARI advisor has had neither counterparts within, or good working relations with, the personnel, equipment, and financial services of the DAAF which are responsible for management and administration of these resources in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de

l'Élevage. Due to this limited interaction, he has had little opportunity to train personnel in the sophisticated management and computer skills which are among his primary areas of expertise. The computer specialist provides formal computer training one afternoon a week, but is constantly solicited to provide technical support for computers and computer operation. This technical support includes a considerable amount of demonstration and training to individuals, as well as providing technical backup. However, much of this training and technical support is focused on the basics of computer operation. Much of the Ministry's personnel need to develop these basic computer skills before they can use the sophisticated management and administrative tools suggested in the implementation strategy. Training on the design of information systems awaits the results of the consultant's studies.

2.2.2. Design of a program budgeting system

Two workshops were held between January 24 and February 5, 1994 to introduce more than sixty people from the ministries of l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, and Finances et du Plan to the concept of management by objectives with a primary focus on communication rather than budgeting. The design of management by objective and program budgeting systems for the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage has progressed very little. A plan that balances budget and program can be designed, but that the political process will allocate sufficient operating funds to maintain the planned balance is doubtful.

2.2.3. Strengthening the participation of nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions in natural resources management

The Principes Directeurs d'une Politique de Développement Rural clearly state that the GON policy is to expand the role of nongovernmental organizations and private-sector organizations in rural development. A process to incorporate such organizations in national development activities began at a workshop held in Dosso in May, 1990. A second workshop on the role and future of national nongovernmental organizations in Niger was held February 21-25, 1994, under the auspices of the DDR/MFP and with support from ASDG II. One of the four commissions reviewed regulations governing NGOs during this workshop. The commission found that the regulations are no longer a constraint and do not need to be modified further. The report indicates that continuing problems are due to the incorrect interpretation and the lack of application of the existing regulations by government agencies. However, many GON bureaucrats interviewed by the evaluation team express some discomfort with expanding the role of NGOs and private sector organizations, believing that such expansion implies reduced funding and a reduced mandate for GON technical services. GON policy towards NGOs has changed much faster than peoples' attitudes. The expressed discomfort underlines the importance of the process to create consensus about how these organizations can be integrated into development activities. As the next step in this process, a roundtable between NGOs, the GON, and donors is presently scheduled for August-September, 1994. A committee has met regularly since the February workshop to prepare the roundtable. While the date may slide a little, organization of the roundtable has progressed well.

USAID has agreed in principle to establish a grants management unit for the management of a local currency fund to finance the activities and institutional development of nongovernmental organizations and other local institutions. The tranche IB of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II, which will finance this local currency fund, has been released, and USAID is amending the contract of the contractor to include grants management.

3. Counterpart funds

3.1. Review of the uses of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II counterpart funds and an assessment of their relevance to Agricultural Sector Development Grant II goals and purpose.

Tranche I of the program funding was split into two separate tranches of \$2.5 million each, less 8 percent, which goes into a USAID programmed local currency trust fund. Tranche IA was released in August 1992 and was used to support the budgets of eight structures under the *tutelle* of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage) and the Ministry of Hydrology and Environment (Ministère de Hydrolique et de l'Environnement). These structures are Sous-Comité de Développement Rural (Sous-Comité de Développement Rural), Cellule-Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, Direction des Études et de la Programmation, and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, the Direction de l'Environnement of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, the Faculté d'Agronomie of the University of Niamey, and the Institut Pratique de Développement Rural at Kollo.

Tranche IB was released in May 1994, and the funds are reserved to finance field activities of nongovernmental organizations and other local private institutions and to help support the institutional development of nongovernmental organizations. Tranche II will likewise be split to permit more rapid access to funds that will provide budget support for selected Government of Niger institutions. These institutions all have some role in the areas of intervention targeted for policy reform. With the exception of the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural and the Direction de l'Environnement, these institutions are not in direct contact with rural populations. But these are institutions where decisions are made that will impact income opportunities, the costs or opportunities to manage resources in a sustainable manner, and the rights and control of rural inhabitants over resources.

3.2. Assessment of the relationship of counterpart fund use to stated Government of Niger strategy and priorities for improved natural resources management.

The Government of Niger and donors involved in natural resource management agree that the areas of natural resources management policy targeted by Agricultural Sector Development Grant II for intervention are priority areas for the improvement of natural resources management policy in Niger. Counterpart funds used in these areas of intervention correspond directly to Government of Niger strategy and priorities for improving natural resources management. Improving the capacity of nongovernmental organizations and other local private institutions (rural associations, credit unions, groupements, etc.) to support natural resources management and rural development is also a specific government strategy and priority. Improving the planning, management and administrative capacity within Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage corresponds to a Government of Niger strategy rather than a priority to improve natural resources management. The Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage directorates primarily responsible for the delivery of technical services (Direction de l'Agriculture and

Direction de l'Élevage et des Industries Animales) have not yet received funding under Agricultural Sector Development Grant II.³

3.3. Review of the overall management and problems encountered in disbursing the counterpart funds for operational support by Government of Niger.

Two serious problems have led to a complete blockage in the disbursement of counterpart funds, which at the time of this evaluation has continued for over six months. One problem relates to the transfer of residual funds from one annual budget to the next. The second is the extremely long and slow bureaucratic process presently used for the disbursement of funds.

All Government of Niger agencies that were allocated budget support under tranche IA have a remaining balance of unused funds but have been unable to make additional expenditures since December 31, 1993. These existing funds cannot be spent because there are no budget lines for these activities in the 1994 national budget. The Government of Niger treasury is not accustomed to handling funds earmarked for specific governmental institutions, and the Ministère des Finances et du Plan does not automatically transfer remaining funds from one budget to the next. (In the general case, unused budget allocations are returned to the national treasury for reallocation the following year.) An *arrêté* authorizing the transfer (*report*) of residual funds from the 1993 to the 1994 budget will be made only when it is possible to update the entire national budget. Budget support has been halted for over six months, and it may be several more months before additional expenditures can be committed.

The disbursement of funds has been very slow. The accounting and payment procedures for these earmarked funds channeled through the treasury system are so slow that bills from late 1993 are still being paid in June 1994. The International Research Group's institutional advisor has documented twenty-two steps in the process required for disbursement of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II funds. In addition, financial commitments for imported goods were disrupted by the January 1994 devaluation. Imported goods, for which orders were already made but which were tied up in this lengthy disbursement process, had to be reordered at double the cost in Franc Communauté Financière Africaine, or the orders canceled. A large portion of the unspent funds exists because of such canceled orders and the complete blockage of additional expenditures since December 31, 1993.

Agricultural Sector Development Grant II funds pass through the Ministère des Finances et du Plan and the national treasury in the twenty-two-step process mentioned above because they are officially labeled as budget support by USAID.⁴ The definition of budget support used by

3. Direction de l'Agriculture does receive substantial support from the World-Bank-financed *Projet de Renforcement des Services Agricoles*.

4. The Direction du Trésor is a directorate within the Ministère des Finances et du Plan. That ministry is responsible for handling most of the Government of Niger's financial resources but uses different procedures depending on the origin and use. The treasury is involved in handling Agricultural Sector Development Grant II funds only because they are categorized as "budget support." It is this processing through the treasury that extends the procedure to

Agricultural Sector Development Grant II contrasts sharply with the Government of Niger's concept of budget support. The GON's concept of budget support, based on normal operating procedures, is that funds are deposited in a general treasury account and used to pay salaries and other general governmental expenses. The GON's treasury is not accustomed to handling funds that are not in the treasury account and that are earmarked to support specific governmental agencies. These funds require special procedures in addition to the normally long and tedious administrative requirements, and they cannot be used for priority treasury expenses like salaries. The technical services in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement would like to avoid the treasury's procedures by returning to a project funding approach. This, however, might create serious problems for USAID.

USAID decided to use the budget support approach and have funds accounted for in the treasury disbursement process to avoid having to account for the funds all the way through final expenditure under USAID procedures. USAID procedures are in fact about as torturous as those of the Government of Niger treasury and would likely require the presence of an expatriate financial manager on the International Resources Group's technical assistance team. This will become necessary if the program is considered by USAID to use a project funding approach.

There is another financial problem in that accounting records show the wrong balance in the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II budget support account to Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The 1993 budget lacked specific funding support and therefore a specific budget line item to fund the annual agricultural campaign. The Ministère des Finances et du Plan originally thought that Agricultural Sector Development Grant II "budget support" could be used for these purposes and attributed the expenses to the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II budget support budget line. However, ASDG II funds were in separate bank accounts and therefore were never accessed to fund the agricultural campaign. But the accounting glitch has remained, and for reasons not apparent to the evaluation team, has not been resolved. The transfer of the remaining ASDG II 1993 budget funds to the appropriate 1994 agency budgets, has been delayed more than six months by this oversight.

The Government of Niger and USAID need to determine how the existing system for the disbursement of funds can be made to work more effectively, or what more functional system can be substituted in its place. Budget support that is only available three or four months of the year will not allow the program to progress normally or support the achievement of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II objectives. In order to reduce the bureaucratic hassles, the Government of Niger and USAID need to negotiate some intermediate approach that is not considered budget support by the Government of Niger and that is not considered project funding by USAID. Clarification of the differences between the Government of Niger's and USAID's definitions of budget project support may provide a basis for achieving this compromise.

If the present disbursement process continues to be used, a possible solution would be for

twenty-two steps. The ministry has simpler procedures for other types of funds, but for budget support it is obliged to use this complex process.

Agricultural Sector Development Grant II to fund one or two positions within the treasury which would handle all of the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II accounting. These individuals would then become accustomed to the peculiarities of handling these funds, and could process them more quickly and accurately than at present. Another alternative might be to contract a local accounting firm to provide personnel to help with this accounting process.

The tranche IA financial reports required for tranche II (Section 4.2.A.5 of the Grant Agreement) have not yet been submitted to USAID. These reports must be completed and procedures established to ensure that the reports for future tranches are presented in a timely manner.

3.4. Review of the status of the nongovernmental and private-sector fund and the potential of its use by nongovernmental organizations and other private-sector institutions in natural resources management

The entire \$2.5 million⁵ of tranche IB was placed in the nongovernmental and private-sector fund and 35 percent of the \$5.0 million⁶ tranche II is programmed to provide continued support. The fund is currently inactive pending the amendment of International Research Group's contract to establish a grants management unit, which will manage these program funds and promote natural resources management activities and the institutional development of nongovernmental organizations and local, private-sector organizations. The scope of work for the grants management unit has been established by USAID and sent to the contract office, but at the time of the evaluation (May-June, 1994), the International Resources Group had not received or had a chance to reply to this scope of work. If things go smoothly, a grants management unit could be established about December 1994.

One estimate indicates that there are about sixty-five international nongovernmental organizations and about eighty to one hundred local nongovernmental organizations now operating in Niger. Restrictions on nongovernmental organizations prior to 1988 means that most local nongovernmental organizations are still in a nascent stage and many consist of little more than a post office box address. One of the important needs of the nongovernmental subsector and one of the important contributions which this nongovernmental and private-sector subcomponent can make is to support the development of institutional capacity among nongovernmental organizations and other local, private-sector institutions. Nongovernmental organizations and other local, private-sector institutions have an important role to play in many Government of Niger and donor programs (i.e., Agricultural Sector Development Grant II, the Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation program of USAID, cooperative and credit union programs, the World-Bank-financed Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and Reform of Agricultural Services program projects) and development of their institutional capacity will serve many needs. This subcomponent will provide ASDG II with practical field-level activities

5. Less the 8 percent for the USAID programmed local currency trust fund.

6. Less the 8 percent for the USAID programmed local currency trust fund.

which directly benefit rural inhabitants and improve natural resources management.

The program design and Program Grant Agreement call for a minimum of 30 percent of the \$20 million program funds⁷ to be used to fund nongovernmental and local, private-sector institution natural resource management activities. This implies a minimum of \$5.5 million in funds will be made available to nongovernmental organizations and local, private-sector institutions, and this funding will only become accessible in the final year of the original five- year life of project. It is unlikely that the nongovernmental organizations and local, private-sector institutions can absorb and efficiently use a large amount of funding in a short amount of time, given their limited institutional capacity. This is one of the reasons for the evaluation team recommendation to extend the project for three years. Extending the project will greatly improve the chance that field activities can be implemented successfully.

If for any reason the program and project is not extended, or the grants management unit is delayed further, USAID should consider establishing an endowment fund with these nongovernmental and private-sector funds. The annual proceeds from investing this capital fund could then be used to support nongovernmental organizations and local, private-sector institutions over an indefinite period of time.

3.5. Recommended ways to improve the effectiveness of counterpart funds and the resource transfer component of the program⁸

The most obvious increase in effectiveness would be to bring about the release of funds so that Government of Niger structures can implement those activities which have been programmed to meet Agricultural Sector Development Grant II objectives. The present system of accounting and disbursement of program funds is not functioning. While project implementation continues through the International Resources Group contract, program implementation by the GON is practically at a standstill. Government of Niger structures receiving funding from Agricultural Sector Development Grant II have been unable to spend any funds for over six months, with no solution in sight. Until the administrative problems with regard to program finances are solved, program implementation cannot progress.

A way must be found to provide Government of Niger structures receiving Agricultural Sector Development Grant II funds with adequate access to the funds which they have been allocated. One solution may be to contract an accounting and financial management consultant to investigate and propose appropriate solutions. Another option for USAID is to consider reprojectizing the program and doing the financial administration internally. While this is a potential solution to the problems of administrating finances, it would necessitate compliance with USAID financial management requirements. Financial management in the project and in

7. Less the 8 percent for the USAID programmed local currency trust fund.

8. An agreement was reached on a new system of accounting and disbursement in October 1994. It appears that this will resolve the problem of delayed disbursement of funds. Encouraging action in this regard seems to be one of the most successful aspects of this mid-term evaluation.

the USAID controller's office would absorb a significant sum and reduce the funding available to the Government of Niger.

Another factor which should significantly improve the effectiveness of counterpart fund use and resource transfer is the startup of the nongovernmental and private-sector subcomponent. To date, most funds have been spent on national-level institutions that control various aspects of natural resources management policy. Yet program and project purpose are stated in terms of impact on rural inhabitants. The nongovernmental and private-sector subcomponent will be the primary element of the program and project which has field-level activities, which (if successful) will directly impact rural inhabitants. Monitoring of these field-level activities (required as a condition of receiving a grant) will also provide a primary means of monitoring the effects of policy reform.

The Agricultural Sector Development Grant II has encountered serious delays in satisfying conditions precedent for the release of funds, fielding a technical assistance team, starting the nongovernmental and private-sector subcomponent, and disbursing funds allocated to Government of Niger structures. Given these delays, the effectiveness of the counterpart funds and resource transfer can be enhanced by extending the project for three years, until December 31, 1998. This will return the program and project to a time frame similar to that proposed in the original project design.

The program assistance approval document calls for use of counterpart funds for both GON operation budget support and investment budget support. There is a potential contradiction in two of the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II objectives or strategies, i.e. between the promotion of natural resources management and the balancing of operating funds and programs (in the program budgeting intervention). The use of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II funds to finance selected activities (investments) related to natural resource management is a very effective way to promote natural resources management. Yet the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement are so short of operating funds that use of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II funds for investment purposes will aggravate the imbalance. Agricultural Sector Development Grant II will have to make a decision as to which of these objectives is more important.

4. Conditionalties

The general strategy of the project design was to specify a condition precedent related to each area of intervention for each of the four tranches of program funding. It apparently was felt that this progression of conditions precedent was necessary to promote and track the desired progress in each area of intervention. With the addition of some general conditions precedent the result is a total of sixty-one itemized conditionalities in forty-eight separate conditions precedent. One general condition precedent is that additional appropriate conditions precedent will be negotiated for tranches III and IV. The program already has so many conditionalities that tracking condition precedent satisfaction impedes effective and efficient project implementation. The program related personnel (the project technical assistance, USAID and participating Government of Niger personnel) spend as much time tracking condition precedent satisfaction as implementing the technical programs that the conditions precedent were supposed to engender.

Note: A basic lesson learned from this evaluation is that using an avalanche of conditions precedent is neither effective nor efficient in promoting program implementation.

One of the problems of the program (NPA) approach, as opposed to the well-know project approach, is that there are few if any national staff who receive salaries or other incentives specifically to implement program activities and work toward the achievement of program objectives. The project design did not carefully address which institutions and which individuals within those institutions would be specifically responsible for program related activities and objectives. This question needs to be addressed by the Government of Niger, and through negotiations between the Government of Niger and USAID, to determine who is responsible for the administration of the process of satisfying conditions precedent, and for other aspects of program administration. Assigning a National Coordinator to the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program and project appears to be one important aspect of a potential solution.

4.1. Assessment of progress related to achievement of conditions precedent for the transfer of funds.

Following delays in program and project start-up, tranche I was split into 2 separate sub-tranches of \$2.3 million each, to allow the Government of Niger access to a portion of the funds, after achieving about one half of the conditions precedent specified for tranche I. In this manner, tranche IA was released in August 1992. The conditions precedent for the rest of tranche I were satisfied in March 1994 and tranche IB was released in May 1994.

The PAAD calls for the use of counterpart funds for to promote natural resource management through support of both the GON operation budget and investment budget. The program budgeting intervention calls for a balancing of the operation and investment budgets to achieve optimal effectiveness and efficiency in the use of the funds available. These two objectives or strategies potentially conflict. Most donor funding reinforces the government's investment budget, with restrictions on use for the operating budget. Facing severe budget shortages, the GON budget process typically allocates the Ministère del' Agriculture et de l' Elevage an operating budget which is much smaller than requested, and much too small to provide the

optimal balance between the Ministry's operating and investment budgets. To actually achieve the objectives of program budgeting would potentially require that all ASDG II funds be devoted to operating funds, rather than targeting investment in selected natural resource management activities. Restricting use of some funds for investment purposes will potentially further aggravate the imbalance. ASDG II will have to make a decision as to which of these objectives is more important.

At the Comité Technique Interministériel meeting on June 8, 1994, the Committee agreed to split tranche II. Seven or eight of the conditions precedent which can be completed by July-August 1994 will be assigned to tranche IIA. The other eight or nine conditions precedent will be assigned to tranche IIB, with the expectation that they can be satisfied about the end of 1994.

Satisfaction of many of the conditions precedent for tranche II are delayed because the institutions financed with funding from tranche IA cannot access the remaining funds to finance the activities required. Unless a solution is rapidly found to these financial problems, it may not be possible to satisfy all of the tranche II conditions in 1994.

In the first three and one half years of a planned five year project, conditions precedent have been satisfied for one of four \$5 million tranches of program funding with about one third of the funds for that \$5 million tranche I disbursed as of June 1994.

The satisfaction of conditions precedent and disbursement of funds for tranches III and IV remain to be addressed. The present project activity completion date of December 31, 1995, is therefore a constraint on the successful satisfaction of conditions precedent and the rational disbursement of funding. The program and project objectives continue to be valid and Agricultural Sector Development Grant II appears to have the potential to meet many of these objectives. The evaluation team recommends that the project activity completion date be extended to December 31, 1998, to allow the completion of the program and project activities and objectives. Given the delayed project start-up, this would return Agricultural Sector Development Grant II to a five-year time frame comparable to that in the original program and project design.

4.2. Recommended adjustments or re-orientation of conditionality (the conditions precedent) for the remaining tranches in order to achieve positive impacts and program purpose

The project design uses a series of conditions precedent (one or more for each tranche) in each area of intervention to promote program implementation. This has resulted in 48 separate conditions precedent and sixty-one itemized conditions (some conditions precedent consist of up to six itemized conditions). In many areas of implementation, the conditions precedent for tranches III and IV call for a review of policy to date, and negotiation of any new conditions deemed necessary to ensure continued progress. While the logic of using conditions precedent as a means to monitor and ensure implementation progress seems reasonable, the practical effect has been to bog down the program in administrating conditions precedent. The program related personnel (the project technical assistance, USAID and Government of Niger personnel) spend

as much time on bureaucratic activities related to condition precedent satisfaction as on implementing the technical programs that the conditions precedent were supposed to engender. Experience to date indicates that the multitude of conditions precedent hinders rather than promotes program implementation.

Streamlining program conditions precedent was analyzed in depth in the consultant report on Focusing Project Priorities. The report poses a useful framework for assessing the tradeoffs in policy reform efforts, which can serve as a solid basis for renegotiating conditions precedent between USAID and the Government of Niger. The evaluation team generally agrees with the analytical approach, as well as with the suggestion that many of the current conditionalities should be changed to program objectives rather than be legal requirements.

The evaluation team has suggested a few conditions precedent that should be eliminated or changed for technical reasons. The decentralization conditions precedent no longer seem relevant. The GARI conditions precedent with regard to information systems, human resource policy and program budgeting systems are largely not feasible or inappropriate and should be completely revised if a Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent is retained as part of the project. But to substantially streamline the total number of conditions precedent, Agricultural Sector Development Grant II will need to reject the "design approach" of having a condition precedent for each area of intervention in each tranche, or significantly reduce the scope of the program and project, or some combination of the two. Agricultural Sector Development Grant II has thirteen different series of conditions precedent encompassing ten areas of implementation and three areas of general conditionality. Even a single condition per series (for example, the development of a significant policy statement for each area of intervention and its introduction into the political process) would result in a large number of conditionalities (thirteen). It would appear that conditions precedent should be limited to important benchmarks in the policy reform process to reduce the administrative burden which their number now imposes.

Establishing improved circumstances for implementation may be another area where conditions precedent would be appropriate. In particular, USAID should consider:

- A condition precedent which requires a rapid resolution of the financial administration problems, i.e. accounting and fund disbursement procedures which are satisfactory to USAID.
- A condition precedent that requires assignment of a National Coordinator acceptable to USAID to the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program and project.
- A condition precedent which requires Government of Niger agreement to move the *tutelle* of the program and project to the Prime Minister's office or the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.
- A condition precedent which requires Government of Niger agreement to merge responsibilities for program coordination and administrative supervision, preferably as an attribution of the National Program Coordinator, or if that is not possible, as an attribution of the institution providing the *tutelle* for Agricultural Sector Development Grant II.
- If the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent is retained,

a condition precedent that requires the assignment of counterparts acceptable to USAID from the critical Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière services (personnel, equipment, financial, and training) to the institutional advisor.

5. Technical assistance

5.1. Review of the terms of reference of the International Resources Group, Land Tenure Center, and International Food Policy Research Institute technical assistance teams

5.1.1. International Resources Group

The International Resources Group contract contains some references to monitoring the achievement of policy reforms and indicates that one indicator of success of the technical assistance will be the effectiveness of the Government of Niger in meeting the conditions precedent and policy reform objectives. These vague references are part of a general statement of work and are not reflected in the specific terms of reference for project technical assistance. The terms of reference indicate that the primary role of project technical assistance is to assist the Government of Niger to accomplish the outputs assigned to their component of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II. In many cases these outputs will provide the means to satisfy specific conditions precedent, but helping achieve the outputs and not tracking and administrating the process of satisfying conditions precedent should be the primary role of project technical assistance.

USAID, the International Resources Group, and the Government of Niger appear to have different interpretations of these terms of reference. The Government of Niger interpretation seems to be that the primary function of the International Resources Group technical assistance is to do whatever is necessary to track and satisfy conditions precedent, in order to facilitate the disbursement of program funds. This interpretation is at least in part based on an assumption that since USAID insisted on imposing sixty-one itemized conditions in 48 different conditions precedent for the release of "budget support", USAID should provide the means (i.e. technical assistance) to track and satisfy the conditions precedent. The USAID's and the International Resources Group's interpretation is that the primary role of the technical assistance is to provide training and technical assistance for natural resources management related policy reform and activities (which in many cases will satisfy specific conditions precedent related to the release of funds). This latter interpretation implies that the Government of Niger needs to accept the primary responsibility for the process of tracking and satisfying the conditions precedent which lead to the disbursement of funds.

To date (June 1994), the International Resources Group team has not yet finalized a work plan for 1994. This deficiency is particularly remarkable given that improving management and administration is a major project objective and focus of the terms of reference for technical assistance. In fact, the Action Plans for Satisfying Conditions Precedent have largely replaced a normal project work plan as the basis upon which activities are organized. The "Action Plan" is updated approximately monthly by the chief of party, in conjunction with the monthly GON/USAID implementation meeting, to identify recent and upcoming activities which contribute to the satisfaction of particular conditions precedent for the upcoming tranche. The

program and project activities tend to be focused on specific conditions precedent in the upcoming tranche which have not yet been satisfied. Political pressure to disburse program funds, emanating from the Government of Niger, the Ambassador and USAID Washington, causes the program to place a higher priority on condition precedent satisfaction than on any longer term planning which might be established.

While the disbursement of funds is important to everyone involved, the priority given to this short-term planning horizon is not appropriate for determining the most effective and efficient use of program and project resources over the life of the program. This dominance of short-term condition precedent satisfaction is one of the problems of having so many conditions precedent in the program design. It is also a function of the responsibility placed on the International Resources Group team for the satisfaction of the conditions precedent because no individual or office in the Government of Niger is specifically responsible or concretely provides management of the process of tracking, and the satisfaction of the conditions precedent.

5.1.2. Land Tenure Center

The focus of the Land Tenure Center Cooperative Agreement is on studies to be undertaken in collaboration with the Rural Code Committee, which support the development and implementation of a Rural Code (see also the report of Joseph Tabor, Natural Resource Management Specialist, Annex K). The Land Tenure Center also accepts responsibility for the design and implementation of a system which will monitor the progress of the Rural Code process, and the impact of changes in tenure on management of natural resources. In addition, Land Tenure Center agrees to: train six individuals in land tenure theory and practice (6 Nigerien attended a workshop in Mbour, Senegal in 1992), assist in incorporating study findings into the Rural Code, collaborate with the International Resources Group technical assistance (who are responsible for the communication of Rural Code legislation to the rural population and for training local authorities), and to assist USAID in drafting conditions precedent for tranches II-IV related to security of tenure.

The Land Tenure Center has either accomplished or has made significant progress on the objectives agreed to in the Cooperative Agreement. A number of studies have been produced, and a monitoring system is in the process of being designed by the Land Tenure Center research assistant. In addition to producing studies, developing a monitoring system, advising the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, and serving as the Land Tenure Center representative in Niger for administrative purposes, the research assistant has contributed to the efforts to plan the popularization of the Code Rural, to the organization of workshops on popularization and the impact of the Code Rural, to training the Commissions Foncières, and to a regional conference in Praia on decentralization and land tenure.

USAID should consider placing a long-term technical assistance in the Code Rural to provide advice on an appropriate process for the implementation of the Code Rural and associated regulations, and the establishment of the Commissions Foncières test cases. The Land Tenure Center is an obvious source of the type of expertise necessary. However, it must be recognized by all parties that the role of this technical assistance is not to do academic studies, but to

provide advise on the day-to-day planning and implementation of Code Rural related activities, and particularly the appropriate establishment and functioning of the Commissions Foncières test cases. These results of the efforts of the Commissions Foncières and the traditional authorities, who are also attempting to apply the new regulations, provide a basis for monitoring and evaluating the impact of resource tenure reform.

5.1.3. International Food Policy Research Institute

The International Food Policy Research Institute ordering agreement provides additional funding for supplemental basic research to be carried out in Niger by International Food Policy Research Institute under the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II contract. The purpose is to further exploit the detailed village-level data already collected by International Food Policy Research Institute through some additional analyses, and a small amount of new complementary research to update information on a few critical variables. Of the four agricultural research topics in the scope of work, two are related to natural resources management. These studies may help determine some variables that are important at the farm level, and this in turn may provide ideas about impact indicators, but the studies are not designed or intended to monitor impact. The study does not, and was not intended, to repeat data collection which could be compared to the original database. To date, none of the reports have been submitted.

5.2. Assessment of the relevancy and role of the technical assistance components of the program

5.2.1. Assessment of the degree to which the institutional advisor meets the terms of reference for this position and his or her contribution to the implementation of institutional development within the program

The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor's training and experience generally conforms to the range of alternative profiles suggested in the terms of reference. He does not have a background in management and administration, which shows up in less experience in areas like management by objectives and program budgeting. While he is very qualified to do training in computer applications, he does not have experience providing training and guidelines on management by objectives and other administrative and management techniques. If the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles program is to continue, it would be appropriate to refocus the activities on introducing basic management skills and information systems. Someone with a degree in Public or Business Administration would more likely fit this revised Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor profile.

While progress to date in Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles has been slow, false assumptions in the project design, institutional constraints and administrative problems are each as much to blame as the role of the institutional advisor. Given these more fundamental problems, replacing the institutional advisor, will not resolve the problems of the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent.

5.2.2. Assessment of the degree to which the natural resources management advisor meets the terms of reference for this position and his or her contribution to the implementation of the natural resource management component.

The natural resources management advisor has the requisite qualifications and experience called for in the terms of reference. His formal training is in forestry and environmental studies and in geography. He has spent the last ten years as an advisor in environmental and natural resource planning, in both long-term and short-term consulting positions. In this capacity he has worked on numerous national environmental strategies and national environmental action plans.

In addition to the administrative duties of being chief of party, the natural resources management advisor has been able to develop interactions with most of the national and donor natural resources management programs and work to facilitate improved management of natural resources through these contacts and Agricultural Sector Development Grant II funding support. He frequently participates in efforts by different entities to define program activities and forms of collaboration. This has included promoting natural forest management and a changed role for forestry agents in the Ministère de l'Hydrologie et de l'Environnement's Direction de l'Environnement, encouraging natural resources management and territory management (gestion de terroirs) in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, and promoting work on the Rural Code through contacts with the Land Tenure Center and the Rural Code Commission.

5.3. Assessment of progress made in meeting the training objectives of Government of Niger counterparts and in developing increased capacity within Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.

Neither of the International Resources Group technical assistants has a counterpart who is specifically associated with their daily activities. Neither technical assistant is presently located in the governmental agency that is responsible for the policies and activities that he is supposed to help implement. Nor is there a project staff person that is learning their skills. The institutional and administrative structure of the program does not permit the technical assistance to provide on-the-job training to counterparts. The chief of party effectively serves as the equivalent of a Chef de Service in Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage; but there is no *service* except for the technical assistance and their small support staff. Any increased capacity originating from Agricultural Sector Development Grant II is from the financing and facilitation of studies, tours and workshops. The present program and project structure does not enable technical assistance to train governmental personnel directly.⁹

9. The Direction des Études et de la Programmation liaison officer counterpart is often associated with technical assistance activities including visits, attendance at conferences, and so forth, and is therefore receiving training in a number of aspects of natural resources management. But the liaison officer is not responsible for implementing any of the natural resources management or institutional reform activities.

6. Policy reform component

Because of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II's budget and time constraints, the International Resources Group and the Land Tenure Center need to conduct a triage on natural resources management activities. Agricultural Sector Development Grant II needs to prioritize from the full range of possible natural resources management activities in much the same way that Shaikh (1994) proposed prioritizing the conditions precedent. For example, there is the question of how does the cost vs. benefit of conducting additional studies and workshops on the role of the forest agents compare with the need to conduct studies and workshops on how better to integrate pastoralists in the Rural Code process.

Also, in the face of increasing pressure for Agricultural Sector Development Grant II to show measurable performance, the International Resources Group and the Land Tenure Center should not sacrifice quality for the sake of numbers. The natural resource management (NRM) tools of development that are currently en vogue (e.g., *terroir villageois*, geographical information systems, aerial videography) are at risk of becoming tarnished if oversold or poorly executed as have been other tools such as farming systems research, remote sensing, and natural forest management.

6.1. Recommendations for the future of the policy reform component

6.1.1. Natural resource policy reform precedents

The history of African development is full of examples where well-meaning donors offered a system or technology that did not match this alien environment. USAID's Forest Land-use and Planning project was one of the first natural forestry management projects in West Africa and, through the example of its Guesselbodi Model Site, was very successful in demonstrating that Niger can manage its brushlands. Through this demonstration, USAID had an important impact on the development of the Rural Code and the numerous other donor-funded natural forest management projects that immediately followed the example of the Forest Land-use and Planning project. This replication of Guesselbodi by other donors was hasty and now is considered unsustainable because of social rather than technical problems. Nevertheless, progress was made by example: (1) encouragement of the Rural Code, (2) increased experience in natural forest management, and (3) the uncovering of other, more fundamental constraints to improved natural resources management.

Agricultural Sector Development Grant II is in an ideal position to help Niger take the next step by supporting other "model sites" that help identify and reduce social constraints (e.g., resource tenure). Successful demonstrations will encourage the government along a clear path; but it will be a difficult and painful one. This next step is needed to resolve the contradictions between society and the environment. It will require much support, coordination, and commitment among donors because established economic, social, and political relationships will be disrupted. Inevitably these disruptions will occur and Niger will be forced to change. The increasing competition for natural resources requires an evolution of natural resources management.

6.1.2. Multiple-use and priorities: A need for change in natural resources management orientation

The Agricultural Sector Development Grant II natural resource management program has a strong concentration on forestry activities. Factors affecting this orientation are the chief of party's professional orientation, the forestry orientation of the International Resources Group's personnel in the United States, the cooperation of Direction de l'Environnement which until recently was the Direction de Eaux et Forêt, and the fact that the role of the forester is one of the four major themes in the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II natural resources management program. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II project, conceived when Guesselbodi was considered a total success, needs to shift its orientation toward the more economically important sectors, agriculture and livestock. An indicator for this change is that people are killing each other over agricultural and livestock conflicts, not for stealing firewood.

The "successes" of natural forest management projects are limited by their failure to resolve multiple-use and other social issues that plague the entire country, not just the relatively small project areas that are presently being intensively exploited for firewood. Donors should continue supporting natural forest management of Niger's brushland in those open access areas where there is overharvesting of firewood. However, the question that needs to be asked for future projects is "how to manage grass, forbs, shrubs, and trees for agriculture and livestock in the face of severe pressure to harvest firewood," not "how to manage trees for firewood in the face of pressure from livestock and agriculture." In addition, donors should support a strong effort in natural range management, especially where frequent conflicts between farmers and pastoralist occur.

6.1.3. The role of forestry agents

Forest agents cannot effectively control the harvesting of shrubs and trees in classified forests much less the woody resources in the rest of the country. Responsibilities and rights to shrub and tree resources are being defined in the implementation of the Rural Code process. Once established, civil police and courts will settle disputes, and "policing" will be conducted by the resource users or parcel managers. Agricultural Sector Development Grant II can use its nongovernmental organization, private enterprise fund to support projects and activities that place forest agents in new roles (i.e., managing seed collection for revegetation of rangelands) or encourage other donor projects to test new roles that require larger projects.

6.1.4. Resource tenure

Through the encouragement of USAID, Niger is now at an extremely important time in developing natural resource policies which can have either beneficial or disastrous social and environmental consequences. Agricultural Sector Development Grant II needs an increased, more focused effort in resource tenure studies as well as increased support for the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural. The Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural needs a full time resource tenure specialist to help develop a process of tenure reform, train the representatives of Commissions Foncières, coordinate translations and popularization activities, and direct and

interpret research. Some of the studies conducted by the Land Tenure Center are perceived as academic studies rather than as analyses which are helpful for resolving priority issues. In spite of those perceptions, the Land Tenure Center studies should continue to evaluate how different natural resources management practices affect resource tenure in addition to studies on the Rural Code process. The Land Tenure Center's independent role is needed to maintain transparency and avoid conflict of interest during the process of developing regulations and implementing the Rural Code. Closed door decisions about land use in other Sahelian countries have not had pleasant consequences.

7. Institutional component - gestion, administration et réformes institutionnelles

The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent of the project is the most problematic in terms of strategic fit in the program, appropriateness of the conditionalities, and implementation. The program strategy of Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles, or Management, Administration and Institutional Reform, was to use a combination of policy reform and institutional strengthening which will address constraints and lead to an improvement of service delivery at the field level. It is not possible to achieve many of the policy objectives which the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent was designed to address, particularly within the life of the project (even if extended). Improvements can be made in Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage administrative and management procedures, but these will not fundamentally change the policies in question (incentives, promotion and selection for training by performance, program budgeting which balances operating budgets and programs, some balance of funding by region and subsector). With little chance of achieving the assigned policy objectives, the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent becomes a project subcomponent grafted on to a policy program. Given the implementation problems already experienced in Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles, and other donor programs addressing the technical services of Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, it is not promising as a project activity.

7.1. A revised Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles

The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent will not have the policy impact for which it was originally designed. It could be revised as a project activity to pursue the objective of introducing administrative and management procedures, tools and training, which help Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage move toward improved administration and management of personnel, material and financial resources. Any continued Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles activities should be reoriented toward the training of basic administrative and management procedures and tools. To have any chance of success, the institutional and administrative context must be revised to improve the implementation environment. The program and project must establish a situation in which the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor has meaningful interaction with those services responsible for administrating and managing ministry personnel, equipment and finances. It must also drastically broaden its training program.

7.2. Make recommendations concerning the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles institutional subcomponent of the program.

USAID should consider several options for the future of the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles institutional subcomponent:

- Option 1: Eliminate the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II. The policy objectives and conditions precedent cannot be achieved and Gestion,

Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles will not have a significant policy impact. Programs of other donors will provide a more fundamental restructuring of the technical services and do more to improve service delivery at the field level than was envisioned in Agricultural Sector Development Grant II. Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles has had implementation problems. The Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, the targeted institution, appears to have a recent history of personnel turnover and disorganization, with indications that this problem has not been resolved. The revision of Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles implies the need for a different combination of skills than those possessed by the present Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor.

Option 2: Revise the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent as a project activity located in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage:

- Provide training and develop guidelines for management by objectives and other appropriate administrative and management techniques. Provide a handbook and a training module on administrative procedures for personnel in line for appointments with administrative responsibilities. Help organize and provide guidelines and training to introduce the management by objectives concept and improve annual work plans throughout the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage structure.
- Develop information systems for improving the management of personnel, material and financial resources of Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The focus should be on establishing improved systems which will help the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière personnel do their jobs and which they can and will use. At some point these may be computerized, but this will depend on the project increasing the computer skills of Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière personnel so that they can and will use the computerized systems.
- Establish conditions precedent which require: (1) the Government of Niger to provide the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor with counterparts in the personnel, equipment and financial services of Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage (and the Ministère de l'Hydraulique et de l'Environnement); (2) the Government of Niger to agree to provide personnel to serve as full-time trainers for the implementation of the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles training throughout Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and Ministère

de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement. If USAID wants the advisor to try to operate within Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, a separate condition precedent should require a formally signed accord between ministries that the advisor can work directly with both Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière directors.

- Establish a new terms of reference for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor. Ask for formal training in Business or Public Administration and experience in analyzing existing administrative and management systems and designing improvements. The advisor will be expected to implement programs in basic administrative and management procedures, tools and training. The advisor should have basic computer skills, but can call on a short-term consultant if a need develops to design a sophisticated database.

8. Participation of nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions in natural resources management

8.1. The Grants Management Unit institutional setting

The evaluation team believes that the nongovernmental and private-sector subcomponent has important potential to encourage natural resources management activities and local participation. The grants management unit will be responsible for the management of this important effort. It will be very important to establish an appropriate institutional and administrative environment for the grants management unit. Experience to date indicates that organizations trying to promote nongovernmental organizations' and private-sector activities need very streamlined administrative procedures to be effective. The small, inexperienced organizations which are numerically dominant among Niger's nongovernmental organizations, cannot handle a lot of bureaucracy or long delays in funding decisions. It is critical that the program and project identify an administrative setting which will allow simple administrative procedures and rapid response.

The evaluation team is concerned that location in the Services des Organisations Non-gouvernementales–Direction de Développement Régional–Ministère des Finances et du Plan will cause severe, and potentially crippling, administrative problems. Problems with regard to administrative arrangements for project components and their respective technical assistance have constrained program and project effectiveness, even though they are located in the ministry of *tutelle*, Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. It is difficult to see how the grants management unit can avoid being slow and bureaucratic if formal administrative procedures between ministries and signatures are required to approve grants management unit actions. If the grants management unit is to be located in the Ministère des Finances et du Plan, steps must be taken to reduce the administrative hassle. The grants management unit needs to be able to contact and be contacted by nongovernmental organizations and local private institutions, without requiring communications to pass through either ministry, or signatures of ministry officials.

An alternative would be to associate the grants management unit with the Groupement des Aides Privées. It is the logical institutional base for the training, information and technical assistance activities for which the grants management unit will be responsible. In this manner, the grants management unit can hope to institutionalize the training, information and technical assistance activities so they will continue after the contract ends. The Groupement des Aides Privées has the potential, but does not at this time have the actual capacity to be the primary partner for the grants management unit and the nongovernmental and private-sector program. This appears to be equally true of the Services des Organisations Non-gouvernementales–Direction de Développement Régional. With a large measure of autonomy and the Groupement des Aides Privées as the institutional location, it should be possible to establish a grants management unit with very streamlined administrative procedures. This may well mean the difference between success and failure of the nongovernmental and private-sector subcomponent.

A third alternative would be to locate the grants management unit in an Agricultural Sector

Development Grant II program office. Using this approach, the grants management unit would be responsible to the International Resources Group's chief of party and the National Program Coordinator. Internalizing the administration within the program could greatly reduce the necessary administrative procedures. However, it would distance the grants management unit from the institutions which are responsible for and provide the liaison with nongovernmental organizations. This isolation would reduce any long-term impact from technical assistance working with nongovernmental-organization-related institutions and would probably reduce its effectiveness in working with nongovernmental organizations.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

The program assistance approval document and project paper indicates that baseline data will be collected in year one of the program to serve as a benchmark against which progress will be measured. However, the program and project design includes neither budget nor project activities designated to collect this baseline data. No source of existing data has been identified which can provide such a baseline. While the nongovernmental and private-sector activities financed under Agricultural Sector Development Grant II might provide some of this information, that component has not yet begun. Thus, no baseline yet exists and no field-level monitoring is in progress.

In part, the sense that a low priority has been placed on data collection and monitoring in the project design may be reflected in the statement that "USAID does not anticipate seeing more than process indicators of impact by project activity completion date" (program assistance approval document and project paper: p. 82). The conditions precedent and program and project outputs are the appropriate process indicators. The statement seems to imply that no field-level impact is expected during the life of the project, therefore, no collection of field-level data is necessary. The program assistance approval document and project paper statement is not far off the mark. Very little field-level impact can be expected from a policy program within a five-year life of project. A major effort to monitor natural resources management impacts at the field level only makes sense in the framework of a long-term USAID mission commitment to continued work in natural resources management.

The selection of impact indicators for monitoring Agricultural Sector Development Grant II has not yet been finalized. Several workshops and consultancies have helped define what indicators would be useful. However, like the indicators described in the program assistance approval document and project paper, many of the suggested indicators: (1) are difficult and expensive to measure; (2) are not representative; (3) measure quantity without regard for quality or effect; (4) will demonstrate impact only many years after the project ends; and (5) would require data collection by organizations with no formal links to Agricultural Sector Development Grant II (i.e. which receive no funding or other incentives to collect such data).

9.1. Indicators for impact monitoring (See Tables 1 and 2)

There has been difficulty and considerable delay in identifying acceptable indicators and methods for monitoring the impacts of ASDG II. There are few good precedents and very little agreement within the natural resource and environmental community or among monitoring and evaluation specialists as to what should be measured, or how it can best be implemented. Each consultancy seems to result in diverse lists of indicators and different recommended monitoring approaches. The evaluation team believes that many of these ideas have been highly idealistic, and frequently expensive and impractical to implement. In selecting indicators and methods of monitoring, there must be a balance and compromise between the costs of information and the benefits received from the information.

In a typical natural resource project with a five year life, it is unlikely that program

monitoring will result in proof of impact during the life of the project. In many cases statistically valid results will not be available in such a short period of time. Rather, indicators should generally identify progress towards necessary preconditions. Frequently the impact of a practice introduced by a project will not be statistically measurable across a population during a limited time span. But we know from experience that the practice will only have an impact if it is adopted. One can measure its potential impact in a few case studies. The results of these case studies and information on the scope and frequency of adoption provide an indication of what the potential impact may be.

The evaluation team agrees that the indicators listed in the program assistance approval document's analytical framework (Table 1) for level 1 and level 2 are appropriate. However, some of the logical relationships identified in levels 4 and 5 seem less appropriate, and several may be difficult to measure (see the modified analytical framework in Table 2).

9.1.1. Biophysical parameters

For example, in most cases, soil quantity can not be increased from a baseline amount by human intervention. Soil conservation activities however, can help prevent a reduction in soil depth. Soil depth is often an appropriate proxy for soil quantity, particularly where rill or wind erosion is removing topsoil from a whole area, as opposed to forming deep gullies. While erosion is rather difficult and expensive to measure, soil depth or the depth of a particular soil horizon, can frequently be measured or approximated more easily.

Most scientists and farmers refer to soil fertility when they want to discuss or measure soil quality. While scientists may evaluate soil fertility through various measures of soil structure and the organic and mineral content, farmers will have local names for soil types with more or less agreed upon characteristics and production potential. Scientifically evaluating these characteristics in a few case studies provides the means to interpret farmer's knowledge of the region to identify indicators of soil fertility and productive potential. In many cases, particularly where there is a high incidence of surface erosion, soil quantity and fertility are so closely linked that is impractical to separate the two.

Biodiversity is another interesting biophysical characteristic which may or may not be a practical indicator. For example, it may not be practical to conduct complete species inventories over large areas. However, case studies may provide an assessment of species profiles for different types of environments. This assessment may identify certain species which are known to be an indicator of either favorable or unfavorable conditions within a specific type of ecology. The presence of such indicator species may then be evaluated as part of a multi-purpose transect at a sample of different sites.

The productive potential of soil or land resources is most often measured by crop yields or other measures of production per unit of area for grass, forest and other non-crop environments. In the past, the productivity of pasture or grazing resources were often measured in terms of the carrying capacity of livestock. This measure has been questioned recently, particularly in areas with significant year to year variation in rainfall. Yield is one

type of data that is often available from secondary sources such as extension services and national census activities. It is an appropriate and practical proxy for the three soil indicators (soil quantity, quality, and moisture) although it is not a biophysical characteristic *per se*. While it does not include biodiversity, production per unit of area (yield) may be the best, relatively simple and available proxy for the biophysical parameters.

9.1.2. Sustainable increases in income and productivity

Level 5 in the framework includes several indicators which appear inappropriate. Decreases in women's workload, although laudable, is not a stable indicator nor a stable proxy for increased income and productivity. The workload may or may not increase or decrease based on a multitude of social factors independent from increasing incomes and productivity. Male migration, upon which many Nigerien families are heavily dependent for revenue, and increasing economic opportunities for women, are both likely to increase women's workloads while also increasing income and productivity. Decreases in women's workload is not an appropriate indicator of increasing income or productivity, although it may be a desirable socio-economic impact.

Seasonal migration may be linked to either an increase or a decrease in incomes depending on the society. In much of Niger, seasonal migration is a basic strategy to diversify family economic activity and improve income. It also provides an alternative to the mining of natural resources as a survival strategy during periods of drought and crisis. Under such conditions, decreases in seasonal migration is not an appropriate indicator of increasing income and productivity.

Trends in production per unit of area (yields) and per person is an incomplete but useful proxy indicator of income and productivity, particularly for communities largely dependent on the productivity of agricultural and natural resource systems. One can expect that increasing yields and production per person over time will increase rural incomes, assuming that there is a stable demand for the products. Year to year variation in yields and production are heavily influenced by annual climatic variation. Trends over a number of years should be used, rather than differences between a base year and some later year. In some cases it will be desirable to complement this with some measure of income from migration and other forms of off-farm employment. This outside income may not be attributable to the local natural resource sector, but may be necessary to understand how family coping mechanisms function. However, one must expect that it will be nearly impossible for strangers to obtain reliable or factually correct information on cash income in most cultures.

9.2. Monitoring methods

One monitoring method which the project should consider is combining physical and socio-economic observations along what is essentially a road transect. Such a transect might include recorded observations of a general nature on the state of vegetation, types of biodiversity, visible erosion, visible soil and water conservation activities, as well as the presence of other

projects, micro-realizations, or territory management activities.¹⁰ These recorded observations can be backed up with camera points based on posted kilometer markings (*borne kilométrique*) or odometer readings. Interviews should be conducted with selected local communities and organizations involved in natural resource management activities (projects, NGOs, associations, technical services, and donors) located along the transect. Particular attention should be paid to herder associations as herders may or may not be present during the time of the transect.

This is a simple and inexpensive method for gathering sufficient data to evaluate project impacts and satisfy DFA impact requirements. By using a process of careful interview techniques, information can be disaggregated by gender, age, ethnic group, resource use, or other useful classifications. Counterparts can be trained in this level of monitoring and it does not require expensive, extensive, remote sensing types of data gathering and interpretation. This type of monitoring is decentralized and can be used even at the community level. Such data from many local communities should be used to develop a composite view, as well as comparisons across a number of different environments. For ASDG II, this data from many local communities may be facilitated by the NGO component, assuming that the NGOs do such monitoring in their individual programs.

The optimum monitoring system is the merging of data from basic techniques such as those suggested here and the mapping of basic natural resource characteristics as possible with remote sensing activities. However, given budgetary and human resource constraints and the problems of agreeing on procedures, ASDG II should begin a simple, basic monitoring system and then add complementary activities, as budget and resources allow.

10. A policy reform program improves the climate for and facilitates the achievement of a wide range of activities financed and implemented by different projects and institutions. It can legitimately claim some responsibility for progress related to the policy reforms, even if it did not directly finance or implement the activities which were responsible for the change.

Table 1. Indicator Framework for Natural Resources Management in ASDG II

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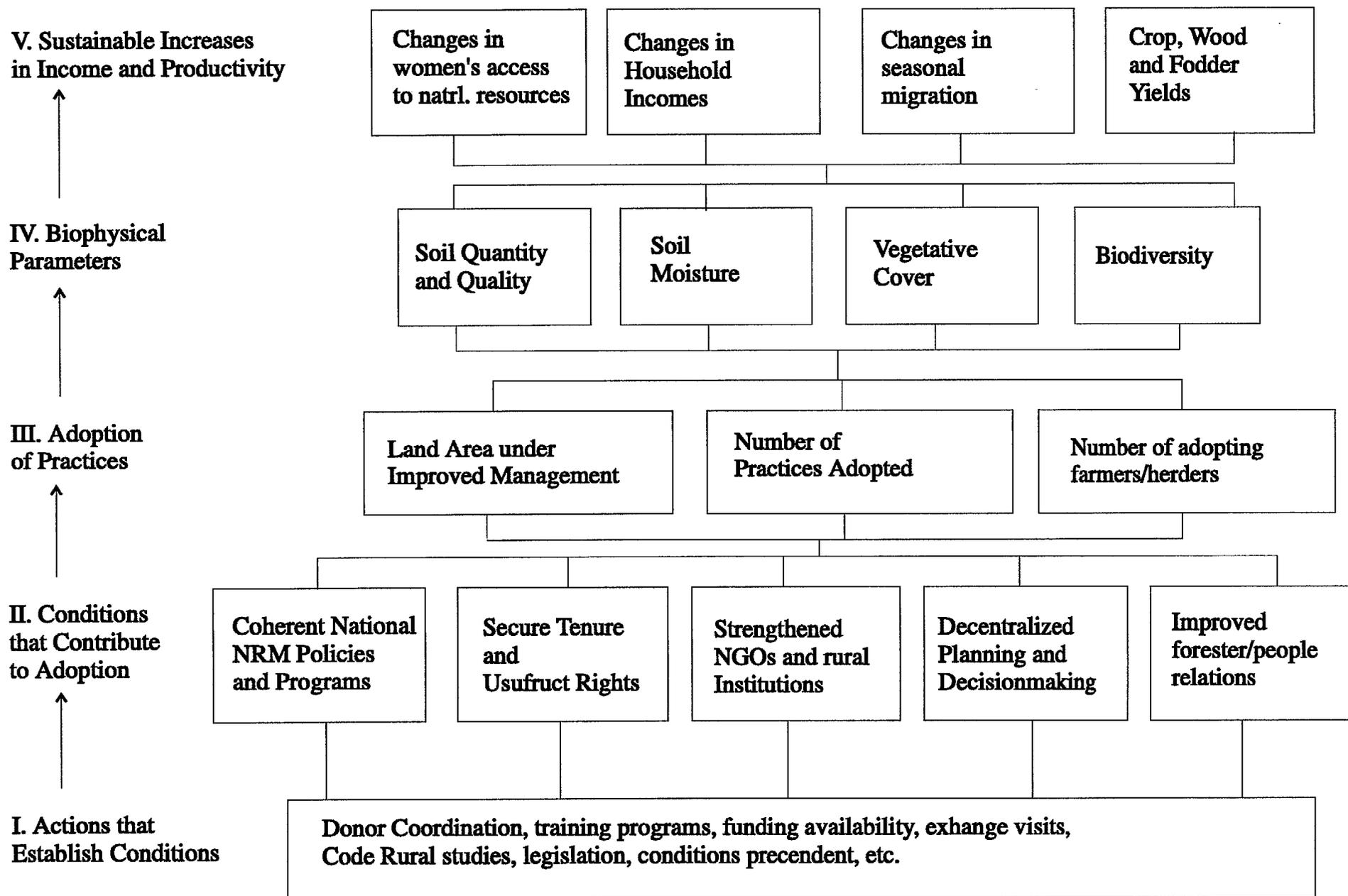
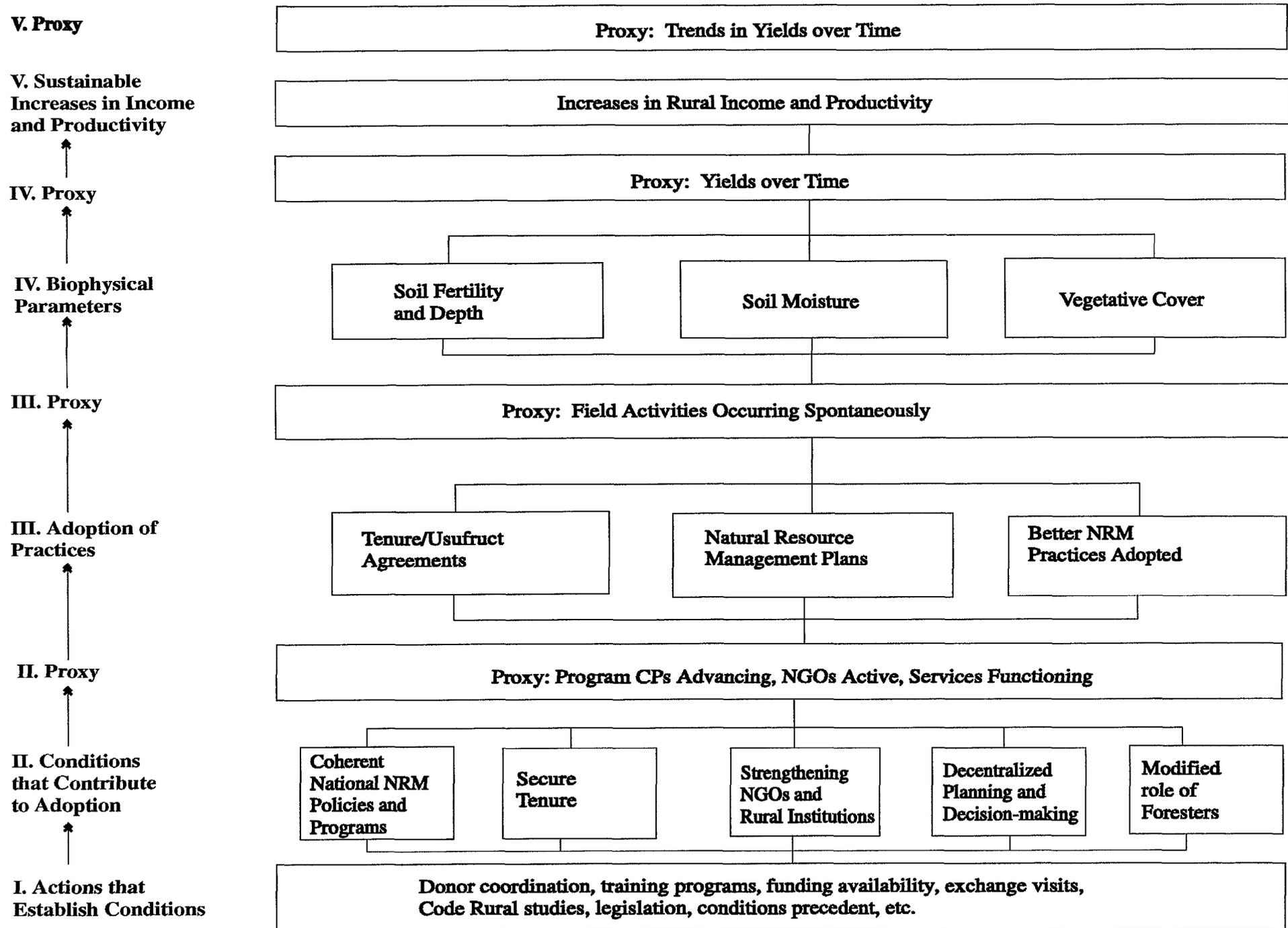


Table 2. Modified Indicator Framework for Natural Resources Management in ASDG II



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10. Institutional location of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II in the structure of the Government of Niger (See Tables 3 and 4)

10.1. Analysis of the existing institutional location of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II

The Ministère des Finances et du Plan was named in the program assistance approval document and project paper as the executing agency and the governmental agency responsible for the coordination of the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II project. It was not expected to provide the institutional location or administrative supervision (*tutelle*) of the program and project. The separation of those functions from oversight responsibility significantly complicates management and administration.

While responsible for coordination of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II, the Ministère des Finances et du Plan has not been involved or engaged in program activities, notably the responsibility for tracking and satisfying conditions precedent. It chairs the meetings and writes the cover letters, but all of the real work (excluding accounting) falls on the International Resources Group team and the Direction des Études et de la Programmation Director. This separation of coordination responsibility and administrative supervision (*tutelle*) seems to be a root cause of confusion and administrative problems in the program. Consideration should be given to terminating the Ministère des Finances et du Plan designation as coordinator and executing agency of the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program and project.

The Direction des Études et de la Programmation was not a primary focus of either the natural resources management program or the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles project activities, but it was implicated along with the Direction des Affaires Administrative Financière in meeting the conditions precedent for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent. The director of the Direction des Études et de la Programmation serves as the secretary of the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural, which broadens his role in the Government of Niger, and as administrative supervisor of the program. Through the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural he has indirect interaction with the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, which are two of the institutions targeted for intervention in the natural resources management component. These are both interministerial structures attached to the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural and under the *tutelle* of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The Direction de l'Environnement of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, a third structure targeted for natural resources management interventions, is more distant administratively, but it is also somewhat less rigid about administrative procedures.

It is not clear that the Direction des Études et de la Programmation is an appropriate institutional location for the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program and project components and their respective technical assistance. While the technical assistance team may be very busy, it appears that they are institutionally constrained from doing the things they were intended to do:

- The Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles would appear to be a more

appropriate location for the natural resources management advisor. The Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles is responsible for the development and coordination of a national natural resources management strategy, and assisting this process is the primary role of the natural resources management advisor. The Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles is (at present) the institution which needs his skills and experience. He can provide some advice from the Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, but does not provide on-the-job training to Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles personnel.

- Most of the activities assigned to the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor are the responsibility of personnel, equipment, and financial services within the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière. The Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière are in the same building. But the program and project have not developed administrative procedures to facilitate the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor's working effectively with and serving as advisor to the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière; particularly the personnel, equipment, financial services, and perhaps the training service of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière. To date, the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor has difficulty working with or advising these services and no one in them is learning his management and computer skills.
- The proposed nongovernmental and private-sector subcomponent will face severe administrative problems if located in the Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The two organizations that it will need to work with are the Services des Organisations Non-gouvernementales–Direction de Développement Régional–Ministère des Finances et du Plan and the Groupement des Aides Privées. Location in the Direction des Études et de la Programmation would not allow the grants management unit to provide effective technical assistance and day-to-day training to either of these organizations. Judging from past experience, administrative procedures across ministries would be a serious constraint to implementation.

This raises the question whether, or how easily, the institutional location of the different Agricultural Sector Development Grant II components can be split. In order for program support and technical assistance to be most effective, it would appear that (1) the natural resources management component and advisor should be located in the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, (2) the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles component and advisor should be located in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, and (3) the grants management unit should be located in either the Services des Organisations Non-gouvernementales– Direction de Développement Régional–Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement or the Groupement des Aides Privées. However, it is not evident that any of these locations would provide a good location for administrative supervision (*tutelle*) of the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program and project. If the program and project is separated into three components distributed across three different Government of Niger agencies, there is a serious risk that administrative problems

would cause program implementation to founder. Program *tutelle* and ease of administration and implementation need to be considered as well as theoretical program component effectiveness in deciding in which institution(s) the program should be located.

10.2. Analysis of the appropriate administrative supervision (tutelle) of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II

There are several possibilities to consider as the *tutelle* of the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II. The Government of Niger agency that seems to have the most in common with the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program, its objectives, and activities is the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. However, the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles does not have a very stable institutional base. Organizationally, the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles is attached to the interministerial Sous-Comité de Développement Rural, which has no physical existence. (It meets only once or twice a year and has no permanent secretariat.) The Government of Niger has already indicated that the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles is not an appropriate institutional base and *tutelle* for the World-Bank-financed Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project.

The Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles has taken the lead role in developing the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the World-Bank-financed first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project.

The World Bank has proposed that the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles be involved in the implementation of its first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project. It is not yet clear what effect this may have on the role of the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the potential role of the natural resources management advisor to work with this structure. Different drafts and different documents seem to imply different roles, and even the possibility of the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles being detached from the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural and being attached directly to the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. There is speculation that the World Bank would like to include national natural resources management policy development and coordination within the first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project, or that the World Bank will eventually propose to move these functions to a national environmental action plan secretariat. Until negotiations between the Government of Niger and World Bank progress further, and some of these documents are finalized, it will be difficult to judge the future of the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles.

The Agricultural Sector Development Grant II, like a number of other donor programs, has contributed, and continues to contribute, to the development of the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. The Agricultural Sector Development Grant II has objectives similar to those proposed concerning the World Bank first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project, including further development of national policies and strategies, program coordination, harmonization of technologies, assessment of issues related to tenure, decentralization, local participation, establishing an environmental information system, monitoring and evaluation of natural resources management activities, and so forth. World Bank

financing may not be much larger than USAID's commitment to Agricultural Sector Development Grant II. It would seem that a parallel relationship should exist between Agricultural Sector Development Grant II and the World Bank first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project, both of which contribute to the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. Recognition of this parallel relationship may make it necessary, or at least appropriate, to change the *tutelle* of the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program and project to the same Government of Niger agency that provides the *tutelle* for the World Bank Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project. While it is not certain where this will end up, there are some indications that the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage will be proposed.

Moving the *tutelle* of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II to the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage would not solve all of the administrative problems by any means, but it would be a better institutional location than the Direction des Études et de la Programmation. Administratively, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to advise and coordinate the activities of one directorate, secretariat, or *cellule* from an institutional location within a different directorate, secretariat, or *cellule* at the same level in the organizational hierarchy. (This applies to the ministries as well because they also are at the same level in the organizational hierarchy.) The Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage offers an institutional location directly superior in the organizational hierarchy to that of the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, and the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. This would permit better coordination and simplify administration of program activities in these four institutions. The natural resources management advisor would be in an office that directly supervises the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, allowing him better access and interaction with these important institutions. The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor would be in an office bureaucratically superior to the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière, increasing the chances that an administrative arrangement could be achieved which allowed him to work with both. Coordination and administration of program activities in the Ministère de l'Hydrologie et de l'Environnement would still be relatively difficult. Administrative arrangements for the grants management unit would be difficult unless the grants management unit is made largely autonomous from both Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and Ministère des Finances et du Plan.

A final alternative for USAID to consider is to establish a program office in the Office of the Prime Minister and unite program coordination and administrative supervision (*tutelle*) in the position of a national program coordinator. Situated in the Office of the Prime Minister, the program would be at a level in the organizational hierarchy superior to that of the three ministries. Institutionally, this greatly increases the chances that Agricultural Sector Development Grant II can successfully coordinate and work with natural resources management activities in all three ministries. Location in the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage might provide closer relations and better interaction with Government of Niger agencies having natural resources management activities within, or under the administrative supervision of, the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. However, only location at a

superior level in the organizational hierarchy like that offered by the Office of the Prime Ministers can provide easy access to all three ministries.

10.3. The role of a national coordinator

One possibility for reducing administrative problems and facilitating program implementation would be to establish a National Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program coordinator. If the program has a national coordinator, it will be very clear who is responsible for tracking and the satisfaction of program conditions precedent. Several additional attributions should be considered for this position. One would be to make the national coordinator responsible for administrative supervision of the program and project. Most of the program oversight would continue to be provided by the Comité de Suivi des Réformes de Politique and the Comité Technique Interministériel (or the informal combination of the two committees that presently addresses most Agricultural Sector Development Grant II problems and issues). The functional relationship between the national coordinator and the Government of Niger agency responsible for the *tutelle* of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II should be informational rather than requiring signatures.

USAID and the Government of Niger should also consider giving the position of national coordinator the attribution of official program and project coordination (as opposed to the Direction de l'Analyse, des Études Economique et Financières et de la Prévision—Ministère des Finances et du Plan). The Ministère des Finances et du Plan has not been effective at program and project coordination and most of the effort required for program coordination has fallen on the Direction des Études et de la Programmation director and the International Resources Group team. Giving the national coordinator this authority will simplify administrative procedures. If for some reason, it is not possible to make the national coordinator responsible for the official program and project coordination, this attribution should be given to the Government of Niger structure responsible for the program *tutelle*. The separation of administrative supervision and coordination seems to be a major source of confusion with regard to responsibilities, a factor which complicates administration, and a constraint to implementation which serves no useful purpose.

If a national coordinator for the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II is to be appointed, the role and attributions must be negotiated between USAID and the Government of Niger. Either the Comité de Suivi des Réformes de Politique or the Comité Technique Interministériel would seem to provide an appropriate forum for such debate. Obviously, an Agricultural Sector Development Grant II national coordinator cannot be located in the all of the Government of Niger agencies which will receive technical support. While it could be argued that the national coordinator should be located with the chief of party (perhaps again thinking of the familiar project approach), it would seem more important that he assure the administrative support for program and project activities, and be available on a full-time basis.

Whatever the outcome of the proposal to name a national coordinator, the International Resources Group should hire an administrative assistant to help the chief of party (and perhaps the National Director) with the increased administrative tasks, that will necessarily result from

the addition of the grants management unit to the International Resources Group contract. Without administrative help, there is a serious risk that the chief of party will not be able to effectively meet his other responsibilities as natural resources management advisor.

10.4. Recommendations concerning the institutional location of the program.

If Government of Niger administrative procedures can be reduced to allow program components and their respective technical assistance to function effectively dispersed over two or three institutions, the location of the technical assistance and the institutional location of the program should be treated separately. If the administrative burden is too great, then treating them as separate questions will not be possible. Logic dictates that program components and their respective technical assistance should work with those institutions which have the responsibility and mandate for the natural resources management policies and activities addressed by the component (Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, and the Direction de l'Environnement for the natural resources management component, Groupement des Aides Privées and Services des Organisations Non-gouvernementales–Direction de Développement Régional–Ministère des Finances et du Plan for the grants management unit, Direction des Études et de la Programmation and Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles component).

One of the possibilities to help reduce administrative problems and facilitate program implementation would be to establish a National Agricultural Sector Development Grant II Program Coordinator, with responsibilities for coordination and administrative supervision. In this manner it would be very clear who is responsible for the coordination of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II, and for the process of tracking and the satisfaction of program conditions precedent. It would also provide an opportunity to simplify administrative procedures between the program and project components and the administrative supervisor. The *Comité de Suivi des Réformes de Politique* and the *Comité Technique Interministériel* (or the informal combination of the two) could continue to provide program oversight. The functional relationship between the National Coordinator and the Government of Niger structure responsible for the *tutelle* of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II, should be informational, rather than requiring signatures. The National Coordinator and the program office should be located in either the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage or the Office of the Prime Minister.

Whether this is sufficient to resolve the administrative problems of having components located in different institutions is not clear. The program would seem to have the best chance of administrating this kind of institutional octopus, if it were located in the Prime Minister's Office. Administrative procedures are simpler and more direct, if the project office is located at a level in the organizational hierarchy which is superior to that where the individual components are located. If all of the components were located in the same ministry, this could be accomplished by being located in the Office of the Secrétaire Général. Because Agricultural Sector Development Grant II must attempt to work with different ministries, this requires the program office to be located in the office of the Prime Minister. (Location in any one ministry is a bit like

trying to control and coordinate the octopus from a location in one of its tentacles.)

Locating the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program in the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage would produce a more compact program organization, but with more risk of administrative problems. The Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage is hierarchically superior to the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural with regard to the natural resources management component, and to the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière with regard to the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles component. In addition to the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, the natural resources management component and advisor need to work with the Direction de l'Environnement, the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement. An accord between the program and the Direction de l'Environnement could provide a working relationship between the program and Direction de l'Environnement that would not require a lot of administrative procedure. It seems like the big problem for locating the program in Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage will be the administration and coordination of the grants management unit. A tremendous amount of administrative detail is involved in awarding and managing \$5-6 million in small grants. There is a high risk that the cumbersome administrative procedures usually required between ministries would render the grants management unit ineffective and unable to achieve its assigned program objectives. Therefore, USAID should seriously consider making the grants management unit largely autonomous of ministries, and attach it to the Groupement des Aides Privées. While it might be possible to administrate a grants management unit located in the Ministère des Finances et du Plan from a program location in the Prime Minister's office, it would be very difficult if the program office is located in Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.

Specific recommendations

- International Resources Group and USAID should enter into discussions with the Government of Niger to establish the position of a National Agricultural Sector Development Grant II Program Coordinator and the attributions of this position. Official program coordination and administrative supervision should be among the attributions considered.
- If official program coordination cannot be attributed to the National Coordinator, it should be attributed to the institution in which the program office is located (the Prime Minister's office or the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage).
- International Resources Group and USAID should enter into discussions with the Government of Niger to move the *tutelle* of the program to the office of the Prime Minister or the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.

- International Resources Group and USAID should discuss with the Government of Niger, the possibility of the natural resources management Advisor establishing an office in the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles.
- If the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent is to be continued, the revised Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles program should be focused on activities in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière and the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles Advisor should have counterparts in the personnel, equipment, finance and training services of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière, of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.
- The grants management unit should be established as a largely autonomous organization, attached to the Groupement des Aides Privées. (If the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program office is located in the Prime Minister's office it may be possible to attach it to the Services des Organisations Non-gouvernementales–Direction de Développement–Ministère des Finances et du Plan.)

PARTENAIRES DE L'ÉQUIPE IRG / SDSA II

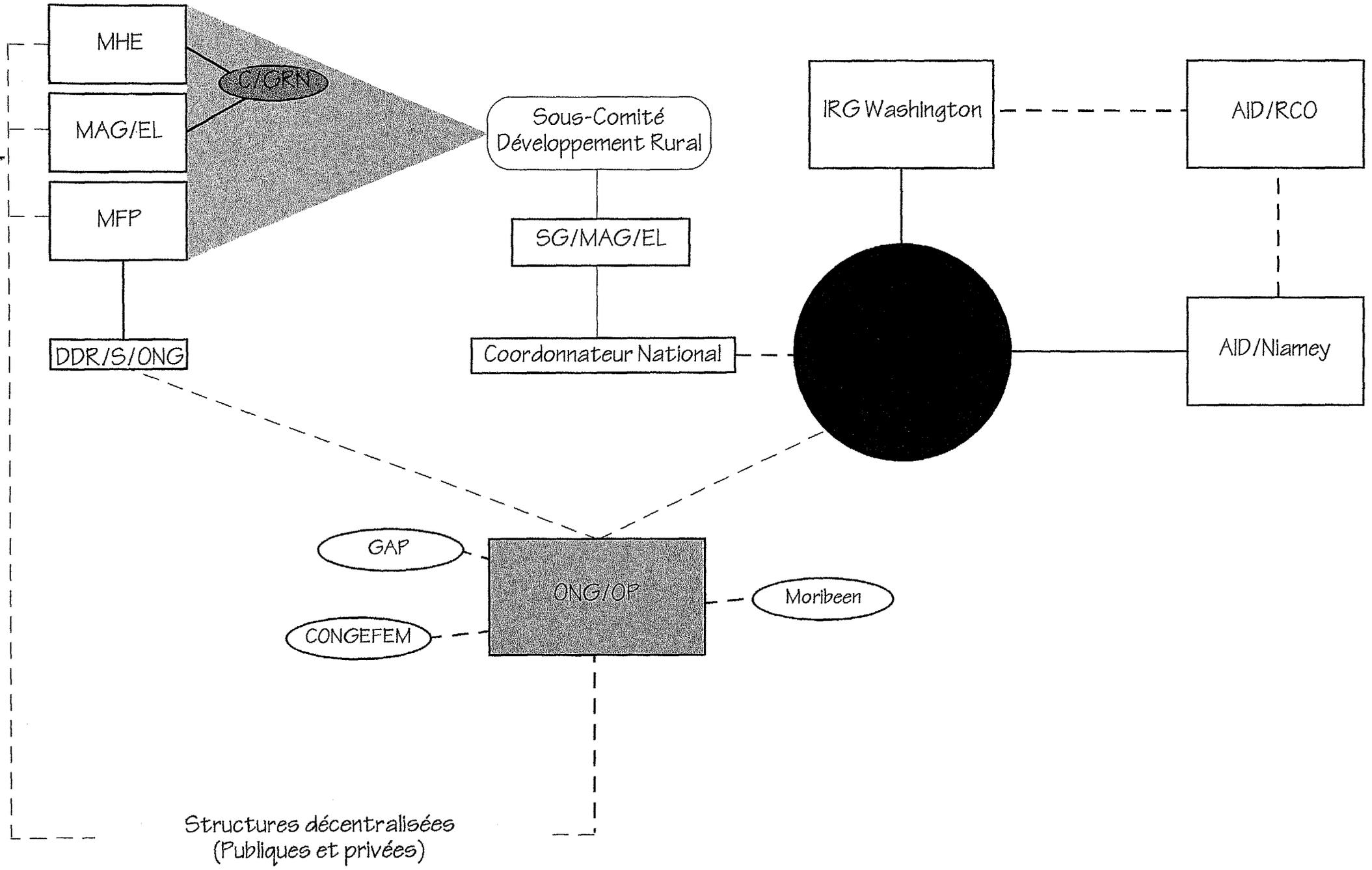
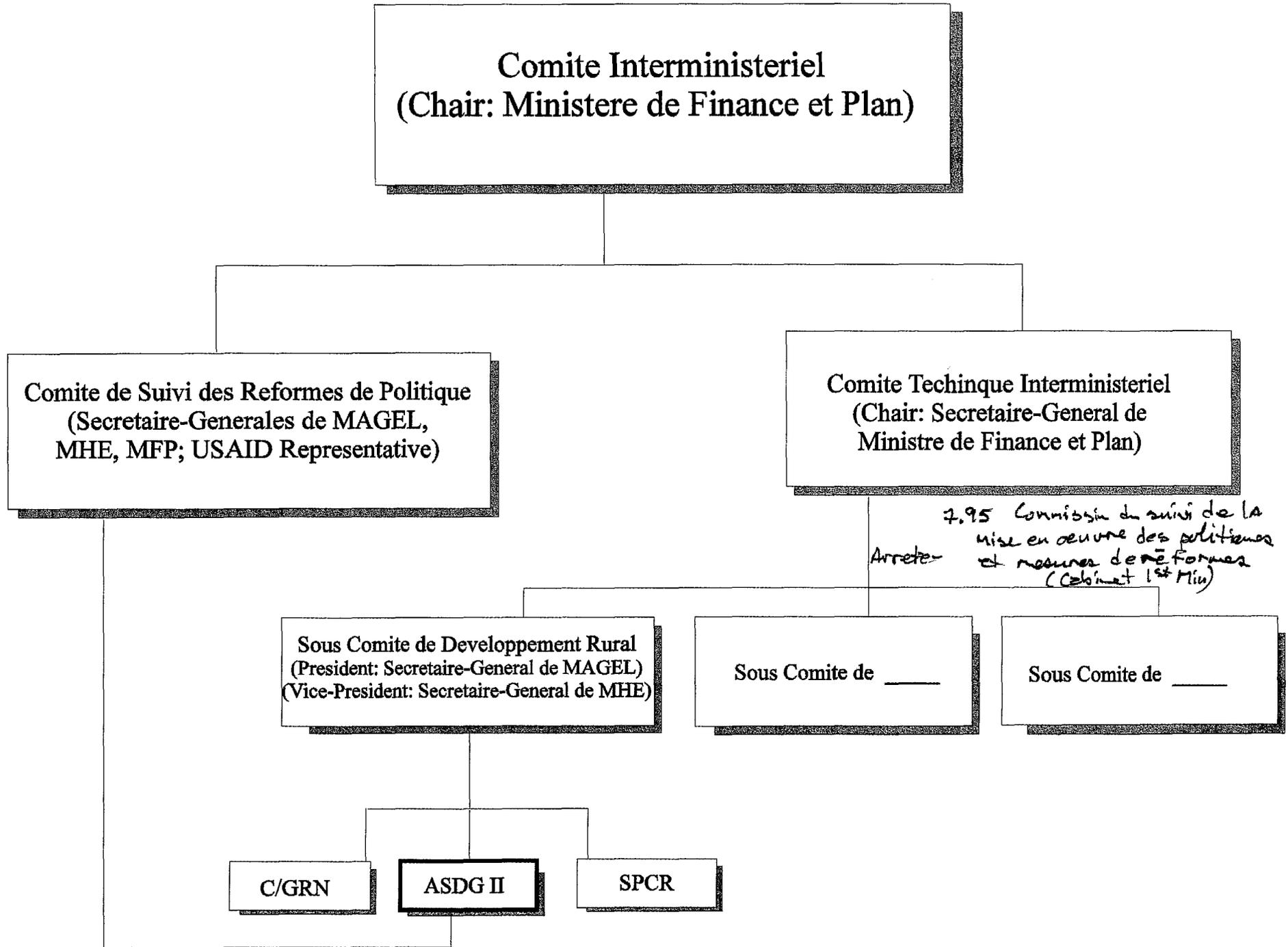


Table 3. GON and ASDG II committee structure

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See Annex F. Institutional Analysis for a description of the committee structure

11. Recommendations for Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program adjustments and reorientation

- The Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program and project should be extended for approximately three years (that is, until December 1998), to allow time to establish the nongovernmental organizations subcomponent and to return to a project implementation time frame comparable to the one originally planned.
- The International Resources Group technical assistance team should complete the program and project monitoring and evaluation plan and finalize and submit the second annual work plan.
- Niger is at an extremely important crossroads in the development of Code Rural and related resource tenure policies and regulations. USAID should consider funding a full-time resource tenure specialist to assist the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural in implementing the resource tenure reform process and establishing the regional Commissions Foncières to test proposed regulations.
- Agricultural Sector Development Grant II should consider how it could provide more balance in its natural resources management outlook. One way would be to address policies that are important to pastoralists and the livestock subsector.
- USAID should seriously consider either terminating the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent or significantly revising it along the lines suggested in the Evaluation Report. A revised Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles would also require changes in ASDG II objectives, approach, and conditions precedent, and in the terms of reference for technical assistance.
- The Government of Niger and USAID need to determine how the existing system for the disbursement of funds can be made to work more effectively, or whether a more functional system can be substituted in its place. To reduce administrative problems, a compromise should be sought which is not considered budget support by the Government of Niger, and which is not considered project funding by USAID. The Comité Technique Interministériel should meet with the Directors of Budget, Treasury and Taxes, to seek a solution to these financial problems.
- The Government of Niger should complete and submit the financial reports required in Section 4.2.A.5 of the Grant Agreement and establish procedures to ensure that future reports are submitted to USAID in a timely manner.
- Experience to date indicates that the multitude of conditions precedent hinders rather than promotes program implementation. In order to substantially streamline the conditions precedent, Agricultural Sector Development Grant II should reject the project design assumption that a condition precedent for each area of intervention in each tranche would facilitate program implementation.

- The Agricultural Sector Development Grant II needs to analyze carefully the rationale for the remaining conditionalities and any new conditions precedent that are proposed. The total list of conditionalities should be reviewed with a view to reducing their number. An existing report from an International Resources Group consultant provides a solid basis for establishing the type of process necessary for determining which conditions precedent are worth maintaining or adding. The present conditions precedent related to decentralization and the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent should be eliminated.
- The Government of Niger and USAID should clearly identify the institutions and personnel responsible for program related objectives and activities. Particular attention is needed with regard to (1) program coordination and administration and (2) the process of tracking and satisfying conditions precedent.
- Given the importance attached to improving conditions for program implementation and program performance, the Government of Niger should appoint a national Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program coordinator acceptable to USAID.
- Official responsibility for program coordination should be merged with the responsibility for administrative supervision. If possible, both should be attributed to the national program coordinator. If that is not possible, coordination should be made the responsibility of the institution chosen to provide the *tutelle* for the program.
- The *tutelle* for Agricultural Sector Development Grant II should be moved to either the Office of the Prime Minister or the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. Improving implementation and reducing administrative problems requires that the program office be located at a level in the organizational hierarchy superior to that of the organizations in which the program components are located. (This will be only partially true if located in the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, and certain precautions would therefore be necessary to avoid administrative problems.)
- If the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program office is located in the Prime Minister's office, the program should consider locating program components and their respective technical assistance to those organizations which have the mandate and responsibility for the activities targeted in the program component:
 - the natural resources management component in the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles
 - the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles component in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage (if it continues)
 - and the semiautonomous grants management unit attached to the Groupement des

Aides Privées, or possibly the Services des Organisations Non-gouvernementales—Direction de Développement Régional—Ministère des Finances et du Plan.

Alternatively, if the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program office is located in the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, the natural resources management and Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles components and their respective technical assistance could potentially be located in the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program office. In this case the grants management unit should be largely autonomous and attached to the Groupement des Aides Privées, to avoid the serious problems caused by cumbersome administrative procedures between ministries.

- The evaluation team supports the proposal of the Pre-Evaluation Mission of the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles to move the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles or natural resources management—program coordinating unit to the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The evaluation team proposes that a parallel relationship be established between the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program and the World Bank First Phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project, and the manner in which they both support the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles.
- The Agricultural Sector Development Grant II under USAID should consider establishing a limited number of conditions precedent to improve the implementation environment for the program and project. In particular, these might include:
 - A condition precedent requiring a rapid resolution, satisfactory to USAID, of the financial administration problems, i.e. accounting and fund disbursement procedures.
 - A condition precedent requiring assignment of a national coordinator acceptable to USAID to the Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program and project.
 - A condition precedent requiring the Government of Niger's agreement to move the *tutelle* of the program and project to the Office of the Prime Minister or the Office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.
 - A condition precedent requiring the Government of Niger's agreement to merge responsibility for program coordination and administrative supervision, preferable as an attribute of the national program coordinator; if that is not possible, to make responsibility for program coordination and administrative supervision an attribute of the institution providing the *tutelle* for Agricultural Sector Development Grant II.
 - A condition precedent—if the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent is retained—requiring the assignment of counterparts acceptable to USAID from the critical Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière services (personnel, equipment, finance and

training) to the institutional advisor.

- The evaluation team strongly suggests that the following concerns need to be addressed promptly and decisively by the appropriate authorities:
 - Devising a means to facilitate coordination and administration of Agricultural Sector Development Grant II activities throughout three ministries.
 - Establishing the position of a national coordinator and appropriate attributions of the office.
 - Determining the most appropriate institutional attachment for program components and their respective technical assistance.
 - Determining the most appropriate institutional location (*tutelle*) for Agricultural Sector Development Grant II and for the proposed national coordinator.
 - Scheduling regular meetings of the Comité de Suivi des Réformes de Politique or the Comité Technique Interministériel to consider Agricultural Sector Development Grant II program issues.

Annex A. Scope of work, Agriculture Sector Development Grant II Midterm Evaluation

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Article I — Title and background

Agriculture Sector Development Grant II (PROJECT NO. 683-0257/0265)

USAID Niger intends to conduct a Midterm Evaluation of the the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project to assess the program and the project's overall progress in achieving the objectives set out in the Program Assistance Approval Document, the Project Paper, the grant agreement, and the amendments to the grant agreement.

The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II is a \$28.2 million program to support the Government of Niger's aim to increase productivity and incomes in rural Niger in a sustainable manner. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II grows out of, and in its initial years coexisted with, USAID Niger's premier agricultural policy reform program titled the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I which was implemented from 1984 to 1993.

The purpose of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II is to enhance the ability of individual rural inhabitants to gain control over resources they habitually use and to manage and profit from them in a sustainable manner. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II aims to (1) establish the legal and policy framework for natural resources management, and (2) strengthen institutions that work directly with rural producers. The program's approach is based on the concept that in order to generate sustainable increases in rural production and income rural citizens must have control over the land and resources which they traditionally exploit; have access to technologies and resources from service providers that promote

sustainable production; and be able to profit from their labors with higher incomes and an improved standard of living.

In order to establish the desired legal and policy framework and to strengthen the appropriate institutions, the program has adopted the following objectives:

Policy reform objectives:

1. The formulation and implementation of a national strategy and program for natural resources management. Included under this objective is increased coordination of donor initiatives in natural resources management and the integration of biodiversity conservation concerns in national development plans.
2. The establishment of secure land tenure rights and the right by rural populations to use natural resources. This is being accomplished through support of the ongoing efforts of the Government of Niger's Permanent Secretary for the Rural Code. The Permanent Secretary for the Rural Code is conducting studies and drafting legislation to support the attainment of this objective.
3. The decentralization of decision making and executive powers regarding natural resources management issues from central government to the local level. This objective also includes training of local level institutions in the planning and execution of natural resources management activities.

Institutional strengthening objectives:

1. The enhancement of the "change agent" extension role of forestry agents which would improve the effectiveness and assure the success of participatory natural resources management programs.
2. The strengthening of nongovernmental organizations capacity in natural resources management. This will be accomplished by creating a regulatory and administrative environment conducive to nongovernmental organizations establishment and operations and by providing training and financial means to nongovernmental organizations undertaking natural resources management projects.
3. The improvement of management of human and financial resources of the Government of Niger's rural development ministries.
4. Improved conceptualization, programming, coordination, and management of the projects in the rural development investment budget.

This five-year (1990-95) program is structured into two parts: a sector grant (683-0257) and a project component (683-0265). The sector grant of \$20 million is released in consecutive tranches upon the Government of Niger's satisfaction of stipulated conditions precedent reflecting policy reforms that influence natural resources management in Niger. Local

currency generated by the release of the program's tranches contribute to the achievement of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II's objectives. Over the life of the program, a minimum of 30 percent of the total net resource transfer will be programmed to support organizations and private-sector activities. This portion of the grant will make up the nongovernmental organizations and private-sector fund that will be managed by an entity recruited for this purpose. The remaining amount will be transferred directly to selected agencies within the the Government of Niger as operational and investment budget support. The project component of the program finances technical assistance, studies, training, commodities, and evaluation and audit requirements of the program.

Status of Implementation:

The final selection of interventions undertaken by the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II was made on the basis of the Government of Niger's priorities and interests and USAID experience in Niger. Since the time of the program design through the present, the Government of Niger has given increasing attention to natural resources management in Niger. Natural resources management is the first of four principle elements of a comprehensive rural development strategy as outlined in the recently adopted Principes Directeurs d'Une Politique de Développement Rural Pour le Niger. The government has made progress in harmonizing development plans that relate to natural resources management by creating the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. The Principes d'Orientation du Code Rural were formally adopted and published in March 1993 and are now in the process of being translated into national languages and disseminated throughout the country. Several studies that relate to the satisfaction of conditions precedents have been, or are in the process of being undertaken. Conditions precedents for tranche IA were met and those for tranche IB should have been met during January-February 1994. Conditions precedents for tranche II should be well on their way to being satisfied by the middle of 1994.

Assisting the Government of Niger in implementing the program and attaining its objectives are the International Resources Group under direct contract with USAID, the University of Wisconsin's Land Tenure Center and the International Food Policy Research Institute working under cooperative agreements. The International Resources Group is the prime contractor for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II, working directly with the Planning and Studies Directorate within the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. The Land Tenure Center has a cooperative agreement to work on an intermittent basis with the Permanent Secretary of the Rural Code, providing research support to its efforts to draft and promulgate Niger's Rural Code. The International Food Policy Research Institute has been commissioned to do several studies to support the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II analytical base. In addition, a program funded the U.S. Personal Service Contractor (USPSC) and natural resources expert to work with the program. Recruitment of a U.S. private-sector entity is in progress to manage the fund for programs of nongovernmental organizations and the private sector and to provide training.

Article II — Objective

The objective of this scope of work is to provide USAID Niger with a technical assistance team to conduct a midterm evaluation of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. The evaluation will assess the program's overall progress in achieving the objectives set out in the program assistance approval document and the project paper. As this is a midterm evaluation, the Mission is particularly concerned that the evaluation assess progress and program impact, and provide useful recommendations to USAID Niger in order to improve performance and enhance program effectiveness and, if necessary, reorient the program's objectives and outputs.

Article III — Statement of work

A. Summary

The technical assistance team will conduct a midterm evaluation of the overall Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program to assess the program's implementation performance and anticipated impact at the national and local levels. The general approach and methodology employed will be to examine the progress made in achieving the purpose and objectives of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II as set out in the program assistance approval document, project paper, and grant agreement and the amendments made to the agreement. This will include analysis and measurement of the specific verifiable indicators of progress as contained in the logical framework at both the purpose and the output levels. Also, the evaluation will examine how the program relates to the Mission's CPSP conditions precedent 1992-1994 strategic objectives, related targets, and indicators. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II relates directly to the Mission's second strategic objective of increasing opportunities for sustainable agricultural production and rural enterprises. The evaluation will assess the program's potential in achieving this objective through the main indicator of "increased numbers of farmers and pastoralists using natural resources management practices that lead to sustainable agricultural production."

The evaluation team is asked to review the results to date and examine the potential of several natural resources management projects working at the local level for evidence that the Government of Niger's policy reform encouraged by the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program is linked to and does affect Niger's rural areas.

The evaluation report should make detailed recommendations pertaining to each of the policy areas, training, technical assistance, conditionality, and counterpart funds.

It is anticipated that a degree of subjective analysis and inference will be required to "measure" the actual impacts of policy conditionality. To this end, the evaluation team will be required to present the analyses upon which their conclusions and recommendations are based.

The evaluation will be organized around four basic components of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II: (1) policy reform measures, such as tenure, decentralization, coherent

natural resources management policy, and the role of forestry agents; (2) the actual, potential use and management both for the Government of Niger and nongovernmental organizations support of counterpart funds; (3) the performance of the International Resources Group technical assistance team and the collaborators such as the Land Tenure Center, the personal services contractor natural resources management resident expert and International Food Policy Research Institute; and (4) the strengthening of nongovernmental organizations, the private-sector, and other rural institutions for greater participation in natural resources management.

B. Specific tasks

1. Background Reading and Interviews:

- a. Review relevant documentation pertaining to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I program implementation, specifically those related to tranche VI; the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I final evaluation report; the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II programming documents; other donor natural resources management sector programs and projects; and the Government of Niger's documents produced with counterpart funding. The evaluation team will provide a bibliography of the documentation reviewed as part of the final evaluation report.
- b. Interview persons at USAID Niger, other donors, the Government of Niger officials and representatives of private-sector groups involved in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program management and related policy reform activities. Private-sector groups could include nongovernmental organizations, rural associations, key farmers, and the like. The evaluation team will provide a list of persons interviewed, their titles, and organizational affiliations as part of the final report.

2. Policy reform activities

- a. Compare the current situation in Niger and the situation described in the 1989-90 design and program documents with respect to the program rationale. Does the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II currently fit the Government of Niger's policy directions and strategy? Specifically, is it probable that the program will achieve its purpose of enhancing the ability of individual rural inhabitants to gain control over the resources that they use? Identify how the current situation has changed and how it has affected the real or potential impact of the existing conditions precedents.

- b. Evaluate the conditionalities for all the policy areas and verify their current validity. Determine if the original assumptions made during the the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program design are valid. Are there policy reform areas that the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II has missed that will help achieve program objectives? Are some policy areas no longer relevant?
- c. Analyze the progress made to date in implementing policy reform measures. Based on this review, the evaluation team will make recommendations for reorienting or adjusting conditionality of the conditions precedents for the remaining tranches in order to achieve positive impacts to facilitate implementation and to more fully engage the Government of Niger in the substance of policy reform.
- d. After review of API, conditions precedent and the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II indicators for impact, recommend what databases can be used. Based on this assessment, recommend specific methodologies, indicators, and databases most useful for simplified monitoring and impact assessment of the program.
- e. Review other donor (principally IBRD) natural resources management initiatives and identify program complementarities, areas of overlap and possible divergence of these programs with the purpose and objectives of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. Should, for example, USAID Niger consider cofinancing or parallel financing the proposed World Bank Programme National de Gestion des Ressource Naturelles project? Recommend ways to improve coordination with other donor's natural resources management programs.
- f. Review the status of program policy reforms accomplished under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I program with respect to positive or negative impact on the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II objectives. Access rationale of the conditionality statement in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II that "evidence must be presented that the grantee has not discontinued, reversed, or otherwise impeded any action it has taken in satisfaction of any conditions precedent under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I program."

3. Counterpart fund

- a. Review the uses of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II counterpart funds and assess their relevance to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II goals and purpose, their relationship to the stated Government of Niger strategy, and priorities for improved management of natural resources.

- b. Review the overall management and problems encountered in disbursing the counterpart funds for operational support by the Government of Niger and recommend ways to improve the effectiveness of using the resource transfer.
- c. Review the status of the nongovernmental organizations and private-sector fund and the potential of its use by nongovernmental organizations and other private-sector institutions in natural resources management.

4. Technical assistance:

- a. Review the terms of reference of the technical assistance teams and collaborators. Assess the relevancy and role of the technical assistance component to the overall program. Assess the degree the individual members and the team as a whole have fulfilled their job requirements.
- b. Determine the progress the long-term and short-term technical assistance have made in implementing the institutional development and the natural resources management components, as well as information system management, computer programming, and management training.
- c. Assess the significance and relevance of the studies performed and proposed by the technical assistance contractor, the International Resources Group, the Land Tenure Center and the International Food Policy Research Institute in terms of meeting program objectives.
- d. Determine the progress made in meeting the training objectives of the Government of Niger's counterparts and in developing increased capacity within the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. Assess the plans for training farmers through study tours and exchanges.
- e. Analyze the placement of the International Resources Group technical assistance team in terms of the team being able to perform its obligations in assisting the Government of Niger with natural resources management policy reform. Could the team be more effective if placed in another directorate, at a higher level, or even in a different location, ministry, or Government of Niger office in the government?

5. Participation of nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions in natural resources management

- a. Review the actual and potential role that nongovernmental organizations are playing in rural development, natural resources management technology transfer, and in providing feedback for the Agriculture

Sector Development Grant II policy dialogue in Niger. Identify and recommend how the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II might further enhance Nigerien nongovernmental organizations' role in natural resources management in Niger.

- b. Assess what progress has been made in improving the regulatory and administrative environment and funding opportunities conducive to nongovernmental organizations' establishment and operation. Are increased opportunities being made or have been made?
- c. Review a sample of natural resources management donor funded and nongovernmental organizations funded projects including Nigerien and international nongovernmental organizations, such as the Africare and Goure' natural resources management project to assess the effects of natural resources management policy reform at the field level. Are the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II policies linked to field needs? Are interventions such as those envisioned by the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II being used successfully by others? Are farmers adopting these interventions? What are the constraints to adoption?
- d. Access to the potential role of the technical assistance team being procured to promote nongovernmental organizations' activity and manage the nongovernmental organizations' fund in terms of meeting the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II objectives for nongovernmental organizations working in natural resources management. What will be a workable relationship with the Government of Niger, the International Resources Group, and USAID? What is the possibility of this technical assistance team managing all the counterpart funds?

Article IV — Reports

1. The contractor will submit its recommended outline of the evaluation report to USAID Niger by the end of the second week of work in Niger. The draft outline will be reviewed and any changes suggested will be considered by the team for incorporation into the final outline.
2. The contractor shall submit to USAID Niger and to the Government of Niger in form and substance acceptable to the Mission, ten copies of a typed English language text and twenty copies of a typed French language text of a preliminary report which includes the results of the analysis and examination required below. This report shall include an executive summary and allow for a minimum of five working days for USAID Niger and the Government of Niger to review prior to the team leader's departure from Niger. The team will present an oral summary of the paper to USAID and the Government of Niger in review meeting as scheduled by the Mission.

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3. The team leader will prepare a draft Project Evaluation Summary (PES) to be submitted to USAID prior to departure from Niger.
4. Based upon USAID, the Government of Niger review of the preliminary report, the contractor shall revise the report and submit twenty copies English and twenty copies French of the typed, final report with the computer disc to USAID Washington for mailing to USAID Niger within four weeks of the team leader's departure from Niger.

Article V — Technical directions

Technical directions during the performance of this delivery order will be provided by USAID Niger supervisory agricultural development officer or his or her designee.

Article VI — Term of performance

- a. The evaluation team shall consist of outside consultants and Nigerien counterparts who have first-hand experience with the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program from the cooperating Government of Niger ministries, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Hydrology and Environment, and the Ministry of Finance and Plan. The team will consult with appropriate nongovernmental organizations and other donors to gain that perspective. The team members and counterparts will be assigned specific responsibilities by the team leader.
- b. The technical assistance team will work in Niger as follows: institutional and policy analyst, six weeks; agricultural economist, four weeks; and natural resources management expert, six weeks. The team leader will be authorized an additional two weeks to finish the final evaluation report at the contractor's home office. The approximate date to begin the evaluation was the middle of March 1994.

Article VII — Qualifications of evaluation team

The technical assistance team will consist of three consultants: institutional and policy analyst; agricultural economist; and natural resources management specialist. One of the consultants will be the team leader, who in addition to carrying out his or her scope of work, will be required to coordinate the overall compilation of the final evaluation report and ensure its completion in a timely manner. The team leader must have previous experience in leading USAID evaluations. The team leader will also be responsible for all administrative and logistical support for the team. The consultants will have the following qualifications:

a. Institutional and policy analyst

Education: Doctorate in public administration, rural institutional development, or related field with emphasis on rural institutional and policy analysis.

Professional

Experience: A minimum of ten years including substantive analytical experience in natural resources management institutional and policy analysis in Sahelian Africa. This expert must have previous experience in USAID project and sector program evaluations.

Language: French capability at the minimum FSI S-3, R-3. This level must be attested to by the contracting firm in writing before the selection of the candidate. Preference will be given to candidates with FSI S-4, R-4 or better. In the case of native French speaker, fluency in English with a minimum FSI S-3, R-3, and ability in English must be attested to by the contracting firm.

b. Agricultural and Natural Resources Economist

Education: Doctorate of master's degree in agricultural and natural resources economics, or related field with emphasis on natural resources management policy.

Professional

Experience: A minimum of five years including substantive analytical experience in policy analysis in Africa, preferably, Francophone Africa. This expert must have previous experience in conducting natural resources management project and sector program evaluations.

Language: Same as above

c. Natural resources management expert

Education: Doctorate or master's degree in relevant technical field in agriculture, natural resources or forestry with emphasis on applications in the arid or semiarid tropics.

Professional

Experience: A minimum of five years including substantial experience in Sahelian Africa. This expert must have proven understanding of sustainable production systems applicable to the African context and previous experience in conducting evaluations.

Language: Same as above

d. Nigerien counterparts

The Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Elevage, Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement and the Ministry of Finance and Plan will provide top level officers to work fulltime with the above team members. They will be chosen to complement each team member and thereby provide Nigerien experience and understanding. The officers must be fully knowledgeable of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and be actively working in at least a portion of the program. The counterparts will attend all of the meetings and provide relevant input to the evaluation document and the recommendations.

Article VIII — Work days ordered

a. Functional <u>Labor Specialist</u>	Delivery Days <u>Ordered</u>	Fixed Daily <u>Rate</u> *	<u>Total</u>
Team Leader	14	\$332	4,650
Institutional and Policy Analyst	36	\$332	12,000
Agricultural and Natural Resources Economist	24	\$332	8,000
Natural Resources Expert	36	\$332	12,000
Government of Niger counterparts	108	\$30	3,350

* based on USAID FS-1 max

- b. Subject to the prior, written approval of the project officer, contractor is authorized to adjust the number of days actually employed in the performance of the work by each position specified.
- c. Contractor is authorized up to a six-day work week with no premium pay.

Article IX — Logistic support

USAID will provide office space to the extent available. The contractor is expected to rent a vehicle in Niamey. Subject to availability, USAID will provide official vehicle and driver for trips outside Niamey. Check cashing facilities and pouch usage are available in accordance with applicable Embassy rules and regulations. Embassy health unit requires all authorized users to have a complete physical examination within six months of arrival in Niger, using

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the "Medical History and Examination for Foreign Service" form DS-1843. The physical standards for foreign service duty in Niger must be met. An affirmative statement by the physician conducting each examination of such fitness and the completed DS-1843 form must be provided to the Embassy health unit for their review upon arrival. Non-U.S. citizens including green card holders are not authorized access to Embassy health unit, except in a medical emergency.

All other reasonable, allocable, and allowable logistic support will be provided by the contractor.

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Annex C. List of Contacts

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The Code Rural

Alan Nani Nouna	→	Secrétaire Permanent du Code Rural Chargé des Programmes Conseiller Juridique
Yacouba Ide		
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Ali Akilou	→	Secrétaire Permanent du Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage Directeur, Direction des Études et de la Programmation El H. Moussa Kaoura Directeur, Direction des Affaires Administratives et Financieres
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Idi Maman		
Aboy Atchabi		
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- Andrew Stancioff Technical Assistant at AGRHYMET OMM - USAID, Niamey
- Laurin Blum Fulbright Researcher, Flingue

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The International Resources Group technical assistance team

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Malcolm Versel →	The International Resources Group, and Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor
Sidi Aboubacar /	Liaison with the Planning and Studies Directorate of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage
Jean-Pierre Perier	Consultant to the International Resources Group, (ENDA, Dakar, Senegal)

The Land Tenure Center

William Thiesenhusen	Director, the Land Tenure Center, Madison, Wisconsin
Tidiane N'Gaido	Resercher, the Land Tenure Center, Niamey

The Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation Program

Roger Guichard	RONCO Team COP
John McMillan	Consultant, RONCO
Jack Packard	Nongovernmental organizations specialist, RONCO

Other donor projects

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Soumana Kassaoura	Directeur, Projet Dollol Bosso Nord, CECI
Claudette Brodeur	Directrice Administrative, Project Dollol Bosso Nord, CECI
Boukata Boureima	Directeur du Project PI, Projet d'Aménagement de Terroirs/Dallol Bosso Sud, Birni N'Gaouré

Volunteer organizations

Yves Pelletier	Directeur, AFVP, Niamey
Ken Patterson	Assistant Director of AFCL, Peace Corps Niger
Marcia McKenna	Assistant Director of Rural Development, Peace Corps Niger
Daniel McCormick	Volunteer, Peace Corps, Niamey

Nongovernmental organizations

} Paul Wild Carol Wild David Weight John Soloninka	Project Director, Africare, Gouré
	Agro-forestry Advisor, Africare, Gouré
	Africare, Niamey
	West Africa Regional Representative, Lutheran World Relief, Niamey
Anada Tiéga	Niger Director, The World Conservation Union or Union mondiale pour la nature 72-40-06.
Tom Price	Niger Deputy Director, the World Conservation Union
Peter Kristensen	The World Conservation Union, Niamey
Bouremima Dodo ?	Secrétaire General, Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Élevage au Niger (AREN), Niamey
Hassane Ibrahima ?	Chargé de Projet, Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Élevage au Niger, Niamey
Deborah Taylor ?	Volontaire Canadien, Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Élevage au Niger/APRN, Niamey
Balma I. Yahaya ?	Administrateur du Projet, Catholic Relief Services, Niamey

Kamaye Moussa
Gambo Ahmadou
Ayinde Guillaume
Ide Djermakoye

President, Groupement des Aides Privées, Niamey
Tresorier, Groupement des Aides Privées, Niamey
Secrétaire Permanent, Groupement des Aides Privées, Niamey
Organisation Nigérienne pour le Développement à la Base du
Potentiel Humain

Maustapha Saléy

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Technicienne supérieure de l'action sociale, Caritas-Niger,
Niamey

Rabiou Husanie
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ONVPE - 72-30-66

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Natural Resources Management Specialist, Agriculture, Natural
Resources and Private-sector Development, departing

David Miller

Natural Resources Management Specialist, Agriculture, Natural
Resources and Private-sector Development, arriving

Michael Sullivan
Winfield Collins
Charles Habis
Nancy Lwenthal
Cristy Collins
Mark McGuire

GDO
GDO
HPN Office Head, GDO
HPN, GDO
DRU Office Head, GDO
FEWS, GDO

Consultants

Thomas Cook	Prism Consultant, Research Triangle Institute (RTI)
Mary Young	Prism Consultant, RTI
Thomas Catterson	Forestry Consultant, LWS
Robin Maille	Forestry Support Service USDA
Susan Gannon	Consultant, LWS

Other donors

Rames Abhukara	Second Secretary, Coopération Canadienne, Niamey
Salifou Mahaman	} Conseillier en Agriculture et Environnement, Coopération Canadienne, Niamey
Anastase Gamba	
Francis Mody	World Bank, Niamey
Madiéké Niang	World Bank, Niamey

Salifou Mahaman → 73.49.66/56.16

M. Coulibaly PAKP 72-32-96./59-88

Annex D. Evaluation Methodology

The Midterm Evaluation of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project seeks to provide information to USAID and the Government of Niger's decision makers regarding program progress and ways to improve program performance. Following normal USAID evaluation methodology, the evaluation does not attempt to make decisions concerning reorientation of the program. It does provide recommendations in the form of alternatives for enhancing program effectiveness.

The evaluation team began the evaluation process by reviewing relevant documentation regarding the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project and natural resources management issues and activities in Niger. The scope of work for the evaluation was reviewed and a preliminary outline was established for the evaluation report. This outline was discussed with the project officer and revised to ensure that it adequately covered both the important specific questions in the scope of work and the general needs of the USAID mission. When Nigerian counterparts became available, the questionnaire was discussed among the entire team. The team, which consisted of an external consultant and a counterpart, were designated responsibility for each section of the outline. This organization was intended to ensure that a national and an external perspective would be available for each section.

The team members made a limited number of field trips to feel out the conditions under which natural resources management programs and activities operate in Niger. Interaction with project personnel and farmers provided information about both the accomplishments of and constraints to natural resources management activities at the field level. It also permitted an assessment of the relative importance of different policy issues at the field level.

Much of the evaluation team's effort was focused on interviewing government officials and personnel from projects, donor organizations and nongovernmental organizations and other people working with the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II or natural resources management programs and activities. About 100 people were interviewed to gather information and a cross section of opinions regarding the program and key issues in natural resources management in Niger. While some interviews were attended by the entire team, frequently the team divided into groups to address issues related to specific programs or activities.

The combination of field trips and interviews, both in Niamey and in the field, also helped to offset the lack of a program and project monitoring program. Impact indicators have not yet been chosen, and a monitoring and evaluation plan has not yet been established for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. Program conditions precedent and planned program and project outputs were found to be very good indicators of progress in the program and project implementation.

Following an intensive period of field visits and interviews, the team members took a few days to write analyses of their respective sections of the report outline. Thereafter each team member presented his major findings and recommendations for consideration by the entire team. The original draft of the evaluation report's recommendations grew out of this meeting.

During the course of the evaluation, two debriefings were presented for USAID and two for the Government of Niger. An issues paper was presented at the initial USAID debriefing and subsequently used in discussions with the project administrator and technical assistants. A draft evaluation summary was presented and used as the basis of discussion for the final USAID and Government of Niger debriefings. This summary was translated into French to serve as a basis for the final Government of Niger debriefing.

Annex E.

USAID/Niger ASDG II Project - Inventory List (Summary)
International Resources Group, Ltd.
as of 2 March 1994

				Page 1 of 1	
CATEGORY	ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QTY	COST US\$	SUB-TOTAL US\$
Computer Hardware	cpu	Compaq ProSignia	1	3,999.00	
	cpus	Compaq Prolinea 4/50	4	8,400.00	
	monitors	Compaq 151 FS	2	1,010.00	
	monitors	Compaq 14" SVGA	2	1,010.00	
	monitor	CTX 14" Colour	1	319.00	
	notebooks	Toshiba Satellite T1850	2	4,200.00	
	printer	Canon BubbleJet	1	299.00	
	printer	Smart Label Plus	1	249.00	
	printer	Okidata ML 591	1	710.00	
	printers	HP LaserJet 4	4	5,980.00	
	CD-Rom	NEC	1	489.00	
	Scanner	HP ScanJet 2C	1	1,395.00	
	spare parts	hard & floppy drives, french keybd		1,182.00	
	softwares	W/Perfect, Lotus, SmartSuite etc		1,365.00	
Electrical, computer related	suppressors	McMaster-Carr surge suppressors	8	526.32	
	transform- ers	McMaster-Carr step- down transformer	2	286.56	
	suppressors	Safety line	2	389.23	
	regulator	American Power 1250 kva	1	87.50	
	regulators	Tripplite line condi- tioner LC1200/1.2kva	4	1,076.92	
	regulators	Tripplite line condi- tioner LC2000/ 2kva	4	1,196.68	
	ups	Smart UPS 600kva	4	1,333.36	
	ups	Best 660kva	1	650.00	
	batteries	Caterpillar 100amp	2	646.32	
Photocopier	copier	Xerox 5017	1	4,198.08	4,198.00
Communi- cations	modems	US Robotics external fax/modem	2	550.00	
	phone	Bosh Telecom System (std + 4 exts)	1	3,500.00	
	fax	Xerox fascimile	1	1,638.46	
					5,688.46
Furniture	cabinets	3-drawer filing cabinet	2	766.77	
	chair	Swivel chair	1	397.63	
					1,164.40
Vehicles	vehicles	Toyota Station Wagon 4x4 HZJ80	2	65,000.00	65,000.00
					65,000.00
				TOTAL	112,850.75

date: 20th. June 1994

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Appendix F. Institutional Analysis: Agricultural Sector Development Grant II

by John A. Lichte, TR&D consultant
(Institutional Specialist and Midterm Evaluation Team Leader)

1. Overview of progress in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program

1.1. Chronology of the development and implementation of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II to date

The Agricultural Sector Development Grant II project was authorized on August 21, 1990, as a five-year project with a project assistance completion date of December 31, 1995. The original authorization was for a \$20 million dollar program component and a \$5 million project component. The project component authorization was amended August 25, 1992, to increase it to \$8.2 million.

The grant agreement was signed and the initial obligation of tranche 1 for \$5 million was made on August 24, 1990. The grant agreement was amended on July 29, 1991, to increase the program component authorization to \$10 million and to increase the project component authorization from \$2 million to \$3,472,000. Both the program grant agreement and the limited scope grant agreement were amended a second time in 1992 (August 21 and 31, respectively). Amendment number two to the program component split tranche I of the program funding into two tranches of \$2.5 million each, and also allocated the conditions precedent for tranche IA and tranche IB. This was accomplished by applying the conditions precedent that had already been met to tranche IA, allowing the release of the first \$2.5 million in August 1992. At the same time the project component obligation was amended to add \$2.5 million, increasing it to \$5,972,000.

A third amendment to the project component, signed on April 21, 1993, added another \$1 million for a total obligation of \$6,972,000. A third amendment to the program component (about June 1994), will split tranche II. Tranche IIA will consist of \$3.25 million for the Government of Niger's structure budget support, and tranche IIB will provide \$1.75 million for nongovernmental organizations and local, private-sector institutions. The amendment allocates the six or seven conditions precedent that will be satisfied by July or August, 1994, to tranche IIA so that the budget support can be released more rapidly. This budget support will be divided, 60 percent for investment and 40 percent for operational support.

The conditions precedent for tranche IIB may be satisfied near the end of 1994 if the existing financial blockage can be lifted so that funds are accessible to finance condition precedent related activities. The Comité Technique Interministériel has agreed to allocate 70 percent of tranche IIB to nongovernmental organizations and 30 percent to other private-sector organizations.

Niger traversed a period of political instability shortly after the project was designed. A national conference was held intermittently from July through November 1991 to determine Niger's political future. A transition government ruled from December 1991 to April 1993, when a new government was democratically elected. First the transition government, then the newly elected government, had many preoccupations other than the conditions precedent of this program and project, including a financial crisis that still existed in July 1994. By partitioning the first tranche and its conditions precedent, the Government of Niger was permitted to qualify for a first disbursement of funds two years after the project design (August 1992).

USAID encountered difficulties establishing the terms of reference for the technical assistance contract, delaying the awarding of the primary technical assistance contract until January 1993. The technical assistance team was put in place from March to May 1993, just as the democratically elected regime was coming to power. More than half of the original five-year program and project time frame had expired before the technical assistance team arrived. Tranche IB, financing for the nongovernmental and private-sector subcomponent, was released in late May 1994, but the scope of work for this component's technical assistance has not yet been finalized. Thus, this major subcomponent, which is to receive one-third of the total program funding, had yet not started in July 1994.

No spending from program funds has been possible since December 31, 1993, because of problems in routing funds through the treasury and national budget. The use of the treasury and national budget administrative process is related to use of the program funds as budget support. Unfortunately, the Government of Niger and program assistance approval document authors had different definitions and expectations of budget support.

So far, the Government of Niger's performance in satisfying conditions precedent for the release of funds has been slow. Unfortunately, even when funds became available, USAID was not ready to initiate the corresponding technical assistance contracts, delaying the project progress even further.

The project should be extended three years to re-establish a project time frame comparable to that originally planned. This extension should not create any serious problems for the nonproject assistance program, but implies the need for potentially significant additions in project funding.

1.2. Relationship between the program and the strategy of the USAID Niger's Mission

The mission strategy is stated in the USAID and NIGER Country Program Strategic Plan and Concept Paper. The goal of the mission strategy is to "promote sustainable market-based economic growth while emphasizing locally managed resources and reduced population growth." The mission has two strategic objectives: one for family planning, maternal and child health care; and a second for natural resources management, including agriculture and rural development. This second strategic objective is to "increase the opportunities for sustainable agricultural production and rural enterprises." Specific targets under this objective

are to "increase individual and community control of natural resources, and increase participation in and output of private-sector activities."

Natural resources management is a critical issue in Niger. Natural resources are few, and they suffer from overuse and misuse. Depleted soils, overcut forests, pasture lands under stress, and erratic water supplies are evidence of human pressure on the environment in the continuing presence of wide irregularities in rainfall. The government's emphasis on patrolling and controlling natural resources, practices that are widely perceived by local residents as coercive, limits the extent to which people gain a direct stake in the consequences, negative as well as positive, of their actions. Better ways must be found to encourage rural inhabitants to control and manage the resources they use in a way that will sustain the productive base.

the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II is designed to improve the policy environment with regard to natural resources management in order to promote improved local resources management and use. Policy reform is expected to relieve constraints to or provide incentives for improved natural resources management. The Government of Niger and donors agree that some of the important areas where policies are a constraint include land and resource tenure, decentralization of natural resources management and other activities, more effective coordination of natural resources management and development programs, the incorporation of biodiversity concerns, transformation of forestry field agent roles, broadening the role for nongovernmental organization and private-sector participation in natural resources management and development activities, and improved delivery of technical services by the Government of Niger agencies. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II has an intervention in each of these areas where policies are considered to be a constraint. While there is a heavy focus on policy, the nongovernmental organizations and private-sector subcomponent will fund field level activities. These activities will focus on increasing productivity while maintaining or improving the natural resource base, which will increase rural incomes and well being.

1.3. Project component inputs

1.3.1. Dollar disbursements

Tranche IA of \$2.5 million was released in August 1992. For reasons discussed in section four, these funds are still being disbursed. Tranche IB of \$2.5 million was released in late May 1994. This tranche is reserved for nongovernmental organization activities, but the management unit for these funds is not yet established. Tranche 2 will split so part of the funds can be released more rapidly to provide budget support for the Government of Niger's structures.

1.3.2. Technical assistance

The primary technical assistance contract was awarded to International Resources Group in January 1993 and the natural resources management advisor (chief of party) and institutional advisor were put in place during the period from March to May 1993. Plans are to amend the International Resources Group contract to include technical assistance and staff for a grants management unit which will manage the program funds set aside to finance natural resources management related nongovernmental organization activities. But the terms of reference for this amendment are not yet finalized.

The International Resources Group and DATEX subcontract was approved in November 1993, and has been used primarily for short-term consultants to help with studies and to facilitate workshops.

The Land Tenure Center cooperative agreement was awarded on December 31, 1991. After some delay in recruiting, the Land Tenure Center research assistant arrived in Niger in November 1993.

1.3.3. Training

Some limited computer applications training has been provided to personnel of the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage by International Resources Group's computer technician. Unfortunately neither of the technical assistants have counterparts with whom they work regularly and systematically. The effectiveness of the on-the-job-training which they provide to people with whom they are working may be limited.

The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II has helped finance, and International Resources Group has helped facilitate, a number of workshops including workshops on the role of the forester, a workshop on monitoring and evaluation of natural resources management activities, and a national and regional workshop on farm parklands.

The International Resources Group and DATEX subcontract has been used primarily to prepare and facilitate training workshops, particularly the management by objectives workshop (January 24–February 5, 1994) and the environmental information system workshop (preparations in March 1994 and workshop held June 13–17, 1994).

1.3.4. Commodities

Commodities provided under the International Resources Group contract include two vehicles, five desktop, and two notebook computers with related peripherals and the necessary equipment to regulate electrical supply, a photocopier, and a small amount of office furniture. Please see the commodity inventory in Annex E.

1.3.5. Studies

Studies completed under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II auspices include the biological diversity study completed by the World Wildlife Fund, the natural forest management study, the study on nongovernmental organization regulations as part of the nongovernmental organizations workshop, and the environmental information system study.

Studies in progress under the International Resources Group contract include the study on the role of the forester, two institutional studies, and the decentralization study done by the International Resources Group to complement the Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dans le Sahel decentralization study. The institutional studies had one study on information systems for the management of human, material, and financial resource in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the other on human potential and assignment policies in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.

The Land Tenure Center research assistant is involved in an ongoing study of patterns of conflict with regard to resource tenure, which will help monitor the evolution of progress on the Code Rural. The Land Tenure Center will also review the Code Rural study on *mise en valeur*. To date, the Land Tenure Center has produced four major studies (Ngaido, 1993a; Loofboro, 1993; Terraciano, 1993; Ngaido, 1993b), a commissioned paper (Leiz, 1993), a report on a workshop (McLain, 1993), and an issue paper (Ngaido, 1994) that are directly related to Nigerien resource tenure and usufruct issues.

1.3.6. Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation system is not yet in place. However, considerable time and effort has been spent on determining appropriate indicators. The International Resources Group team consulted with four natural resources management specialists from USAID, with the World Bank Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project review team, and with WRI and AGRYHMET on appropriate indicators and monitoring approaches. Detailed International Food Policy Research Institute surveys of rural inhabitants may provide some indications of important natural resources management factors that would have implications for selecting indicators.

This midterm evaluation is being undertaken two years and nine months after the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II was authorized, but only one year after the technical assistance team's arrival and project inception.

1.3.7. Audit

Funds are available for a "compliance audit" if deemed necessary by USAID or the Government of Niger and the USAID steering committee. Independent, nonfederal audits will assess the management of the nongovernmental organizations and private-sector fund and its

activities. The International Resources Group contract's project activities were audited in March 1994.

2. Progress related to priority program assistance approval document and project paper outputs and activities by component

2.2. Institutional component

The institutional component consists of two subcomponents: the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent and a nongovernmental organizations and private-sector subcomponent. The objective of the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent is to improve the delivery of technical services at the field level through a combination of policy reform and institutional strengthening. Working with the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage,¹ the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent strategy is to improve resources management by the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage through improvements in the ministry's administrative and management procedures and policies. Attainment of the objectives is complicated by the fact that most of the important policies in question are governmentwide and not under the control of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The implementation strategy implied in the program assistance approval document and project paper and in the conditions precedent is oriented toward replacing existing administrative and management methods with procedures based on high-tech, computerized, U.S.-style management and administrative tools. The strategy seems to expect that these tools will produce the same type of results they would produce under U.S. conditions.

The nongovernmental organization and private-sector subcomponent is devoted to strengthening local participation in natural resources management. The implementation strategy is to make a minimum of 30 percent of the program funds, or approximately \$5.5 million, available to support the natural resources management activities of nongovernmental organizations, cooperatives, village associations, and private-sector organizations. A grants management unit will be established under the International Resources Group contract to manage these program funds and to promote natural resources management activities by these local institutions. Recent Government of Niger policy is to support such institutions and lessen restrictions on grassroots activity. Participatory local institutions are a recent development and require support for institutional development if they are to take on an important role in local natural resources management and development activities.

¹ The program assistance approval document clearly expected the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement to be integrated into a single ministry. The institutional advisor has also tried to work on similar activities with the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement.

2.2.1. Information systems for better resources management, Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage

The 1993 work plan for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent was extremely ambitious. Many of the activities have not been completed. One of the major activities of the institutional advisor has been the preparation of a questionnaire on job descriptions and job holders. It provides data on the responsibilities and activities of personnel positions and on the career experience and training background of the human resources filling these positions. It also includes an evaluation by the hierarchical supervisor of personnel competency and training needs to allow personnel to better accomplish their duties in relation to each post. The questionnaire would allow the establishment of databases that would permit better personnel management, including derivation of training plans, career path tracking, and the distribution of personnel by region and by categories such as area of functional skill, age, grade, and so forth, etc.

The questionnaire was primarily prepared with informal collaboration from a group of personnel from the Direction des Études et de la Programmation, the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, the Direction de l'Environnement, and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement. However, the collaboration of this group fell apart when an attempt was made to formalize the work group which had participated on the questionnaire design. Agents assigned to participate in the development of a terms of reference for a study on human potential and the policies affecting personnel assignment lacked the requisite experience to contribute effectively.

To test the questionnaire in the Tillabéri *arrondissement*, a formal letter addressed to the Department Services of Agricultural, Livestock, and Environment via the Ministry of the Interior was required. Of the fifteen agents in each service targeted for the test, only six agents in the Environment Service returned questionnaires. The other thirty-nine were not forthcoming, even after a follow-up mission to Tillabéri by the institutional advisor. Since November there has been no effort to retest the questionnaire. The reasons for this lack of follow through on the part of the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage are not clear.

The Directorate of Environment was able to have about 100 personnel successfully fill out of these questionnaires and return them to the institutional advisor for processing, with another 200 are expected shortly. A personnel database was established by the institutional advisor containing the information from the questionnaires. At this point, the database contains only information about the Direction de l'Environnement personnel. The Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière director of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement reported to the evaluation team, in the presence of her Secrétaire Général, that she is angry that this was done in the Direction de l'Environnement without the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière involvement and that she will no longer work with the Gestion,

Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles program until formal rules of collaboration are established. The chef de personnel of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière told the evaluation team that he could not collaborate with the institutional advisor to retest the questionnaire until he received a formal notice from his superiors.

Another important activity of the institutional advisor was an analysis of the financial system and the process of accounting and disbursement of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program funds. He documented the twenty-two steps in the fund disbursement process for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program funds and many of the problems working through this system. He also provided a report on expenditures to date in September and again in November 1993.

A formal study of the existing management information systems was not part of the original work plan, although a terms of reference for such a study was a condition precedent. After progress stalled on use of the questionnaire, a terms of reference was prepared for a study of information systems on human resources, equipment, infrastructure, and financial resources of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. Preparation of the terms of reference began in November 1993, and they were finalized in early March 1994.

While some progress has been made, much of the work of developing computerized management information systems awaits the results of this study. In the three months since the terms of reference were finalized, the contractor and subcontractor have been unable to find and field consultants to implement the study.

Some training of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage staff members in computer use has begun, but it has not progressed very far on the basis of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II activities. It appears that the computer specialist has been viewed more as a computer technician and consultant than as a trainer. Training on the computerized information systems awaits the design of the systems. The institutional advisor does not have a direct counterpart in the personnel, equipment, and financial services or persons that he works with directly on a daily basis with regard to Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles activities. Therefore, the institutional advisor's management and computer skills do not provide on-the-job training to anyone on a day-to-day basis.

(1) Design and installation of a Geographic Information System, (2) development of an action plan to establish systems for subsectoral and regional information systems, and (3) establishing job descriptions for the Direction des Études et de la Programmation in two *arrondissements* have not begun.

2.2.2. Development of personnel training and assignment policy, Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage

As mentioned above, a questionnaire was designed to provide much of the data it needed to meet this objective, but, has not been implemented in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de

l'Élevage after an initial test resulted in the questionnaires not being filled out. Successful use with about 100 respondents in the Direction de l'Environnement indicates that the questionnaire itself is not at fault. Why the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage have not followed through and used this questionnaire is not clear. A second terms of reference was finalized in mid-March 1994 for a study of the human potential and personnel assignment policy in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. As with the study of information systems, the contract and subcontractor have not yet been able to find and field consultants to implement the study.

2.2.3. Design of a program budgeting system and guide for conformity of donor projects with program budget objectives, Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage

Two workshops were held between January 24 and February 5, 1994, to introduce more than the sixty personnel from the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, and the Ministère de Finance et Plan to the concept of management by objectives. The primary focus was on communication rather than budgeting. The evaluation team found that personnel interviewed believe that this training was very useful and that this approach could help them clarify objectives, tasks, functions, and the organization necessary to improve performance. Many participants report that they redesigned their work plans after the workshop using what they had learned to make their work plans more objective.

The design of a management by objective and program budgeting systems for the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage has progressed very little. The management by objectives workshop trained many directors and *chefs de service* in concepts that can help them improve the organization of their agency's activities, within the limits of the means they have available. It is less clear how to apply a program budgeting system to the ministry as a whole, when both programs and budgets are often set by the political process. While a plan that balances budget and program can be designed, there is little chance that the political process will allocate sufficient operating funds to maintain the planned balance.

In 1992, the Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage printed a "Bilan d'exécution des projets sous-tutelle du Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage." In this document, the Direction des Études et de la Programmation refined some of the rules of project design, programming, coordination, and management.

2.2.4. Strengthening the participation of nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions in natural resources management

A workshop on the role and future of national nongovernmental organizations in Niger was held February 21-25, 1994, under the auspices of the Ministère de Finance et Plan of the

Direction de Développement Régional and with support from the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. One of the four commissions reviewed regulations governing nongovernmental organizations during this workshop. A law (No. 91 006) of 1991 and a decree (No. 92/292/PM/MF/P) modified the 1984 law (Ordonnance No. 84 06), which was considered a constraint on the role of nongovernmental organizations. The change primarily defines development of nongovernmental organizations as not-for-profit associations, autonomous from state control, and aiding development through social and economic activities. The commission found that the regulations are no longer a constraint and do not need to be modified further. The report indicates that continuing problems are due to the incorrect interpretation and the lack of strict application of the existing regulations by government agencies. It may also be in part a question of attitude. Many government personnel interviewed by the evaluation team perceive that nongovernmental organizations, associations, and other local, private-sector institutions are organizations that compete with the Government of Niger's technical services in terms of mandate and funding. Many of these bureaucrats do not favor reducing the role of government technical services by expanding the role of these other organizations. The Government of Niger's policy toward nongovernmental organizations has changed much faster than peoples' attitudes.

USAID agreed in principle to establish a grants management unit for the management of a local currency fund to finance the activities and institutional development of nongovernmental organizations and other local institutions. The tranche IB of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II which will finance this local currency fund has been released, and USAID is in the process of finalizing a scope of work for the grants management unit contract.

A roundtable between nongovernmental organizations, the Government of Niger, and donors is presently scheduled for August–September 1994. A committee has met regularly since the February workshop to prepare the roundtable. While the date may slide a little, good progress has been made in organizing the roundtable.

5. Technical assistance

5.1. Review of the terms of reference of the International Resources Group, the Land Tenure Center, and the International Food Policy Research Institute's technical assistance teams

5.1.1. International Resources Group

A general statement of work for the contractor, as opposed to specific terms of reference for the individual technical assistants, reads, "the technical assistance team will be responsible for assisting the Government of Niger to monitor the achievement of policy reform measures and to assist the government to accomplish the outputs described in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. The contractor's team, in collaboration with their ministry counterparts, will be responsible for monitoring the rate at which policy reform steps are

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being accomplished, suggesting areas in which technical assistance might be needed, and providing technical assistance in the areas requested of them by the Government of Niger. The Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage is not expected to require technical assistance to meet all of the conditions precedent and to plan and implement all of the policy reform steps. However, one indicator of success of the technical assistance will be the effectiveness of the Government of Niger in meeting the conditions precedent and the policy reform objectives. The technical assistance contract is funded separately and payments are not dependent upon satisfaction of the conditions precedent." [International Resources Group, Contract Number 624-0265-C-00-3026-00, page 12.]

While nonspecific and equivocal, this general statement of work might easily give one the impression that the primary purpose of the International Resources Group technical assistance team is to intervene in the process of tracking the satisfaction of program conditions precedent and, therefore, to facilitate the disbursement of funds. However, this interpretation is not supported in the responsibilities and specific duties assigned to each technical assistance position. The primary responsibilities of the two International Resources Group technical assistants are to help plan and implement technical activities necessary to achieve policy reform measures stipulated in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II grant agreement and evaluate the impact of those reforms.

- The major assignment of the institutional advisor is to design and put into place management systems in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.
- The natural resources management advisor is to assist the Government of Niger in implementing and evaluating the project and policy reform activities of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II and to strengthen the coordination and programming capacity of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.
- The chief of party, who is the natural resources management advisor, is also charged to help draft the required plans for policy reforms to be carried out upon successive disbursements of grant funds according to the tranche schedule to which the Government of Niger and USAID agreed.

Each technical assistance has a number of specific implementation duties related to the reform of specific policies and procedures, but none is related to the process of satisfying conditions precedent per se. However, many of these reforms are also the subject of specific conditions precedent for disbursement of program funds.

USAID, International Resources Group, and the Government of Niger appear to have different interpretations of these terms of reference. The Government of Niger's interpretation seems to be that the primary function of the International Resources Group technical assistance is to do whatever is necessary to track and satisfy conditions precedent in order to facilitate the disbursement of program funds. This interpretation is at least in part based on an assumption that since USAID insisted on imposing 61 itemized conditions in 48 different conditions precedent for the release of what it claims is "budget support," USAID should provide the

technical assistance to track and satisfy the conditions precedent. The USAID and International Resources Group interpretation is that the primary role of the technical assistance is to provide training and technical assistance for natural resources management related policy reform and activities, which in many cases will satisfy specific conditions precedent related to the release of funds. This latter interpretation implies that the Government of Niger needs to accept the primary responsibility for the process of tracking and satisfying the conditions precedent that lead to the disbursement of funds.

To date (June 1994), the International Resources Group team has not yet finalized a work plan for 1994. But this does not mean that its activities are not planned. In fact, the action plans for satisfying conditions precedent have largely replaced a normal project work plan as the basis upon which activities are organized. The action plan is updated approximately monthly by the chief of party to identify recent and upcoming activities that contribute to the satisfaction of particular conditions precedent for the upcoming tranche. The program and project activities tend to be focused on specific conditions precedent in the upcoming tranche that have not yet been satisfied. With political pressure from the Government of Niger, the ambassador, USAID, and Washington to satisfy the conditions precedent in order to disburse the program funds, this process takes priority over any longer term planning that might be established.

While the disbursement of funds is important to everyone involved, the priority given to this short-term planning horizon is not appropriate for determining the most effective and efficient use of program and project resources over the life of the program. This dominance of short-term condition precedent satisfaction is one of the problems of having so many conditions precedent in the program design. It is also a function of the responsibility placed on the International Resources Group team for the satisfaction of the conditions precedent because no individual or office in the Government of Niger is specifically responsible or concretely provides management of the process of tracking and satisfying the conditions precedent.

5.1.2. Land Tenure Center

The focus of the Land Tenure Center's cooperative agreement is on studies to be undertaken in collaboration with the Rural Code Committee, which supports the development and implementation of a Rural Code (see also the report of the natural resources management specialist, Annex K). The Land Tenure Center also accepts responsibility for the design and implementation of a system will monitor the progress of the Rural Code process and the impact of changes in tenure on the management of natural resources. In addition, the Land Tenure Center agrees to train six individuals in land tenure theory and practice (six Nigeriens attended a workshop in Mbour Senegal in 1992), assist in incorporating study findings into the Rural Code, collaborate with the International Resources Group technical assistance (who are responsible for the communication of Rural Code legislation to the rural population and for training local authorities), and to assist USAID in drafting conditions precedent for tranches II-IV, related to security of tenure.

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The Land Tenure Center has either accomplished or has made significant progress on the objectives agreed to in the cooperative agreement. A number of studies have been produced, and a monitoring system is being designed by the Land Tenure Center research assistant. In addition to producing studies, working on a monitoring system, advising the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, and serving as the Land Tenure Center representative in Niger for administrative purposes, the research assistant has contributed to the efforts to plan the popularization of the Code Rural, the organization of workshops on popularization, and the impact of the Code Rural, training of the *commissions foncières*, and a regional conference in Praia on decentralization and land tenure.

The Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural is in the process of reviewing the Land Tenure Center's studies to assess the recommendations of each study and determine what findings warrant being incorporated into the Code Rural process. Individual reactions to the studies are quite varied. At one extreme there are individuals who believe that the time for study is past and that it is now time to get on to the real work of implementing the Code Rural process. On the other side, there are individuals who express regret that only a limited number of "superficial" case studies have been done rather than broad studies that would really explore a particular tenure issue in varied regional and ethnic settings. This position implicitly criticizes the studies by Land Tenure Center students, who provide most of the detailed information available about tenure issues. But at the same time it seeks a broader information base from which to determine what issues the Code Rural needs to address.

The Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural also expressed disappointment that there was not more involvement from the Land Tenure Center core staff. Their preference and expectation is that the Land Tenure Center staff would periodically visit and provide several months of consulting to the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, in addition to supervising students and administrating the cooperative agreement.

The evaluation team received mixed messages from the Government of Niger with regard to appreciation of the Land Tenure Center's role in support of the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural and the type of assistance needed. Some of the tension in the relationship between the Land Tenure Center and the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural is apparently related to the incident regarding the funding of the *mise en valeur* study. The Land Tenure Center agreed in principle to fund the study and provide an outside consultant, but arrangements were progressing more slowly than desired by the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural. The Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural moved ahead and implemented the study, using local consultants without concurrence from the Land Tenure Center. The Land Tenure Center refused to fund this study, which did not respect the principles to which they had agreed. While the new Permanent Secretary of the Code Rural arrived after this incident, other members of the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural still have very negative feelings about this episode, which affect their attitude toward the Land Tenure Center.

The Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural wants assistance from the Land Tenure Center to continue and, if possible, to expand. The Permanent Secretary thought it would be very useful to have a full-time Land Tenure Center advisor in the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural.

He solicits the continuation of the Land Tenure Center studies through the intervention of students by whatever means possible.

USAID should consider placing long-term technical assistance in the Code Rural to provide advice on an appropriate process for the implementation of the Code Rural and associated regulations and on the establishment of the *commissions foncières* test cases. The Land Tenure Center is an obvious source for the type of expertise needed. However, it must be recognized by all parties that the role of this technical assistance is not to do academic studies but to provide advice on the day-to-day planning and implementation of Code Rural related activities, particularly on the appropriate establishment and functioning of the *commissions foncières* test cases. The results of the efforts of the *commissions foncières* and the traditional authorities who are also attempting to apply the new regulations provide a basis for monitoring and evaluating the impact of resource tenure reform.

5.1.3. The International Food Policy Research Institute

The International Food Policy Research Institute contract provides additional funding for supplemental basic research carried out in Niger by the International Food Policy Research Institute under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I contract. The purpose is to further exploit the detailed village-level data collected by the International Food Policy Research Institute through some additional analyses and a small amount of new complementary research to update information on a few critical variables. Of the four agricultural research topics in the scope of work, two are related to natural resources management:

- Determinants of land and labor productivity in crop production
- Comparative advantage in crop production across agroclimatic zones
- Use of the commons for food security
- Determinants of investments in soil fertility

These studies may help determine some variables that are important at the farm level, and this in turn may provide ideas about impact indicators; but the studies are not designed or intended to monitor impact. The study does not, and was not intended to, repeat data collection, which could be compared to the original database.

5.2. Assessment of the relevancy and role of the technical assistance components of the program

5.2.1. Assessment of the degree to which the institutional advisor meets the terms of reference for this position and his or her contributions to the implementation of institutional development within the program

The training and experience of the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor conform well to the range of alternative profiles suggested in the terms of reference.

He is an agricultural economist by training, has very advanced computer skills, has done extensive training in computer applications, has served as the coordinator for computerized management information systems, and has served as advisor in a Planning and Programming Directorate in Africa. His training is not in business or public administration, which the director of the Direction des Études et de la Programmation believes would be more appropriate for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles position. He does not have a background in management and administration per se, which shows up in less experience in areas like management by objectives and program budgeting. While he is very qualified to do training in computer applications, he does not have experience providing training and guidelines on management by objectives and other administrative and management techniques. If the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles program is to continue, it would be most appropriate to refocus the activities on:²

- Developing information systems for improving the management of personnel, material, and financial resources of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The focus should be on establishing improved systems which will help the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière personnel do their jobs and which they can and will use. At some point these systems may be computerized, but this will depend on the project increasing computer skills so that the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière personnel can and will use them.
- Providing training and developing guidelines for management by objectives and other appropriate administrative and management techniques. Provide guidelines and a training module on administrative procedures for personnel in line for appointments with administrative responsibilities. Help organize and provide guidelines and training to introduce the management by objectives concept to personnel throughout the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage structure.

With the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent reoriented in this manner, the terms of reference for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor should focus on administration and management related experience, skills, and training. It would seem that someone with a master's degree in business administration or in public administration would more likely fit this revised Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor profile.

The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles institutional subcomponent of the program and project have not achieved the progress desired. While the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles design seems to include many unrealistic

² It would be useful and desirable for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor to work with the Ministère de l'Hydrologie et de l'Environnement to develop the same activities and products. But the attempt is only useful if collaboration across ministries becomes radically more effective than it has been to date.

expectations, progress on those which appear feasible is also slow. Initially, the technical assistance tried to use informal arrangements to develop what appears to be a very appropriate questionnaire on job descriptions and the training and experience of personnel. Since the testing of the questionnaire failed in September and October 1993, the advisor has attempted to reorganize and use a formal approach to designing and implementing the studies on human potential and assignment policies, and on information systems to improve the management of human, material, and personnel resources. Many of the personnel assigned to work on designing the terms of reference for the studies on information systems, human resources, and assignment policies did not have sufficient experience to contribute effectively to the task.

International Resources Group and DATEX have experienced delays in recruiting short-term technical assistance to implement the two studies on information systems and human potential. While the original work plan did not call for the use of consultants to study the management information systems of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, a tranche II condition precedent does require the development of a terms of reference for this study. A similar condition precedent requires a terms of reference for the study on human potential. Establishing this terms of reference was included in the original work plan but has not progressed any more rapidly.

The informal approach has been effective in producing results in the Direction de l'Environnement, which has funding and from which a senior staff person has been involved. Neither the informal nor the formal approach has provided results in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financières of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, which have the mandate for this type of activity in their respective ministries. In the case of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, it may be said that it received no funding from the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II and so did not have the resources available to implement the questionnaire and related personnel study or the computer equipment to use the proposed database. This argument does not explain the lack of progress in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, which did receive the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funding. The Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage lost three of its four *chefs de service* in 1993 and several of these positions went some time without being filled. This loss and the interim disorganization of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière are two examples of why the ministry needs to improve its personnel management.

While progress to date in the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles has been slow, false assumptions in the project design, institutional constraints, and administrative problems are each as much to blame as the role of the institutional advisor. Given these more fundamental problems, replacing the institutional advisor will not resolve the problems of the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent.

5.2.2. Assessment of the degree to which the natural resources management advisor meets the terms of reference for this position and his or her contributions to the implementation of the natural resources management component

The natural resources management advisor has the requisite qualifications and experience called for in the terms of reference. His formal training is in forestry and environmental studies and in geography. He spent the last ten years as an advisor in environmental and natural resource planning, in both long-term and short-term consulting positions. In consulting he worked on numerous National Environmental Strategies and National Environmental Action Plans. One requested skill that he does not have is in the area of geographic information systems. However, the geographic information system activities proposed in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II do not seem appropriate and are under the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent rather than the natural resources management component. The advisor's wealth of experience in the design and implementation of natural resources management activities appears much more important than the lack of geographic information system skills.

The natural resources management component benefits from the fact that there is strong Government of Niger and donor agreement on the major natural resources management issues in Niger, if not necessarily on the best approach to resolve those problems and forms of collaboration. In addition to the administrative duties of being chief of party, the natural resources management advisor has developed interactions with most of the national and donor natural resources management programs and work to facilitate improved management of natural resources through these contacts and the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funding support. He frequently participates in efforts by different entities to define program activities and forms of collaboration. This has included promoting natural forest management and a changed role for forestry agents in the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement of the Direction de l'Environnement, encouraging natural resources management and territory management (*gestion de terroirs*) in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, and promoting work on the Rural Code through contacts with the Land Tenure Center and the Rural Code Commission. While not much progress has been made on the decentralization conditions precedent per se, progress in decentralization has advanced so that the conditions precedent no longer appear relevant. Many of the other Agriculture Sector Development Grant II activities indirectly support or contribute to the decentralization of natural resources management.

5.2.3. Assessment of the degree to which short-term consultants contributed to the implementation of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project

Short-term consultants have been helpful in the implementation of studies and the preparation and facilitation of workshops. In the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles institutional subcomponent, short-term technical assistance has been helpful in the preparation and facilitation of the workshop on management by objectives and in the preparation and

facilitation of the workshop on the role of nongovernmental organizations. The technical assistance for the management by objectives workshop trained three Nigerien trainers with the idea that they would train additional personnel of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage in this approach for improving planning capabilities. This training has not yet been extended to additional Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage personnel and may require additional technical assistance training input.

In the natural resources management component, studies completed or underway with short-term technical assistance include studies on biological diversity, natural forest management, the role of the forester, decentralization, and environmental information systems. The natural forest management, the role of the forester, and the environmental information systems studies were (or will be) used as the basis for workshop activities. Workshops on environmental information systems, the role of the forester, and on economic analysis techniques for the management of natural resources are scheduled to be held in June and July 1994.

Several short-term administrative consultancies helped with the functioning of the program and project and the International Resources Group team. Improvements came through analysis of the project priorities based on implementation of experience and improvement of the administrative procedures in the International Resources Group office in preparation for an audit of the International Resources Group contract.

5.3. Assessment of progress made in the training objectives of the Government of Niger's counterparts and in the development of increased capacity within the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage

Neither of the International Resources Group technical assistants have counterparts with whom they regularly and systematically associate. Neither technical assistance is presently located in the Government of Niger's agency which is responsible for the policies and activities that he is supposed to help implement. Nor is there a project staff member learning their skills. The institutional and administrative structure of the program does not permit the technical assistance to provide on-the-job training to counterparts. The chief of party effectively serves as the equivalent of a *chef de service* in the Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The problem is there is no service except for the technical assistance and their small support staff. Any increased capacity originating from the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II is from the financing and facilitation of studies, tours and workshops. The present program and project structure do not enable technical assistance to train the Government of Niger's personnel directly.³

³ The Direction des Études et de la Programmation liaison officer is often associated with TA activities including visits, attendance at conferences, etc., and is therefore receiving training in a number of aspects of natural resource management. But the liaison officer is not responsible for implementing any of the natural resource management or institutional reform activities.

While the primary role of the natural resources management advisor is to help prepare, coordinate, and facilitate implementation of a national natural resources management strategy, the mandate and responsibilities for these activities is in the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, not in the Direction des Études et de la Programmation where he is presently located. The natural resources management advisor interacts with personnel of the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles but not on a basis which would promote the learning and transfer of skills.

Responsibility for the administration and management of the personnel, equipment, and financial resources of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage resides primarily in the three services in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière, not in the Direction des Études et de la Programmation where the institutional advisor is located. To date, the program and project have been unable to establish an effective means for the institutional advisor to work with personnel in these services. The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles activity is only useful if people are trained to implement and use the improved management and administrative procedures. The management by objectives workshops were well received, but only about sixty highly placed personnel in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement benefitted from this training (of 2,900 personnel in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and an estimated 4,200 personnel in the two ministries). The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles component must increase its training effort drastically to have any impact on developing increased management and administrative capacity within the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.

To date, the role of the International Resources Group computer specialist with the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent has been largely as a computer technician for the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. Limited training in basic computer skills was provided. It appears this position might serve an important role if it were reoriented toward offering additional training in basic computer skills and specific computer applications.

5.4. Assessment of plans to train farmers through study tours and exchanges

This is a very valuable extension technique, but the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II is not involved in extension. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II has no direct field-level activities, i.e., no direct contact with farmers, villagers, herders, and the like. In the future, the program will indirectly sponsor field-level activities through the subcomponent which funds nongovernmental organizations, associations, and other local institutions.

It is a technique that might be encouraged among these local institutions by informing potential grant applicants that requests for such funding would be viewed favorably. Use of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funding for technical services to promote visits

by local populations to promising natural resources management activities might be discussed with the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural or with the Comité Technique Interministériel.

7. Institutional Component — the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles

The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles institutional subcomponent of the project is the most problematic in terms of strategic fit in the program, appropriateness of the conditionalities, and implementation. The program design strategy was to use a combination of policy reform and institutional strengthening to address constraints and lead to an improvement of service delivery at the field level. It is not possible to achieve many of the policy objectives that the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent was designed to address, particularly within the life of the project even if extended. Improvements can be made in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage administrative and management procedures, but these will not fundamentally change the policies in question, like incentives, promotion, and selection for training by performance, program budgeting which balances operating budgets and programs some balance of funding by region and subsector. With little chance of achieving the assigned policy objectives, the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent becomes a project subcomponent grafted on to a policy program. It is not promising as a project activity given the problems already experienced in the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles, and other donor programs addressing the technical services of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.

7.1. Implementation problems

The institutional advisor is specifically assigned to serve as the advisor to the directors of the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage on matters of policy reform, economic analysis, information systems, personnel management, and special studies. While these activities are equally relevant to the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, the Direction de la Plannification der Études et de Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement were not allocated any funds from tranche IA of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II by the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement and have limited means to implement such activities. Initially, focusing the activities in a single ministry until results were produced may have been a good idea. Among other reasons, it is not evident that a program in a directorate of one ministry can easily work with another directorate, to say nothing of directorates in another ministry.⁴ For example, the program and project have not yet established an effective means for the institutional advisor to work with personnel in the personnel, equipment, and financial services of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et

⁴ Program designers expected the two ministries to be reunited in a single Ministry of Rural Development.

Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. Until these types of administrative problems are resolved, expanding the program into more administratively distant institutional settings does not seem appropriate.

The basic management information systems and the human potential activities largely fall under the mandate of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financières. Unfortunately, the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage lost three of its four experienced *chefs de service* in 1993 and several of the positions went unfilled for a number of months.⁵ This disorganization of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière and the lack of any structured relationship between the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière services, make it difficult for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor to find personnel with whom to work effectively. It is particularly difficult to implement the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles activities under these conditions without assigned counterparts. The evaluation team received indications that one or two of the present *chefs de service* in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage are considering leaving the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière. Such turnover of key personnel does not bode well for the implementation of the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent, or for the effective functioning of the directorate which is responsible for administrative affairs and personnel. It does serve as an example of why the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage needs better personnel management.

The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles approach to improving the delivery of technical services at the field level is being overtaken by events because other donors have introduced programs which will produce broader and more fundamental changes in service delivery. The World Bank-financed Reform of the Agricultural Serviced Program and the National Agricultural Research Program projects are a first step in the complete restructuring of agricultural extension and research in Niger, assuming that the World Bank-financed programs follow patterns established in numerous African countries. These are complimented by the World Bank-financed Gestion des Ressources Naturelles program which will change the organization of village level development activities and the relationship between technical services and villagers. These programs will have a much more fundamental effect on restructuring service delivery than the management and administrative changes addressed by the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. The French Cooperation-financed PASA activities are also intended to address institutional changes in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage with the contribution of several expatriate advisors. In fact, the management and administrative changes envisioned in the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles component would seem to be more strategically related to these programs of other donors than to the other aspects of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. At a minimum, the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles program should collaborate with these donor programs.

⁵ With the establishment of the *Service Juridique et du Contentieux* the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière now has five *chefs de service*.

7.2. Design problems

Conditionalities impose a whole list of high-tech, computerized management, and administrative tools on the Ministry of Agriculture, but in many cases the ministry does not control the policies and procedures which the program was expected to change:

- Salary is based on grade and years of service, not performance. Grade and promotion are based on formal degree training, not on performance. These policies are established globally for the Government of Niger by the civil service Ministère de la Fonction Publique.
- Access to degree training follows policies established in the civil service and the Ministry of Finance and Plan.
- Hiring of graduates from university and technical institutions is done under political pressure and ministries have little control over the quality of the students they receive.
- The Government of Niger faces a financial crisis and does not have the resources necessary to meet ministry requests for operating budgets, given other priorities and constraints. Planning an appropriate balance between operating and investment budgets at the ministry level will not change the national priorities and constraints, or result in a budget allocation that respects this balance. Allocations from the national budget are controlled by the Ministère de Finance et Plan and the National Assembly.
- The national budget is also heavily influenced by the fact that donors provide about ninety-five percent of the investment budget, and in some cases an important part of the operational budget in project activities. But donors often expect the Government of Niger to finance varying portions of the operating budget of the investment programs and projects which the donor finances. They tend to not consider the financial burden that funding operating budgets in all the projects combined places on the Government of Niger. Examples are easy to find. Even USAID, while insisting that the Government of Niger and the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage use program budgeting through a condition precedent in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II, does not necessarily balance the operating budgets and investment budgets of other projects in its portfolio.

The introduction of administrative and management tools in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and perhaps in the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement are not likely to change the Government of Niger-wide policies controlled by other ministries. Yet the project design assigns the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent the task of changing these policies and conditions precedent require that they be changed to disburse the final tranches of the program funds. Whether or not the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles continues, these unachievable policy objectives and related conditions precedent must be discarded. Under the revised approach, all of the conditions precedent for tranches two to four should be eliminated. A few of these conditions precedent, such as setting up a geographic information system, could theoretically be

accomplished, but are not appropriate and should not be pursued.⁶ It would still be useful to do the studies on (1) information systems for the administration and management of human, material, and financial resources, and (2) human potential and assignment policies. However, expectations of what will follow from the studies must be radically revised.

7.3. A revised Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionelles

The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionelles subcomponent will not have the policy impact for which it was originally designed. It could be revised as a project activity to pursue the objective of introducing administrative and management procedures, tools, and training which help the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage move toward improved administration and management of personnel, material, and financial resources. Any continued Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionelles activities should be reoriented toward the training of basic administrative and management procedures and tools. To have any chance of success, the institutional and administrative context must be revised to improve the implementation environment. The program and project must establish a situation in which the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionelles advisor has meaningful interaction with those services responsible for administrating and managing ministry personnel, equipment, and finances. It must also drastically broaden its training program.

While the ministry is unlikely to achieve program budgeting, almost everyone in the ministry can benefit from an introduction to management by objectives and training on how to prepare a realistic annual work plan. The focus should be on improving basic administrative and management skills, and not necessarily on using high-tech, computerized tools. Computerized databases may well be appropriate, but first, the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionelles needs to ensure that there is an effective administrative and management system, and that people know how to use it. The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionelles should support training programs and the development of guidelines for a number of basic administrative and management programs:

- An introduction to management by objectives and training on how to develop annual work plans which are realistic both in terms of objectives to be achieved and the resources necessary to accomplish them.
- Training on administrative and management procedures for personnel recruited for or appointed to posts with administrative responsibilities. In many cases, ministry personnel appointed as a regional or national chef de service receive no training in the administrative procedures which they are expected to use. A training module accompanied by a handbook on administrative and

⁶ Several geographic information systems already exist and the World Bank financed Programme National de Gestion des Ressource Naturelles project will fund detailed geographic information systems and remote sensing activities related to the *Gestion des Terroirs* program.

management procedures would allow personnel to learn their jobs much quicker.

- Assist personnel in developing administrative and management tools to help them perform assigned tasks and that are related to their skill levels.
- Training in basic computer skills and specific computer software applications, like spreadsheets and databases.
- Help personnel with computer skills to develop computerized tools to help them do their jobs and which they will be able to use whatever their level of sophistication. Personnel should be involved in tool design and not have high-tech, incomprehensible, tools imposed on them.

The revised Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles is a project activity and will require the use of personnel in addition to the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor to implement the activities. To have any real impact on the 2,900 personnel in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, a training-of-trainers approach will have to be used. The advisor can train trainers and help develop guidelines or handbooks, but other trainers will be needed to help spread the skills throughout the ministry. This will probably require that the project pay salaries and provide transportation for a number of these trainers. The Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière has the mandate for these types of activities as well as for training within the ministry, but it is not clear that the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière presently has the capacity to implement this broader training program. It is likely that the first year would be spent training Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière and project personnel to perform this function. For this training to be effective, there would need to be assurances that the rapid turnover and recent disorganization of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage be resolved.

This reorientation of the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles activity would require a revision of the terms of reference for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor. For the type of program described above, the advisor would need a background in basic administrative and management procedures, tools, and training. This would most likely be found in a candidate with experience in public administration or business administration. The skills required would be in the area of analysis of existing administrative and management procedures and identifying ways to improve them, using procedures and tools that the personnel are capable to use.

The original conditions precedent related to the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent should be discarded. If conditions precedent are used for this project activity, they should relate to assigning counterparts from the personnel, equipment, and financial services and other Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière personnel to work with the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor. This should apply to both the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of

the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement if there is any expectation that the advisor will attempt to work in both ministries.

This revision may reject some of the specific tools suggested by Jonathan Smith, but in fact returns to the basics of his proposed general strategy:

"The activities seek to give particular emphasis on building, and leaving in place, a small cadre of professionals skilled in organization and methods, personnel management, training, and human resources information systems. These national experts would be the front-line, hands-on experts who would work with their ministries under technical guidance to implement and ensure sustainability of the management systems improvements envisioned in the proposals. While the activities would be developed throughout the ministries' technical services, they would also be directly affiliated to the ministries' strengthened personnel administration offices, since so many of the development areas that must necessarily be dealt with are personnel and operations management systems in which the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière should be key participants."

7.4. Could the project be more effective in promoting institutional policy reform if its location within the government were changed?

The Government of Niger's structure consists of powerful directorates that are severely isolated from each other even within the same ministry. In addition, heavy, formalistic administrative arrangements are typically required for most activities. It is evident that the program and project have failed to place the institutional advisor in an institutional environment that resulted in successful collaboration with other directorates in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage or in the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement. The one exception is the productive collaboration which the institutional advisor established with the Direction de l'Environnement of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement. This relationship seems to have been successful because the Direction de l'Environnement assigned a very capable senior officer to work with the institutional advisor on the inventory of job descriptions and human resource potential. In effect, this is the only Government of Niger service which has assigned something approaching a counterpart to work with and learn from the institutional advisor.

The Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage appears to be the most appropriate location for such activities, but it is not an attractive target in because of its recent history of personnel turnover and disorganization. It would also be appropriate to provide similar training in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement. Conditions precedent might be used to ensure that counterparts and others in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière personnel are assigned to work with the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor from both ministries.

7.5. Recommendations concerning the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles institutional subcomponent of the program

USAID should consider several options for the future of the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles institutional subcomponent:

Eliminate the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. The policy objectives and conditions precedent cannot be achieved and the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles will not have a significant policy impact. Programs of other donors will provide a more fundamental restructuring of the technical services and do more to improve service delivery at the field level than was envisioned in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles has had implementation problems. The Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, the targeted institution, has a recent history of personnel turnover and disorganization with indications that this problem has not been resolved. The revision of the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles implies the need for a different combination of skills than those possessed by the present Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor.

Revise the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent as a project activity located in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage:

- Provide training and develop guidelines for management by objectives and other appropriate administrative and management techniques. Provide a handbook and a training module on administrative procedures for personnel in line for appointments with administrative responsibilities. Help organize and provide guidelines and training to introduce the management by objectives concept and improve annual work plans throughout the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage structure.
- Develop information systems for improving the management of personnel, material and financial resources of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The focus should be on establishing improved systems that will help the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière personnel do their jobs. At some point these may be computerized, but this will depend on the project being able to increase computer skills so that the personnel of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière personnel would be able to use them.
- Establish conditions precedent which require (1) the Government of Niger to provide the Gestion, Administration et Réformes

Institutionelles advisor with counterparts in the personnel, equipment, and financial services of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage (and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement), (2) the Government of Niger to agree to provide personnel to serve as full-time trainers for the implementation of the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionelles training throughout the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement. If USAID wants the advisor to try to operate within the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, a separate condition precedent should require a formally signed accord between ministries that would allow the advisor to work directly with both directors of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière.

- Establish a new terms of reference for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionelles advisor. Ask for formal training in business or public administration and experience in analyzing existing administrative and management systems and designing improvements. The advisor will be expected to implement programs in basic administrative and management procedures, tools, and training. The advisor should have basic computer skills, but can call on a short-term consultant if a need develops to design a sophisticated database.

8. Participation of nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions in natural resources management

8.1. Background to the role of nongovernmental organizations in Niger

Nongovernmental organizations play a more limited role in rural development in Niger than in many neighboring countries. Historically, restrictions were placed on nongovernmental organizations contacts and activity at the grassroots level. Until 1988, indigenous nongovernmental organizations were banned. Until 1989, all activities of foreign nongovernmental organizations had to receive written, advance approval of the Ministry of Finance and Plan. Only since 1988–1989 has there been a significant development of indigenous or international nongovernmental organizations activities. At present, only a few indigenous nongovernmental organizations are well established and have active programs with rural inhabitants. However, the number of nongovernmental organizations is growing rapidly. The Service des Organisations Nongouvernementales statistics indicate that there are now eighty-eight recognized indigenous nongovernmental organizations and sixty-five international nongovernmental organizations operating in Niger. The potential exists for nongovernmental organizations to take on an important role in rural development, much like they have in neighboring countries. This potential will take some time and effort to develop.

The existing capacity of indigenous nongovernmental organizations and other local, private-sector organizations to manage and use program funding is much smaller than in neighboring countries. A strong emphasis needs to be placed on institutional development to increase this capacity and help ensure that the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funds are used effectively.

8.2. Nongovernmental organizations institutional setting

Past restrictions severely limited the development of community-based nongovernmental organizations or associations. Many indigenous nongovernmental organizations started as local partners of foreign nongovernmental organizations, but there has been only a limited period in which such local partnerships could operate at the grassroots level. Most indigenous nongovernmental organizations were created in the capital and have their offices there. In the past, these "national" nongovernmental organizations were more likely to receive government approval. Even now, most nongovernmental organizations look to receive funding from the Government of Niger, donors, or other international partners and find that location in the capital is generally necessary to have access to these funding opportunities. Many have no field level activities or presence but hope to attract funding which will allow them to initiate programs with rural inhabitants. Some of these nongovernmental organizations consist of little more than an individual with a post office box and some initiative.

The Direction de Développement Régional of the Ministry of Finance and Plan, and particularly its Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental, is responsible for the promotion and supervision of nongovernmental organizations. It both serves as the liaison between nongovernmental organizations and other Government of Niger services and is responsible for arranging audits of the use of the Government of Niger's grants to nongovernmental organizations. Nongovernmental organizations must be authorized by the Ministry of Finance and Plan, in particular because authorization as a nongovernmental organization includes the right to import goods duty free. Some people speculate that the right to import duty free goods is the major reason for the rapid growth in the number of nongovernmental organizations.

Niger does not have an umbrella nongovernmental organization which is supported by the government and open to all nongovernmental organizations. The Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental helped establish, and works with, the Groupement des Aides Privées. This nongovernmental organization collective serves as a secretariat to provide shared services to its members. The Groupement des Aides Privées does not receive government budget support and membership requires a payment of 100,000 Franc Communauté Financière Africaine per year. The Groupement des Aides Privées membership consists of the larger, better established nongovernmental organizations because this fee, recently reduced from 250,000 Franc Communauté Financière Africaine per year, is prohibitive to emerging nongovernmental organizations. The Groupement des Aides Privées serves as a liaison to the nongovernmental organizations community, but there has been some discontent expressed by smaller nongovernmental organizations that only wealthy, well-established nongovernmental organizations can afford to become members. At least part of this displeasure is based on a

belief that size, experience, and membership all confer an advantage in the competition for funding, and the status quo leaves small nongovernmental organizations at a distinct disadvantage.

The Groupement des Aides Privées established a *cellule* to provide training, information, and institutional support services which are available to any nongovernmental organizations, whether or not a member. Both the Groupement des Aides Privées and the Direction de Développement Régional suggests that the grants management unit support the Groupement des Aides Privées, and particularly, the *cellule* for training, information, and institutional support. This appears to be the most appropriate existing channel for providing support to nongovernmental organizations and other local, private organizations for institutional development.

8.3. The regulatory, administrative, and funding environment for nongovernmental organizations and local, private-sector organizations

Because of the history of restrictive regulations above, the project design was very concerned with the lifting of these regulatory constraints so that nongovernmental organizations and other private, local organizations could operate more freely. A law (No. 91 006) of 1991 and a decree (Number 92/292/PM/MP/P) have modified the 1984 law (Ordonnance Number 84 06) which was considered a constraint on the role of nongovernmental organizations. These changes in the regulations are not well known by either nongovernmental organizations or government service personnel. However, the commission which reviewed regulations governing nongovernmental organizations during the nongovernmental organizations workshop held in February 1994, concluded that the regulations are no longer a constraint and do not need to be modified further. The commission report indicates that present problems are due to a lack of knowledge of the new regulations, insufficient application, and incorrect interpretation. It appears that these regulations need to be made available and popularized, much as is planned for the Code Rural.

Another problem, not addressed by the workshop commission, is that of attitudes toward nongovernmental organizations. Many government personnel in technical services with field level activities perceive nongovernmental organizations and other local private organizations as competitors rather than collaborators. Many of these personnel express the belief that one reason the budgets of the technical services are so limited is because donors and the Government of Niger switched some of their funding from the technical services to nongovernmental organizations. While the official government policy is to encourage nongovernmental organizations and local private institutions, it is not evident that this policy is as yet generally accepted and implemented.

A number of donor organizations provide support for the activities of nongovernmental organizations and other private local institutions. In fact, there is a risk of too much money chasing too few operational and effective indigenous nongovernmental organizations. The United Nations Development Program and Coopération Canadienne provided support for

training and the institutional development of nongovernmental organizations. The World Bank plans to encourage nongovernmental organizations and local, private institutions to organize local populations in the implementation of the *gestion de terroir* activities of the new Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project. With hundreds, and eventually thousands, of villages to be organized, this may be the most important reason and opportunity to expand the role of nongovernmental organizations and local, private-sector organizations in natural resources management.

8.4. The effects of natural resources management policy reform at the field level

It was recognized in the project design that policy reform would often take a number of years to have an impact at the field level. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II project has been effectively operational only a little more than a year, at the time of this midterm evaluation. Due to the delay in satisfying the conditions precedent for tranche IB which funds the nongovernmental organization subcomponent, and in contracting for the grants management unit, the nongovernmental organization subcomponent of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project have not yet started. A monitoring and evaluation program also has not been established. Therefore, the program and project do not yet have a field-level component and there is as yet no direct feedback to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II concerning the effects of natural resources management policy reform at the field level.

In its brief field visits, the evaluation team identified a few indications of policy impact at the field level. Perhaps the most pervasive natural resources management activity seen on the field trips is use of soil and water conservation techniques, including the reclamation of degraded areas. Numerous donor and nongovernmental organizations projects, such as Coopération Canadienne, UNSO, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Italy, Africare, Sudan Interior Mission, etc., are sponsoring these activities. While not based on a specific policy, there is coordination of project orientation and recognition that in Niger soil and water conservation is an essential element of national natural resources management strategy.

Another activity related to one of the priority areas of implementation is that of planting trees in farmers' fields, which is related to the role of foresters. Villagers interviewed in Dosso said that farmers are now willing to let trees grow in their fields since foresters no longer fine them when they are harvested. Some increase of trees in fields was a technology evident in all of the *gestion de terroir* activities visited. The Sudan Interior Mission project focuses on these agricultural parkland activities. While some farmers in some villagers have increased the number of trees in their fields significantly, others have not. They believe that where the numbers of trees in fields have not increased, the technology is constrained by resource tenure issues.

These visits also demonstrated that women were very much involved in natural resources management activities. One of the important activities in the Dosso area is dry season vegetable gardening by women. Projects and nongovernmental organizations have fenced

areas and sunk wells to facilitate this activity. While not reducing women's workloads, it certainly provides an important economic opportunity.

8.5. The grants management unit institutional setting

The evaluation team believes that the nongovernmental organization and private-sector subcomponent has important potential to encourage natural resources management activities and local participation. The grants management unit will be responsible for the management of this important effort. It will be very important to establish an appropriate institutional and administrative environment for the grants management unit. Experience to date indicates that organizations trying to promote nongovernmental organizations and private-sector activities need very streamlined administrative procedures to be effective. The small, inexperienced organizations which are numerically dominant among Niger's nongovernmental organizations, cannot handle a lot of bureaucracy or long delays in funding decisions. It is critical that the program and project identify an administrative setting which will allow simple administrative procedures and rapid response.

Within the Government of Niger, the dominant opinion is that the grants management unit should be located in the Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental, the Direction de Développement Régional, and the Ministry of Finance and Plan. The evaluation team is concerned that this institutional location of the subcomponent will cause severe, and potentially crippling, administrative problems. Administrative problems, particularly when trying to work with other directorates or other ministries, have hindered progress in the natural resources management and the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles components to date. Administrative problems have prevented beneficiaries from accessing the remaining tranche IA funds provided by the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II for over six months. The Ministère de Finance et Plan seems to have serious organizational problems, be less knowledgeable about the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program, and be less engaged than the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement. Resolving administrative problems to improve the implementation and effectiveness of the program and project, would seem to require the same type of attention as that presently focused on the financial blockage.

Problems with regard to administrative arrangements for project components and their respective technical assistance have constrained the program and project effectiveness, even though they are located in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. It appears that a major project subcomponent in a different ministry will be a much bigger administrative problem. The reason for locating the grants management unit in the Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental, the Direction de Développement Régional, and the Ministry of Finance and Plan is that it has the responsibility and mandate to promote and supervise nongovernmental organizations. But this is only appropriate if the administrative problems can be resolved. A slow and bureaucratic grants management unit cannot achieve the project objectives.

With the overall project *tutelle* in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the grants management unit subcomponent in the Ministry of Finance and Plan, it is difficult to see how it can avoid being slow and bureaucratic if formal administrative procedures between ministries and signatures are required to approve grants management unit actions. If the grants management unit is to be located in the Ministry of Finance and Plan, steps must be taken to reduce the administrative hassle. This might take the form of an accord between the program and project and the Ministry of Finance and Plan which gives the grants management unit a large measure of autonomy. The grants management unit needs to be able to contact and be contacted by nongovernmental organizations and local, private institutions, without requiring communications to pass through either ministry, or signatures of ministry officials. A small management committee could be established with responsibility to review and approve the grants management unit work plan, grant criteria, and grantees selected.⁷ The grants management unit would provide informational memorandums about activities to the Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental, the Direction de Développement Régional, and to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II national coordinator.

An alternative would be to associate the grants management unit with the Groupement des Aides Privées. As mentioned above, the grants management unit will need to work with the Groupement des Aides Privées training and information *cellule*. It is the logical institutional base for the training, information, and technical assistance activities for which the grants management unit will be responsible. In this manner, the grants management unit can hope to institutionalize the training, information, and technical assistance activities so they will continue after the contract ends. The Groupement des Aides Privées has the potential, but does not at this time have the actual capacity to be the primary partner for the grants management unit and the nongovernmental organizations and private-sector program. This is probably equally true of the Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental and the Direction de Développement Régional. With a large measure of autonomy and the Groupement des Aides Privées as the institutional location, it should be possible to establish a grants management unit with very streamlined administrative procedures. This may well mean the difference between success and failure of the nongovernmental organizations and private-sector subcomponent.

A third alternative would be to locate the grants management unit in an Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program office. Using this approach, the grants management unit would be responsible to the International Resources Group chief of party and the national program coordinator. Internalizing the administration within the program could greatly reduce the necessary administrative procedures. However, it would distance the grants management unit from the institutions which are responsible for and provide the liaison with nongovernmental organizations. This isolation might reduce its effectiveness. The program and project may have to consider the trade-off between administrative efficiency and being located in institutions mandated with nongovernmental organizations and private-sector responsibilities.

⁷ Such a committee might consist of 1 representative each from Direction de Développement Régional of the Ministry of Finance and Plan, USAID, Groupement des Aides Privées, an indigenous nongovernmental organization and an international nongovernmental organization.

8.6. Possibility of the grants management unit team managing all of the counterpart funds

Management of the nongovernmental organization and private-sector funds and subcomponent activities will be a major undertaking. It is doubtful that a grants management unit team of the size and composition envisioned in the scope of work could effectively implement the nongovernmental organizations and private-sector subcomponent and also manage the other counterpart funds. If a project team managed these fund, USAID financial management procedures would have to be followed. This requires an accounting system which provides a paper trail for every final expenditure. The accounting alone would require a financial manager with international qualifications and a staff of several accountants. There is still hope that the administrative constraints can be resolved so that the grants management unit can be located in the Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental and the Direction de Développement Régional or in the Groupement des Aides Privées. Responsibility for the counterpart funds would seem to imply the projectization of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program, and constrain the grants management unit to being located in an International Resources Group project office.

10. Institutional location of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II in the Government of Niger's structure

10.1. Background

There is little analysis in the program assistance approval document and the project paper and related background papers of the appropriate location or attachment of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and its project components within the Government of Niger's structure. The only specific reference under program implementation was to name the Ministry of Finance and Plan as the official executing agency for the Government of Niger, and require that it establish a steering committee. The Ministry of Finance and Plan's primary role is identified as coordination and being responsible for the compilation and transmission to USAID of all official reports required under the program. The Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage was given responsibility for the development and implementation of changes in resource tenure systems, and identified as the main focus of institution-building and institutional reform efforts. The program and project grant agreements provide no further information on the institutional location of the program and project components. The first official document which indicates an institutional location is the International Resources Group contract. It provides no explanation of why the Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage was chosen to provide administrative supervision of the program and project or why the technical assistant was placed there. The contract states that the two technical assistants will work in the Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage with the natural resources management advisor serving as an advisor to the Direction des Études et de la Programmation director and the management or administration advisor serving as an

advisor to both the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière Directors. Amoul Kinni (1994) notes that firms bidding on the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II project presented very different institutional arrangements, revealing that the request for proposal lacked guidance on an appropriate institutional location for the program and project.

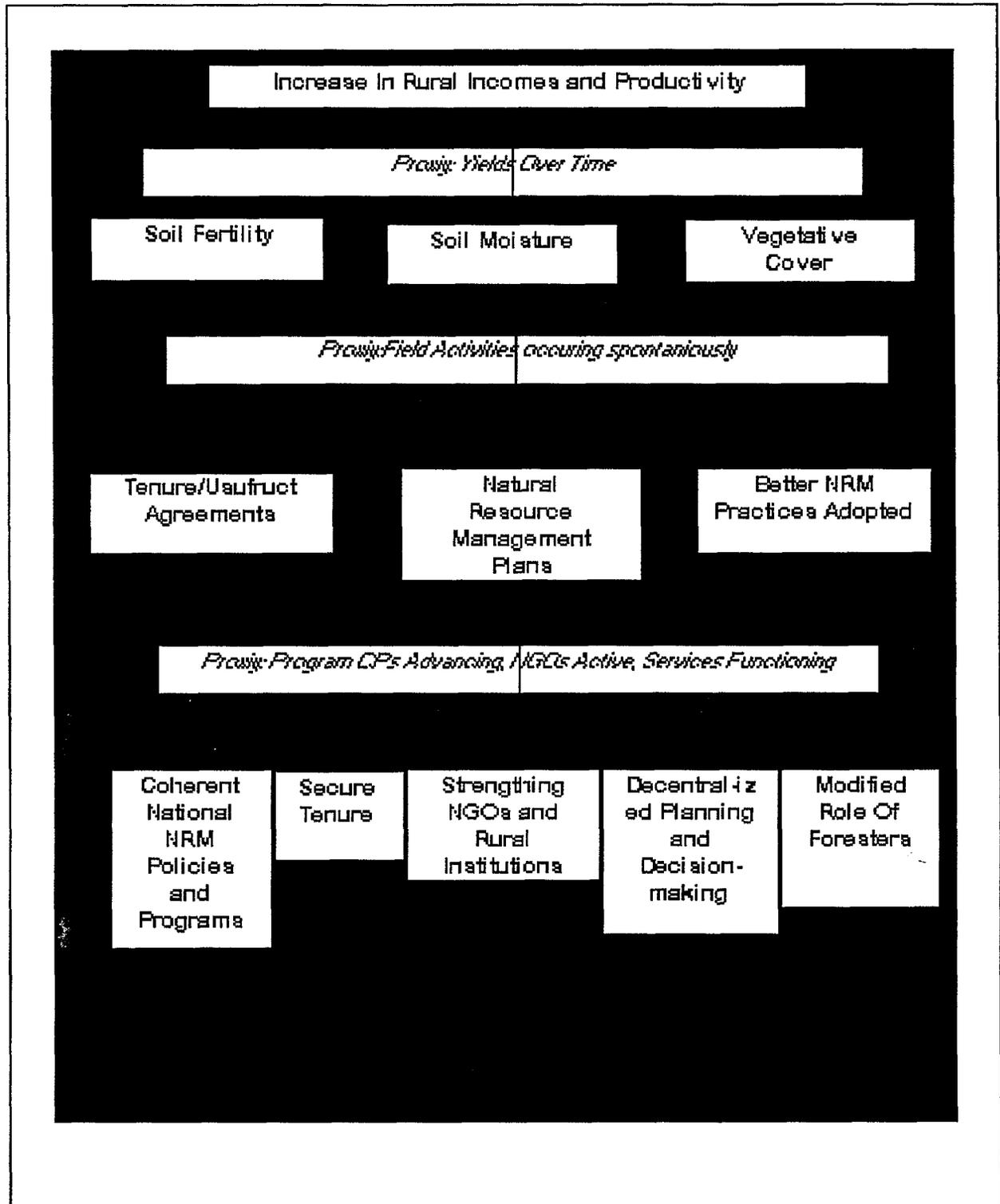
The PAIP/PID had proposed interventions directed at local government administrations. The different institutional analyses were primarily focused on institutional relations and functions at the regional level. The two exceptions are some discussion of the role of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I Secretariat (MSI: October 1989), and Jonathan Smith's analysis on how national-level policies constrain policy, decision-making, and the delivery of technical services at the regional level. Smith's analysis reoriented the project away from regional interventions and back to working at the level of national ministries. Smith comments that during his work in 1990 the organizational charts reflecting the ministerial reorganization in 1989 were not yet available. In 1991 the National Conference was held and a transition regime ruled until April 1993, when a democratic government was elected. From this information, it is evident that the Government of Niger's structure was in a severe state of flux from the time when the project was designed until after the project proposals were written by firms competing for the project. It was only after the technical assistance team arrived that there was any semblance of stability in the Government of Niger's structure. Agencies like the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural were created in 1991, but did not exist when the project was designed.

10.2. Institutional setting of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II

The structure in which the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II finds itself is rather complex due to the direct involvement of three ministries and a hierarchy of committees (see diagram 1). The program assistance approval document and project paper names the Ministry of Finance and Plan as the executing agency for the Government of Niger, and as such, responsible for program coordination. The other responsibilities attributed to the Ministry of Finance and Plan in the program assistance approval document and project paper are the compilation and transmission to USAID of evidence attesting to satisfaction of the conditions precedent for each tranche and reports on budgetary attributions which attest to compliance with agreed priorities for use of program funds.

The Ministry of Finance and Plan is generally responsible for coordinating interministerial functions and activities within the Government of Niger. This responsibility is particularly evident in the role the Ministry of Finance and Plan plays in the hierarchy of interministerial committees. The Secrétaire Général of the Ministry of Finance and Plan, or the director of the Direction de l'Analyse des Études Economiques et Financières et de la Prévision, does call and chair the meetings of the Comité Technique Interministériel which now handles most Agriculture Sector Development Grant II issues. The Ministry of Finance and Plan also officially transmits the documentation which certifies that the conditions precedent for a particular tranche have been satisfied. While the program assistance approval document and project paper attributes responsibility for the compilation and transmission of budget reports

Diagram 1. Hierarchy of committees.



to USAID, no budget reports have yet been received, but are being compiled by the director of Direction des Études et de la Programmation. The action plans for the satisfaction of conditions precedent and the almost monthly reports on the state of advancement have been prepared to date by the International Resources Group technical assistance team. The Ministry of Plan has had little direct involvement with the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project activities except for the official coordination activities.⁸

A letter from the Minister of Finance and Plan dated February 22, 1994, indicates that coordination of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program is the responsibility of the Direction de l'Analyse des Études Economiques et Financières et de la Prévision of the Ministry of Finance and Plan. The persons directly responsible for coordination are the director of the Direction de l'Analyse des Études Economique et Financières et de la Prévision and the chef de service des Réformes Economiques et Sociales within the Direction de l'Analyse des Études Economique et Financières et de la Prévision. This directorate and this service are responsible for supervising and coordinating policy reform activities in whatever ministry or sector they might take place. However, the letter was necessary because within the Ministry of Finance and Plan it was not clear until that point whether the Direction de l'Analyse des Études Economique et Financières et de la Prévision, the Direction de Développement Régional, or the Direction de Financement des Investissements et de la Dette was responsible for the coordination of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. The fact that the Ministry of Finance and Plan was only determining which ministry service was responsible for coordinating the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II three years into the five-year life of the project, indicates the lack of involvement and engagement of the Ministry of Finance and Plan to date. It also indicates the level of support that the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II personnel, i.e. the International Resources Group team and the Director of the Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage have received from the Government of Niger in program coordination and satisfying conditions precedent.

The technical assistance and program office are located in the Direction des Études et de la Programmation in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The director of the Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage provides administrative supervision or the *tutelle* of the program and project. There is one the Direction des Études et de la Programmation staff person assigned to be the program liaison officer. The Direction des Études et de la Programmation personnel do not otherwise serve as staff for the program or project. The Direction des Études et de la Programmation director fills the administrative role normally filled by a project director. Correspondence and interaction between other structures in the Government of Niger and the program or project pass through him. He also officially transmits correspondence from the program and project to other structures in the Government of Niger. Any correspondence between the program and project and USAID is copied to him so that he remains informed of the correspondence, activities, and issues affecting the program and project. Otherwise, interaction between the

⁸ This limited direct involvement will change if the grants management unit is established in the Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales of the Direction de Développement Régional of the Ministry of Finance and Plan.

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project technical assistance and the Direction des Études et de la Programmation is largely confined to the Direction des Études et de la Programmation's limited role to date in the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent activities. Within the Direction des Études et de la Programmation organizational chart, the chief of party fills the role of a chef de service or chef de section, but the only staff within this service or Section is the International Resources Group project staff.

The natural resources management advisor's principle professional relationships within the Government of Niger's structure are with the coordinating unit for natural resources management, the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, the Secretariat Permanent du Code Rural, and the Direction de l'Environnement. The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor's principle professional relationships are with the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, and to some extent with the Direction de Planification, des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement.⁹

10.3. The committee structure affecting the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II

The Government of Niger has a generalized hierarchy of committees that are responsible for interministerial interactions and activities. At the top is the Comité Interministériel,¹⁰ composed of six ministers and the Secretary of State for Cooperation, and presided by the Minister of Finance and Plan. This Comité Interministériel is assisted by a Comité Technique Interministériel, composed of the Secretary Generals and Director Generals of the Government of Niger, and a representative of the national agency of the Banque Centrale des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, three representative of the union movement, three representatives of the business community, and two independent economists. The Comité Technique Interministériel is presided by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance and Plan. Typically, only representatives of those ministries involved with a given program or activity will be invited to attend a particular meeting of the Comité Technique Interministériel. For example, meetings which consider decisions regarding the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II are generally attended by the Secrétaires Généraux of the Ministry of Finance and Plan, the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement or their representatives, and the directors or *chefs de service* of any agencies which might be directly involved, such as the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage; the Direction de l'Environnement of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement; the

⁹ If the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent is continued, the role of the GARI advisor will be more focused on activities within the mandate of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière.

¹⁰ Responsible for the preparation and monitoring of the economic and financial reform program and the roundtable process (with donors).

Direction de l'Analyse des Études Economique et Financières et de la Prévision; the Direction de Développement Régional; the Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental; and the Direction de Financement des Investissements et de la Dette of the Ministry of Finance and Plan. USAID representatives and the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II technical assistants are typically invited to attend meetings of the Comité Technique Interministériel which address the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II issues. However, this is in part because the broader Comité Technique Interministériel has taken on many of the tasks that normally would be the responsibility of the more restrained Comité de Suivi des Réformes de Politique, which is the official steering committee for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II.

Under the original Comité Technique Interministériel, composed of all Government of Niger Secrétaire Général and DG, is a series of subcommittees related to technical services. Natural resources management falls under the domain of the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural. The Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Secrétaire Général of Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement are the president and vice-president respectively of the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural. The Sous-Comité de Développement Rural is under the tutelle of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the activities of the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural secretariat (not permanent, full-time position) are assured by the director of the Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The Sous-Comité de Développement Rural is credited with proposing the division of tranche IA funds between the eight different ministry and interministerial structures, which was approved by the Comité Technique Interministériel.

Although it has no permanent existence, the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural supervises the interministerial agencies responsible for establishing land tenure regulations and for the coordination and development of a national natural resources management strategy. These are the Permanent Secretariat for the Rural Code, the Secretariat Permanent du Code Rural and the Coordinating Unit for natural resources management, and the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. These are the institutions responsible for two of the four strategies targeted for support in the natural resources management component of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program.

In compliance with the program assistance approval document and grant agreement, a special committee was established to monitor the progress of Agriculture Sector Development Grant II called the Comité de Suivi des Réformes de Politique. This official steering committee for the grant is composed of the Secrétaire Generals of the three ministries involved (the Ministry of Finance and Plan, the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement), an economic counsellor representing the Prime Minister's Office, and the USAID project officer. This is the steering committee required by USAID for the guidance of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II, and on which USAID is officially represented, but it does not meet regularly. In fact the responsibility for guiding the project seems to have been largely transferred to the Comité Technique Interministériel, enlarged to include USAID representation. The Comité Technique Interministériel provides a larger form, including the structures receiving budget support from the grant, and the backing of a body established by an Arrêté of the Prime Minister. This expands participation in decision-making and should increase support for decisions taken. A minor practical

problem resulting from this arrangement is that the Ministry of Finance and Plan representative chairing the meeting often is not knowledgeable about the program and project or the issues being discussed. The agenda is proposed by the Direction des Études et de la Programmation Director and the International Resources Group technical assistance team.

The previously mentioned letter from the Minister of Finance and Plan also states that technical implementation of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II is the responsibility of the directors of the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage; the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage; and the Direction de l'Environnement of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement. This seems to form the basis of the informally established Comité de Suivi de l'État D'Avancement du Programme SDSA II, commonly known as the Comité de Suivi or the Comité Technique, and presided by the director of the Direction des Études et de la Programmation. There is a monthly meeting between USAID and the Direction des Études et de la Programmation director, to which the International Resources Group technical assistance team, the Land Tenure Center representative, and representatives of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, the Direction de l'Environnement of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement and the Direction de Financement des Investissements et de la Dette and the Ministry of Finance and Plan are invited as participants. Representatives of other Directorates of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement and the DG of Plan and the Ministry of Finance and Plan are invited to be kept informed.

This Comité de Suivi or Comité Technique group also appears to be assigned tasks by the Comité Technique Interministériel which require more detail than is considered appropriate for discussion in that forum. In particular, in a recent meeting this group was assigned the task of preparing a proposal for those Government of Niger's structures that would receive budget support from tranche IIA. Since this committee does not appear to have any formal basis it is unclear why it was assigned this task, rather than the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural, which is credited for making the previous allocation of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II budget support. Perhaps the primary reason is that this committee although informal, ~~does meet regularly~~. The Sous-Comité de Développement Rural rarely meets and has no permanent secretariat. In either case, the director of the Direction des Études et de la Programmation would be responsible for preparing the proposal for the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural secretariat, or for the Comité de Suivi and Comité Technique. If this committee is going to have these responsibilities, it should be formalized. It should also be given a name which distinguishes it from the existing formally established committees, i.e., the Comité Technique Interministériel and the Comité de Suivi des Réformes de Politique.

10.4. Analysis of the existing institutional location of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II

The Ministry of Finance and Plan was named in the program assistance approval document and project paper as the executing agency and the Government of Niger's structure

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responsible for the coordination of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II project. It was not chosen for the institutional location or to provide the administrative supervision (*tutelle*) of the program and project. This separation of functions may be understood in terms of the Ministry of Finance and Plan's responsibility for all policy reform activities and its coordinating role among ministries, but it significantly complicates management and administration. The Ministry of Finance and Plan has organizational problems of its own, apparently related to the integration of the Ministry of Finance and Plan and the Ministry of Finance in 1993. For example, it didn't clarify what directorate was responsible for coordinating the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II until February 1994, it still encountered contention in naming a representative to the midterm evaluation team and its planning has not yet extended to producing an official organizational chart.) While responsible for coordination of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II, it has not been involved or engaged in the program activities, and particularly in taking responsibility for the process of tracking and satisfying conditions precedent. It chairs the meetings and writes the cover letters, but all of the real work excluding accounting falls on the International Resources Group team and the Direction des Études et de la Programmation Director. This separation of coordination responsibility and administrative supervision (*tutelle*) seems to be one of the root causes of confusion and administrative problems in the program. Consideration should be given to terminating the Ministry of Finance and Plan designation as coordinator and executing agency of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project. This would be one important step to simplifying administration and concentrating program authority.

The Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage is a traditional institutional location for a project activity. The Direction des Études et de la Programmation is the directorate in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage that usually deals with donor projects so it had more experience in providing administrative supervision for donor programs and projects than other directorates. A directorate, like the Direction des Études et de la Programmation, was a relatively safe choice as the institutional location in a period when the Government of Niger's structure was regularly changing. Directorates may be moved intact from one ministry to another when there are changes in the government.

The Direction des Études et de la Programmation was not a primary focus of either the natural resources management or the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles program and project activities, but it was implicated along with the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière in meeting the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent conditions precedent. The director of the Direction des Études et de la Programmation does serve as the secretary of the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural, which broadens his role in the Government of Niger, and as administrative supervisor of the program. Through the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural he does have indirect interaction with the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, which are two of the institutions targeted for intervention in the natural resources management component. These are both interministerial structures attached to the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural and under the *tutelle* of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The Direction de l'Environnement of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, a third structure targeted for natural resources

management interventions, is more distant administratively, but is also somewhat less rigid about administrative procedures.

The fourth area of implementation of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II natural resources management component is to promote decentralization of natural resources management activities. It was expected that this would be accomplished primarily through the decentralization of technical services in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, and through the support of nongovernmental organizations and other local institutions. This design assumption was overtaken by events. Decentralization policy, if not implementation, has moved very rapidly since the program was designed. Institutionally, a Ministère de l'Administration Régional et de la Decentralization has been established. The need to regularly interact with yet a fourth ministry would place a major additional implementation burden on a project team and an administrative setup which is already heavily burdened. Given the policy change with regard to decentralization and the administrative problems working with three ministries, it does not appear to be appropriate to require the program and project to interact with this fourth ministry.

It is not clear that the Direction des Études et de la Programmation is an appropriate institutional location for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project components and their respective technical assistance. While the technical assistance team may be very busy, it appears that they are institutionally constrained from doing the things they were intended to do:

The Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles would appear to be a more appropriate location for the natural resources management advisor. The Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles is responsible for the development and coordination of a national natural resources management strategy, and assisting this process is the primary role of the natural resources management advisor. The Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles is at present the institution which needs his skills and experience. He can provide some advice from the Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, but does not provide on-the-job training to the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles personnel.

Most of the activities assigned to the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor are the responsibility of personnel, equipment, and financial services within the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière. The Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière are in the same building. But the program and project have not developed administrative procedures which facilitate the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor's working effectively with and serving as advisor to the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière; particularly the personnel, equipment, financial services, and perhaps the training service of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière. To date, the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor has difficulty working with or advising these services and no one in them is learning his management and computer skills.

The proposed nongovernmental organizations and private-sector subcomponent will face severe administrative problems if located in the Direction des Études et de la Programmation of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The two organizations that it will need to work with are the Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental of the Direction de Développement Régional of the Ministry of Finance and Plan and the Groupement des Aides Privées. Location in the Direction des Études et de la Programmation would not allow the grants management unit to provide effective technical assistance and day-to-day training to either of these organizations. Judging from past experience, administrative procedures across ministries would be a serious constraint to implementation.

This raises the question, whether, or how easily the institutional location of the different the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II components can be split. In order for program support and technical assistance to be most effective, it would appear that the natural resources management component and advisor should be located in the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles; the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles component and advisor should be located in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage; and the grants management unit should be located in either the Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental, the Direction de Développement Régional, the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement or the Groupement des Aides Privées. However, it is not evident that any of these locations would provide a good location for administrative supervision (*tutelle*) of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project. If the program and project are separated into three components distributed across three different Government of Niger's structures, there is a serious risk that administrative problems would cause program implementation to founder. Program *tutelle* and ease of administration and implementation need to be considered as well as theoretical program component effectiveness in choosing (an) institutional location(s) for the program.

10.5. Analysis of the appropriate administrative supervision of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II

There are several possibilities to consider as the *tutelle* of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. The Government of Niger's structure which would seem to have the most in common with the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program, its objectives and its activities, is the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. However, the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles does not have a very stable institution base. Organizationally, the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles is attached to the interministerial the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural, which has no physical existence. It meets only once or twice a year, and has no permanent secretariat. The Government of Niger has already indicated that the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles is not an appropriate institutional base and *tutelle* for the World Bank-financed Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project.

The Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles has taken the lead role in developing the Programme National de Gestion des Ressource Naturelles and the World Bank-financed first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project. The World Bank has proposed that the Cel-

lule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles be involved in implementing its first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project. It is not yet clear what effect this may have on the role of the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the potential role of the natural resources management advisor to work with this structure. Different drafts and documents seem to imply different roles, and even the possibility of the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles being detached from the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural and being attached directly to the office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. There is speculation that the World Bank would like to include national natural resources management policy development and coordination within the first phase of the project, or that the World Bank will eventually propose to move these functions to a National Environmental Action Plan secretariat. Until negotiations between the Government of Niger and the World Bank progress farther, and some documents are finalized, it will be difficult to judge the future of the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles.

The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II, like a number of other donor programs, has and continues to contribute to the development of the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II has similar objectives to those proposed concerning the World Bank first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project, including further development of national policies and strategies, program coordination, harmonization of technologies, assessment of issues related to tenure, decentralization, local participation, establishing an environmental information system, monitoring and evaluation of natural resources management activities, etc. The World Bank financing may not be much larger than USAID's commitment to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. It would seem that a parallel relationship should exist between the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II and the World Bank first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project, both of which contribute to the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. Recognition of this parallel relationship may make it necessary, or at least appropriate, to change the *tutelle* of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project to the same Government of Niger's structure which provides the *tutelle* for the World Bank Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project. While it is not certain where this will end up, there are some indications that the office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage will be proposed.

While moving the *tutelle* of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II to the office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage would not solve all of the administrative problems, it would be a better institutional location than being in the Direction des Études et de la Programmation. Administratively, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to advise and coordinate the activities of one directorate, secretariat or *cellule* from an institutional location within a different directorate, secretariat or *cellule* at the same level in the organizational hierarchy. The same applies to ministries since they also are at the same level of organizational hierarchy. The office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage offers an institutional location which is directly superior in the organizational hierarchy to that of the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, and the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. This would permit better coordination and simplify administration of those program activities in these four institutions which are important to the achievement of the Agriculture Sec-

tor Development Grant II objectives. The natural resources management advisor would be in an office that directly supervises the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, allowing him better access and interaction with these important institutions. The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor would be in an office bureaucratically superior to the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière, increasing the chances that an administrative arrangement could be achieved that allowed him to work with both. Coordination and administration of program activities in the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement would still be relatively difficult. Administrative arrangements for the grants management unit would be difficult unless the grants management unit is largely autonomous from both the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Ministry of Finance and Plan.

Another possibility is that the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural will take on a physical existence through the establishment of a permanent secretariat. If that happens, the Government of Niger might agree to establish an Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program *tutelle* under this permanent secretariat of the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural. This would place the program in a position directly above the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural in the organizational hierarchy. This possibility would seem to provide the closest institutional linkages for the natural resources management component activities given the present structure. However, the location in Permanent Secretary of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage would provide essentially the same advantages and be a more stable institutional base.

A different option for attempting to resolve the division in program coordination and *tutelle* is to move the *tutelle* to the Direction de l'Analyse des Études Economique et Financières et de la Prévision of the Ministry of Finance and Plan. However, given the Ministry of Finance and Plan's internal organizational problems and its lack of engagement to date in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II, this would appear to be a step in the wrong direction.

A final alternative for USAID to consider is to establish a program office in the Prime Minister's office and unite program coordination and administrative supervision (*tutelle*) in the position of a national program coordinator. Situated in this office, the program would be located at a level in the organizational hierarchy superior to that of the three ministries. Institutionally, this greatly increases the chances that the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II can successfully coordinate and work with natural resources management activities in all three ministries. Location in the office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage may provide closer relations and better interaction with those Government of Niger's structures with natural resources management activities within, or under the administrative supervision of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. However, only location at a superior level in the organizational hierarchy can provide easy access to all three ministries.

10.6. The role of a national coordinator

One of the possibilities to help reduce administrative problems and facilitate program implementation would be to establish a National Agriculture Sector Development Grant II

program coordinator. If the program has a national coordinator, it will be very clear who is responsible for the process of tracking and satisfying program conditions precedent. Several additional attributions should be considered for this position. One would be to make the national coordinator responsible for administrative supervision of the program and project. Most of the program oversight would continue to be provided by the Comité de Suivi des Réformes de Politique and the Comité Technique Interministériel, or the informal combination of the two committees which presently addresses most Agriculture Sector Development Grant II problems and issues. The functional relationship between the national coordinator and the Government of Niger's structure responsible for the *tutelle* of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II, should be informational, rather than requiring signatures.

USAID and the Government of Niger should also consider giving the position of national coordinator the attribution of official program and project coordination, as opposed to the Direction de l'Analyse des Études Economique et Financières et de la Prévision and the Ministry of Finance and Plan. The Ministry of Finance and Plan has not been effective at program and project coordination and most of the effort required for program coordination has fallen on the Direction des Études et de la Programmation Director and the International Resources Group team. Giving the national coordinator this authority will simplify administrative procedures. If for some reason, it is not possible to make the national coordinator responsible for the official program and project coordination, this attribution should be given to the Government of Niger's structure responsible for the program *tutelle*. The separation of administrative supervision and coordination seems to be a major source of confusion with regard to responsibilities, a factor which complicates administration, and a constraint to implementation which serves no useful purpose.

If a national coordinator for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II is to be appointed, the role and attributions must be negotiated between USAID and the Government of Niger. Either the Comité de Suivi des Réformes de Politique or the Comité Technique Interministériel would seem to provide an appropriate forum for such debate. USAID and the International Resources Group team should develop the role that they think a national coordinator should play, as should representatives of the Government of Niger. One major issue will be, to what extent is this national coordinator a counterpart to technical assistance team members and to what extent is he an administrator of the program. People in general are more comfortable with the project approach in which the Project Director or Coordinator is the head of whatever agency the project is designed to work with. Obviously, an the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II national coordinator can not be located in the all of the Government of Niger agencies which will receive technical support. While it could be argued that the national coordinator should be located with the chief of party (perhaps again thinking of the familiar project approach) it would seem more important that he assure the administrative support for program and project activities, and be available on a full-time basis.

Whatever the outcome of the proposal to name a national coordinator, International Resources Group should hire an administrative assistant to help the chief of party, and perhaps the National Director, with the increased administrative tasks, that will necessarily result from the addition of the grants management unit to the International Resources Group contract.

Without administrative help, there is a serious risk that the chief of party will not be able to effectively meet his other responsibilities as natural resources management Advisor.

10.8. Should the program be reprojectized?

In considering the effectiveness of individual program components, it seems preferable to attach program components and their respective technical assistance directly to those agencies that have the responsibility and mandate for the policies and activities in question. What is not clear yet is whether the normally clumsy and burdensome administrative procedures of the Government of Niger will allow this approach to be used. One known and effective way to limit the administrative burden is to establish a project and program office responsible for the implementation and administration of all program components. While some people would find it easier to return to this known project model rather than experiment with ways to make a program model work, this would seem to be a choice of last resort.

One of the problems with the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program to date is that many of the partners are used to a project approach and are not comfortable with the program approach. Many partners would prefer that there be a single office where they can address any technical or administrative-issue related to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II. While this is difficult with a program spread over several ministries, establishing an the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II office headed by a national coordinator responsible for all administrative aspects of the program would solve many of the problems.

The financial management of the program may also be a determining factor with regard to whether the program should be reprojectized. USAID is responsible for the detailed accounting and supervision of funding used for projects. If a decision is made to reprojectize the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funding, then USAID will need some way to centralize the accounting and financial management of the program. To provide accounting and financial management in a manner which is acceptable to USAID and Congress is expensive. One of the primary advantages of the budget support approach used in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II was to avoid the need for this type of expensive financial management arrangements. This is why it would be very advantageous to all parties if a functional solution can be found to the problems encountered in the Government of Niger treasury accounting system, without returning to a project accounting system. However, if the administration is too burdensome to operate effectively as a program, then the return to a project approach will require the expensive USAID style accounting and financial management.

10.9. Recommendations concerning the institutional location of the program

If Government of Niger administrative procedures can be reduced to allow program component and their respective technical assistance to function effectively dispersed over two or three institutions, the location of the technical assistance and the institutional location of the program should be treated separately. If the administrative burden is too great, then treating them as separate questions will not be possible. Logic dictates that program components and

their respective technical assistance should work with those institutions which have the responsibility and mandate for the natural resources management policies and activities addressed by the component. Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, and the Direction de l'Environnement for the natural resources management component, the Groupement des Aides Privées and the Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental and the Direction de Développement Régional of the Ministry of Finance and Plan for the grants management unit, the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage for the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles component.

One of the possibilities to help reduce administrative problems and facilitate program implementation would be to establish a National Agriculture Sector Development Grant II Program Coordinator, with responsibilities for coordination and administrative supervision. It would be clear who is responsible for the coordination of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II and for the process of tracking and satisfying program conditions precedent. It would also provide an opportunity to simplify administrative procedures between the program and project components and the administrative supervisor. The Comité de Suivi des Réformes de Politique and the Comité Technique Interministériel (or the informal combination of the two) could continue to provide program oversight. The functional relationship between the national coordinator and the Government of Niger's structure responsible for the *tutelle* of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II should be informational, rather than requiring signatures. The national coordinator and the program office should be located in either the office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage or the office of the Prime Minister.

Whether this is sufficient to resolve the administrative problems of having components located in different institutions is not clear. The program would seem to have the best chance of administering this institutional octopus if the project office is located at a level in the organizational hierarchy that is superior to that where the individual components are located, such as the Prime Minister's office. If all of the components were located in the same ministry, this could be accomplished by being located in the office of the Secrétaire Général. Because the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II must attempt to work with different ministries, this requires the program office to be located in the office of the Prime Minister. (Location in any one ministry is a bit like trying to control and coordinate the octopus from a location in one of its tentacles.)

Locating the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program in the office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage would produce a more compact program organization, but with more risk of administrative problems. The office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage is hierarchically superior to the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural with regard to the natural resources management component, and to the Direction des Études et de la Programmation and Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière with regard to the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles component. In addition to the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, the natural resources management component and advisor need to work with the Direction de l'Environnement of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement. An accord between the program and the Direction de l'Environnement could provide a working relationship between the

program and the Direction de l'Environnement which did not require a lot of administrative procedure. It seems like the big problem for locating the program in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage will be the administration and coordination of the grants management unit. A tremendous amount of administrative detail is involved in awarding and managing \$5-6 million in small grants. There is a high risk that the cumbersome administrative procedures usually required between ministries would render the grants management unit ineffective and unable to achieve its assigned program objectives. Therefore, USAID should seriously consider making the grants management unit largely autonomous of ministries, and attach it to the Groupement des Aides Privées. While it might be possible to administrate a grants management unit located in the Ministry of Finance and Plan from a program location in the Prime Minister's office, it would be very difficult if the program office is located in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.

- 10.9.1. International Resources Group and USAID should enter into discussions with the Government of Niger to establish the position of a National Agriculture Sector Development Grant II Program Coordinator and the attributions of this position. Official program coordination and administrative supervision should be among the attributions considered.
- 10.9.2. If official program coordination can not be attributed to the national coordinator, it should be attributed to the institution in which the program office is located (the Prime Minister's office or the office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage).
- 10.9.3. International Resources Group and USAID should enter into discussions with the Government of Niger to move the *tutelle* of the program to the office of the Prime Minister or of the office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.
- 10.9.4. International Resources Group and USAID should discuss with the Government of Niger, the possibility of the natural resources management Advisor establishing an office in the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles.
- 10.9.5. If the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent is to be continued, the revised the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles program should be focused on activities in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles Advisor should have counterparts in the personnel, equipment, finance and training services of the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.
- 10.9.6. The grants management unit should be established as a largely autonomous organization, attached to the Groupement des Aides Privées. If the Agriculture

Sector Development Grant II program office is located in the Prime Minister's office it may be possible to attach it to the Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental, the Direction de Développement Régional, and the Ministry of Finance and Plan.

11. Recommendations for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II Program Adjustments and Reorientation

- 11.1. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project should be extended for approximately 3 years, i.e. until December 1998, to allow time to establish the nongovernmental organizations subcomponent and to return to a project implementation time frame comparable to that which was originally planned.
- 11.2. The International Resources Group technical assistance team should complete the program and project monitoring and evaluation plan and finalize and submit the second annual work plan.
- 11.3. Niger is at an extremely important crossroads in the development of Code Rural and related resource tenure policies and regulations. USAID should consider funding a full-time resource tenure specialist to assist the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural in implementing the resource tenure reform process and establishing the regional *Commissions Foncières* to test proposed regulations.
- 11.4. the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II should consider how it could provide more balance in its natural resources management outlook. One strategy may be through addressing policies which are important to pastoralists and the livestock subsector.
- 11.5. USAID should seriously consider either terminating the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent or significantly revising it along the lines suggested in the Evaluation Report. A revised the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles would also require changes in the objectives, approach, conditions precedent and the terms of reference for technical assistance.
- 11.6. The Government of Niger and USAID need to determine how the existing system for the disbursement of funds can be made to work more effectively, or whether a more functional system can be substituted in its place. To reduce administrative problems, a compromise should be sought which is not considered budget support by the Government of Niger, and which is not considered project funding by USAID. The *Comité Technique Interministériel*

should meet with the Directors of Budget, Treasury and Taxes, to seek a solution to these financial problems.

- 11.7. The Government of Niger should complete and submit the financial reports required in Section 4.2.A.5 of the grant agreement and establish procedures to ensure that future reports are submitted to USAID in a timely manner.
- 11.8. Experience to date indicates that the multitude of conditions precedent hinders rather than promotes program implementation. In order to seriously streamline conditions precedent, the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II should reject the design assumption that a condition precedent for each area of intervention in each tranche would facilitate program implementation.
- 11.9. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II needs to seriously analyze the rationale for remaining conditionalities and any new conditions precedent which are proposed. The total list of conditionalities should be reviewed with a view to reducing the number. An existing report from an International Resources Group consultant provides a solid basis for establishing the type of process which is necessary to evaluate which conditions precedent are worth maintaining or adding. The present conditions precedent related to decentralization and the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent should be eliminated.
- 11.10. The Government of Niger and USAID should clearly identify the institutions and personnel responsible for program related objectives and activities. Particular attention is needed with regard to program coordination and administration, and the process of tracking and satisfying conditions precedent.
- 11.11. Given the importance attached to improving conditions for program implementation and program performance, the Government of Niger should appoint a National the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II Program Coordinator acceptable to USAID.
- 11.12. Official responsibility for program coordination should be merged with the responsibility for administrative supervision. If possible, both should be attributed to the national program coordinator. If that is not possible, coordination should be made the responsibility of the institution chosen to provide the *tutelle* for the program.
- 11.13. The *tutelle* for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II should be moved to either the Prime Minister's office or the office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. Improving implementation and reducing administrative problems requires that the program office be located at a level in the organizational hierarchy which is superior to that of the organizations in which the program components are located. This is only partially true for location in the office of the Secrétaire Général of the

Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and certain precautions to avoid administrative problems would be necessary.

11.14. If the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program office is located in the Prime Minister's office, the program should consider locating program components and their respective technical assistance to those organizations which have the mandate and responsibility for the activities targeted in the program component:

- the natural resources management component in the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles
- the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles component in the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage (if it continues)
- and the semiautonomous grants management unit attached to the Groupement des Aides Privées, or possibly the Service des Organisations Non-Gouvernemental, the Direction de Développement Régional of the Ministry of Finance and Plan.

Alternatively, if the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program office is located in the office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, the natural resources management and the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles components and their respective technical assistance could potentially be located in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program office. In this case the grants management unit should be largely autonomous and attached to the Groupement des Aides Privées, to avoid the serious problems caused by cumbersome administrative procedures between ministries.

11.15. The Evaluation Team supports the proposal of the Pre-Evaluation Mission of the Programme National de Gestion des Ressource Naturelles to move the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles or natural resources management-PCU to the office of the Secretary General (Secrétaire Général) of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The Evaluation Team proposes that a parallel relationship be established between the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and the World Bank First Phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project, and the manner in which they both support the Programme National de Gestion des Ressource Naturelles.

11.16. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II/USAID should consider establishing a limited number of conditions precedent which improve the implementation environment for the program and project. In particular, these might include:

- A condition precedent which requires a rapid resolution of the financial administration problems, i.e. accounting and fund disbursement procedures, which are satisfactory to USAID.
- A condition precedent which requires assignment of a national coordinator acceptable to USAID to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project.
- A condition precedent which requires Government of Niger agreement to move the *tutelle* of the program and project to the Prime Minister's office or the office of the Secrétaire Général of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.
- A condition precedent which requires Government of Niger agreement to merge responsibility for program coordination and administrative supervision, preferable as an attribution of the national program coordinator, or if that is not possible, as an attribution of the institution providing the *tutelle* for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II.
- If the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent is retained, a condition precedent which requires the assignment of counterparts acceptable to USAID from the critical Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière services (personnel, equipment, finance, and training) to the institutional advisor.

11.17. The Evaluation Team strongly suggests that the following areas need to be rapidly addressed by the appropriate authorities:

- How to facilitate coordination and administration of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II activities throughout three Ministries.
- The establishment of the position of a national coordinator and appropriate attributions of the office.
- The most appropriate institutional attachment for program components and their respective technical assistance.
- The most appropriate institutional location (*tutelle*) for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II and for the proposed national coordinator.
- Regular meetings of the Comité de Suivi des Réformes de Politique or the Comité Technique Interministériel to consider the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program issues.

Annexe G. Evaluation a mi-parcours de la subvention au développement du secteur agricole seconde phase (S.D.S.A. II)

**par Abousalé Abdoulahi
Political reform specialist**

La Subvention au Développement du Secteur Agricole Seconde Phase (S.D.A.A. II) est un programme d'assistance sectorielle de cinq ans, avec pour objectifs principaux :

- la création des conditions qui permettront à chaque habitant des zones rurales de gérer et profiter des ressources naturelles qu'il contrôle en mettant l'accent sur le cadre juridique de l'investissement foncier, la capacité des organisations rurales publiques ou privée, pour faciliter la croissance des productions et revenus;
- l'encouragement des actuels "agents de changement" et favoriser l'introduction des nouveaux agents (coopératives, Organisations Non Gouvernementales, Caisse d'Epargne et de Crédit et Organes Administratifs locaux).

Afin d'atteindre ces objectifs fixés, les activités du programme S.D.S.A. II sont regroupés dans deux grandes composantes qui sont :

- l'établissement d'un cadre juridique et politique favorable à la gestion participative des ressources naturelles qui sont à la base d'une production durable en milieu rural et à la promotion des investissements dans les activités de gestion des ressources naturelles ;
- le renforcement des capacités des institutions oeuvrant pour le développement rural et l'appui aux réformes y afférentes.

L'accord de subvention du programme S.D.S.A. II (N°683-0257) et l'accord de subvention à portée limitée du Projet S.D.S.A. II (N°683-0265) ont été signés le 24 Août 1990 par les représentants du Gouvernement du Niger et ceux des États Unis d'Amérique. La date d'achèvement de l'assistance du programme S.D.S.A. II est prévue pour la fin du mois de décembre 1995. Or, de cette date à aujourd'hui on ne note que le déboursement intégrale de la première tranche des fonds prévus au titre du programme alors que l'on s'achemine vers la satisfaction des conditions préalables au déboursement de la deuxième tranche qui comme la première (qui fut scindée en tranches 1.A et 1.B) est en voie d'être scindée en deux tranches (2.A et 2.B). Ce constat nous amène à affirmer qu'il y a eu une lenteur dans le processus de déboursement des tranches de fonds prévus au titre de la SDSA II. En effet, deux années se sont écoulées entre la date de signature de l'accord du programme et le premier déboursement de fonds. Ceci est en fait lié au retard accusé dans l'installation de l'assistance technique qui a mis deux ans avant d'être en place (alors qu'elle était nécessaire au tout début du programme) et les difficultés socio-politiques et financières qu'a connu le pays notamment la conférence nationale et la période de transition.

Par ailleurs, il est important de souligner que le premier déboursement était intervenu grâce à l'appui de l'assistance malgré les efforts fournis par l'administration nigérienne.

Dans le cadre de la présente évaluation à mi-parcours, nous allons non seulement apporter des solutions aux difficultés qu'a connu l'exécution du programme, mais aussi évaluer la performance relative à la mise en œuvre du programme et l'impact prévu au niveau national et local. D'une manière générale, il s'agira pour nous d'examiner les progrès réalisés en vue d'atteindre le but et les objectifs de la S.D.S.A. II tels que stipulés dans la DAAP et dans l'accord de projet et ses avenants.

Pour mener à bien cette évaluation, de concert avec le Chef de l'équipe d'évaluation, le travail a été repartitionné entre les différents membres. C'est ainsi qu'il me revient d'aborder les points qui suivent :

1. les progrès réalisés au niveau des résultats/activités prioritaires par rapport à la DAAP
2. l'élaboration d'un système de budget-programme et un guide pour assurer la conformité entre les projets des différents donateurs et les objectifs du budget-programme du Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage ;
3. le renforcement de la participation des Organisations Non Gouvernementales (ONG) et autres institutions rurales à la gestion des ressources naturelles ;
4. les fonds de contrepartie ;
5. le volet institutionnel ;
6. la participation des Organisations Non Gouvernementales et d'autres institutions rurales à la gestion des ressources naturelles;
7. le suivi et évaluation du Programme Subvention au Développement du Secteur Agricole Seconde Phase (SDSA II).

I. Les progrès réalisés au niveau des résultats/activités prioritaires par rapport à la DAAP.

Toutes les priorités retenues dans la DAAP et le DP en matière de gestion des ressources naturelles ne sont pas perdues de vue de la part du Gouvernement du Niger et ne sont nullement remises en cause ou en contradiction avec ses préoccupations, mieux il en fait siennes de celles-ci.

Pour assurer un meilleur développement du secteur rural au Niger, le Gouvernement a adopté en Mars 1992 "les Principes Directeurs d'une Politique de Développement Rural pour le Niger", qui nous donne les grandes orientations nationales en matière de développement rural, au sein desquelles figurent celles relatives à la gestion des ressources naturelles (GRN).

Ces grandes options nationales en matière de développement rural, contenues dans les principes directeurs viennent renforcer les priorités retenues par le programme S.D.S.A. II en matière de gestion des ressources naturelles à savoir:

- l'établissement d'un cadre juridique et politique favorable à la gestion participative et à la promotion des investissements dans les activités de gestion des ressources naturelles
- renforcement des capacités des institutions intervenant auprès des populations rurales.

Pour mettre en œuvre ces options politiques, dès Avril 1992 il a été créée et mise en place une Cellule Nationale de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles (CNGRN), dont le rôle est d'assurer l'harmonisation des programmes et la planification de la gestion des ressources naturelles au Niger.

Cependant, des informations recueillies au cours de cette évaluation, il serait indiqué de veiller à ce que la CNGRN puisse jouer pleinement son rôle conformément à son arrêté de création et non de glisser vers le rôle que veut lui assigner la Banque Mondiale, qui est celui d'être son instrument de mise en œuvre de ses options en matière de gestion des ressources naturelles.

A mon avis, la CNGRN doit rester l'unité nationale de proposition de réformes en matière de gestion des ressources naturelles et d'harmonisation des interventions ou options de tous les Bailleurs de Fonds intervenant dans le domaine.

Pour mieux appuyer cette vision, il est important de préciser qu'en conformité avec la logique d'élaboration des principes directeurs, le Sous-Comité Développement Rural fut redynamisé en Avril 1992. Ses attributions sont celles de superviser toutes les réformes de politique à opérer dans le secteur rural et à ce titre il assure la tutelle de la CNGRN et autres structures relevant du secteur. A son tour, le Sous-Comité Développement Rural rend lui aussi compte au comité technique mis en place dans le cadre du processus de préparation des tables rondes et qui assure le suivi de la mise en œuvre du programme SDSA II.

D'une manière globale, on peut retenir que toutes les priorités retenues par le Programme S.D.S.A. II cadrent et traduisent parfaitement les préoccupations du Gouvernement du Niger pour le secteur rural. Actuellement au niveau national d'autres actions sont en cours de réalisation et viendront renforcer les dispositions prises antérieurement en faveur d'une meilleure gestion des ressources naturelles. Et sans doute, ces dispositions permettront à l'avenir la libération dans des délais raisonnables des tranches restantes du programme.

II. L'élaboration d'un système de budget-programme et d'un guide pour assurer la conformité entre les projets des différents donateurs et les objectifs du budget-programme du Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.

Dans ce domaine, on note la tenue d'un atelier sur la gestion par objectifs (GPO) à Kollo du 24 Janvier au 5 Février 1994. Des avis recueillis, on est loin d'atteindre les objectifs fixés car à

l'état actuelle des choses cette approche est difficile à mettre en œuvre. Néanmoins, compte tenu de l'intérêt accordé à cette approche et de son utilité, d'autres actions sont prévues ultérieurement. Il s'agira de l'organisation d'autres ateliers à l'intention des animateurs nigériens et cadres régionaux des Ministères de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage et de l'Hydraulique et Environnement.

Pour la mise en place des règles concernant la conception, la programmation, la coordination et la gestion des projets, un pas semble être fait avec l'organisation de l'atelier de Kollo. Mais par contre, l'application d'un tel système est limitée actuellement au niveau des Ministères intervenant dans le secteur rural par la crise financière que traverse le pays qui influence considérablement les processus d'élaboration du budget général de l'État et de programmation des investissements de l'État. Pour parvenir à mettre en place un tel système, d'intenses activités de formation s'avèrent nécessaires et ce sur longue période.

III. Le renforcement de la participation des ong et d'autres institutions rurales a la G.R.N.

Concernant les règles régissant les Organisations Non Gouvernementales et les Associations au Niger, un atelier sur l'émergence d'ONG nationaux a été organisé en Mai 1990 à Dosso, avec pour objectif de proposer un cadre juridique et institutionnel favorable aux développement des activités des ONG.

Pour apprécier les efforts fournis suite à l'atelier de Dosso, grâce à l'assistance du programme SDSA un autre atelier a été organisé du 21 au 26 Février 1994 à Kollo avec pour objectif de faire le bilan des actions entreprises depuis la tenue de l'atelier de Dosso.

Des travaux de l'atelier de Kollo sur le bilan et les perspectives de l'émergence des ONG nationales au Niger, il ressort que l'aspect juridique ne constitue plus un blocage aux activités des ONG et associations de tout genre. Par contre, les difficultés de celles-ci résident au niveau de la mise en application des textes et règlements par les Ministères techniques, des relations entre les ONG/Associations et le Gouvernement, les bailleurs de fonds, la population et entre elles-même.

Aussi, les ONG nationales et associations souffrent d'un manque considérable d'organisation. D'intenses activités sont à mener dans ce domaine. Et pour cette raison, d'après le Chef de Service des ONG au Ministère des Finances et du Plan, elles sont incapables de gérer ou d'utiliser les fonds que leur réserve le programme au titre de la tranche 1-B (2,5 millions de dollars) et dans son ensemble (30% de 20 millions de dollars) d'ici décembre 1995.

Afin de leur permettre d'utiliser ces fonds une prolongation de la date d'achèvement du programme de deux à trois années est nécessaire. Et durant toute cette période, les ONG nationales/Associations profiteront de l'assistance technique prévue par le programme SDSA II. De concert avec les cadres de la Direction du Développement Régional, cette assistance technique aura la responsabilité d'organiser les ONG/Associations. Ces structures peuvent aussi bénéficier de la formation en MBO.

Une partie des fonds prévue pour leurs activités peut être dégagée dans ce cadre.

IV. Les fonds de contrepartie

Il y a lieu ici de préciser que depuis la signature de l'accord en Août 1990, seule la première tranche des fonds sur les quatre prévues a été déboursée. Trois tranches seront à déboursée d'ici décembre 1995, ce qui nous paraît assez difficile et sans rationalité pratique. A mon avis, la date d'achèvement du programme est à prolonger, cette action est nécessaire et permettra une utilisation efficiente des fonds des tranches S.D.S.A II non encore déboursées.

Initialement prévue pour être déboursée dans sa totalité, la première tranche des fonds a été scindée en deux (tranche 1-A et 1-B) et libérée en deux étapes :

a) le déboursement de la tranche 1-A est intervenu en 1992, d'un montant de 2,5 millions de dollars et est destinée à l'appui budgétaire des institutions du Gouvernement intervenant dans la gestion des ressources naturelles;

b) et le second intervenu lui en 1994, concerne la Tranche 1-B qui elle est destinée aux activités des ONG/secteur privé et d'un montant de 2,5 millions de dollars également.

D'une manière globale, on peut retenir qu'il y a eu un grand retard dans les déboursements de fonds. Comme cité en introduction, ceci est en partie dû aux difficultés socio-politique et économique qu'a connu le pays (Conférence Nationale, Transition, etc...) et au retard mis dans la mise en place de l'assistance technique. Et l'on peut retenir que c'est grâce à l'appui de cette assistance que les premiers déboursements sont intervenus. Cette assistance est matérialisée par l'équipe IRG composée de deux conseillers : l'un en gestion des ressources naturelles et l'autre en réformes administratives et institutionnelles. Sa mission consiste à aider le Gouvernement à satisfaire les conditions préalables aux déboursements des tranches prévues dans le cadre du programme.

1. Pour l'utilisation des fonds, on peut également retenir que seule la tranche 1-A a connu un début d'utilisation ou été utilisée à plus de 50%.

Les fonds de cette tranche ont été utilisés en appui aux structures intervenant dans le GRN, il s'agissait de la Direction des Etudes et de la Programmation du Ministère de l'agriculture et l'Elevage, de la Direction des Affaires Administratives et Financières du MAG/EL, de la Cellule Nationale de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, du Code Rural, de l'Institut Pratique du Développement Rural (IPDR), du Sous-Comité Développement Rural, de la Direction de l'Environnement et de la Faculté d'Agronomie.

En conclusion, on peut noter que cette utilisation a été pertinente et cadre parfaitement aux buts et objectifs de la S.D.S.A. II, qui sont ceux d'accroître les capacités des populations rurales en matière de gestion des ressources naturelles, de la croissance des productions et des revenus. En ce sens qu'elle a permis aux structures ayant bénéficié de l'appui financier du programme, de

bien fonctionner et de contribuer à la satisfaction des conditions préalables des tranches restantes à travers notamment l'élaboration des termes de référence des études, la réalisation des études et l'encadrement technique apporté aux populations rurales. Il est important de souligner que sans cet appui, certaines structures auraient fermé leurs portes ; c'est d'ailleurs le cas du code rural et de la Cellule Nationale de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles qui suite au blocage des fonds qui leur ont été alloués au titre de la tranche 1-A risque de faire des compressions du personnel.

2. Pour ce qui est de la gestion des fonds, aucune reproche ne peut être faite à l'égard des structures chargées de cette gestion, sauf qu'on déplore la lourdeur du processus d'engagement et de règlement des dépenses engagées par les structures bénéficiaires. En effet, le circuit est composé d'environ 25 points de contrôle de passage.

3. La situation actuelle des fonds est la suivante :

- le montant total de la tranche 1-A est de 551.000.000 de Francs CFA. Ce montant ne comprend pas les 8% des fonds fiduciaires dont la gestion revient à l'USAID pour des dépenses relatives aux activités du programme ;

- le montant total alloué aux différentes structures au titre du budget 1993 est de 465.000.000 Francs CFA ;

- le montant total des dépenses engagée est de 323.972.392 Francs CFA.

- le solde théorique des fonds alloués et fonds engagés est de 141.027.608 Francs CFA.

Il est important de souligner que tous les fonds engagés, n'ont pas été réellement réglés au niveau de la banque où sont logés les fonds. Ceci est dû à la lourdeur du processus d'engagement des dépenses qui est celui du circuit normal des dépenses engagées sur les ressources de l'État et dont la durée varie de trois à six mois. A titre d'illustration, certaines dépenses engagées depuis 1993 par les structures bénéficiaires sont jusqu'ici non réglées du fait de la non inscription sur le budget général de l'État par manque de rubrique qui leur sont propres.

Cette contrainte constitue le seul blocage que connaît la mise en œuvre du programme et à laquelle il serait judicieux d'apporter une solution.

4. Les 551.000.000 de Francs CFA représentant les fonds de la tranche 1-A sont logés au niveau d'une banque de la place dans un compte spécial et peuvent générer des intérêts. De cette somme, 369.000.000 F CFA sont mis sur un compte opérationnel qui lui ne génère aucun intérêt et sur lequel seront payées toutes les dépenses engagées par les structures bénéficiaires.

- Le solde, soit 182.000.000 sont actuellement sur le compte spécial et génèrent des intérêts. Pour faire la situation de ces fonds, il va falloir demander au gestionnaire (le Directeur des Financements, des Investissements et de la Dette) de faire le point sur la situation des fonds, car de son avis, le trésor doit lui adressé une lettre pour le retrait du BIC sur les dépenses réglées (2% du montant) et prendre en compte les intérêts générés. Le travail devrait

bien sûr être fait avant l'évaluation, ce qui nous permettrait de voir clair au niveau des différents soldes, ce qui ne fut pas le cas.

En conclusion, il faut souligner que l'utilisation des fonds de la tranche 1-A n'a pas été aisée pour les différentes structures bénéficiaires ; et, actuellement, il ne leur est plus possible de faire des engagements sur les fonds qui leur sont alloués et pris en compte dans leur budget, car il n'y a aucune inscription dans ce sens au niveau du budget général de l'État au titre de l'année 1994. Pour permettre à ces structures d'engager ces fonds, il va falloir demander à la Direction Générale du Budget de faire un report sur le budget 1994. Cependant, de l'avis des agents de la DAAF du Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage une demande vient d'être faite dans ce sens auprès du Ministère des Finances et du Plan. Aussi, de l'avis du Directeur des Financements, des Investissements et de la Dette, pour l'utilisation des autres tranches, on aura plus besoin de ce long processus, la gestion deviendrait comme celles de fonds de Projets des autres bailleurs de fonds tels que la Banque Mondiale. Dans ce cas, le circuit sera constitué seulement de deux à trois points de passage au lieu de 25 dans la gestion des fonds de la tranche 1-A. Cependant, comme la DAAF/DP parle spécifiquement de l'appui budgétaire il serait difficile d'échapper à ce processus. Néanmoins, comme le document de projet offre la possibilité aux parties (USAID/ Gouvernement du Niger) de convenir d'un mode de gestion de ces fonds, il serait indiqué que les deux parties examinent la situation.

5. La tranche 1-B destinée aux ONG/Secteur Privé venait d'être libérée et aucun engagement n'a été effectué sur ces fonds, la gestion de ces fonds sera effectuée par une unité de gestion, dont la coordination sera évoquée au niveau de la localisation des structures du projet.

6. Afin de permettre une utilisation efficace des fonds de contrepartie, il serait judicieux d'alléger le processus d'engagement des dépenses au cas où le système actuel sera maintenu. Mais le mieux serait un système à deux ou trois points de passage pour les engagements des dépenses.

V. Volet institutionnel

Concernant l'assistance au titre du Programme S.D.S.A. II, il est indéniable qu'elle a joué et jouera un rôle important dans la mise en œuvre du programme. On peut ainsi affirmer que sans l'appui de l'équipe PRG, il serait difficile de réaliser les résultats actuels (satisfaction des conditions préalables de la tranche 1-B et prochainement celles de la seconde tranche au cours d'une même année "1994"). Compte tenu de la diversité du programme et des volets d'activités du secteur rural qu'il intéresse, le renforcement de l'assistance technique est nécessaire. Cette assistance technique doit s'appuyer sur les compétences locales disponibles, donc elle doit être composée des consultants recrutés sur le marché international que local.

La mise en œuvre du programme sera effectuée conformément au document du projet (DP) évoquée en son article 2. En effet, la coordination sera assurée par le MF/P (DAEEFP), la gestion

financière par le MF/P (DFID) et la mise en œuvre technique par le Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage (DEP).

Pour rendre l'assistance technique plus efficace, elle sera répartie au sein des ministères à charge du programme.

A mon avis, le Conseiller au GRN sera logé à la CGRN dans sa forme ci-haut évoquée ; le Conseiller en réforme institutionnelle au niveau de la DAAF ; l'unité de gestion des fonds des ONG/Secteur privé au niveau de la DDR du Ministère des Finances et du Plan (Service des ONG) et le Coordonateur des secteurs techniques (Chef d'Equipe) au niveau de la DEP et sera l'homologue du cadre désigné à plein temps pour assurer le suivi de la mise en œuvre technique du programme, appuyé par les cadres de la DAEEFP du Ministère des Finances et du Plan.

Il serait dans ce cas, judicieux d'examiner les termes de référence de chaque partie d'assistance technique au niveau du comité de suivi des réformes de politique initié au titre de la S.D.S.A ; comité qui doit être dynamisé afin qu'il puisse jouer pleinement son rôle dans le cadre du programme S.D.S.A.

VI. Participation des ONG et autres institutions rurales à la GRN

Bien que n'ayant pas eu l'occasion de visiter un projet exécuté par une ONG dans le cadre de cette évaluation, la visite de deux projets exécutés par des structures publiques (PDAAT, PSN-FIDA), nous permet de faire les appréciations qui suivent :

- Un effort important de transfert de technologies en matière de GRN est en train d'être fait, matérialisé par une certaine prise en charge de certaines réalisations par les populations;
- Une importante évolution voir changement de mentalité des paysans, qui tendent aujourd'hui vers une gestion intégrée de leurs ressources naturelles ;

D'une manière globale, on peut affirmer que les réformes de politique initiées dans le cadre du programme S.D.S.A II cadrent bien avec les besoins exprimés sur le terrain. Et, bien que le programme S.D.S.A ne connaît qu'un début d'application, la réalité de ce qui se passe sur le terrain, nous permet aussi d'affirmer que les réformes envisagées seront d'un apport capital dans l'amélioration de la gestion des ressources naturelles au Niger.

Contrairement aux années antérieures où les paysans sont hostiles à certaines interventions (des structures publiques ou autres structures intervenant au niveau du secteur rural), on assiste aujourd'hui à l'acceptation de l'appui qu'offre les différentes structures au niveau du secteur rural. Les expériences acquises sont en train d'être capitalisées par les paysans, qui expriment le besoin de voir se renforcer l'appui que leur apportent ces différentes structures. Cet appui est nécessaire et doit être étalé sur une longue période (environ une vingtaine d'années pour voir le monde rural se prendre en charge au Niger).

Ainsi donc, on peut retenir comme contraintes aux interventions des différentes structures (publiques et privées), l'insuffisance des moyens (matériels et financiers) destinés à la mise en œuvre de leur stratégie, l'inexpérience du personnel technique d'appui et d'encadrement. A cela s'ajoute l'incapacité ou le manque de volonté des ONG de toucher les zones rurales les plus affectés et ayant besoin d'assistance pour assurer une gestion rationnelle de leur milieu naturel, qui connaît de plus en plus une dégradation accélérée.

Les paysans sont eux aussi limités dans la mise en œuvre ou l'adoption des techniques et expérience acquises auprès des projets par le manque des moyens financiers nécessaires à l'acquisition du petit matériel pour effectuer certaines réalisations physiques notamment les travaux de CRS/DRS, de leur inorganisation et par l'analphabétisme.

L'équipe d'assistance technique pour la promotion des activités et de gestion des fonds des ONG prévus au titre du programme, doit en termes de satisfaction des objectifs de la S.D.S.A. II apporter un appui en formation et en organisation aux institutions concernées par ce programme. Cet appui se justifie par le fait qu'une grande majorité de ces institutions ont un personnel jeune et sans expérience professionnelle suffisante pour leur permettre de mener à bien des telles activités.

En terme de rapport de travail entre les structures administratives gouvernementales du Niger, l'IRG et l'USAID, il doit y avoir une parfaite intégration entre les services gouvernementaux et l'assistance technique, car dans les conditions normales de travail il reviendrait au Gouvernement du Niger de réaliser les actions prévues au titre du programme.

D'ailleurs, l'assistance technique n'est nécessaire que dans les domaines où le Gouvernement nigérien ne dispose pas ou dispose de peu de compétences. Concernant l'USAID, elle doit suivre l'évolution des activités menées dans le cadre du programme et veiller à ce que les actions gouvernementales en matière de réformes de politique au niveau du secteur rural soient conformes à l'esprit de la S.D.S.A.

Pour la gestion des fonds S.D.S.A. II, l'assistance technique ne peut gérer que les fonds destinés aux activités des ONG/Secteur privé, car l'autre volet concerne les activités des structures administratives, prises en charge au niveau du budget général de l'État.

A mon avis, confier la gestion de l'appui budgétaire à l'État à une structure privée me paraît mal indiqué parce que cette intervention sera non conforme aux principes nationales en matière d'élaboration du budget. Pour appuyer cette idée, il est important de noter que le PAAD/DP ne parle spécifiquement que de l'appui budgétaire à l'État et pour cette raison, il serait difficile d'éviter pour les prochaines tranches, le long processus d'engagement des dépenses (25 points de passage). Une clarification de cette situation entre le Gouvernement Nigérien et celui des États Unis est nécessaire.

VII. Suivi et evaluation

A mon avis, en matière d'élaboration d'un plan de suivi et évaluation de la S.D.S.A. II, l'on doit se limiter à la réalisation des termes de référence de l'évaluation du programme et le suivi doit quant à lui être assuré par un comité conjoint Gouvernement du Niger/USAID. Donc dans cette situation, le plan se limite à la définition de la périodicité d'évaluation du programme et celle de la tenue des réunions du Comité de Suivi.

Les indicateurs d'impact et les bases de données que l'on utilise actuellement sont à mon avis appropriés et suffisants pour permettre une appréciation du programme.

Il s'agissait notamment des progrès effectués dans la mise en œuvre des réformes prévues au titre du programme ou celles concourant aux réalisations des objectifs de la S.D.S.A. II. Ceci peut être apprécié à travers les activités des structures publiques et privées intervenant dans le secteur rural, qui ne sont limitées par aucune contrainte juridique.

A l'avenir, les évaluations des activités des différentes structures intervenant dans le secteur rural suffisent pour apprécier l'impact du programme S.D.S.A. II.

Annex H. Report: Fiscal analysis of conditions precedent and financial situation, Agricultural Sector Development Grant II.

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3.1. Review of the uses of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II counterpart funds and assessment of their relevance to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II goals and purpose

Tranche I of the program funding was split into two tranches of \$2.5 million each, less 8 percent that goes into a USAID programmed local currency trust fund. Tranche IA was released in August 1992 and was used to support the budgets of eight structures under the *tutelle* of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and the Ministry of Hydrology and Environment. These structures are the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural, the Cellule-Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural, the Direction des Études et de la Programmation, and the Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, the Direction de l'Environnement of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, the Faculté d'Agronomie of the University of Niamey, and the Institut Pratique de Développement Rural at Kollo. Tranche IB was released in May 1994 and the funds were reserved to finance field activities of nongovernmental organizations and other local, private institutions and help support the institutional development of nongovernmental organizations. Tranche II also will be split to allow more rapid access to the portion that will provide budget support for selected Government of Niger institutions.

These institutions all have some role in the area of intervention targeted for policy reform. The Sous-Comité de Développement Rural makes decisions regarding rural development, including natural resources management. The Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles is mandated to develop a natural resources management strategy and coordinate natural resources management policy. The Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural is in charge of developing the Rural Code and regulations on resource tenure. The Direction des Études et de la Programmation and Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière of Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, are responsible for planning, management and administration of resources (human, equipment and financial) within Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The Direction de l'Environnement of the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement is responsible for forestry policy, including the role of foresters, and the lead institution on developing a National Environmental Action Plan. The Faculté d'Agronomie and the Institut Pratique de Développement Rural are the primary training institutions for the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage personnel. Operational support for these institutions will finance

many of the studies and other policy related activities required by the conditions precedents and the project strategy. However, in many cases, the relationship between this budget support and the project purpose and goal are only evident if one considers the entire program strategy. With the exception of the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural and the Direction de l'Environnement, these institutions are not in direct contact with rural populations. But these are institutions where decisions are made that will impact income opportunities, the costs or opportunities to manage resources in a sustainable manner, and the rights and control of rural inhabitants over resources.

3.2. Assessment of the relationship of counterpart funds use to the stated Government of Niger strategy and priorities for improved natural resources management

The Government of Niger and other donors agree that the areas of natural resources management policy targeted by the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II for intervention are priority areas for the improvement of natural resources management policy in Niger. Counterpart funds used in these areas of intervention correspond directly to Government of Niger strategy and priorities for improving natural resources management. Improving the capacity of nongovernmental organizations and other local private institutions, that include rural associations, credit unions, *groupements*, and the like to support natural resources management and rural development is also a specific government strategy and priority. Improving planning, management and administrative capacity within the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, corresponds to the Government of Niger strategy rather than a priority to improve natural resources management. The Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage directorates primarily responsible for the delivery of technical services are the Direction de l'Agriculture and the Direction de l'Élevage et des Industries Animales, and they still have not received funding under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II.¹

3.3. Review of the overall management and problems encountered in disbursing the counterpart funds for operational support by the Government of Niger

Two very serious problems have led to a complete blockage in the disbursement of counterpart funds, which at the time of this evaluation has lasted over six months. One problem relates to the transfer of residual funds from one annual budget to the next. The second problem is the long and slow bureaucratic process presently used for the disbursement of funds. A meeting of the Comité Technique Interministériel enlarged to include the Directors of Budget, Treasury and Taxes, was called to discuss a solution to the financial problems that are crippling the effectiveness of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program.

¹ DA does receive substantial support from the World Bank financed *Project de Renforcement des Services Agricoles*.

All Government of Niger structures which were allocated budget support under tranche IA have a remaining balance of unused funds but have been unable to make additional expenditures since December 31, 1993. These existing funds cannot be spent because there are no budget lines for these activities in the 1994 national budget. The Government of Niger's treasury is not accustomed to handling funds earmarked for specific Government of Niger institutions and the Ministry of Finance and Plan does not automatically transfer remaining funds from one budget to the next. In the general case, unused budget allocations are returned to the national treasury for reallocation the following year. An *arrêté* authorizing the transfer (*report*) of residual funds from the 1993 to the 1994 budget will be made only when it is possible to update the entire national budget. Budget support has been halted for over six months and it may be several more months before additional expenditures can be committed.

The disbursement of funds has been very slow. The accounting and payment procedures for these earmarked funds channeled through the treasury system are so slow, that bills from late 1993 are still being paid in June 1994. The International Resources Group Institutional advisor documented twenty-two steps in the process required for disbursement of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funds. Financial commitments for imported goods were disrupted by the devaluation. Imported goods, for which orders were already made but which were tied up in this disbursement process had to be reordered at double the cost, or the cancel the orders. A large portion of the unspent funds exists because of such canceled orders and the blockage of additional expenditures since December 31, 1993.

The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funds pass through the Ministry of Finance and Plan and the national treasury in the twenty-two step process mentioned above because they are officially labelled as budget support by USAID.² The definition of budget support used by the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II contrasts sharply with the Government of Niger's concept of budget support. The Government of Niger's concept of budget support, based on normal operating procedures, is that funds are deposited in a general treasury account and used to pay salaries and other general Government of Niger expenses. The Government of Niger's treasury is not accustomed to handling funds that are not in the treasury account and that are earmarked to support specific government structures. These funds require special procedures in addition to the normally long and tedious administrative requirements and cannot be used for priority treasury expenses like salaries. The technical services of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement would like to avoid the treasury's procedures by returning to a project funding approach. However, this might create serious problems for USAID.

² The *Direction du Trésor* is a directorate within the Ministry of Finance and Plan. The Ministry of Finance and Plan is responsible for handling most of the Government of Niger's financial resources but uses different procedures depending on the origin and use. The treasury is involved in handling ASDG II funds only because it is termed "budget support". It is because of this processing through the treasury that the procedure includes 22 steps. The Ministry of Finance and Plan has simpler procedures for other types of funds, but is obliged to use this complex process for budget support.

USAID decided to use the budget support approach and have funds accounted for in the treasury disbursement process to avoid having to account for the funds all the way through final expenditure under USAID procedures. USAID procedures are in fact about equally torturous as those of the Government of Niger's treasury and would likely require the presence of an expatriate financial manager on the International Resources Group technical assistance team. This will become necessary if the program is considered by USAID to be using a project funding approach.

A third financial problem is that accounting records show the wrong amount in the fund for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II budget support to the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. The 1993 budget lacked specific funding support and therefore a specific budget line item to fund the agricultural campaign. The Ministry of Finance and Plan originally thought that the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II "budget support" could be used for these purposes and attributed the expenses to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II budget support budget line. These funds were safely stored in separate bank accounts and were never accessed to fund the agricultural campaign. But the accounting glitch has remained and for reasons not apparent to the evaluation team, have not been resolved. But the transfer of the remaining Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funds attributed to the 1993 budget cannot be transferred until this accounting glitch is corrected.

This accounting glitch, along with others in the Ministry of Finance and Plan and treasury disbursement process, demonstrate the peculiarity of these funds which are called budget support but cannot be used for general Government of Niger expenses, and which special handling. Some the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II bills were paid directly from general treasury funds and others were attributed to the budget support of other donors. While the treasury is supposed to retain two percent of all funds spent as treasury revenue support, it has not arranged to have the two percent of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funds spent transferred to the treasury. All of these factors indicate that the Government of Niger needs a clearly defined and preferably simplified accounting and fund disbursement process for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funds.

The Government of Niger and USAID need to determine how the existing system for the disbursement of funds can be made to work more effectively, or what more functional system can be substituted in its place. Budget support which is only available three or four months of the year will not allow the program to progress normally, or support the achievement of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II objectives. In order to reduce the bureaucratic hassles, the Government of Niger and USAID need to negotiate some intermediate approach which is not considered budget support by the Government of Niger, and which is not considered project funding by USAID. This may be possible because the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program funds do not conform to the Government of Niger's definition of budget support, even if they are called budget support by USAID.

If the present disbursement process continues to be used, a possible solution would be for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II to fund one or two positions within the treasury, which would handle all of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II accounting. These individuals would then become accustomed to the peculiarities of handling these funds and

could process them more quickly and accurately than at present. Another alternative might be to contract a local accounting firm to provide personnel to help with this accounting process.

The financial reports required for tranche II (Section 4.2.A.5 of the grant agreement) have not yet been submitted to USAID. These reports must be completed and procedures established to ensure that the reports for future tranches are presented in a timely manner.

3.4. Review of the status of the nongovernmental organizations and private-sector fund and the potential of its use by nongovernmental organizations and other private-sector institutions in natural resources management

The entire \$2.5 million³ of tranche IB was placed in the nongovernmental organizations and private-sector fund and 70 percent of the \$1.75 million⁴ tranche IIB is programmed to provide continued support. The fund is inactive pending the amendment of the International Resources Group's contract to establish a grants management unit that will manage these program funds and promote natural resources management activities and the institutional development of these local institutions. The scope of work for the grants management unit has been established by USAID and sent to the contract office, but at the time of the evaluation (May-June, 1994), the International Resources Group had not received or had a chance to reply to this scope of work. If things go smoothly, a grants management unit could be established about December 1994.

One estimate indicates that there are about sixty-five international nongovernmental organizations and about eighty to one hundred local nongovernmental organizations now operating in Niger. Restrictions on nongovernmental organizations prior to 1988 means that most local nongovernmental organizations are still in a nascent stage and many consist of little more than a post office box address. One of the important needs of the nongovernmental organizations subsector and one of the important contributions which this nongovernmental organizations and private-sector subcomponent can make is to support the development of institutional capacity among nongovernmental organizations and other local private-sector institutions. Nongovernmental organizations and other local, private-sector institutions have an important role to play in many Government of Niger and donor programs, such as the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II, the Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation program of USAID, cooperative and credit union programs, the World Bank-financed Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, and the World Bank-finance Reform of Agriculture Serviced Program projects. Development of these institutions will serve many needs. This subcomponent will also give the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II some practical field-level activities which directly benefit rural inhabitants and improve natural resources management.

³ Less the 8 percent for the USAID programmed local currency trust fund.

⁴ Less the 8 percent for the USAID programmed local currency trust fund.

The program design and program grant agreement call for a minimum of 30 percent of the \$20 million program funds⁵ to be used to fund nongovernmental organizations and local, private-sector institution natural resources management activities. This implies a minimum of \$5.5 million in funds will be made available to nongovernmental organizations and local private-sector institutions and this funding will only become accessible in the final year of the original five-year life of the project. It is unlikely that the nongovernmental organizations and local, private-sector institutions can absorb and efficiently use a large amount of funding in a short amount of time, given their limited institutional capacity. This is one of the reasons for the evaluation team recommendation to extend the project by three years. Extending the project will greatly improve the chance that field activities can be implemented successfully.

If for any reason the program and the project is not extended or the grants management unit is delayed further, USAID should consider establishing an endowment fund with these nongovernmental organizations and private-sector funds. The annual proceeds from investing this capital fund would then be used to support nongovernmental organizations and local, private-sector institutions over an indefinite period of time.

3.5. Recommendation of ways to improve the effectiveness of counterpart funds and the resource transfer component of the program

The most obvious increase in effectiveness would be to bring about the release of funds so that Government of Niger's structures could implement those activities which have been programmed to meet the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II objectives. The present system of accounting and disbursement of program funds is not functioning. While project implementation continues through the International Resources Group contract, program implementation is practically at a standstill. The Government of Niger's structures receiving funding from the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II have been unable to spend any funds for over six months, with no solution in sight. Until the administrative problems with program finances are solved, program implementation cannot progress. These problems must be rapidly resolved in order for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II to have any chance of achieving its program objectives.

A way must be found to process fund disbursements more rapidly and to provide the Government of Niger's structures receiving the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funds with adequate access to the funds which they have been allocated. Unless the Government of Niger rapidly proposes solutions which are satisfactory to USAID, the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II will need to contract an accounting and financial management consultant to investigate and propose appropriate solutions. In the extreme case where a satisfactory solution cannot be found, USAID will have to consider projectizing the program and doing the financial administration internally. While this is a potential solution to the problems of administrating finances, it would necessitate compliance with USAID financial management requirements. Financial management in the project and in the USAID

⁵ Less the 8 percent for the USAID programmed local currency trust fund.

controllers office would absorb a significant sum and reduce the funding available to the Government of Niger.

Another factor which should significantly improve the effectiveness of counterpart fund use and resource transfer is the startup of the nongovernmental organizations and private-sector subcomponent. To date, most funds have been spent on national level institutions which control various aspects of natural resources management policy. Yet the program and the project purpose are stated in terms of impact on rural inhabitants. The nongovernmental organizations and private-sector subcomponent will be the primary element of the program and the project which has field level activities, which (if successful) will directly impact rural inhabitants. Monitoring of these field-level activities which are required as a condition of receiving a grant will also provide a primary means of monitoring the effects of policy reform.

The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II encountered serious delays in satisfying conditions precedents for the release of funds, fielding a technical assistance team, starting the nongovernmental organizations and private-sector subcomponent, and disbursing funds allocated to the Government of Niger's structures. Given these delays, the effectiveness of the counterpart funds and resource transfer can be enhanced by extending the project by three years, until December 31, 1998. This will return the program and the project to a time frame similar to that proposed in the original project design.

There is a potential contradiction in two of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II objectives and strategies between the promotion of natural resources management and the balancing of operating funds and programs in the program budgeting intervention. The use of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funds to finance selected activities and investments related to natural resource management is a very effective way to promote natural resources management. Yet the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement are so short of operating funds that any use of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funds for investment purposes will aggravate the imbalance. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II will have to make a decision as to which of these objectives is more important.

4. **Conditionalities**

The general strategy of the project design was to specify a conditions precedent related to each area of intervention for each of the four tranches of program funding. It apparently was felt that this progression of conditions precedents was necessary to promote the desired progress in each area of intervention. With the addition of some general conditions precedents the result is a total of sixty-one itemized conditionalities in forty-eight separate conditions precedents. One of the general conditions precedents is that additional appropriate conditions precedents will be negotiated for tranches III and IV. The program already has so many conditionalities that tracking conditions precedent satisfaction impedes effective and efficient project implementation. The program related personnel spend as much time tracking

conditions precedent satisfaction as implementing the technical programs that the conditions precedents were supposed to engender. The evaluation team recommends streamlining the conditions precedents and considering the elimination of the conditionalities related to decentralization and to the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II needs to seriously analyze the rationale for the remaining conditionalities and any new conditions precedents which are proposed. An existing report from an International Resources Group consultant provides a preliminary analysis and establishes a solid basis for the type of process which is necessary to evaluate which conditions precedents are worth maintaining or adding.

Note: A basic lesson learned which emerges from this evaluation is that using an avalanche of conditions precedents is not an effective and efficient way to promote program implementation.

One of the problems of the program (NPA) approach, as opposed to the well known project approach, is that there are few if any national staff who receive salaries or other incentives specifically to implement program activities and who work toward the achievement of program objectives. The project design did not carefully address which institutions and which individuals would be specifically responsible for program related activities and objectives. This is probably due to the instability of the Government of Niger's structures during that period and the concept that this would be handled in the "rolling design". Program implementation has not yet addressed those questions sufficiently. This question needs to be addressed by the Government of Niger and through negotiations between the Government of Niger and USAID to determine who is responsible for the administration of the process of satisfying conditions precedents and for other aspects of program administration. Assigning a national coordinator to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project appears to be one important aspect of a potential solution.

4.1. Assessment of progress related to achievement of conditions precedent for the transfer of funds.

The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program was authorized and the Grant agreement signed in August 1990. The transfer of funds was planned to take place in four tranches of \$5 million each⁶ over the life of the project. Following delays in the program and the project start-up, tranche I was split in two tranches of \$2.3 million each to allow the Government of Niger access to a portion of the funds, after achieving about one-half of the conditions precedents specified for tranche I. This was done as a supplement to the program assistance approval document signed on August 17, 1992, and resulted in the amendment number two of the program grant agreement signed on August 21, 1992. Tranche IA was

⁶ Less eight percent which goes into a USAID programmed local currency trust fund. This fund supports USAID's cost of managing the ASDG II program, including the salaries of the Natural Resource Specialist and FSN assistants to the Natural Resource Specialist and the Project Officer.

released in August 1992 in this manner. The conditions precedent for the rest of tranche I were satisfied in March 1994, and tranche IB was released in May 1994.

The International Resources Group Team report "The State of Advancement of the Execution of the Plan of Action for the Satisfaction of the Conditions Precedent for the Disbursement of the Second tranche" dated May 23, 1994, summarizes the situation with regard to satisfaction of the sixteen tranche II conditions precedent:

15 conditions precedent	The activities are planned or in progress.
1 conditions precedent	The activity has been accomplished and the necessary correspondence is being processed.
0 conditions precedent	The conditionality is officially recognized as having been satisfied.

At the Comité Technique Interministériel meeting on June 8, 1994, the committee agreed to split tranche II. Tranche IIA will consist of \$3.25 million (less eight percent) to provide budget support for the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement structures. Of that budget support, 60 percent will be used for investment and 40 percent will be used for operational support. Tranche IIB will provide an additional \$1.75 million (less eight percent) for nongovernmental organizations and other private-sector institutions, with 70 percent oriented towards nongovernmental organizations and 30 percent toward private-sector institutions, primarily cooperatives, credit unions, groupements or other local community institutions involved in natural resource management. Seven or eight of the conditions precedent that can be completed by July–August 1994 will be assigned to tranche IIA. The other eight or nine conditions precedent will be assigned to tranche IIB, with the expectation that they can be satisfied about by the end of 1994.

Satisfaction of tranche II conditions precedent are presently hindered by the financial problems previously cited. Satisfaction of many of the conditions precedent for tranche II are delayed because the institutions financed with funding from tranche IA cannot access the remaining funds to finance the activities required. Unless a solution is rapidly found to these financial problems, it may not be possible to satisfy all of the tranche II conditions in 1994.

In the first three and one half years of the planned five-year project, conditions precedent have been satisfied for one of four \$5 million tranches of program funding. About one-third of the funds for that \$5 million tranche I were disbursed as of June 1994, and it is unlikely that more than one-half will have been disbursed by the end of 1994. A portion of tranche IIA funding could theoretically be disbursed by the end of 1994, but this is probably unlikely given the present financial problems. The satisfaction of conditions precedent and disbursement of funds for tranches III and IV remain to be addressed. The present project assistance completion date of December 31, 1995, is therefore a constraint on the successful satisfaction of conditions precedent and the rational disbursement of funding. The program and the project objectives continue to be valid and the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II appears to have the potential to meet many of these objectives. The evaluation team recommends that the project assistance completion date be extended to December 31, 1998, to

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allow for the completion of the program and the project activities and objectives. Given the delayed project start-up, this would return the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II to a five-year time frame comparable to that in the original program and project design.

4.2. Evaluation of the conditionalities for all the policy areas and verify their current validity

Reference numbers refer to the article, section, and paragraph of the program grant agreement as amended to split tranche 1.

4.2.1.1. Natural resources management policy conditionalities

National natural resources management policy and program

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|-------------------|-------------|---|
| 4.1.A.6(a) | Tranche IA | A plan to harmonize and coordinate various programs concerned with natural resource policy and planning was elaborated and adopted by the grantee for incorporation into an overall plan. |
| 4.2.A.1(a) | Tranche II | Demonstrated progress in the development of a national natural resources management policy and overall program. |
| 4.2.B.1(a) | Tranche III | National natural resources management policy and strategy and program completed and adopted. |
| 4.2.C.1(a) | Tranche IV | Demonstrated progress in the implementation of the national natural resources management policy and program. |

Developing a national natural resources management policy and strategy are core objectives and program priorities and an appropriate subject for conditions precedent. The crucial Tranche III condition can be satisfied in the proposed extended project time frame. With regard to streamlining conditions precedent, one can ask whether the tranche II and tranche IV conditions are necessary, assuming that the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II accepts that a conditions precedent is not necessary for each area of implementation in each tranche. The tranche II condition will automatically be fulfilled in satisfying the crucial tranche III condition. The satisfaction of the tranche IV condition is focused on implementation rather than policy development and is so flexible that satisfaction is almost automatic. With regard to the streamlining the total number of conditions precedent, one should ask whether some vague indication of policy implementation is an appropriate condition. One must also ask if any condition which is nearly automatic is necessary or useful.

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Conservation of biological diversity

- 4.2.A.6(b) Tranche IA The terms of reference for a national biological diversity assessment have been elaborated and adopted by the grantee.

The condition concerning the conservation of biological diversity was fulfilled in tranche IA. This was the only conditions precedent planned concerning biological diversity and primary responsibility for this area of implementation has now passed to other donor programs.

Code Rural

- 4.2.A.6(b) Tranche IA The Land Tenure Center, the University of Michigan, and the Government of Niger studies on natural resources management tenure issues related to the Rural Code have started.
- 4.2.A.1(b) Tranche II Demonstrated progress in achieving the objectives of the Rural Code project including the incorporation of the principle recommendations from the studies into the Rural Code.
- 4.2.B.1(b) Tranche III Demonstrate additional progress in the implementation of the revised Rural Code.
- 4.2.C.1(b) Tranche IV Demonstrate additional progress in the implementation of the revised Rural Code.

Security of resource tenure is a priority policy objective of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project. The principle orientations of the Rural Code was established and a limited effort has been made to publicize them. Application of the principles orientations depends on the content of accompanying regulations. The efforts of the Commissions Foncières in seven *arrondissements* to apply these regulations will test their appropriateness and provide a basis for any revisions deemed necessary. The primary constraint on establishing the pilot Commissions Foncières is the fact that the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II funding to the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural is presently not accessible. Testing the regulations and their initial revision will likely require most of the extended life of the project. Nationwide implementation of revised Rural Code will probably require about a generation to accomplish. As in the previous case, satisfaction of the conditions precedents is not a problem. With regard to potential streamlining of the total number of conditions precedent, one must ask whether "demonstration of additional progress" is meaningful or useful as a conditionality.

Decentralization

- 4.2.B.1(a) Tranche IB Elaborate and adopt a terms of reference for an in-depth joint study on needs for and options available in decentralization related to natural resources management.

- 4.2.A.1(c) Tranche II Complete the study on decentralization of natural resources management and adopt the recommendations of the study.
- 4.2.B.1(c) Tranche III Demonstrate progress in the implementation of the Government of Niger's decentralization policy, specifically implementation of the study recommendations.
- 4.2.C.1(c) Tranche IV Demonstrate additional progress in the implementation of the Government of Niger's decentralization policy.

The conditionalities concerning decentralization no longer seem very relevant, given recent events. The Government of Niger recently created a Ministry of Regional Administration and Decentralization (MRAD) and a law on decentralization has been presented to the National Assembly for consideration. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II financed decentralization study is not yet finalized. The program has significant implementation problems trying to work with three ministries and it does not appear appropriate to add a fourth ministry. While decentralization remains an important policy objective, significant progress in implementation will require twenty to thirty years. The conditionalities on decentralization should be eliminated and the program limited to those other activities in the three ministries originally targeted that will promote decentralization, such as the nongovernmental organizations component, Rural Code, and improvements in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage administration.

The role of the forestry agent

- 4.2.B.1(b) Tranche IB Elaborate and adopt the terms of reference for an in-depth joint study on forestry agent field experience.
- 4.2.A.1(d) Tranche II Complete the study on forestry agent field experience and adopt the principal recommendations of the study.
- 4.2.B.1(d) Tranche III Implement the previously adopted recommendations of the study on forestry agent field experience.
- 4.2.C.1(d) Tranche IV Demonstrate additional progress in the implementation and application of adopted recommendations of the study on forestry agent field experience.

The role of the forester is closely linked to resource tenure. The foresters have not been successful at protecting the national forests from deforestation by woodcutters and agriculturalists who clear the land. The government does not have the resources to improve this protection, to say nothing of the large areas of common land. Yet farmers have often been fined for cutting or otherwise exploiting trees in their own fields, while the forest service licenses total strangers to decimate the limited forest resources of their village common lands. Improving resource management requires that farmers have the right to exploit and benefit from resources which they manage and that local communities have the

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right to exclude strangers and make users pay for access to the use of village resources. Even protection of the national forests depends on the active participation of local communities. Such participation is only likely if these communities receive benefits from the forest which provide an incentive to protect it. This new orientation requires a forest service which is less intent on policing and fining rural populations for their use of needed forest resources. It requires foresters who are more focused on facilitating the improved management of existing forest resources and increased production of trees.

The critical result here is the completion of the study and the implementation of its recommendations. Again, one must ask if some vague indication of progress is an appropriate conditions precedent.

4.2.1.2. Conditions for the institutional component

Management information system

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|-------------------|-------------|--|
| 4.2.B.2(a) | Tranche IB | Elaborate the terms of reference for development of a computerized information system for better human and financial resource management in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and begin data collection. |
| 4.2.A.2(a) | Tranche II | Develop and commit to implementation of an action plan for the installation of systems for subsectoral and regional information and coordination of development activities in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. |
| 4.2.A.2(b) | Tranche II | Establish an information system on personnel, equipment, and infrastructure in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. |
| 4.2.B.2(a) | Tranche III | As part of the information system for better human and financial resource management in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, establish:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A system of job descriptions.2. A geographical information system. |
| 4.2.C.2(a) | Tranche IV | Implement a system of job descriptions as part of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage's information system. |

At present, only a limited number of Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage personnel have basic computer skills. Fewer yet have knowledge of sophisticated computer applications. The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles advisor does not have counterparts in the critical Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière services responsible for personnel, equipment and financial management. Few personnel regularly use computer applications to improve their work performance and no one is trained in the use of

sophisticated databases. While the project can establish the databases and a sophisticated management information system, it is not evident that the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage personnel can or will manipulate the data and system to improve management. Improved management skills would benefit the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, but this is a case of inadequate needs assessment and an inappropriate solution. A sophisticated application is being introduced before personnel have the skills to use even basic computer applications.

If the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles continues, it should focus more on introducing basic management skills and information systems and allow the skill level and needs of personnel to determine the level of sophistication of tools that are to be used. New information systems should allow the identification of resource use by subsector and region, but this may take time. This information may provide the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage some leverage when negotiating with donors about program and project location, but resource allocation by subsector and region will still be very dependent on donor decisions. The conditions precedent requiring development of a geographic information system in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage should be eliminated. Several institutions in Niger have geographic information system and the capacity to do geographic information system applications. If a geographic information systems product is deemed necessary, one of these institutions should be hired to produce it. The conditions precedent for a revised Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles should ensure that counterparts are provided in each of the critical Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière services. Other changes necessary in this series of conditionalities are discussed in more detail in the section on institutional reform.

Personnel management policy

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|-------------------|-------------|--|
| 4.2.B.2(b) | Tranche IB | Elaborate and adopt the terms of reference for a study on human potential and personnel assignment policy in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. |
| 4.2.A.2(c) | Tranche II | Implement the study on the human potential and personnel assignment policy of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage. |
| 4.2.B.2(b) | Tranche III | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Determine criteria for the selection of:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. personnel to be trained.b. fields of training.2. Define technical assistance needs related to number one.3. Define a strategy for monitoring personnel careers.4. Adopt and implement recommendations of the study on the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage personnel assignment. |

- 4.2.C.2(b)** Tranche IV
1. Put in place a personnel career monitoring strategy.
 2. Implement a training plan.
 3. Put in place measures for ensuring relevancy of training to employment.

The Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage has little control over the recruitment of new agents. The Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage is assigned a number of candidates each year in a political process which attempts to find jobs for all graduating students. While many of the candidates will be graduates in agronomy, animal science, or forestry, some will not have any agricultural related training or background. Job descriptions are largely limited to degree level and title to allow the incorporation of all available candidates. Most candidates require experience and additional training before they are really qualified for ministry positions.

The civil service system determines a person's grade on the basis of their degree level and salary on the basis of grade and years of service. The ministry has little ability to reward performance. Access to degree training, which determines grade and salary, is also controlled by regulations of the civil service system and the Ministry of Finance and Plan. The ministry loses some of its better personnel to projects, nongovernmental organizations, and other non-governmental organizations that can pay a higher salary and can select employees on the basis of qualifications and performance.

Job descriptions and personnel profiles could be useful in matching jobs and human resources, but may conflict with or be marginalized by the nationally mandated process for recruiting candidates. The nationally mandated system also allows little flexibility to reward good performance or punish poor performance. A training plan developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations a few years ago has not been used. In the future, the major source of practical training is likely to be provided in the training and visit program of the World Bank-financed Reform of Agriculture Serviced Program/PNVA project. While, the activities identified in the conditions precedent are a good thing to do, it is not likely that they can achieve their policy objectives or are sufficient to have a major impact on the selection of candidates for positions and training. While the conditions precedent present a whole strategy for making margin improvements in the personnel management within the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, one must question whether it is appropriate to present the strategy in the form of nine separate conditions precedent for a single area of implementation.

Program budgeting system

- 4.2.B.3** Tranche IB
- Plan and schedule a workshop on management by objectives. The purpose of the workshop is to elaborate a program budgeting system and guidelines for assuring the conformity of donor project and the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage program budgeting systems.

- 4.2.A.2(d) Tranche II Hold the management by objectives workshop.
- 4.2.B.2(c) Tranche III
1. Define and adopt a management by objectives system.
 2. Make progress in the improvement of project design, programming, coordination, and management.
 3. Establish a program budgeting system.
 4. Establish a system for annual activity planning and budgeting.
 5. Elaborate guidelines on the conformity of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage the program budgeting system and donor projects.
 6. Hold a workshop explaining guidelines.
- 4.2.C.2(c) Tranche IV Annual work plans derived from the program budgeting system are in use in two departments of the country.

The Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage does not control the allocation of financial resources between investment and operating, recurrent budgets. This allocation is determined by the Ministry of Finance and Plan and the National Assembly in the political process which established the national budget. Given the Government of Niger's lack of financial resources, ministries typically receive much smaller allocations for operating budgets than requested, but do not have the authority to reduce the scope of their program. Under the continuing conditions of financial crisis, implementation of a program budgeting system will not likely result in improved operating budgets or an appropriate balance between operating budgets and programs.

Donors provide 95 percent of the Government of Niger's investment budget. Many donors, including USAID, do not consistently provide operating funds in their projects and expect the Government of Niger to cover recurrent costs of projects. The planning involved in a program budgeting system may provide the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage with additional leverage for negotiating improved operating budgets with donors, but the decision will still remain with the donors.

At present, most planning and budgeting is done by the technical services at the national level, rather than in the *départements* or *arrondissements*. Until this planning and budgeting is effectively decentralized, producing annual work plans at the *département* level is of questionable utility.

Under these circumstances, it seems unlikely that implementing a program budgeting system can achieve the objective of establishing an appropriate balance between operating budgets and programs. It can perhaps help technical services make more effective use of the small operating budgets they do receive. Once again, nine conditions precedent seems like overkill, particularly when the premise upon which this area of implementation was based is faulty. If this subcomponent is retained, then the conditions precedent for tranches III and IV should be rewritten to reflect objectives which might realistically be obtained, that is that marginal improvements in programming and in the budgeting of limited resources.

National policy on nongovernmental organizations

- 4.2.B.4 Tranche IB Complete a review of the Government of Niger's regulations governing the existence and operation of nongovernmental organizations in Niger by a committee of nongovernmental organizations, USAID, and the Government of Niger's representatives. Draft an action plan for any necessary revisions.
- 4.2.A.2(e) Tranche II Hold a Government of Niger-nongovernmental organizations roundtable with respect to nongovernmental organizations and issue an action plan for the implementation of the recommendations made at the roundtable.
- 4.2.A.2(g) Tranche II The Ministry of Finance and Plan publishes the regulations and action plan developed by the committee established under tranche IB and promotes a vast public information and awareness campaign concerning the regulations.
- 4.2.B.2(d) Tranche III Make revisions or changes to regulatory texts to provide specific permission for nongovernmental organizations to operate in Niger and serve in community development roles in rural areas with direct contacts with community organizations.
- 4.2.C.2(d) Tranche IV Hold a second Government of Niger-nongovernmental organizations roundtable meeting and formulate an action plan for the implementation of the recommendations made at this meeting.

A Government of Niger-nongovernmental organizations workshop addressed the question of revisions or changes needed in regulatory tests and determined that no revisions or changes are necessary. Given this conclusion, the tranche III conditions precedent appears to be superfluous. The workshop did conclude that many nongovernmental organizations and government personnel do not know the existing regulations and that wide distribution of these texts was needed among other efforts to improve public awareness concerning nongovernmental organizations opportunities and responsibilities.

National policy on rural associations

- 4.2.A.2(f) Tranche II 1. Complete a review of the status of policy reforms accomplished under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I and actions taken under tranche I with regard to rural associations. Agree with USAID on any new conditionality required to maintain progress in the development of economically viable cooperative movement and rural credit union systems.

2. Agree to contribute the Franc Communauté Financière Africaine the equivalent of \$1 million U.S. dollars from tranche II to a bank guarantee fund for cooperatives operated under the Rural Organizations Development Project 683-0260 being implemented by CLUSA.
3. Agree that this guarantee fund can continue to operate after the completion of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program as long as management systems are in place and operations that meet normal banking standards.

4.2.B.2(e) Tranche III Complete a review of the status of policy reforms accomplished previously and actions taken under tranche II with regard to rural associations. Agree with USAID on any new conditionality required to maintain progress in the development of economically viable cooperative movement and rural credit union systems.

4.2.C.2(e) Tranche IV Complete a review of the status of policy reforms accomplished previously and actions taken under tranche III with regard to rural associations. Agree with USAID on any new conditionality required to maintain progress in the development of economically viable cooperative movement and rural credit union systems.

This is a continuation of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I activities to promote the establishment of a viable private sector. There seems to be some question whether the \$1 million addition to the guarantee fund is needed at this time. The latter conditions precedent, which consist of a review of policy reforms regarding rural associations and agreement on any new conditionalities required, seems to be a particularly appropriate translation of the rolling design concept. Among other things, this would allow supplementing the guarantee fund when additional funding becomes necessary. This review of policies and agreement on any additional conditionalities deemed necessary might serve as a general model for follow-up in the other areas of implementation.

4.2.1.3. General Conditionalities

Continued progress

4.2.B.5 Tranche IB Evidence that the grantee has not discontinued, reversed, or otherwise impeded any action it has taken in satisfaction of any of the conditions precedent under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I program.

4.2.A.6 Tranche II The grantee has not discontinued, reversed, or otherwise impeded any action it has taken in satisfaction of any of the conditions

precedent under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I program or any of the conditions precedent under tranche I of the present grant.

- 4.2.B.6 Tranche III The grantee has not discontinued, reversed, or otherwise impeded any action it has taken in satisfaction of any of the conditions precedent under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I program or any of the conditions precedent under either tranche I or tranche II of the present grant.
- 4.2.C.6 Tranche IV The grantee has not discontinued, reversed, or otherwise impeded any action it has taken in satisfaction of any of the conditions precedent under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I program or any of the conditions precedent under tranches I, II or III of the present grant.

See commentary on this specific topic below in item 3.3

Agreement with AID on policy action plan

- 4.2.B.6 Tranche IB Evidence of an agreement in writing between the parties on the specific terms of a plan for implementation of specific actions and policy changes proposed to be achieved and the specific measures of performance to monitor the extent of their achievement prior to the disbursement of the second increment of U.S. dollars under the grant.
- 4.2.A.7 Tranche II Reached agreement with USAID in writing on specific terms of a plan for implementation of specific actions and policy changes proposed to be achieved and the specific measures of performance to monitor the extent of their achievement prior to the disbursement of the third increment of U.S. dollars under the grant.
- 4.2.B.7 Tranche III Reached agreement with USAID in writing on specific terms of a plan for implementation of specific actions and policy changes proposed to be achieved and the specific measures of performance to monitor the extent of their achievement prior to the disbursement of the fourth increment of U.S. dollars under the grant.

This is standard agreement wording to promote the rolling design concept. Note that as in the case of the conditions precedents for continued progress, above, evidence is required for the initial conditions precedent, but the conditions precedent of the subsequent tranches does not require evidence.

Financial and activity reports

- 4.2.A.5** Tranche II Submitted financial and activity reports relating to tranche I describing the level of financing accorded to each element of the program in form and substance that is satisfactory to USAID. Include information on the governmental institutions supported by local currency funds disbursed under tranche I allocated to the operating budget to support the purposes and objectives of the program.
- 4.2.B.5** Tranche III Submitted financial and activity reports relating to tranche II describing the level of financing accorded to each element of the program in form and substance that is satisfactory to USAID. Include information on the governmental institutions supported by local currency funds disbursed under tranche II allocated to the operating budget and a description of the activities, and include programs, projects and the like that were undertaken with such local currency funds allocated to the investment budget to support the purposes and objectives of the program.
- 4.2.C.5** Tranche IV Submitted to USAID financial and activity reports relating to tranche III describing the level of financing accorded to each element of the program in form and substance that is satisfactory to USAID. Include information on the governmental institutions supported by local currency funds disbursed under tranche III allocated to the operating budget and a description of the activities that includes programs, projects and the like that were undertaken with local currency funds allocated to the investment budget to support the purposes and objectives of the program.

These are standard reporting requirements, the only question is how much detail USAID requires for these reports. Are they mingled funds (budget support) as described in the program assistance approval document that fall under 87 State 327494, para 3.13(b), or are they accounted for the same as project funds since they are earmarked for use in only two ministries and are kept in a separate bank account and not combined with other budgetary funds? The program assistance approval document states "local currency funds derived from the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II . . . will be traceable only at the Ministry of Finance level, where books and records will be kept with normal A.I.D. rights to review and audit.

4.2.2. Identification of how changes from design assumptions to current conditions affected the real or potential impact of existing conditions precedent

If the delay in the program and the project startup has allowed the Government of Niger to advance in certain areas without waiting for USAID to catch up, this does not change the

basic design assumptions. If the conditions precedent were written with future flexibility in mind, as some were, this flexibility allows minor corrections to take place without major revisions.

Real or potential impact is measured by the progression in fulfilling the program conditions. The progress suggests that the design assumptions were correct excepting the institutional reform assumptions for the strengthening of MAL which were not realistic. This is a result of the original assumption and not from changes in conditions.

The design assumption that nongovernmental organizations feedback loop would be available for testing field effects of policy change has not happened and will require strengthening of the monitoring at people levels to assess progress on the program and the project purpose to compensate for this lack.

4.2.3. Are conditionalities for some policy areas no longer relevant?

The conditionalities series concerning decentralization no longer seem relevant given recent events. There is now a law on decentralization and a Ministry of Regional Administration and Decentralization. The program has significant problems trying to work with three ministries and adding a fourth ministry does not appear to be appropriate. The conditionalities series on decentralization should be eliminated and the program limited to those other activities in the present three ministries that will promote decentralization of natural resources management, for example, the nongovernmental organizations component, the Code Rural, and possibly improvements in the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage administration.

The conditions precedent concerning revision of the rules governing nongovernmental organizations appears to have already been satisfied. What remains is to publicize and explain the rules and regulations. Nongovernmental organizations interviewed were often unaware of changes in rules and procedures. This was found in both local and international nongovernmental organizations.

Some other conditionalities may need to be adjusted or eliminated in response to actions taken on evaluation recommendations.

4.3. Assessment of the rationale of the conditionality statement in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II that "evidence must be presented that the grantee has not discontinued, reversed, or otherwise impeded any action it has taken in satisfaction of any conditions precedent under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I program."

The first conditions precedent in a series of recurrent conditions precedent that usually require evidence of compliance to changes made in a previous program. The next requirement in the series is reduced to a statement of compliance without the evidence requirement.

An examination of intent of the designers that drafted the program assistance approval document is seen in the wording of the statement found in the program assistance approval document. The statement for the condition preceding the release of the first tranche reads, "Evidence that the grantee has not discontinued, reversed, or otherwise impeded any action it has taken in satisfaction of any of the conditions precedent under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I program." (Section VII.1.I page 144 of the program assistance approval document) (Section 4.1.I of the Program Grant Agreement dated August 24, 1990). The paragraphs proceeding and following (VII.1.H and VII.1.J) both demand evidence that actions and agreements have been done.

In tranche II and all subsequent tranches this condition reads "the grantee has not discontinued, reversed, or otherwise impeded any action it has taken in satisfaction of any of the conditions precedent under the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I program." (VII.2.A.6 page 146 of the program assistance approval document) (Section 4.2, paragraph six of the amendment two program grant agreement dated August 21, 1992.) This does not mention any evidence required. Indeed the following article number seven and the proceeding article number five both state requirements of agreements in writing, paragraph six does not even require this level of reporting. This suggests a difference in the level of guarantee required.

If the intention was to demand evidence for the release of each tranche the word evidence would remain in all of the conditions. As this evidence has already been provided, further evidence is not required in the latter conditions on this topic. A simple statement should be sufficient to satisfy the intention of this requirement. However, the evaluation team is not qualified to give a legal opinion. There are legal requirements for a certain amount of rigidity in an agreement between two nations. Conditions must be stated so both parties can understand and agree on the action required.

The intent of the design can be summed up in a quotation from the executive summary of the program assistance approval document that reads, ". . . It also means that the maximum flexibility must be built into conditions for the tranche release after the first year of the program. As the dialogue on the relationship of government to rural citizens and private-sector continues to progress, conditions for the release of the sector grant must evolve as well. For this reason, USAID and the Government of Niger are negotiating precise language for the conditions precedent of the initial tranche and a statement of agreed goals and objectives for the program as a whole, with a tentative listing of conditions precedent prepared for later years to serve as a framework for policy discussions."

If legal rigidity requires a complex, time-consuming search for evidence to satisfy this condition for release of future tranches, the cost of compliance for USAID far outweighs the benefit received by USAID, and it would be the recommendation of the evaluation team that the condition be rewritten to comply with the intent of the program assistance approval document. However, if a simple statement of compliance is all that is legally required, the condition should remain as it is.

4.4. Are there new or additional policy reform areas that will help the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II achieve program objectives?

Technical analysis has suggested that the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II consider improving the balance between the forestry, agriculture, and livestock production subsectors. Agricultural policy is expected to be strongly influenced by the World Bank-financed *Gestion de Terroir* program. It is not clear whether the World Bank program will also focus on the problems of herders and livestock production. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II may want to consider policy reform with regard to herding and livestock production as a possible new area of implementation. Perhaps the primary need is to ensure that the application of Code Rural regulations and the use of *Gestion de Terroir* approaches do not unintentionally deprive herders and livestock producers of needed access to land and resources.

4.5. Recommendation of adjustments or reorientation of the conditions precedents for the remaining tranches in order to achieve positive impacts and program purpose

The project design uses one or more conditions precedents for each tranche in each area of intervention to promote program implementation. This has resulted in forty-eight separate conditions precedents and sixty-one itemized conditions with some conditions precedents consisting of up to six conditions. In many areas of implementation, the conditions precedents for tranches III and IV call for a review of policy to date and negotiation of any new conditions deemed necessary to ensure continued progress. While the logic of using conditions precedents as a means to monitor and ensure implementation progress seems reasonable, the practical effect has been to bog down the program in administrating conditions precedents. The program related personnel spend as much time on bureaucratic activities related to conditions precedent satisfaction as on implementing the technical programs that the conditions precedents were supposed to engender. Experience to date indicates that the multitude of conditions precedents hinders rather than promotes program implementation.

Streamlining program conditions precedents was analyzed in depth in the consultant report on Focusing Project Priorities. The report poses a useful framework for assessing the tradeoffs in policy reform efforts which can serve as a solid basis for renegotiating conditions precedents between USAID and the Government of Niger. The evaluation team generally agrees with the analytical approach, as well as with the suggestion that many of the current conditionalities should be changed to program objectives rather than be legal requirements.

The evaluation team suggested a few conditions precedents that should be eliminated or changed for technical reasons. The decentralization conditions precedents no longer seem relevant. The Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles conditions precedents with regard to information systems, human resource policy, and program budgeting systems are largely not feasible or inappropriate and should be completely revised if a Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent is retained as part of the project. But to seriously streamline the total number of conditions precedents, the Agriculture Sector

Development Grant II will need to reject the design approach of having a conditions precedent for each area of intervention in each tranche, or significantly reduce the scope of the program and the project, or some combination of the two. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II has thirteen different series of conditions precedents encompassing ten areas of implementation and three areas of general conditionality. Even a single condition per series would result in 13 conditionalities. It would appear that conditions precedent should be limited to important benchmarks in the policy reform process to reduce the administrative burden which their number now imposes.

Establishing improved circumstances for implementation may be another area where conditions precedents would be appropriate. In particular, USAID should consider:

- A conditions precedent which requires a rapid resolution of the financial administration problems, such as the accounting and fund disbursement procedures which are satisfactory to USAID.
- A conditions precedent which requires assignment of a national coordinator acceptable to USAID to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program and project.
- A conditions precedent which requires the Government of Niger's agreement to move the *tutelle* of the program and the project to the office of the Secretary General of the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage.
- If the Gestion, Administration et Réformes Institutionnelles subcomponent is retained, a conditions precedent which requires the assignment of counterparts acceptable to USAID from the critical Direction des Affaires Administrative et Financière services (personnel, equipment, finance) to the institutional advisor.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

9.2. Are the impact indicators and the databases being used appropriate?

9.2.1. Indicators for impact monitoring

In selecting indicators and methods of monitoring, the costs of information should be compared to the benefits received from the information. It should be remembered that program monitoring calls for indicators of impact and not proofs of impacts. Statistical analysis and scientific proof are not required.

The indicators listed in the program assistance approval document analytical framework are good for level 1 and level 2. The logic breaks down in level 3. "Soil quantity and quality" should be changed to "soil fertility". Soil creation is a geological process requiring eons so soil quantity cannot be increased in a human or project time frame. Soil quantity can be

decreased through movement to another location (erosion). The best that can be expected is no or very little soil loss.

If "soil quantity" refers to reclamation of abandon or nonproductive soils, then it can be a proxy for level 2, local level natural resources management strategies, but not level 3, biophysical parameters indicators. The act of reclamation allows level 3 biophysical changes to take place, but it is indicative that the farmer has sufficient security of tenure, has access to natural resources management knowledge, and has sufficient capital and labor to invest.

Biodiversity is a biophysical characteristic, but is not an economically feasible indicator. Yield is a proxy for the two soil indicators (soil quality and soil moisture) and is not a biophysical characteristic *per se*.

Decreases in women's workload, although laudable, is not a stable indicator nor a stable proxy for level 5, socioeconomic benefits. The workload may or may not increase or decrease based on multitudinous social factors independent from increasing incomes and cannot be used as an indicator. Increasing economic opportunities for women is likely to increase their workloads, at least in the short run.

Decreases in seasonal migration may indicate either an increase or a decrease in incomes depending on the society. Interviews with each involved community can decide the validity of this indicator, but consequently it is not an economically viable indicator above the community level and should not be used as a program indicator. In much of Niger, seasonal migration is a basic strategy to diversify family economic activity and improve family income. It also favors natural resources management by reducing the need to mine natural resources in difficult times.

The best indicator for level 5 is the proxy of increasing yields and production per person over time. One can expect that increasing yields and production per person over time will increase rural incomes, assuming that there is a stable demand for the products. However, the time line needs to be long enough to smooth variance of annual climatic variation.

For the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program, the indicators of success in the resource transfer program can easily be monitored by the progress in fulfilling the conditions precedent for the release of each tranche. The program has no direct field activities. The monitoring of the results of policy change in the field can be done by the project component.

The program is designed to:

1. Change natural resources management policy.
2. Test the change on the ground through nongovernmental organizations activity.

The nongovernmental organizations component has been delayed so long it will not be possible to complete the feedback loop to any serious extent during the life of the project. Therefore, the monitoring system must replace this function of the design.

The process of monitoring people level impact should occur at the people level. If the program and the project are serious about decentralization and individual empowerment as is stated in the program purpose, then the monitoring system should also be designed in a decentralized, people level manner.

The suggested monitoring method should consist of a road transect including recorded observations of a general nature on the state of vegetation, visible erosion, visible soil and water conservation activities, as well as the presence of other projects, microrealizations, or territory management activities. These recorded observations can be backed up with camera points based on posted kilometer markings (*borne kilométrique*) or odometer readings. Interviews should be conducted with selected projects and local communities, nongovernmental organizations, associations, technical services, and donor activities, located along the transect. Particular attention should be paid to herder associations as herders may or may not be present during the time of the transect.

For example, on a field trip by the evaluation team, a farmer interview suggested that the farmer felt secure enough in tenure to spontaneously adopt soil and water conservation practices (level II), resulting in increased fertility and moisture (level III), recovering naked crusted soils (level III), giving increased vegetative cover (level III), and resulting in increased yields (level IV). Another village interview found management plans (level II), work with technical services (role of foresters), and the combination of youth in the village and a decrease in seasonal migration in this village (level IV).

This is a simple and inexpensive method for gathering sufficient data to satisfy DFA impact requirements. By the process of careful interview techniques, information can be separated by gender group, ethnic group, age group, resource use, or any other way. Counterparts can be trained in this level of monitoring and it does not require funding or contracts needed for more expensive, extensive, remote sensing types of data gathering and interpretation. This type of monitoring is decentralized and can be used even at the community level. The optimum monitoring system is the merging of data from many local communities own monitoring systems, but this refinement will only be possible in the nongovernmental organizations component, and then only if the nongovernmental organizations are trained to train local communities to do local monitoring.

As this is a policy reform program, any change seen on the ground that is attributable to a policy change is countable as a result of this program whatever the source of finance or the executing agency.

If it is felt necessary to proceed with high-tech data collection, this can be done after the serious data collection takes place.

Annex I. Résumé des entretiens accordés, aux membres de l'équipe d'évaluation, par certaines personnes rencontrées

**par Amoul Kinni, homologue de l'expert d'évaluation
en gestion des ressources naturelles, Mai-Juin 1994**

11/05/94: Rencontre de contact des trois représentants de la partie nigérienne avec le DEP/MAG/EL, Mr. Nissly responsable de la SDSA à l'USAID et Mr Saley Moussa de l'ADO/USAID

Au cours de cette première rencontre, Mr Nissly a fait part à nigérienne du rôle attendu d'elle; il s'agit:

- 1°) "d'organiser les contacts avec les personnes importantes pour ";
- 2°) "de faciliter les réunions, les contacts; de constituer une liaison entre les ministères concernés et d'évaluation";
- 3°) "de faciliter les contacts sur le terrain à l'occasion des visites que aurait à effectuer au niveau des différents projets gouvernementaux et privés".

N.B:

1°) A la lumière de ces "termes de référence", il est aisé de se faire une idée de ce qui est attendu de la partie nigérienne. Pourvu que le Coordonnateur National du Programme SDSA II tant réclamé par certains (cf résumé des entretiens ci-après) ne fasse pas l'objet de désignation sans que ses attributions n'aient été définies au préalable et sans que ses conditions de travail n'aient été également arrêtées.

2°) Afin de donner au lecteur la mesure des problèmes actuellement vécus dans le cadre du Programme SDSA II, nous avons jugé utile de mettre à sa disposition la synthèse des entretiens que certains partenaires du Programme ont bien voulu accorder aux membres de l'Équipe d'Évaluation. Que ces différents partenaires trouvent ici l'expression de nos sincères remerciements pour leur disponibilité et leur esprit de coopération. Si par mégarde, il se trouve que certains propos ont été "déformés", nous prions par avance les personnes concernées de bien vouloir nous en excuser et si possible d'apporter les redressements nécessaires.

12/05/94: Rencontre de lancement officiel de l'évaluation: participants: SG/MAG/EL et SG/MH/E assurant respectivement les fonctions de président et de vice-président du Sous-Comité Développement Rural, DEP/MAG/EL, le spécialiste sortant de l'USAID en gestion des ressources naturelles et son remplaçant, Mr Saley Moussa, les six membres de l'équipe d'évaluation.

Le président du Sous-Comité Développement Rural (SG/MAG/EL) fait part à d'évaluation de l'intérêt accordé par le Niger au programme SDSA II et à la présente étude. II

rappelle à qu'il est possible que beaucoup d'éléments aient changé depuis que le programme a été bâti, l'invite à en tenir éventuellement compte et l'assure de la disponibilité de la partie nigérienne pour que le travail soit conduit de la meilleure façon et que le produit soit de la meilleure qualité.

Le vice-président du SCDR (SG/MH/E) a insisté sur l'importance de l'appui apporté au Niger par le programme SDSA II, particulièrement dans la situation actuelle des finances publiques très réduites. Il a signalé qu'à l'heure actuelle, où le véritable problème est constitué par le manque de moyens logistiques et matériels pour aller sur le terrain, le Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage et celui de l'Hydraulique et de l'Environnement apprécient à sa juste valeur le programme SDSA II.

12/05/94: Rencontre des membres de l'équipe avec le conseiller en gestion, administration et réformes institutionnelles (GARI) de l'IRG:

Dans son intervention, le Conseiller IRG en GARI a porté à la connaissance de que le Conseiller IRG en Gestion des Ressources Naturelles (GRN) est arrivé au Niger en fin Mars 1993, que lui-même est arrivé le 13 Mai 1993. Le 25 Mai 1993, ils ont présenté à une réunion élargie le premier plan de travail, plan qui n'aurait, malheureusement, pas recueilli des observations: il n'y aurait eu ni recommandation, ni modification de la part des différents partenaires. L'Assistance Technique IRG a dû travailler sur la base du plan proposé par elle. Le Conseiller en GRN a pu, dans le cadre de ses activités, participer à la réunion annuelle 1993 des cadres de l'Élevage et à celle des cadres de l'Environnement. Il a constaté qu'en matière de GRN, il y a beaucoup d'interventions mais pas assez d'harmonisation. Il a en outre compris que même au sein d'un Ministère, il n'y a pas suffisamment de coordination; parfois deux programmes poursuivant le même objectif sont logés à l'intérieur d'une même direction: c'est le cas du "rôle de l'agent forestier" qui bénéficie, au niveau de la Direction de l'Environnement, des financements "Projet GTZ" et "SDSA II"; heureusement que les deux équipes concernées ont discuté du problème (double emploi) et se sont entendues pour ne pas se répéter. Par ailleurs, il y a des programmes prévus (exemple du Code Rural) mais non financés; financé à 100% par la SDSA, le Code Rural (qui est pourtant un programme et non un projet) est sujet à blocage dès qu'il y a des problèmes quant à la satisfaction des conditions préalables de la SDSA II.

Le Conseiller en GARI estime que c'est un gros problème de conception dans la mesure où, de son point de vue, un programme ne peut dépendre du financement d'un seul projet.

Au niveau du Ministère des Finances et du Plan, le Conseiller en GARI a informé des problèmes posés par le déblocage des fonds de la SDSA II à toutes les étapes (plus d'une vingtaine) ce qui a d'une part pénalisé certains bénéficiaires comme le Code Rural justement et d'autre part fait perdre beaucoup d'argent en désintéressant un certain nombre de fournisseurs qu'après la dévaluation alors qu'on aurait pu le faire avant étant donné que les fonds étaient disponibles.

Pour le Conseiller en GARI, la pléthore des partenaires qu'ils ont (DAAF/MAG/EL, DEP/MAG/EL, DAAF/MH/E, DE/MH/E, SG/MAG/EL, SG/MH/E, DA/MAG/EL, DEIA/MAG/EL, Projet Energie II, MRAD, BOM, C.GRN, Code Rural, Fac d'Agro, IPDR,

USAID/NIAMEY, DFI/DP/MF/P, DDR/MF/P, Direction Aménagement Territoire, ...), ne leur a pas permis d'effectuer des déplacements à l'intérieur du pays et pose, pour les deux experts IRG qu'ils sont, d'énormes problèmes d'organisation, de communication d'informations, d'administration, d'harmonisation. De par ce qu'ils font actuellement et la multitude des acteurs auxquels ils font face, le Conseiller en GARI dit que leur nombre (deux experts) est insuffisant et que leur tâche est fatigante.

Estimant les conditionnalités de la SDSA II ambitieuses, le Conseiller en GARI insiste en outre sur le fait que le plus grand problème qui se pose est celui du manque d'un homologue nigérien à eux, les conduisant à tout faire alors qu'à son avis, l'Assistance Technique doit mettre l'accent sur l'appui à fournir aux cadres nationaux.

Se référant au cadre affecté par la DEP/MAG/EL comme homologue, le Conseiller en GARI dit qu'il est "satisfaisant pour ce qu'il fait", que c'est un "bon intermédiaire" mais qu'il travaille avec eux comme agent d'une seule direction dans un seul ministère. Il ajoute qu'un des problèmes que vit l'Assistance Technique IRG/SDSA II est qu'elle est affectée dans une direction (DEP) d'un ministère (MAG/EL); pour travailler avec une autre direction ou un autre ministère, il y a une contrainte. Ainsi pour entreprendre quelque chose avec par exemple la DAAF/MAG/EL ou la DE/MH/E, il faut une correspondance émanant de la DEP/MAG/EL et le Conseiller en GARI se pose la question de savoir si cette direction (DEP/MAG/EL) est la structure la mieux indiquée pour abriter l'Assistance Technique IRG/SDSA II. De même, il se demande si lui ne serait pas mieux valorisé en étant placé à la DAAF/MAG/EL.

Pour le Conseiller en GARI autant les concepteurs du programme SDSA II ont espéré que l'Assistance Technique travaillerait à la fois avec le MAG/EL et le MH/E, autant dans la pratique cela a été un exercice très fastidieux.

Il ajoute qu'il est actuellement en train de développer un logiciel en vue d'une meilleure gestion du personnel, que c'est lui qui fait tout le travail, qu'il a eu des nigériens très juniors pour l'assister et qu'il est difficile de travailler quand les cadres ne sont pas très engagés.

Pour le Conseiller en GRN (arrivé en cours d'entretien), les objectifs poursuivis sont nobles mais il se demande si tous peuvent être atteints en l'espace de la durée du Projet. Prenant l'exemple de la programmation par objectifs, il attire l'attention sur le fait qu'il faudrait que les directions régionales et l'administration centrale connaissent leurs besoins de cette année, les prévisions de l'année prochaine, qu'elles comparent les écarts, ... Il estime que tout cela est un peu trop scientifique pour le moment, en comparaison notamment de la programmation actuelle. Il ajoute qu'il est possible de mettre en place des systèmes d'information mais encore faudrait-il savoir à quoi serviront-ils et surtout il conviendrait au préalable de s'assurer de pouvoir les entretenir. Il précise que:

- le système d'information sur le personnel est faisable;
- le système d'information sur ment et les infrastructures n'est pas prioritaire;
- le système d'information sur les finances est plus difficile car nécessite une mise en ordre et une harmonisation des comptes et à ce niveau c'est moins évident, il y a un travail de fond à faire, les données doivent être organisées avant d'être informatisées.

De son point de vue, la conditionnalité relative à la mise en place d'un système d'information géographique a dû être décidée dans la foulée des conditionnalités sans qu'elle soit réellement opportune.

Il émet le voeu que la mission d'évaluation puisse déterminer les vraies orientations, fasse des propositions pour une utilisation rationnelle de l'Assistance Technique disponible, précise les buts que le Programme SDSA II poursuivra en gardant à l'esprit la nécessité d'aider le gouvernement à réaliser un développement durable.

Il insiste sur le fait que le système de gestion par objectifs est une activité qui peut être très bien valable mais que la période nécessaire pour sa mise en œuvre est bien plus longue que celle actuellement prévue.

Il porte à la connaissance de la mission d'évaluation qu'ils ont déjà organisé deux sessions de gestion par objectifs que les cadres ont positivement appréciées et qu'ils se proposent dans une prochaine étape de procéder à l'organisation d'autres ateliers.

Rappelant qu'il y a 2.904 cadres au MAG/EL et environ 1.000 au MH/E, il signale qu'il convient de choisir à qui s'adresser, or ce travail de sélection n'est pas fait au niveau des structures concernées.

Estimant qu'il est aberrant de considérer sur un même pied les ONG et le secteur privé, il rappelle que les ONG au Niger sont à un état naissant et de ce fait, imaginer leur donner l'équivalent de six millions de dollars US n'a, de son point de vue, pas de sens.

Indiquant que sur les 2,5 millions de dollars US mis à la disposition des ONG-Secteur privé, aucun franc n'est encore consommé, il signale qu'à côté, les institutions gouvernementales (IPDR, Fac d'Agro, DAAF/MAG/EL, ...) ont dépensé tout ce qui leur a été affecté et se pose la question de savoir si les ONG-Secteur privé vont pouvoir utiliser même la moitié de ce qui leur est réservé et en quoi faisant. Il conseille d'examiner la question avec les responsables du CLUSA qui sont des partenaires du Programme SDSA II et qui apportent une contribution importante dans le développement des associations rurales.

Demandant à en connaître plus sur l'Unité de gestion des fonds au profit des ONG-Secteur privé pour lesquels il a entendu dire qu'un amendement interviendra en faveur de IRG afin que ce dernier fournisse une assistance technique en vue de la gestion desdits fonds, le Chef de l'équipe d'évaluation s'est entendu répondre par le Conseiller en GARI que c'est vers Novembre-Décembre 1993 que IRG a attiré l'attention de ses partenaires sur le fait que ses deux assistants techniques ne peuvent suffire; cela a amené l'USAID à revoir les prévisions initiales, à publier des annonces en vue du recrutement d'une assistance technique supplémentaire; actuellement l'USAID est à l'étape de la finalisation des termes de référence; dans sa soumission, IRG a proposé 85 hommes.mois, l'USAID en a retenu 36 répartis entre un poste de 24 hommes.mois pour l'Administrateur des fonds et un poste de 12 hommes.mois pour un expert qui assurerait la formation des responsables des ONG; pour plus de précisions, le Conseiller en GARI a demandé de se référer au responsable de la SDSA II à l'USAID.

Se référant à l'accord de subvention de la SDSA II, le Conseiller en GRN rappelle les grands axes d'orientation du Programme:

Coordination, mise en place d'une stratégie tenant compte du PNGRN, du PNLCD, du PAFT/Niger, de la Gestion des Terroirs, ... d'où la nécessité:

- de rendre opérationnels les quatre axes (dont la gestion des ressources naturelles) des principes directeurs de développement rural;
- de rendre plus efficace (en l'appuyant) le Sous-Comité Développement Rural;
- de mettre en place la C.GRN (élément clé du Programme) vue comme une unité, une cellule technique ayant, entre autres, pour mandat de faciliter la coordination des bailleurs de fonds.

Sécurisation foncière: à travers un appui au Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural pour la mise en œuvre dudit Code: popularisation du Code, mise en place des commissions foncières, organisation prochaine d'un atelier pour faire le bilan.

Décentralisation: souligne qu'il a été dit partout (et notamment au séminaire de Ségou) que la réussite dans la gestion des ressources naturelles passe par la décentralisation, la responsabilisation des populations.

Changement du rôle de l'État: les moyens de l'État étant insuffisants, il faut que son rôle change; prend l'exemple du rôle de l'agent forestier, pose la question de savoir ce qu'il faut y changer: faut-il un nouveau profil donc un nouveau programme? pense qu'il faudrait une adéquation poste-profil. De même, la mise en place des fonds au profit ONG, prévue dans le Programme, nécessite la définition d'un cadre juridique; que faut-il faire pour que les ONG émergent? nécessité de consultations État-ONG, d'une émergence des structures d'encadrement des ONG, d'améliorer la capacité des ONG à mobiliser les fonds.

Autre point clé: il s'agit d'une meilleure gestion de l'information qui conditionne des éléments importants comme la coordination, la meilleure gestion, l'efficacité des intervenants.

Chef de l'équipe d'évaluation: pose aux experts IRG la question de connaître les résultats auxquels ils sont parvenus, les problèmes concrets rencontrés et les propositions de solutions.

A cette question le Conseiller IRG en GRN a répondu qu'il est prévu un Comité de Pilotage dont la coordination doit être assurée par le MF/P, qu'il n'y a pas quelqu'un au MF/P qui s'occupe à plein temps de la SDSA, qu'il a fallu près de deux ans pour que le Comité se réunisse, que pour la réunion du Comité, le travail de secrétariat est anormalement assuré par IRG, qu'il convient de s'organiser et de responsabiliser le MF/P, qu'il y a nécessité d'y désigner un point focal, qu'au MF/P il y a la DFI/DP, la DPP, la DAEEP, ... et qu'il serait indiqué de mettre de l'ordre à ce niveau.

Le Conseiller en GARI intervient pour signaler qu'il y a une dizaine de structures au MF/P avec lesquelles ils travaillent; il pose la question de savoir quels sont les changements qu'on aimerait pérenniser et qui prendra la relève après l'Assistance Technique.

Le Conseiller en GRN souligne que le Comité de Pilotage doit normalement réunir les trois S.G (MAG/EL, /MH/E, /MF/P) et un Conseiller du Premier Ministre, mais que les quatre personnes ne se sont jamais réunies. Il attire l'attention sur la lenteur excessive constatée dans le déblocage des fonds, se dit convaincu que s'il y a des cadres responsabilisés pour cela, le déblocage serait moins lent; signale que quand quelqu'un suit les pièces comptables, la procédure de déblocage devient plus rapide et déplore cette situation de pièces qui ne sont traitées avec diligence que quand on est derrière elles; estime qu'il y a un manque de volonté et regrette qu'il y ait des fonds de partenaires de coopération qu'on n'arrive pas à consommer en raison d'une lenteur des nationaux; reste persuadé que beaucoup de problèmes existent à cause de procédures mises en place.

Autre problème soulevé par le Conseiller en GRN: celui de l'exécution technique du Programme confiée à un Comité Technique: DAAF/MAG/EL, DE/MH/E, ...; le Comité n'aurait pas fonctionné en raison du fait que les différentes directions n'ont pas considéré le Programme comme le leur; IRG étant sous tutelle de la DEP/MAG/EL (avec laquelle elle tient des réunions hebdomadaires) laquelle est mal placée pour intervenir dans ce genre de

situation; insiste sur le fait que la C.GRN, la DE, ... doivent considérer la SDSA II comme leur programme et à ce titre il conviendrait de les responsabiliser dans le pilotage.

Le Conseiller en GARI signale que les fonds de la SDSA II vont à l'IPDR, à la Faculté d'Agronomie mais qu'ils n'ont jamais mis pied dans ces structures qui à leur tour ne leur ont jamais rendu visite; se demande si la SDSA II est uniquement un mécanisme de transfert de ressources ou s'il y a quelque chose attendue d'elle.

Le Conseiller en GRN souligne que si c'est le Conseiller en GARI et lui qui doivent s'assurer du suivi, il y aura trop de choses à faire par eux et dit que c'est le cas; il signale que depuis leur arrivée, ont satisfait les huit conditionnalités de la tranche 1.B, mais que cela n'a pas été de tout repos; il estime que chaque structure bénéficiaire doit, de façon hebdomadaire, faire le point sur ce qu'elle a fait et ce qui lui reste à faire.

S'agissant des conditionnalités, le Conseiller en GRN les trouve trop nombreuses (de l'ordre de 55 en tout dont 16 pour la première tranche, plus pour la deuxième tranche) et il estime que la mission d'évaluation devrait proposer leur réduction.

Le Conseiller en GRN souhaite que des correspondants au niveau des différents ministères soient désignés pour les aider car dans la situation actuelle, il peut passer 100% de son temps en travaillant uniquement dans l'harmonisation de l'approche Gestion des Terroirs par exemple, de même il peut passer 100% de son temps dans le cadre de l'étude sur le rôle de l'agent forestier. Il estime que s'ils ne sont pas aidés, on pourrait multiplier leur nombre par 6 (ce qui n'est pas une bonne idée reconnaît-il) sans qu'ils suffisent.

Le Chef de d'Équipe d'Évaluation se demande alors comment se fait-il que pour un projet aussi important, on donne des responsabilités aux américains seulement et on laisse de côté les nigériens.

Le Conseiller en GARI signale en outre que les autres directions du MAG/EL pensent que c'est un projet de la DEP/MAG/EL et les autres ministères pensent que c'est un projet du MAG/EL.

Le Conseiller en GRN souligne que le cadre de la DEP/MAG/EL affecté à temps plein n'est pas coordonnateur du Programme, que le Sous-Comité Développement Rural ne s'est jamais réuni pour constater l'état d'avancement des activités, qu'il y a une nécessité de nommer un Coordonnateur National du Programme, que même l'envoi des compte rendus à tous les partenaires nécessite quelqu'un. Il attire l'attention sur le fait qu'en page 18 de l'accord de subvention, il est prévu un rapport annuel de performance, à rédiger par le bénéficiaire, et que cela n'a jamais été fait.

Le Conseiller en GARI dit que si on continue comme c'est le cas actuellement, on se retrouvera à la fin du Programme avec uniquement des véhicules et des ordinateurs.

S'agissant des résultats atteints, le Conseiller en GRN a cité:

- l'Étude sur le rôle de l'agent forestier qui est en cours;
- pour la C.GRN: le travail d'harmonisation des approches participatives; le suivi d'impacts des projets GRN à Maradi en 1993; le suivi d'information environnementale;
- dans le cadre du Code Rural: la contribution directe de IRG n'est pas évidente mais c'est surtout à travers la SDSA II qui a aidé;
- pour les ONG: rapport sur l'atelier de Kollo en liaison avec le Chef de Service ONG de la DDR/MF/P;
- les ateliers organisés sur la Gestion par Objectifs;
- le rapport du PDG de IRG, les TDR pour différentes études, la conception des formulaires de description des postes, ...

19/05/94 **Rencontre avec responsable cellule gestion ressources naturelles:**

Le Conseiller à la C.GRN a apprécié positivement IRG sur les plans humain et professionnel. Pour lui, essaie d'apporter un appui important pour l'harmonisation des activités, ses membres viennent régulièrement les rencontrer, ce sont les meilleurs partenaires qu'ils ont. joue également un rôle dans la coordination qui est une fonction qui n'apparaît nulle part. Il estime que le grand mérite de IRG est justement de poser ce problème de coordination pour laquelle il y a nécessité d'aboutir à un consensus sur le contenu (coordination des programmes, coordination des projets de gestion des terroirs, ...).

Abordant la situation institutionnelle actuelle de la SDSA II, le Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation a expliqué que sur le plan:

- technique, le Programme est localisé à la DEP/MAG/EL mais n'est lié à rien dans cette DEP car l'Assistance Technique IRG se trouve, dans l'organigramme de cette direction, au même niveau que les manœuvres; il pense que c'est sous la DEP dans son rôle de Secrétaire du Sous-Comité Développement Rural;

- politique, la tutelle est assurée par le MF/P.

Il a souhaité connaître ce que pensent les responsables de la C.GRN de cette situation, notamment si elle peut permettre d'atteindre les objectifs du Programme; il a souligné que lui pense que la structure la mieux indiquée serait la C.GRN mais qu'il se pose des questions pour l'instant sur les finalités que veut assigner la Banque Mondiale à la C.GRN.

En réponse, le Coordonnateur de la C.GRN a fait ressortir:

- qu'ils se concertent constamment avec l'équipe IRG, que cela montre que leurs tâches convergent, et que lui-même a eu à dire que s'il n'y avait pas eu, au cours de la SDSA I, l'équipe de l'Université de Michigan à la DEP/MAG/EL, l'équipe IRG aurait certainement été placée à la C.GRN qui constitue la structure dans laquelle elle devrait être;

- que le mandat de la C.GRN était mal perçu par les directions nationales qui pensaient que la Cellule prendrait leurs attributions;

- que la C.GRN est fragile, sous tutelle du Sous-Comité Développement Rural qui ne constitue pas une structure mais un organe créé pour des opportunités et pouvant disparaître; le palliatif qui a été trouvé, c'est de demander au Président du S/CDR (SG/MAG/EL) de régler les problèmes administratifs de la Cellule. Un des problèmes qui se posent dans la pratique, c'est que certains bailleurs de fonds ont leurs partenaires par lesquels ils préfèrent passer, c'est le cas du PNUD qui s'adresse au MH/E pour les questions d'Environnement.

Pour le Conseiller à la C.GRN, la Cellule aurait pu, avec l'accord des directions et des bailleurs, être un organe de coordination.

À la question du Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation de savoir s'il y a un texte qui élargit les attributions de la Cellule, le Coordonnateur a répondu que l'aide mémoire de la dernière mission de la Banque Mondiale sur la question parviendra, dès qu'il sera achevé, à l'USAID; en outre, une mission de finalisation est attendue de la Banque Mondiale vers le 20 Juin 1994.

Au sujet d'une question relative aux relations entre la C.GRN et la préparation du Plan d'Action National pour l'Environnement (PANE), le Coordonnateur de la Cellule a répondu que leur structure contribue à ce travail exigé par la Banque Mondiale comme document cadre pour ses pays membres; il a signalé qu'il y a, au Niger, une vingtaine de structures intéressées par cet exercice qui inclut le développement agricole, la gestion des ressources

naturelles, les aspects d'hygiène, d'assainissement, de gestion des déchets, de pollutions, ... ; le Comité National (COMNAT) créé pour le suivi de la CNUED et dont la Direction de l'Environnement assure la coordination est chargé de la préparation du PANE. La C.GRN a apporté sa contribution en:

- demandant l'appui de l'ACDI pour la fourniture d'un expert qui a fait un travail de compilation de la documentation existante et qui a préparé une synthèse;
- contribuant, à travers sa participation dans le groupe de travail Environnement et Développement durable, à la préparation de la deuxième table ronde générale des bailleurs de fonds sur le Niger.

A la question du Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation de savoir ce que pensent les responsables de la C.GRN de la stratégie environnementale, le Coordonnateur a souhaité que cette question soit plutôt posée au Directeur de l'Environnement qui est coordinateur du COMNAT.

A la question du Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation relative à ce que deviendra le rôle de coordination de la C.GRN après l'établissement du PANE, le Coordonnateur de la Cellule a répondu qu'il y a certains éléments qui méritent effectivement d'être clarifiés; quant au Conseiller à la C.GRN, il pense qu'il conviendrait de savoir ce qu'on veut coordonner; si ce sont des activités de GRN, de son point de vue, la C.GRN peut jouer ce rôle, mais s'il s'agit des aspects comme la pollution, il faudrait trouver une autre structure.

S'agissant d'un point soulevé et relatif aux problèmes administratifs et financiers avec la SDSA II, le Coordonnateur de la Cellule a dit que les difficultés sont ici énormes et que c'est certainement là le plus grand problème: de la formulation des besoins à la liquidation de la dépense, en passant par le MAG/EL, la DFI/DP, les services financiers, le Trésor, ... le circuit est exagérément long et il se demande, dans la mesure où il s'agit d'un appui institutionnel au Gouvernement pour ses structures classiques, pourquoi, à partir de l'Ordonnateur Délégué, les pièces ne vont pas directement à la banque pour paiement.

19/05/94 Rencontre avec Francis Mody et Madicke Niang de la Mission Residente de la Banque Mondiale en compagnie du responsable de la SDSA II a l'USAID et du conseiller IRG en GRN:

Question du Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation: souhaite discuter des aspects institutionnels:

- PANE;
- Mandat C.GRN: liaison avec PANE;
- Réforme de l'administration du MAG/EL: est ce que les activités de la Banque Mondiale (PRSAA, PNRA) tiennent compte de cette restructuration future?
- point de vue de la Banque Mondiale sur la localisation actuelle de la SDSA II.

Mr MODY: le PANE est un exercice qui vient de démarrer; depuis le sommet de RIO, la Banque Mondiale a tenu à en faire une conditionnalité pour le financement des projets; rappelle que l'Environnement est un domaine multisectoriel et que c'est la C.GRN qui a lancé le processus d'élaboration du PANE en demandant l'assistance d'un consultant canadien pour faire le point de ce qui s'effectue en matière d'environnement; souligne l'existence du COMNAT qui va préparer et le PANE et la suite de RIO (Convention Internationale sur la lutte contre la Désertification (CIND)).

Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation: revient sur le rôle du PANE et de la C.GRN et pose la question de savoir si la Cellule va être transférée au PANE.

Mr NIANG: attire l'attention sur le fait que le PANE n'est pas une structure mais un travail; estime que C.GRN, Code Rural, PANE,..., c'est trop et dit que lui ne se retrouve pas dans tout cela.

Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation: si le PANE est un produit, un processus, qui va l'initier?

Mr MODY: pense que c'est trop tôt, que le processus va démarrer, que l'administration y jouera un rôle mineur et que c'est la société civile (villageois, ...) qui va se l'approprier en l'internalisant; s'agissant des questions institutionnelles, pour lui, le MH/E gère le suivi de RIO (COMNAT) et le MAG/EL gère la C.GRN; souligne qu'il y a aujourd'hui plusieurs ministères concernés, il y a problème en raison de leur structuration très verticale (compartimentée) et qu'il y a nécessité de la rendre horizontale; pour lui, au lieu d'avoir des Ministères qui se bagarrent, il serait plus indiqué de créer des équipes; pense qu'il faut casser la Direction de l'Environnement (DE) car ce n'est une DE mais une Direction des forêts; pour lui, l'Environnement c'est l'assainissement, la pollution, ... ; signale que la vraie question au Niger consiste à savoir comment remonter du terrain en haut, quelles personnes mettre en place.

Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation: annonce qu'actuellement le Programme est logé à la DEP/MAG/EL et pour qu'il bénéficie à une autre structure, c'est très difficile.

Mr NIANG: pense que ces problèmes auraient pu être prévus et solutionnés au moment de la conception du Programme.

Conseiller IRG en GRN: rappelle que le problème au niveau du Programme SDSA II est comment articuler l'ancrage institutionnel; pour lui, il manque un point focal, représentant permanent du Gouvernement qui s'attelerait à voir régulièrement où en est-on avec la décentralisation, le droit foncier, le code rural, ... ; signale que pour le PNGRN, il a été proposé une unité nationale de gestion du programme.

Mr MODY: souligne que pour le PNGRN, la situation est claire; sa tutelle doit revenir au MAG/EL parce qu'ils estiment qu'il s'agit d'une gestion par les paysans; si la tutelle de la SDSA II va à un autre ministère, cela ne constituera pas de problèmes pour eux en ce sens qu'ils vont développer des passerelles pour travailler en rapport avec elle; précise qu'ils n'ont pas voulu la tutelle du Sous-Comité Développement Rural parce qu'il "n'existe que quand on actionne la pompe", préfèrent avoir un interlocuteur, des décideurs (en l'occurrence le Ministre) en face d'eux.

Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation: estime que le lieu privilégié pour la SDSA II, c'est la C.GRN.

Mr MODY: pense que sur le terrain, il sera plus facile de faire la jonction, notamment au niveau des arrondissements; signale que Mr NIANG essaie de transformer tous les agents de base en agents polyvalents.

Conseiller en GRN: informe qu'une étude est en train d'être menée pour changer le rôle de l'agent forestier, modifier son profil, sa formation.

Mr NIANG: pense qu'il faut que le paysan ait un seul interlocuteur; dit qu'actuellement le ratio agent de vulgarisation/pères de familles est ridicule (de l'ordre de 2 à 4%), que ce ratio peut être amélioré en faisant en sorte qu'il n'y ait pas exclusivement des agents d'élevage, de forêts, d'agriculture, ... ; souligne que le Niger ne peut se permettre un

luxes d'encadrement, qu'il n'y a pas en tout 1.000 agents d'encadrement (qui interviennent au niveau des producteurs) et cela au niveau de l'Agriculture, de l'Élevage, et de l'Environnement réunis; ce chiffre est, pour lui, à comparer aux 10.000 villages et 600.000 exploitations du pays; estime qu'il ne sert à rien d'avoir 10 directions dans un Ministère, donc 10 directeurs, 10 véhicules, 10.....car, pour lui, les cadres qui sont à Niamey ne sont pas importants, ce qui importe, c'est ce qui est sur le terrain; pense que tous les agents du niveau central doivent aller sur le terrain; souligne que c'est seulement au Niger qu'il a vu des cadres à la Direction de l'Agriculture, à la Direction des Études et Programmes décidant de la politique nationale sans avoir fait le terrain;

Conseiller IRG en GRN: annonce qu'on veut apporter des changements au système en encourageant, par des incitations, le travail sur le terrain.

Mr NIANG: pense qu'il faut diminuer le nombre de directions par ministère et à l'intérieur des directions, réduire le nombre de services.

Conseiller IRG en GRN: signale que c'est la raison pour laquelle une des conditionnalités de la SDSA II est relative à la question des affectations.

Mr MODY: rappelle qu'ils ont, à leur niveau, beaucoup discuté des questions de personnel et sont arrivés à la conclusion qu'au MAG/EL, il ne faut pas recruter mais redéployer; informe qu'ils veulent prendre 2 ou 3 ministères, étudier leurs missions, leurs moyens,...; souligne qu'au MAG/EL, il n'y a aucune évaluation annuelle des ressources financières et humaines; signale qu'il y a 4.200 agents de l'État dans tout le développement rural, parmi eux seulement 10% sont sur le terrain et travaillent 2 ou 3 mois dans l'année; propose de réaliser des études, de faire des scénarios, de restructurer les services et de balancer tout le monde au niveau des villages; annonce qu'il travaille beaucoup sur les dépenses publiques du MAG/EL en ce moment.

Conseiller IRG en GRN: signale qu'ils sont frustrés de constater que malgré les ressources financières apportées par la SDSA II, l'Assistance Technique IRG, le fait de disposer actuellement d'une meilleure banque de données, les séminaires organisés au profit des agents sur le thème de la gestion par objectifs, malgré tout cela, les problèmes demeurent; informe que certains partenaires recommandent d'affecter le Conseiller en GARI dans PACSA et le Conseiller en GRN à la C.GRN.

Mr MODY: dit qu'il a dépassé ces problèmes de localisation; pour lui les structures se font et se défont et qu'il appartient à en place de voir où elle pense le mieux servir.

20/05/94 Rencontre de l'équipe avec le directeur de l'environnement:

Aux questions posées par le Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation sur les appréciations quant à l'Assistance Technique, aux objectifs du Programme, aux problèmes administratifs éventuels, aux attentes, aux institutions, à la disponibilité des cadres pour promouvoir le Programme, le Directeur de l'Environnement a répondu:

que les objectifs de la SDSA II correspondent aux orientations et stratégies nationales; qu'il apprécie en ce Programme sa souplesse qui constitue un atout majeur contrairement à beaucoup d'autres programmes qui ont des rubriques préétablies;

qu'il entretient des rapports permanents et fructueux avec les membres de IRG;

qu'il n'y a pas de programme sans problèmes et que concernant sa direction, il y a le cas de l'étude sur le rôle de l'agent forestier où, au dernier moment, après que tout ait été

établi, il s'est entendu dire que le déroulement de l'étude ne cadre pas avec la pratique de gestion souhaitée par son ministère de tutelle;

que les attentes vis à vis du Programme sont surtout relatives au financement des projets et programmes concrets sur le terrain;

que relativement aux questions institutionnelles, on peut déplorer la difficulté d'harmonisation des activités et cela, malgré l'approche nationale (éviter la sectorisation, intégrer les actions); la Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles a été mise en place pour, entre autres, assurer la cohérence des actions mais cela s'est avéré difficile;

que les cadres sont disponibles mais qu'il y a nécessité de s'assurer qu'ils travaillent en cohérence.

Le Chef d'Équipe a fait connaître que sur la base des informations obtenues, ce sont les assistants techniques qui font actuellement tout le travail nécessaire à la satisfaction des conditions devant concourir à l'atteinte des objectifs comme la gestion par objectifs, la réforme de l'administration, l'harmonisation des activités,...la DEP/MAG/EL ne dispose en permanence que d'un cadre, très disponible mais n'ayant pas le niveau requis. Il est à craindre qu'au cours des prochaines 2 ou 3 années, on ne puisse pas aisément remplir les conditionnalités retenues.

Au cours des entretiens, il est ressorti qu'il conviendrait mieux de parler de responsabilisation des cadres plutôt que de leur disponibilité car il est possible que ces derniers considèrent la SDSA II comme n'étant pas leur affaire; il y a donc une nécessité de responsabiliser les cadres qui vont par la suite servir de relais.

À la question posée par le Chef d'Équipe sur la Stratégie en matière d'environnement, le Directeur de l'Environnement a répondu qu'un document de base (quoique n'ayant pas été adopté officiellement) a été rédigé il y a un peu plus d'un an dans ce sens; il a ajouté qu'outre le Plan National de Lutte contre la Désertification (PNLCD) et le Plan d'Action Forestier Tropical (PAFT) qui sont disponibles, il y a actuellement, en chantier, le Plan d'Action National pour l'Environnement (PANE) dont les termes de référence viennent d'être élaborés et qui dans sa conception va intégrer le PNLCD et le PAFT.

**20/05/94 Rencontre avec le secrétaire général et la directrice des affaires
administratives et financières du MH/E:**

QUESTION: Appréciations du MH/E sur la SDSA II.

SG/MH/E: rappelle qu'au démarrage, certains cadres du MH/E ont participé à la conception du Programme, qu'il s'agit d'un programme d'appui institutionnel né de la prise de conscience du fait que les moyens financiers dont dispose l'État sont limités au regard du rôle qu'il a à jouer; précise en outre que l'appui institutionnel dont il s'agit ici s'adresse au secteur agricole pris dans son sens large et qu'à ce titre tous les départements ministériels concourant à l'augmentation de la production agricole devraient être appuyés, en particulier le Ministère de l'Hydraulique et de l'Environnement; malheureusement, dans la pratique, il a été constaté qu'en ce qui concerne l'appui, seule une direction (Direction de l'Environnement) en bénéficie, laissant de côté et à tort certaines structures comme la Direction des Infrastructures Hydrauliques, la Direction du Génie Rural, la Direction de la Faune, de la Pêche et de la

Pisciculture; en plus, il y a des directions d'appui comme la Direction de la Planification et de l'Évaluation des Projets, la Direction des Affaires Administratives et Financières qui devraient être couvertes par le Programme; la DAAF/MH/E doit en particulier être étroitement associée et il y a une nécessité absolue d'apporter les corrections nécessaires.

DAAF/MH/E: fait connaître qu'elle suit de très loin la gestion des fonds mis à la disposition de la Direction de l'Environnement; par ailleurs, elle a, au début de la mise en œuvre du Programme, été approchée de façon informelle par le Conseiller en GARI avec lequel elle a participé à l'élaboration des fiches techniques pour la gestion du personnel, en particulier la fiche de description poste-profil; informe la mission d'évaluation du fait que le MH/E avait émis le souhait de voir l'appui à la DAAF/MAG/EL et à la DEP/MAG/EL élargi à la DAAF/MH/E et à la DPEP/MH/E, qu'une lettre avait été adressée dans ce sens au MAG/EL mais que la requête est restée sans suite; du coup la DAAF/MH/E a interrompu ses contacts avec IRG laquelle a poursuivi le travail d'étude poste-profil avec la DE/MH/E; la conséquence de la mise à l'écart de la DAAF/MH/E dans une activité qui relève en premier lieu de ses attributions a été qu'on s'est retrouvé sur le terrain avec deux démarches parallèles: la DAAF/MH/E a envoyé à l'intérieur du pays une mission pour un travail relatif à l'ensemble des agents du MH/E, la mission en question s'est rendue compte que la DE/MH/E avait déjà fait distribuer aux agents relevant d'elle (donc une partie des agents du MH/E) les fiches finalisées avec le concours du Conseiller IRG en GARI; pose un problème réel de chevauchement de compétences entre la DAAF/MH/E et la DE/MH/E qui, à l'insu de la DAAF, élabore un programme de formation avec l'appui de la SDSA II.

QUESTION DU CHEF D'ÉQUIPE: Que faire pour améliorer la situation?

SG/MH/E: propose de désigner un coordonnateur par ministère pour le suivi du programme; il s'agira d'un répondant par lequel tout doit passer; propose également de responsabiliser les cadres et d'améliorer leurs conditions de travail.

DAAF/MH/E: insiste pour que les attributions des différentes structures soient respectées, sinon on crée des frustrations entre les directions.

QUESTION DU CHEF D'ÉQUIPE: opinions sur la stratégie environnementale?

SG/MH/E: le MH/E souhaite jouer le rôle de Chef de file dans l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre du PANE (qui constituera par ailleurs une conditionnalité pour accéder aux fonds concessionnels de la Banque Mondiale (IDA)) qui est dans l'entendement du MH/E un exercice pluridisciplinaire dans lequel la composante essentielle pour notre pays sera la lutte contre la sécheresse et la désertification tout en ne négligeant pas les aspects de lutte contre la pauvreté, démographiques, de pollutions et nuisances, etc.

DAAF/MH/E: propose que dans cette stratégie, il soit tenu compte de l'intégration de la femme au développement; souhaite en particulier que les programmes qui vont découler de cette stratégie accordent une place importante à la femme qui est en amont de la gestion des ressources naturelles; insiste pour qu'il soit prévu des programmes spécifiques aux femmes.

28/05/94 Rencontre entre les membres de l'équipe d'évaluation:

Il a été noté que les conditionnalités sont surtout liées au volet GARI qui constitue le plus grand et plus difficile problème à résoudre; qu'il y a une section dépassée, c'est celle relative à la décentralisation: dans la mesure où il a été créé un ministère chargé de la décentralisation, où un projet de loi relatif à la question est soumis aux autorités compétentes,

on peut considérer les conditions concernant ce point comme satisfaites; il n'est pas nécessaire d'élargir les activités de la SDSA II à un quatrième ministère (en plus de ceux de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage, de l'Hydraulique et de l'Environnement, des Finances et du Plan).

Autre problème constaté, celui de la localisation institutionnelle de d'Assistance Technique: pour le Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation:

- si la C.GRN garde ses fonctions de coordonnatrice des actions, il peut être imaginé d'y loger le Conseiller en GRN; la difficulté immédiate à cette proposition est constituée par la méconnaissance de la position de la Banque Mondiale sur la C.GRN;
- l'assistance technique prévue au titre des ONG-Secteur privé pourrait aller au niveau de la Direction du Développement Régional (DDR/MF/P); les responsables de cette direction estiment que cette assistance serait la bienvenue chez eux dans la mesure où elle renforcerait le Comité de Gestion des ONG qui serait alors élargi à cette assistance technique;
- il conviendrait, pour le Conseiller en GARI, d'examiner la possibilité de le transférer à la DAAF/MAG/EL où il serait certainement mieux valorisé qu'à la DEP/MAG/EL;
- IRG recruterait, dans le cas d'hypothèses ci-dessus, un assistant administratif pour aider son Chef d'Équipe;
- un Coordonnateur National du Programme serait désigné par le Gouvernement nigérien; dans l'éventualité où il constituerait l'homologue du Conseiller en GRN, il aura son bureau, comme ce dernier, à la C.GRN.

Pour certains membres de l'Équipe d'Évaluation, ce scénario n'est pas souhaitable dans la mesure où il ne serait pas opérationnel pour un programme comme la SDSA II d'avoir des équipes dispersées; il conviendrait mieux d'impliquer davantage la partie nationale à travers notamment la désignation d'un coordonnateur qui aurait des répondants dans les différents ministères concernés; cette implication suppose une plus grande responsabilisation, elle-même conditionnée par la définition précise des attributions du Coordonnateur National (dont le rôle devrait aller bien au delà de la simple figuration) et par la mise à sa disposition des conditions de travail suffisamment incitatives .

S'agissant de l'assistance technique aux ONG-Secteur privé, il a été recommandé que le Bureau d'Études bénéficiaire du marché (IRG) procède, à chaque fois que les compétences nationales existent, au recrutement des experts locaux. Des exemples de Bureaux d'Études américains ayant recruté, dans le cadre de programmes ou projets financés par l'USAID au profit de certains pays africains, une forte proposition d'assistance technique nationale (Jusqu'à trois experts sur un total de quatre) ont été donnés par les consultants internationaux de l'équipe d'évaluation.

31/05/94 Rencontre avec le DEP/MAG/EL, le cadre de la DEP/MAG/EL affecté à temps plein à la SDSA II, les deux conseillers IRG:

N.B: le Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation a présenté un document de sept pages et préparé en vue d'un "debriefing" à faire à l'USAID.

Le Chef d'Équipe de l'évaluation a souhaité connaître ce qu'en pense le DEP/MAG/EL; il a ajouté que:

- l'Assistance Technique est arrivée plus de deux ans et demi après la signature de l'accord de financement du Programme, donc plus de la moitié de la vie du Projet (prévu pour se dérouler sur cinq ans), de même la composante ONG-Secteur privé n'a pas encore débuté, d'où la nécessité de prolonger le Projet de trois ans;

- s'agissant de la situation financière, le circuit est compliqué et comprend beaucoup d'étapes, les délais sont anormalement longs, d'où problèmes de consommation de crédits; par ailleurs les fonds étaient disponibles en 1993 et comme il n'y a pas de nouveaux fonds accordés en 1994, il n'y a pas de lignes budgétaires ce qui fait qu'on assiste depuis près de six mois à une situation de blocage; il faudrait, chaque année, attendre six à neuf mois, ce qui fait que personne n'est satisfait du système que tout le monde semble vouloir changer.

Le DEP/MAG/EL confirme que les constats ci-dessus, en ce qui concerne notamment la lenteur du circuit, sont réels, qu'il y a véritablement blocage et que le Conseiller en GARI et la DAAF/MAG/EL ont rédigé un mémo sur les différentes étapes (environ 26) à suivre.

Le Chef de l'Équipe de l'évaluation signale que le Directeur du Financement des Investissements et de la Dette Publique (DFI/DP/MF/P) estime d'une part qu'une correspondance doit être adressée au Directeur du Budget et du Contrôle Financier (DB/CF/MF/P) pour lui faire part de cette lourdeur administrative et d'autre part qu'il pourrait, en accord avec l'USAID qu'il conviendrait de consulter sur la question, être établi un comité de gestion de contrôle à priori, et faire en sorte que les pièces comptables passent de la structure bénéficiaire à sa direction puis directement à la banque de domiciliation du compte de la SDSA II.

Le DEP/MAG/EL dit être sceptique sur cette proposition car la DFI/DP a été ampliatrice de toutes les correspondances adressées par le MAG/EL au MF/P pour évoquer les problèmes de gestion constatés.

Le Conseiller en GRN rappelle qu'il n'y a pas de problèmes en matière de planification budgétaire et de programmation mais que les difficultés résident dans la comptabilité et le déboursement des fonds; il propose que le chéquier soit avec le Coordonnateur National (à désigner) du Programme qui aurait son comptable comme c'est le cas pour la C.GRN;

Pour le Conseiller en GARI, si l'idéal est de décentraliser, on doit, après une bonne élaboration du budget, autoriser le Directeur responsable de l'exécution à signer les chèques; il précise que l'expérience de l'année dernière a été pénible particulièrement pour le Code Rural; en outre, certaines dépenses n'ont pu être liquidées jusqu'après la dévaluation du F.CFA ce qui a été source de perte de beaucoup d'argent; il pense que le Programme gagnerait en donnant à chaque direction la gestion de son budget; il informe que pour accélérer le processus de liquidation des dépenses, ils ont, à un moment, envisagé d'imprimer des bons de commande spéciaux pour la SDSA II en vue d'attirer l'attention des responsables concernés au niveau des différentes étapes, ou de responsabiliser un ou deux agents aux Finances et au Trésor pour uniquement les pièces comptables de ce Programme.

Le DEP/MAG/EL intervient pour dire que le problème se situe au niveau des responsables de la Direction Générale du Budget (D.G.B.) et du Trésor qui, à l'instar des financiers du monde entier, ont, de par leur formation, une autre vision de la gestion financière; il souhaite que l'Équipe d'Évaluation tienne une séance de travail avec la D.G.B, le Trésor et la Direction Générale des Impôts (D.G.I.).

Les échanges de points de vue sur cette question ont été arrêtés sans convenir d'une proposition de solution mais en convenant de la nécessité d'examiner le problème avec d'une

part les responsables compétents du MF/P (D.G.B, Trésor,...) et d'autre part le Contrôleur de l'USAID.

Le point suivant examiné avec le DEP/MAG/EL est celui relatif aux aspects institutionnels; le Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation a demandé l'avis du DEP/MAG/EL sur:

- le problème de la localisation des différents membres de l'Assistance Technique; la nécessité d'un Coordonnateur National à plein temps qui serait logé, avec le Conseiller en GRN, à la C.GRN, quand bien même on ne dispose pas encore d'une perspective claire de la position de la Banque Mondiale sur l'avenir de la C.GRN et qu'il y a nécessité d'attendre l'aide mémoire de la dernière mission ou l'arrivée vers fin Juin 1994 de la prochaine mission de la Banque;

- le programme GARI: il y a la DAAF/MH/E qui dit qu'elle ne peut travailler avec ce volet tant qu'elle n'est pas saisie officiellement; il y a la DAAF/MAG/EL qui dit qu'elle n'est vraiment pas impliquée dans cette composante; il y a l'idée, partagée par certains, que la plupart des activités en GARI sont du ressort de la DAAF/MAG/EL et non de la DEP/MAG/EL;

- l'Unité de gestion des fonds pour la sous composante ONG: doit-on proposer de la rattacher à la DDR/MF/P ce qui implique la nécessité de travailler du jour le jour avec les trois Ministères (MAG/EL, MH/E, MF/P) ou doit-on envisager de regrouper l'ensemble des experts IRG dans un même bâtiment hors des trois Ministères tout en cherchant à maintenir des relations étroites de travail avec ces derniers? n'y a-t-il pas risque, dans ce deuxième cas, d'isolement de l'Assistance Technique et de réduction de son efficacité?

- l'idée de proposer la tenue d'un atelier au cours duquel ces questions seront examinées étant donné que la mission d'évaluation ne pourra disposer, avant son départ, de toutes les informations nécessaires pour formuler toutes les recommandations appropriées.

Dans sa réponse le DEP/MAG/EL a estimé que les développements ayant conduit aux conclusions mentionnées par le Chef d'Équipe d'Évaluation ne sont pas suffisamment étayés et que certains sont exagérés; de son point de vue, si comme ressorti dans l'intervention du Chef de mission, depuis plus d'un an, tout ce qui a été fait l'a été par les deux experts IRG seuls, c'est qu'il s'agit de supermen; il est inexact de dire que personne de l'administration n'a contribué; il pense que ce qui a été réalisé par les experts IRG fait partie de leurs attributions contractuelles.

Le Chef de la mission d'évaluation intervient pour signaler que jusqu'à maintenant, il semble que c'est IRG qui fait tout, y compris les rapports pour le MF/P.

Le DEP/MAG/EL fait connaître qu'il tient environ deux réunions par semaine avec les experts IRG mais qu'à aucun instant ils ne lui ont dit que telle activité ne fait partie de leur mandat; en outre, de par le fait que chacun des experts peut le voir à tout moment, il estime qu'en cas d'un blocage éventuel connu de IRG, tant que l'information n'a pas été portée à son niveau, la responsabilité incombe à ladite équipe; il précise que c'est la première fois qu'il apprend ce qui aurait été dit par les DAAF/MAG/EL et MH/E; il reste convaincu qu'il y aura toujours des problèmes mais il souhaite qu'on ne les exagère pas; il a donné deux exemples de travaux réalisés par lui alors qu'il s'agissait, de son point de vue, de tâches devant être effectuées par l'Assistance Technique IRG; il estime que ce que le Chef d'Équipe d'Évaluation a présenté (tel expert peut ou devrait être ici plutôt que là,...), ce sont des hypothèses de travail; ce qui est essentiel c'est l'analyse ayant conduit aux différentes recommandations.

Le Chef d'Équipe d'Évaluation signale qu'à l'USAID, les décideurs ne s'intéressent pas à l'analyse mais aux conclusions (recommandations).

Le DEP/MAG/EL fait connaître que lui est intéressé par l'analyse qu'il lit effectivement; il estime qu'il convient d'abord de poser les problèmes, ensuite de s'entendre dessus, et enfin formuler les recommandations.

Le Chef d'Équipe d'Évaluation donne l'assurance que l'analyse va figurer dans le document.

Le Conseiller en GRN appuie la nécessité d'une analyse et pose la question de savoir si l'équipe d'Évaluation va traiter du bilan des structures existantes, du Comité interministériel, de la supervision par les Secrétaires Généraux et au niveau technique (directions concernées); il rappelle que les compte rendus des différentes réunions sont disponibles pour exploitation; il signale que beaucoup d'efforts ont été consentis pour la supervision, notamment technique mais que le problème réside dans le fait que malgré cela, il y a un piétinement imputable, pense-t-il, à la non désignation d'un responsable national chargé exclusivement du pilotage du Programme.

Le Conseiller en GARI intervient pour dire que le problème n'existe que pour une seule raison: le fait qu'ils soient obligés de passer d'un ministère à un autre; il estime que tel que le Gouvernement nigérien est structuré, il n'est pas possible de résoudre ces problèmes interministériels.

Le Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation pense qu'un Coordonnateur National de rang élevé est nécessaire.

Le DEP/MAG/EL dit ne pas partager le point de vue qui consiste à croire que la nomination d'un Coordonnateur pourrait résoudre le problème, au contraire, cette mesure pourrait même le compliquer; il invite à ne pas perdre de vue le fait que la SDSA est un programme de réformes économiques.

01/06/94 Rencontre avec le dep/mag/el et son collaborateur affecté à plein temps à la SDSA II:

Le Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation propose d'examiner la possibilité de raccourcir le circuit de liquidations des dépenses.

Le DEP/MAG/EL est d'avis que la procédure (26 étapes) est source de frustration pour tous les bénéficiaires; il propose que la prochaine réunion du Comité Technique Interministériel (8 Juin 1994) soit élargie aux responsables du Budget, du Trésor et des Impôts pour discuter ensemble comment traiter la question des différentes étapes en vue de faire des recommandations en conséquence; il estime que la rencontre (atelier) sur les questions de tutelle du Programme, de localisation des experts,....peut être tenue après le départ de l'Équipe d'Évaluation; pour l'instant le travail va être poursuivi sur la base du système actuel et cela conformément à l'accord de financement; la partie nigérienne pourrait par la suite faire des propositions à l'USAID;

Abordant la question des multiples conditionnalités, le Chef de l'Équipe d'Évaluation informe l'assistance qu'il y a un équilibre à respecter entre elles et l'enveloppe financière du Programme: si on les diminue considérablement, l'USAID de Washington D.C. pourrait réduire le budget; les conditionnalités dont on peut proposer de faire l'économie sont celles

relatives à la décentralisation en raison de la création d'un ministère spécifique ayant en charge la question; concernant les aspects GARI, il y a quelques conditionnalités que la mission d'évaluation proposera de revoir.

Le DEP/MAG/EL émet le souhait que la mission fasse une relecture du contrat IRG (qu'il qualifie de centre nerveux du Programme)-USAID et propose une répartition des tâches qui éviterait de se retrouver à l'avenir dans la situation de quelqu'un qui dit que telle activité n'est pas prévue dans ses attributions; il demande également à la mission d'évaluation d'étudier les profils des conseillers IRG et de se prononcer quant à leur correspondance par rapport aux tâches prévues pour eux; il attire l'attention sur le Conseiller en GARI qui est économiste et informaticien de formation mais pas spécialiste en GARI ce qui, de son point de vue, constitue un point de faiblesse pour l'atteinte des objectifs du Programme.

Copie d'une partie des observations faites par le représentant de la Direction de l'Environnement à l'occasion de l'examen des offres pour l'assistance technique dans le cadre de la SDSA II en mai 1992.

N.B: cette copie est soumise pour rappeler les problèmes évoqués s'agissant de l'"étude sur le rôle de l'agent forestier" et des rapports entre l'Assistance Technique et la partie nigérienne.

" AK 01-02-03/05/92 1/4
Republique du Niger
Ministère de l'hydraulique et
de l'environnement
Direction de l'environnement

Examen des offres pour l'assistance technique dans le cadre de la subvention au développement du secteur agricole (SDSA II):

Il s'agit d'examiner les propositions techniques reçues des trois (3) organismes suivants:

- Associates in Rural Development, Inc. (ARD);
- International Resources Group, LTD (IRG);
- Louis Berger International, Inc. (LBII).

Outre ces propositions, chaque membre du Comité d'Évaluation Technique des offres a eu en sa possession au cours de la première réunion (24-04-92) deux documents:

- "APPENDICE I: DESCRIPTION DU TRAVAIL": il s'agit de termes de référence (18 pages) contenus dans le dossier d'Appel d'Offres;
- "MEMORANDUM" (6 pages) daté du 16 Mars 1992 et envoyé à l'USAID/Niger par la Responsable régionale du Bureau des Contrats de l'USAID basée à Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire).

Observations à la lecture du Mémoire ci-dessus:

- il est fait référence à deux reprises en page 1, à la section M de l'Appel d'Offres; il serait souhaitable de remettre une copie dudit Appel d'Offres à chaque membre du Comité;

- on y parle également de la constitution du Comité lequel serait composé d'un Président et des membres. La pièce jointe (page 6) fait ressortir que le Comité est composé de cinq personnes parmi lesquelles deux représentants de l'Administration nigérienne (un cadre du Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage et un du Ministère de l'Hydraulique et l'Environnement); il serait indiqué que les autres Ministères impliqués dans la mise en œuvre future de la SDSA II (Intérieur, Justice, Fonction Publique et Travail, Finances et Plan) soient associés au processus de sélection de leur partenaire Consultant. Au cas où on craindrait d'alourdir le Comité, on pourrait faire l'économie des représentants de certains ministères mais pas, pensons-nous, de celui des Finances et du Plan.

Au sujet de la Description du Travail, nous ne savons pas si le dossier d'Appel d'Offres dont elle fait partie, a, avant lancement, fait l'objet de soumission à la partie nigérienne pour adoption. En tout état de cause, nous nous permettons de signaler les insuffisances suivantes (de notre point de vue):

- la notion de "rôles des forestiers dans la gestion des ressources naturelles" figurant dans la Description du Travail (pages 2 et 12), est différente de celle de "l'expérience acquise au niveau du terrain par les agents forestiers" retenue par le Comité Niger/USAID chargé de la conception et de la négociation de la SDSA II à sa plénière du 24 Mai 1990 et cela, sur proposition de son sous-comité Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. Il convient de rappeler en effet que le Comité en question avait approuvé, au cours de ladite plénière, le point V "Responsabilités des agents forestiers dans le domaine de la gestion des ressources naturelles" avec comme une des étapes intermédiaires, une étude à réaliser, au cours de la première année d'exécution de la SDSA II, conjointement par l'USAID et le Niger, et ayant pour thème, "l'expérience acquise au niveau du terrain par les agents forestiers", et comme conditionnalité pour le déboursement de la première tranche, l'élaboration et l'adoption des termes de référence pour cette étude.

- les rapports entre l'Assistance Technique et la partie nigérienne ne sont pas suffisamment clairs: "le Conseiller Principal en gestion/administration servira de conseiller au DEP/MAG/EI et au DAAF/MAG/EI (page 7);l'intéressé portera également assistance au MAG/EI au niveau de la collecte des données,... l'intéressé est spécifiquement chargé d'aider le MAG/EI à appliquer les mesures de réforme La principale attribution de ce conseiller sera de concevoir et de mettre en place des systèmes de gestion au sein du MAG/EI...L'intéressé sera chargé de la formation des homologues à la DEP et à la DAAF du MAG/EI..."; nous n'avons nulle part constaté sous quelle autorité nigérienne ce conseiller aura à travailler; en page 15, il est noté que les Experts long terme seront affectés à la DEP/MAG/EI et que le contractant rendra directement compte au directeur de la Mission USAID ou son représentant; le fait que les différents soumissionnaires aient présenté des organigrammes totalement différents (cf ARD page 81 qui met l'Assistance Technique (AT) sous l'autorité de l'USAID et LBII fig. 3.1 à la 3ème page du chapitre 3 qui propose l'AT sous tutelle de la DEP/MAG/EI) est révélateur de l'imprécision des TDR quant à cette question;...."

Annex J. Political reform perspective, Agricultural Sector Development Grant II

par Ibrahim Oumarou
Land tenure specialist

I. Introduction

Le présent document s'inscrit dans le cadre de l'évaluation à mi-parcours du programme de la SDSA-II. Il ne s'agit ni d'un bilan diagnostic ni d'une analyse du déroulement des activités du projet mais d'un "document contribution" au niveau de l'objectif de réforme de politiques en particulier celles relatives à la tenure foncière et à la décentralisation. Ce document donne également des appréciations générales sur les activités du programme SDSA-II.

Au niveau de la tenure, le document traite du Code rural, de son processus d'élaboration à la problématique de sa mise en œuvre.

Quant à la décentralisation, elle sera abordée à travers les trois réformes vécues, les ressources des collectivités territoriales et quelques cas d'expériences de gestion décentralisée des ressources naturelles.

II. Le code rural

Les modalités de la gestion et d'accès à la terre constituent à n'en point douter l'une des conditions préalables au contrôle de la dégradation de l'environnement et la clé d'un développement rural harmonieux et viable. C'est pourquoi le Niger s'est engagé dès 1985 dans le processus d'élaboration d'un code rural.

1. Processus d'élaboration du Code Rural

Le 29 mai 1985, le gouvernement du Niger a mis en place un comité ad'hoc chargé de l'élaboration d'un Code rural. Ce comité ad'hoc sera d'ailleurs érigé en comité national en 1989 avec pour mandat:

- de conduire une réflexion d'ensemble sur les systèmes de gestion de l'espace rural dans le cadre d'un développement global et harmonieux;
- de proposer un projet de réglementation de la gestion et des modalités d'accès à la terre en vue de la sauvegarde de l'équilibre écologique et d'une rentabilisation des investissements.

Prenant en compte le caractère très complexe de la gestion qu'elle soulève, le comité a considéré l'élaboration du Code rural comme une œuvre de longue haleine qui doit se faire selon un processus dont l'objectif était de résoudre progressivement les problèmes qui ont été identifiés.

L'approche choisie associe une démarche à dominante juridique à une démarche socio-économique dans une perspective participative et décentralisée.

Pour permettre une réelle implication de toutes les couches socio-professionnelles et la prise en compte des réalités socio-économiques et culturelles du pays, le décret portant création du Comité National a prévu au niveau décentralisé (arrondissements et départements) respectivement des comités et sous-régionaux.

Dans le souci de garantir l'opérationnalité et l'efficacité de ces structures, un document cadre dénommé "Aide-mémoire" qu'elles sont chargées d'administrer a été élaboré par le Comité national; il est constitué dans son ensemble de questions spécifiques qui s'articulent autour de quatre grands axes:

- les modalités d'accès et de gestion de la terre;
- les usages coutumiers;
- les règlements de conflits;
- les systèmes de production et l'organisation du monde rural.

Ce document était adressé à tous les acteurs ruraux et intervenants en milieu rural (agriculteurs, éleveurs, ONG, projets de développement rural, services techniques d'encadrement) et prend en compte toutes les ressources rurales (foncières, végétales, animales et hydrauliques). Dans la démarche et la stratégie adoptées, les travaux monographiques issus de l'exploitation de l'Aide-mémoire par les régions et sous-régions devaient servir de support au Code rural.

Le primat accordé au travail de la base se poursuivra tout au long du processus.

C'est ainsi que les monographies de toutes les sous-régions de chaque département ont été rassemblées et exploitées au cours des ateliers régionaux organisés en octobre 1989.

Les résultats de ces ateliers ont été par la suite centralisés par le Comité national qui a mis sur pied une équipe de juristes nationaux et internationaux qui devrait les confronter à l'ensemble des lois et règlements répertoriés et en vigueur régissant les ressources naturelles afin de proposer un avant-projet de code rural.

Le texte proposé par cette équipe a été par la suite soumis à l'appréciation de toutes les couches socio-professionnelles du pays (association d'éleveurs, association d'agriculteurs, chefs coutumiers, agronomes, vétérinaires, forestiers, hydrauliciens, juristes, ONG, projets de développement rural) au séminaire national de Guidiguir de janvier 1990 auquel prenaient également part les partenaires de coopération.

Les recommandations issues de ce grand forum ont permis l'enrichissement de l'avant-projet qui, après plusieurs travaux techniques de finalisation, prendra la forme d'un projet de Loi fixant les principes d'orientation du Code rural.

C'est cette Loi qui a été soumise aux autorités politiques pour examen et adoption.

Le gouvernement de la transition l'a transmise au Haut Conseil de la République qui faisait office de parlement au lendemain de la Conférence nationale. Pour sa part, le Haut Conseil de la République a chargé la commission de l'élaboration des textes fondamentaux qu'il a mise en place de l'examiner.

Le nouveau projet de loi issu des travaux de cette commission a été adopté par le Haut Conseil de la République et promulgué par le gouvernement de la transition le 2 mars 1993.

2. Contenu de la Loi fixant les principes d'orientation du Code Rural

La question de la gestion des terres au Niger est un domaine complexe, en raison de la coexistence d'un certain nombre de règles juridiques/

- droit coutumier nigérien,
- droit islamique,
- les règlements fonciers et domaniaux coloniaux,
- les Lois et règlements de l'État nigérien.

Notre code rural est un code de synthèse devant prendre progressivement la place de l'ensemble des règles juridiques préexistantes qu'elles soient du droit écrit ou du droit coutumier. C'est un véritable instrument devant définir le statut des terres et servir de cadre juridique susceptible de permettre une gestion d'ensemble de toutes les composantes de l'espace rural: terres, pâturages, forêts, animaux, ressources en eau.

En particulier le Code rural:

- régit les droits d'accès à la terre et son mode de gestion;
- comble les lacunes institutionnelles et juridiques notamment l'incertitude des agriculteurs et éleveurs quant à la nature de leurs droits sur les terres;
- pose concrètement et régleme les questions relatives à la cohésion sociale notamment celles qui se rapportent aux multiples obstacles culturels, aux litiges et aux diverses conditions d'appropriation des terres;
- met l'accent sur la nécessité de sécuriser les producteurs ruraux et d'élever leur aptitude à la créativité au service de développement.

La Loi portant principes d'orientation du code rural en tant que cadre juridique de référence et d'organisation, se fonde sur la clarification et la reconnaissance des droits et devoirs, les obligations et sanctions, des niveaux de compétence et de recours. Elle est avant tout un instrument privilégié de développement, portant en elle le seau d'une véritable volonté politique.

On peut regrouper le contenu de la Loi d'orientation en quatre thèmes majeurs:

a) Sécurité des opérateurs ruraux

C'est le point focal du Code rural. Il est clairement apparu dans le Code la volonté du législateur de clarifier: la notion de propriété, les sources de droit, la reconnaissance et la garantie des droits des opérateurs ruraux dans l'exploitation des ressources naturelles renouvelables en milieu rural, les règles de procédure de règlement de litiges.

b) Conservation et gestion des ressources naturelles

Il est mis l'accent ici sur la protection et la restauration prioritaire des zones à haut risque écologique, la mise en place et l'exécution d'une politique foncière adéquate, la gestion rationnelle du capital forestier et les pâturages, la protection de la faune et la préservation des ressources halieutiques. Un accent particulier est mis au droit à la propriété foncière des couches sociales marginalisées.

Ainsi, les ressources naturelles rurales sont définies comme faisant parti du patrimoine commun de la nation et tous les nigériens ont une égale vocation à y accéder sans discrimination de sexe ou d'origine sociale.

Il est fait obligation de mise en valeur sous peine de voir confier provisoirement l'usage du sol à un tiers.

Des dispositions sont prévues qui définissent les obligations et le rôle des opérateurs ruraux à tous les niveaux ainsi que les mesures correctrices de toute infraction à la réglementation.

c) Organisation et administration du monde rural

Cette question est une des préoccupations majeures du législateur qui du reste confère à certains aspects une dimension nouvelle afin d'orienter et de concilier toutes les synergies vers le développement. Elle a pour objet l'exercice des prérogatives de direction et de contrôle de l'activité rurale à travers la gestion foncière et la police rurale.

d) Aménagement du territoire

Il s'agit surtout ici de classifications et utilisations des terres. Deux sous-thèmes apparaissent clairement:

- participation des populations à l'organisation de l'espace rural;

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- droits d'usage prioritaires des pasteurs sur leur terroir d'attache et schémas d'aménagement foncier.

3. Campagne de popularisation du Code Rural

En vue de réfléchir sur la popularisation du Code rural, le Premier Ministre a demandé au Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage assurant la tutelle du SP/CNCR de mettre en place un Comité de réflexion. Celui-ci a tenu ses travaux du 10 au 12 août 1993 à Torodi.

Le comité a recommandé au titre des mesures institutionnelles, la mise en place d'une commission nationale de popularisation et d'adoption rapide des textes créant les structures de mise en œuvre du Code rural. C'est ainsi que la commission nationale de popularisation a été mise en place et comprend une quarantaine de membres venant de toutes structures administratives et de la société civile.

Tous les membres de la commission nationale de popularisation se sont retrouvés à Dosso du 13 au 17 décembre pour une formation préalable au démarrage de la popularisation. L'objectif visé par cette formation est la maîtrise du contenu de la loi d'orientation par les participants et une même compréhension des différents articles, une stratégie de popularisation a été également adoptée.

Les objectifs visés à travers la campagne de popularisation sont:

- faire connaître à tous les nigériens le contenu de la loi d'orientation;
- sécuriser les citoyens quant à son contenu.

Au niveau de la méthodologie de cette popularisation nous avons retenu:

a) Pour le contenu:

Un corpus de base concentrant les articles clés de la loi d'orientation a été constitué pour servir de base au module principal de la campagne de popularisation.

b) Des groupes cibles ont été identifiés selon leurs particularités les groupes cibles auront des messages généraux et/ou spécifiques.

c) Les actions de popularisation retenues sont les suivantes:

- édition et diffusion massive de la loi d'orientation dans toutes les langues nationales du pays (8 langues);
- utilisation des moyens de communication de masse (radio, télévision, presse écrite, supports);

- formation: notamment celle de la commission nationale elle-même, les autorités administratives régionales, la chefferie traditionnelle, les magistrats, les cadres techniques, etc, qui sont les principaux acteurs de la mise en œuvre de la loi d'orientation;
- ateliers spécifiques à certaines associations professionnelles d'agriculteurs et d'éleveurs.

Maintenant que la loi est popularisée, sa mise en œuvre effective va dépendre de la capacité des institutions et structures chargées de sa gestion de mobiliser les opérateurs ruraux dans des actions concrètes et surtout élaborer des textes complémentaires qui sont apparus indispensables à travers les débats pendant la popularisation.

4. Mise en œuvre du Code rural

la mise en œuvre du Code rural ne peut être effective que dans le cadre d'une décentralisation véritable. Aussi, la loi d'orientation composée de trois livres consacre le troisième aux institutions du monde rural chargées de sa mise en œuvre.

Ainsi sont prévues les structures locales de gestion foncière notamment des secrétariats permanents locaux du Code rural au niveau des départements, arrondissements et communes.

a) Structure de gestion du Code rural

Au niveau du département, le secrétariat permanent prévu, a pour mission l'élaboration d'un schéma d'aménagement foncier (SAF) qui vise l'affectation des espaces aux différentes activités rurales ainsi que les droits qui s'y exercent.

Le SAF doit être vu comme un élément du schéma du développement du département, donc élaboré avant celui-ci. Des conflits de compétence peuvent intervenir entre le Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage (Code rural), le Ministère des Finances et du Plan (DDR) et le Ministère de l'Équipement et de l'Aménagement du Territoire; donc il faut situer très vite les responsabilités des uns et des autres.

Au niveau des arrondissements et communes, les secrétariats permanents sont les organes permanents des commissions foncières qui gèrent notamment les dossiers ruraux.

La mise en œuvre des commissions foncières conditionne la mise en œuvre effective du Code rural. En effet, ces commissions sont les chevilles ouvrières de la mise en œuvre du Code rural. Elles disposent des compétences consultatives et d'un pouvoir de décision. Au titre des compétences consultatives, leur avis est obligatoirement requis, sous peine de nullité, pour toutes les questions relatives à la détermination du contenu de la mise en valeur des terres et la procédure d'élaboration des concessions rurales pouvant conduire à l'acquisition d'un droit de propriété sur les terres concédées.

Au titre de pouvoir de décision, les commissions foncières ont compétence pour procéder à la reconnaissance et à l'établissement du contenu des droits fonciers ainsi qu'à la transformation en droit de propriété des droits de concession rurale. Elles ont un pouvoir général de contrôle de la mise en valeur des terres de l'arrondissement ou commune. Elles peuvent transférer à un tiers l'usage du sol non mis en valeur. Compte tenu de la complexité de la question foncière, le secrétariat permanent du CNCR a adopté une démarche prudente dans la mise en place des commissions foncières. Ainsi, il est envisagé l'installation d'une commission par département au titre d'une opération test:

- Arrondissement de Kollo pour le département de Tillabéry
- Arrondissement de Boboye pour le département de dosso
- Arrondissement de Konni pour le département de Tahoua
- Arrondissement de Guidan-Roundji pour le département de Maradi
- Arrondissement de Mirriah pour le département de Zinder
- Arrondissement de Maïné-Soroa pour le département de diffa
- Arrondissement de Tchirozérine pour le département d'Agadez.

Ces commissions foncières devraient démarrer en 1994 mais elles n'ont pas encore eu de financement sauf celles de Maïné-Soroa et Mirriah financées par la coopération danoise et qui sont en phase d'installation.

Les cinq arrondissements de l'opération test de la Banque mondiale sont malheureusement différents de ceux du Code rural sauf Boboye. Il y a là un problème de coordination.

b) Textes complémentaires

Des textes complémentaires législatifs et réglementaires sont prévus pour constituer avec la loi d'orientation, le Code rural.

Deux textes seulement sont pour le moment en chantier: pastoralisme et terroir d'attache; mise en valeur.

L'élaboration des textes complémentaires majeurs attendent des financements:

Révision du Code forestier, le régime de la faune, texte sur les sites des cultures de contre-saison, régime de pêche, pisciculture, etc.

Le décret d'application et les textes créant les structures de mise en œuvre du Code rural ne sont pas encore adoptés par le gouvernement si bien que la loi d'orientation bien que popularisée, n'est pas encore appliquée.

C) Problématique posée par la mise en œuvre

Au cours de la popularisation, beaucoup de réactions ont été enregistrées:

- Premièrement, c'est un soulagement quasi général de voir l'aboutissement de la loi d'orientation qui était en chantier pendant plus de sept ans et les dispositions qu'elle renferme notamment en matière de procédure de règlement des conflits sont bien accueillies;
- Il est apparu la nécessité d'élaborer au plus tôt des textes complémentaires notamment ceux relatifs au contenu de mise en valeur, au pastoralisme et terroir d'attache, au statut des sites de cultures de contre-saison et aménagement hydraulique;
- L'urgence de la mise en place des commissions foncières est soulignée par tous les participants.

Des inquiétudes ont également été soulevées:

- sur l'origine de la propriété coutumière, notamment l'alinéa qui dit qu'elle résulte de l'attribution à titre définitif de la terre à une personne par l'autorité coutumière compétente;
- Le constat d'absence ou l'insuffisance de mise en valeur qui autorise la commission foncière à donner l'usage du sol à un tiers;
- Le droit d'usage prioritaire reconnu aux pasteurs sur leur terroir d'attache;
- Le nantissement du capital-bétail par le propriétaire (notion inconnue sur le plan traditionnel);
- La procédure de règlement des conflits qui exclut maintenant les autorités administratives.

Des craintes sont soulignées par les organisations rurales sur leur capacité de faire prévaloir leurs droits, notamment dans la procédure d'expropriation pour cause d'utilité publique où la loi prévoit au préalable une juste indemnisation.

Une autre crainte est celle de voir la loi d'orientation être un texte en plus sans cadre d'application; cette crainte est réelle car les structures prévues de mise en œuvre du Code rural nécessitent des ressources financières importantes qui dépassent la capacité interne actuelle de l'État et sont compatibles difficilement avec un financement soumis à d'énormes conditionnalités comme la SDSA-II.

III. Décentralisation de la gestion des ressources naturelles

L'accession du Niger à l'indépendance a posé la nécessité d'un choix sur la façon d'organiser l'administration territoriale et ce, dans l'optique d'un développement national axé sur l'unité nationale, l'augmentation du niveau de vie des masses et l'indépendance économique. La décentralisation, vue comme réponse institutionnelle au problème de la participation des populations à la gestion des affaires locales, devrait donc permettre de faire face aux exigences de la construction nationale et du développement économique et social.

Il s'agissait donc de mettre en place une solide armature administrative régionale et locale apte à promouvoir et à assurer le développement à partir de la base.

Le découpage territorial en trois niveaux qui en a résulté: départements, arrondissements et communes, aura une mise en œuvre effective pour les deux premiers. Cependant, un retard considérable sera accusé dans l'installation des communes qui étaient perçues comme échelon de base, domaine par essence de la démocratie locale.

Le caractère inachevé de la réforme administrative régionale et locale ainsi que son mode de gestion qui ont laissé apparaître quelques déficiences, nécessite une redéfinition des structures et des organes en vue de la rendre plus aptes à promouvoir et à garantir la participation pleine et entière des populations à la gestion des affaires locales, ce qui du reste constitue un impératif de la nouvelle configuration du contexte national.

1. Cadre institutionnel de la décentralisation

Le Niger a opéré trois réformes dans le cadre de la décentralisation:

- La loi 61-50 du 31 décembre 1961 portant organisation des collectivités territoriales érige les circonscriptions administratives de base, les cercles unitaires et les subdivisions en collectivités territoriales;
- La loi 64-023 du 17 juillet 1964 portant création de circonscriptions administratives et collectivités territoriales institue trois niveaux d'administration territoriale:
 - un échelon de base, la commune;
 - un échelon de relais, l'arrondissement;
 - un échelon de coordination régionale, le département.

Les arrondissements et communes sont érigés en collectivités territoriales dotées de la personnalité morale et l'autonomie financière;

- L'ordonnance 83-026 portant statut de la société de développement.

La société de développement selon ses initiateurs, devrait être "*celle où le développement se fait pour tous et par tous grâce, d'une part à une réelle prise de conscience de chacun de son rôle dans le développement et d'autre part à la participation active de l'ensemble de la population à la définition de ses objectifs et de ses priorités*".

Il faut souligner que le concept de participation introduit par la société de développement a eu le mérite d'une part d'étendre la concertation et la participation des populations à des échelons où jusque là elle n'avait pas cours d'une manière formelle c'est-à-dire les tribus, villages, cantons et groupements; d'autre part de responsabiliser les populations dans l'édification, la mise en œuvre, le suivi et l'évaluation des actions de développement.

2. Les ressources des collectivités territoriales

Le fondement juridique des finances publiques locales au Niger est la loi 65-006 du 8 février 1965. En vertu de cette loi, les arrondissements et les communes sont habilités à percevoir: les taxes d'arrondissement, de voirie ou municipales; les taxes fiscales; les taxes indirectes; les taxes rémunératoires.

La loi 66-022 du 23 mai 1966 détermine la liste des impôts et taxes de l'État sur lesquels peuvent être institués les centimes additionnels au profit des arrondissements et communes.

Un tel processus de décentralisation a-t-il permis une bonne gestion des ressources naturelles? La gestion des ressources naturelles est apparue au centre des débats au début des années 80 quand la désertification prenait des proportions inquiétantes a conduit à l'amenuisement des ressources naturelles, ce qui a gravement modifié les relations homme/espace. Ceci s'est traduit très souvent par des tensions sociales graves.

La réponse à une telle situation, pour être efficace, doit chercher entre autres une participation massive et volontaire des populations. Aussi, nous présentons quelques expériences dans l'approche de gestion des ressources naturelles.

a) La gestion paysanne des ressources naturelles: cas des ressources forestières

Il s'agissait notamment de s'orienter vers une gestion plus rationnelle des ressources existantes en impliquant et en responsabilisant les populations rurales. On parle même de transfert de la gestion des ressources forestières aux populations locales organisées en groupements de producteurs appelés "coopératives forestières" ou "marchées ruraux".

On compte aujourd'hui seize (16) coopératives forestières dont sept (7) pour les forêts naturelles et neuf (9) pour la gestion de plantations. On compte également trente trois (33) marchés ruraux en fonctionnement.

Ces structures rencontrent des difficultés pour mener à bien leurs activités. La plupart de ces difficultés trouvent leur origine dans le processus même de mise en place de ces coopératives: insuffisance de l'information-sensibilisation-formation des dirigeants, très forte "artificialisation" de l'opération de type "entreprise clé en main", etc.

- Difficulté de l'écoulement de la production des coopératives due en grande partie à la concurrence qui leur livre l'exploitation non contrôlée à bon marché par rapport au prix élevé, fixé et pratiqué par les coopératives;
- parmi les enseignements tirés de l'expérience en matière de gestion décentralisée des forêts, il y a aussi la difficile intégration de l'agriculture mais surtout de l'élevage;
- Cependant, on retient que si l'on œuvre pour une responsabilisation réelle des communautés rurales, les paysans sont effectivement à même de faire la preuve de leur capacité à prendre en charge la gestion de leurs affaires surtout quand les intérêts sont bien perceptibles par tous.

b) **Expériences des ONG dans le domaine du foncier et de la gestion des ressources naturelles**

Les ONG dans leur majorité ne sont pas encore directement impliquées dans la gestion des ressources naturelles et de ce fait, l'on peut affirmer sans exagération qu'elles n'ont pas suffisamment capitalisé d'expériences en la matière.

La non implication véritable des ONG au niveau des droits fonciers relève de l'environnement institutionnel dans lequel sont mis en œuvre des projets de développement se rapportant à la gestion des ressources naturelles, plutôt que d'une absence manifeste de volonté de leur part.

Par conformisme, on peut ne pas être en porte à faux avec les autorités de tutelle, les ONG s'aventurent très prudemment sur le terrain épineux de la question foncière sur lequel elles utilisent plutôt les autorités coutumières (chef de village et de canton) et tentent autant que faire se peut de favoriser discrètement l'accès des couches défavorisées, en l'occurrence les petits agriculteurs et les femmes, à la ressource terre.

IV. Appréciations générales du programme SDSA-II

Il s'agit d'appréciations sommaires portées sur le programme et au besoin suivies de recommandations.

a) **Objectif du programme**

L'objectif cadre bien avec la politique du gouvernement en particulier en matière de gestion des ressources naturelles et de la responsabilisation des populations à la base dans la conduite des actions de développement.

La composante institutionnelle va cependant connaître beaucoup de contraintes à cause de la situation socio-politique que traverse le pays et de la situation financière très préoccupante de l'État.

b) Durée du programme

Prévu pour cinq ans, le programme a démarré trois ans après la signature de l'accord, il n'aura donc que deux ans d'activités si aucune prolongation n'intervient.

L'atteinte des objectifs est à présent liée à la prolongation d'au moins trois ans du programme qui prendrait ainsi fin en 1998.

c) Conditonnalités

La SDSA-II a continué dans l'approche de la SDSA-I où le déboursement est prévu en tranches subordonnées à la satisfaction des conditions préalables. La SDSA-I est gérée sous forme de projets alors que la SDSA-II est un appui budgétaire au fonctionnement de certaines structures impliquées directement ou non à la gestion des ressources naturelles et un appui à certains investissements de l'État.

Beaucoup de conditions préalables ne sont autres que des objectifs ou des performances à atteindre au cours de l'exécution du programme. L'étendue de ces conditionnalités et le nombre de structures bénéficiaires font de la satisfaction des conditions préalables un véritable "casse-tête" pour l'équipe du projet.

d) Gestion du projet

1. Structure de gestion du programme

La structure est perçue comme une structure de projet traditionnel c'est-à-dire celle qui a la responsabilité totale du projet. Le mandat de l'IRG, le document de base du projet et le document d'accord de la subvention ne sont pas connus des structures bénéficiaires d'où l'attitude attentiste de ces structures dans l'exécution du projet.

L'IRG avec seulement deux experts résidents, travaille avec toutes les structures gouvernementales parfois sans clarification de rôles.

2. Assistance technique

L'assistance technique travaille sans homologues désignés, ce qui rend difficile sa mission. La coordination des activités entre structures bénéficiaires pose des problèmes et l'IRG se débat presque seul à suivre la satisfaction des conditions préalables. Il y a manifestement un besoin d'un coordonnateur national, qui sera responsable du programme au niveau national et aura la charge de suivre les conditions préalables. Ce coordonnateur aura des répondants dans les 3 ministères impliqués dans le programme (MAG/EL, MFP, MH/E).

Au niveau de l'assistance technique LTC, la phase "études" est maintenant dépassée, le Code rural est dans la phase "mise en œuvre".

L'expertise LTC doit s'orienter maintenant vers les actions terrain avec au moins un expert résident qui appuierait la mise en place des commissions foncières et les schémas d'aménagement fonciers. Il y a beaucoup de travaux de conception dans la mise en œuvre du Code et le SP/CNCR ne dispose présentement d'aucun spécialiste. L'assistance technique prévue au niveau du volet ONG doit tenir compte qu'il existe maintenant des compétences au niveau local. Un chef de mission pourrait donc coiffer deux à trois experts recrutés localement.

e) Structures bénéficiaires

La liste des structures bénéficiaires de la première tranche a été volontairement limitée aux structures directement impliquées dans la GRN et celles directement concernées par le volet GARI.

Maintenant, il y a lieu d'élargir les structures bénéficiaires aux directions de l'agriculture et de l'élevage pour le volet GRN et à la DAAF/MHE pour le volet GARI.

Annex K. Report: Natural Resources, Agricultural Sector Development Grant II

**by Joseph A. Tabor, TR&D consultant
(Environmental and natural resources specialist)**

2. Progress related to priority program assistance approval document outputs and activities by component

2.1. Natural resources management component

Table 2.1-1 shows the level of effort devoted by the International Resources Group to consulting and training activities, which help achieve the Agriculture Development Grant II and the International Resources Group contract objectives.¹ The effort level is given in person days and followed by the name of specific consultants or recipients of training. Activities that are planned but not yet funded are placed in brackets, "[]."

¹ "The [International Resources Group] team will provide technical assistance, particularly in the areas of planning, information systems, impact monitoring, budgeting, and personnel management for the institutional component and various aspects of natural resources management for the natural resources management component" (United States Agency for International Development's Agriculture Sector Development Grant II Contract with the International Resources Group).

Table 2.1-1. International Resources Group level of effort in consulting and training activities.

Activity	Number of person days	Technical specialist(s)
Administration and program	10 4 8	Hindman Winterbottom, Rands Christophersen
Information systems	30 28	Diallo Hecht
Natural resources management monitoring and evaluation training	36 person days in Gambia	Sidi, Seydou (plus a USAID foreign service national)
Policy (activity directly fulfills the condition precedent)	7 9	Shaikh Shaikh (jointly funded)
Institutions	12	Gannon
Decentralization (activity directly fulfills condition precedent)	15	Diallo
Nongovernmental organizations (activity directly fulfills condition precedent) 6-day workshop for 51 participants	11	Sagui
Agroforestry	6 in Ouagadougou	Winterbottom, Sidi
Forest management 2-day study of natural forest management in the Niamey department by 15 participants.	12	Hawkes
Forest agent role (activity directly fulfills condition precedent)	30 30 60 [100 person days for three Direction Departmental de l'Environnement foresters to conduct regional case studies]; [30 person days for a technical study]; [30 person days for a political study]; [125 person days for five foresters to conduct international study in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Cameroon].	Perier Manou Saley, Gombo
Natural resources management economics 2 [?] person days for workshop in July 1994 by Christophersen and Sève.	12	Christophersen

2.1.1. National natural resources management strategy and action plan

Prior to the start-up of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program, the USAID developed a natural resources management action program and action plan for Niger under the African Bureau's natural resources management project, and added a \$7 million natural resources management amendment to the Agriculture Development Grant I to fund natural resources management activities. The World Conservation Union, UNSO, the United Nations Development Programme, Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dan le Sahel, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the World Bank were all heavily involved in developing natural resources management strategies for Niger. The World Conservation Union's contribution included an assessment of biodiversity conservation in Niger and help in developing sections of the Rural Code relating to wildlife and the environment. The World Conservation Union decided against developing a separate national conservation strategy, given the other natural resources management programs that were being developed for Niger.

UNSO, the United Nations Development Programme, and Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dan le Sahel supported the development of the Plan National de Lutte Contre la Désertification; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations promoted the Tropical Forestry Action Plan; and the World Bank contributed to the Program Intégré de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. The Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles was created in 1991 by the Government of Niger to develop and coordinate natural resources management strategy and to help harmonize these diverse donor-supported strategies. It was placed under the interministerial the Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement, Sous-Comité de Développement Rural, which has a mandate to develop a policy and strategy for sustainable rural development that includes a focus on natural resources management. This integration under the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles has helped to eliminate duplication of staff and mandates between Plan National de Lutte Contre la Désertification and Program Intégré de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, and has contributed to combining resources in the development of the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles.

At present, there is considerable controversy regarding the role and the organization of the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the relationship of the Agriculture Development Grant II to both the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and the first phase of the World Bank-financed Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project, which is discussed in more detail in the institutional section. The past coordination of divergent donor approaches to natural resources management illustrates that organizational problems can be worked out, and that an effective national natural resources management strategy can be successfully developed.

2.1.1.1. Specific International Resources Group team activities

The International Resources Group team, in cooperation with the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, conducted an informal meeting on December 20, 1993, of donors

involved in natural resources management programs. The summary tables of condition precedents were distributed to institutions involved with the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II to help coordinate the program with other donors. The Government of Niger (especially the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles), the World Bank, and Food and the Agriculture Organization of the United Nations have been developing the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. It includes many Agriculture Sector Development Grant II goals, such as nongovernmental organizations and private enterprise support, decentralization, and village based management of natural resources and is potentially a much longer-term program (20 to 25 years) than the Agriculture Development Grant II. The International Resources Group team has met on several occasions with the World Bank's supervision missions (June 17, 1993; August 23 and 27, 1993, and May 4, 1994) and discussed modes of collaboration.

The International Resources Group team and the Sous-Comité de Développement Rural met several times last year, primarily to review design issues of the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. The International Resources Group team meets regularly with the staff of the Secrétariat Permanent du Code Rural to determine priority activities that the Agriculture Development Grant II can support. The International Resources Group team is also a member of the newly established Comité Permanent de Suivi et de Réflexion sur l'Aménagement de Forêts Naturelles, which has met three times to discuss issues related to natural forest management.

The International Resources Group team assisted the International Center for Research in Agroforestry and Institute National pour Research Agronomique au Niger in conducting a national workshop, August 13, 1993, on farmed parklands (i.e., trees in agricultural fields) for department-level services (e.g., agriculture, environment, and rural engineering) and some natural resources management project personnel.

The International Resources Group team also meets periodically with the coordinator of the National Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development activities (established June 23, 1993), which is in charge of follow-up activities to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The national committee for this conference, led by the Direction de l'Environnement, represents more than ten Government of Niger institutions concerned with natural resource management and works closely with the Cellule de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. Its focus is to prepare proposals related to Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and natural resource conservation policies related to a National Environment Action Plan.

The International Resources Group team distributed information request forms on natural resources management activities to establish a natural resources management database. The new database is incomplete and needs to address some inconsistencies, such as the four projects listed under Wildlife Management and Fisheries that are described as forestry projects. Nevertheless, of the fifty-three natural resources management projects that have responded, a total of \$60.4 million from donors is distributed among forty-nine projects based on preevaluation exchange rates from franc Communauté Financier Africain to U.S. dollars.

According to the International Resources Group's results, the project with the longest life was USAID's Agriculture Sector Development Grant I and II program of eight years; the average project life was four years. Many of the bigger projects are near completion. According to the response to this International Resources Group survey the largest support from donors goes to agriculture, pest management, and soil and water conservation (classification used in the International Resources Group survey), which receives \$23.6 million per year (\$13 million from the Fond Européen de Développement for an irrigation program and \$5.2 million from USAID for the Agriculture Development Grant I and II). The next management group with the largest funding was the Integrated Rural and Community Development with \$17.4 million (\$10.2 million for the Développement Rural Intégré de Keita II from the Italians and Programme Alimentaire Mondial). The next group, Gestion Des Terroirs and natural resources management, receives \$17 million per year (\$5 million going to the Fond Européen de Développement's Basse Vallée de la Tarka project). Livestock and range management projects receive \$1.4 million a year, revegetation and forest management projects receive \$734,000 a year, and wildlife management and fisheries projects receive \$194,000 a year.

2.1.2. Resource tenure

Since the publication and distribution of the Principes d'Orientation du Code Rural (1993), two draft complementary texts, "Mise en valeur" and "Terroirs d'attaches," have been released. Two of the seven test Commissions Foncières have been funded and are being established in Mirriah (Zinder) and Maine Soroa (Diffo) *arrondissements*. Five more remain to be established in Kollo (Tillabéry), Boboye (Dosso), Birni Nkonni (Tahoua), Guidan Roumgi (Maradi), and Tchirozerine (Agadez) *arrondissements*. The Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural expects to use the Agriculture Development Grant II funding to support these other five Commission Foncières, but progress is delayed by the present financial blockage with regard to use of the Agriculture Development Grant II program funds (see financial section).

2.1.2.1. Land Tenure Center activities

The University of Wisconsin at Madison's Land Tenure Center has done well in fulfilling the objectives identified in its collaborative agreement under the Agriculture Development Grant II.² It has produced four major studies (Ngaido, 1993a; Loofboro, 1993; Terraciano, 1993a

² "[The Land Tenure Center] shall be responsible for the following activities:"

- (1) ... "undertake relevant studies"....
- (2) "Design and implement a system to monitor the progress of the Rural Code process"....
- (3) "Set up and implement a training program for six individuals"....
- (4) "Assist the Rural Code development component to incorporate the findings of the study into an effective Rural Code.
- (5) "Provide collaborative support to [International Resources Group] who has the lead responsibility to:

and 1993b; Ngaido, 1993b), a commissioned paper (Leiz, 1993), a report on a forest code workshop (McLain, 1993), and an issue paper (Ngaido, 1994), all of which are directly related to Nigerien resource tenure and usufruct issues.

The Land Tenure Center's research assistant is presently conducting research in Niger (November 1993 to October 1994) and is backstopping the Land Tenure Center as their representative in Niger (e.g., provide resource tenure information to World Bank representatives for the development of Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles). His research work includes the development of a monitoring system that can be used by the Government of Niger to help guide development of the Rural Code texts and monitor the impact of implementing the Rural Code. His research is resulting in trained assistants that may be useful to the Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural after his field work is completed. In addition to his Land Tenure Center research, he was a major contributor at the national popularization workshop in Dosso and at several of the subsequent regional workshops.

The Land Tenure Center supported a three-day workshop for members of the ad hoc Comité de Réflexion sur la Popularisation du Code Rural, which developed an action plan and budget for a six-month campaign to disseminate information about the Code Rural to the general population. The Land Tenure Center cooperative agreement has funded translation of the Rural Code to eight languages and the printing of the Rural Code in Hausa, Djerma, Fulfulde, and Tamaschek.

The Land Tenure Center is planning to conduct, in collaboration with the Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural and the International Resources Group team, a training program for the members of the Commissions Foncières. The Commissions Foncières are potentially important mechanisms of decentralization that are in great need of training and support. The International Resources Group team is also working with the Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural to organize a workshop on the progress in implementing the Rural Code.

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- (a) "Assist the Rural Code Committee in communicating Rural Code legislation to the rural population of Niger;"
 - (b) "Develop a natural resources management training program for local authorities."
 - (6) "Assist United States Agency for International Development in drafting the conditions precedent relating to security of tenure for the second, third, and fourth tranches of Agriculture Sector Development Grant II.
 - (7) "Submit an annual work plan"....
 - (8) "Coordinate activities"...(United States Agency for International Development's Agriculture Sector Development Grant II Contract with the Land Tenure Center).

2.1.3. Decentralization of natural resources management

The International Resources Group team met with the Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dan le Sahel secretariat in August 1993 to discuss the role of the Agriculture Development Grant II in supporting the Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dan le Sahel regional conference in Praia (Cape Verde) where decentralization and land tenure are to be the two principal topics. The International Resources Group team meets periodically with the country representative for Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dan le Sahel to supervise preparation of the upcoming conference. The Land Tenure Center research assistant in Niger will present a paper at the conference. The International Resources Group team participated in working groups that were organized by the Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dan le Sahel secretariat to prepare for the conference. At the same time, the International Resources Group team worked with the Direction des Études et de la Programmation, the country representative for Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dan le Sahel, and USAID to program terms of reference for a joint Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dan le Sahel and the USAID study on decentralization of natural resources management activities. The first phase of the study has been completed by Diallo Mahamadou (fifteen-person days funded), a consultant recruited by the country representative for Comité Inter-État pour la Lutte contre le Secheresse dan le Sahel. The International Resources Group team plans to meet with Sous-Comité de Développement Rural to review the results of the decentralization study.

The training program for the Commissions Foncières will include aspects on improving natural resources management training to local leaders at the *arrondissement* level. Some of the administrative reforms that are necessary for decentralization are being studied through International Resources Group's support of the Regional Forestry Role Workshops and a nongovernmental organization Workshop, ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities, a planned Forestry Role International Study Tour, and a planned nongovernmental organizations Round Table Conference. The International Resources Group team has planned to support two workshops in the near future to address decentralization issues that are related to natural resources management, one on forest economics conducted by Christophersen and Sève of the International Resources Group, and one on the Rural Code.

2.1.4. Forester Roles in natural resources management

The fulfillment of this responsibility by the International Resources Group team is on schedule and ahead of the other targets set by the Agriculture Development Grant II. International Resources Group has funded numerous consultancies and training sessions related specifically to forester roles, as well as the preparation of numerous terms of references (120 person days funded, 255 person days in terms of references waiting for funding). Other supporting consultancies, studies, and conferences that have been funded include six-person days in agroforestry, forty-two-person days in forest management, and 12 person days in forest economics.

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The design of three workshops on the role of forestry agents have been completed and the first was conducted in Tahoua in May 1994. The International Resources Group funded 30 person days of consulting to produce a methodological guide and to facilitate the first workshop. The Agriculture Development Grant II funds also financed per diems for approximately 30 participants. The first workshop is being evaluated to help improve the remaining two that are planned. These workshops, related study tours, and national seminars that are planned by the International Resources Group team will help define approaches to test potential new roles for forest agents.

6. Policy reform component

Because of the Agriculture Development Grant II's budget and time constraints, the International Resources Group and the Land Tenure Center need to conduct a *triage* on natural resources management activities. The Agriculture Development Grant II needs to prioritize from the full range of possible natural resources management activities in much the same way that Shaikh (1994) proposed prioritizing the condition precedents. For example, how does the cost vs. benefit of conducting additional studies and workshops on the role of the forest agents compare to the need to conduct studies and workshops on how to better integrate pastoralists in the Rural Code process.

Also, in the face of increasing pressure for the Agriculture Development Grant II to show measurable performance, the International Resources Group and the Land Tenure Center should not sacrifice quality for the sake of numbers. The tools of development that are currently en vogue (e.g., *terroir villageois*, geographic information system, and aerial videography) are in risk of becoming tarnished if over-sold or poorly executed (e.g., farming systems research, remote sensing, and natural forest management).

6.1. Review of other donor natural resources management initiatives

The following is a brief review of donor natural resources management initiatives from the information made available to the evaluation team. This information was gathered from both literature sources and interviews, but it certainly is not complete and the team was often unable to verify the state of project implementation.

The World Bank's natural resources management activities center around Projet Energie II and planned activities supporting the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and National Environment Action Plan. The World Bank project will provide assistance for further development of national natural resources management policies and strategies, program coordination, harmonization of technologies, assessment of issues related to tenure, decentralization and local participation, promoting training in natural resources management, setting up a natural resource information network, and conducting monitoring and evaluation. These program and project objectives are very similar to those of the Agriculture Development Grant II. While there does not appear to be any conflict in

objectives, an appropriate structure needs to be found to allow the World Bank project and the Agriculture Development Grant II to support the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles.

The World Bank's first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project will use the gestion de terroirs approach to help local communities manage natural resources. It will test several approaches including the use of nongovernmental organizations and private sector organizations as well as Government of Niger technical services to provide community (*terroir*) development. These will work with the extension efforts provided by the Government of Niger's technical services. The Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project test zones are the *arrondissements* of Birni-Ngaoure, Dogondoutchi, Gouré, Say, and Tessaoua.

To reform the agricultural research and extension system, the World Bank is developing a Programme National de Recherche Agricole and its Programme de Renforcement des Services Agricoles will likely be the preliminary phase in developing a Programme National de Vulgarisation Agricole. These programs are intended to restructure the research and extension system at the national level and the manner in which they operate at the regional level as well. The Comité Régional de Recherche Agronomique is a World Bank-sponsored structure to facilitate communication and coordination of natural resources management activities between researchers, developers, and the rural population.

The World Bank is also funding Projet Energie II, which is devoted to improving the pricing, availability, and management of energy sources. The project is interested in substitute energy sources, such as gas and kerosene, but the primary focus is on fuelwood. Its strategy for developing fuelwood marketing (*marchés ruraux*) and natural forest management is somewhat different from that of past USAID projects (based on local cooperatives) or that advocated in the 1993 International Resources Group-financed study on Natural Forest Management in Niger: Economic, Ecological, and Institutional Perspectives. There appears to be a considerable degree of misunderstanding between the different approaches and a need to achieve better collaboration toward shared objectives.³

The Fond Européen de Développement has a large national program in irrigation and food security improvement throughout Niger, with special focus in Madaoua et Bouza *Arrondissements*.

Italy and Programme Alimentaire Mondial: Italy with the support of Programme Alimentaire Mondial is continuing their integrated rural development activities in the Keita *Arrondissement*.

³ Future approaches need to pay more attention to the incentives for resource users. For example, it would appear that participants in the cooperatives had a very large financial incentive to sell wood to merchants rather than to the cooperative. Some other strategy for financing forest management must be found than one which pays participants only about one half of what competing buyers will pay.

International Fund for Agricultural Development: International Fund for Agricultural Development's Programme Special National is near completion but is presently negotiating a new phase. International Fund for Agricultural Development's program has three activities: irrigation, soil and water conservation, and range management (*développement pastoral*). Funding for the development of small irrigation projects along the Komadougou wash (*corrie*) in the Diffa Department and along the Niger River in the Tillabéry Department. Range management activities are conducted in the Departments of Tahoua and Agadez, which include development of groupements mutualistes pastoraux. Owing to security problems, this aspect of the program cannot be fully supported. Soil and water conservation activities are conducted in Illéla *Arrondissement* of Tahoua Department. They are getting some replication of water-harvesting catchments by farmers on their own (an indicator of improved natural resources management).

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations provides support for a few natural resources management projects in Niger, most notably the United Nations Development Programme dune stabilization project in Zinder and Diffa Departments. It has also helped the World Bank in the design of Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is also interested in developing a national soil conservation strategy.

The Coopération Canadienne's largest effort has been to increase agricultural production in Diffa Department where they have had experience with the gestion de terroirs approach. Coopération Canadienne is ending its support for the gestion de terroirs projects in the Dallol Bosso region and moving toward water management activities. Its assessment is that local gestions de terroirs projects require too much personnel and management effort to be an efficient development and natural resources management approach.

Camélin de Zinder is the French Cooperation's largest natural resources management effort in Niger, primarily in the Gouré and Tanout *arrondissements*. The project, which is based in Zinder, is primarily concerned with animal husbandry and veterinary (zootechnique) aspects of camels (*dromadaires*). The French Cooperation is also starting an institutional support project for the Ministère d'Agriculture et Élevage's Projet Appui Institutionnel and plans to fund a one-year position in the Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural for a legal expert in agriculture (*agro-juiste*).

The most notable development of Coopérative Danoise's natural resources management activities is their decision not to fund the Baban Rafi natural forest management project. Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere's decision, not to be involved in the management of the project, may have precipitated Coopérative Danoise's decision. Coopérative Danoise is also helping finance Projet Energie II. This project's objectives are sustainable production of firewood for the departments of Tillabéry, Tahoua, Maradi, and Zinder.

The United Nations Development Programme's policy in Niger is to focus on micro-realizations by funding a large number of small projects that support environmental

conservation and sustainable development, the largest of which is the *Projet Lutte Contre l'Ensamblage des Terres de Cultures Zinder et Diffa*. The United Nations Development Programme, along with German Agency for Technical Cooperation, has supported development of a water resources master plan.

The largest efforts of the Netherlands Development Organization's (*Association néerlandaise d'assistance au développement*) largest efforts are toward sustainable agriculture in *Birn Konni* and *Madaoua Arrondissements* and revegetation of the right bank area of *Tera Arrondissement*.

The German Agency for Technical Cooperation's main efforts have been in forestry and tree plantation management. It has supported the United Nations Development Programme in the development of a water resources master plan.

6.2. Opportunities for the Agriculture Development Grant II's involvement with donors

6.2.1. Nongovernmental organizations and private sector fund

The Agriculture Development Grant II can monitor field-level impacts of other donor projects and programs through its nongovernmental-organization and private-sector fund. The Agriculture Development Grant II's demand for information on improved natural resources management should be used to select type and location of activities when awarding grants. This formal linkage with projects and programs activities assures that the Agriculture Development Grant II will receive the kind of information it needs. These "invasions" by the Agriculture Development Grant II into other donors' territories will require coordination in order to avoid disrupting the participating donor's goals. For example, the Agriculture Development Grant II's nongovernmental-organization and private-sector fund might be used to capitalize community development nongovernmental organizations that participate in the World Bank first-phase *Gestion des Ressources Naturelles* project. These funds can also be used to refine improved natural resources management approaches by supporting research and monitoring of farm level natural resources management interventions by *Institute National pour Recherche Agronomique au Niger* scientists or university students through village organizations (Adelski et al., 1994). This would help ensure the gathering of quality information and at the same time support the World Bank's *Comité Régional de Recherche Agronomique*.

The USAID's Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation program has many of the same goals as the Agriculture Development Grant II: support nongovernmental-organization and private-enterprise development through grants for natural resources management activities. Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation program of USAID's approach uses Food for Work to encourage natural resources management activities in areas that are under threat of food shortages. It is more restricted than the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II in location (disaster areas),

response time (quickly activated and of short duration), and orientation (to increase resistance to recurrent disasters) of activities. The International Resources Group, RONCO, and the Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation program of USAID should coordinate their programs, activities, and monitoring.

The Peace Corps has greatly improved its role in development and natural resources management with its African Food Systems Initiative program. Volunteers' successes, as well as "failures," can provide useful information for directing national natural resources management programs. The Peace Corps' new biodiversity program is still looking for its niche. The Agriculture Development Grant II and Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation program of USAID, through nongovernmental organizations and private-sector grants, can fund requests from communities in which volunteers happen to work. This additional support to villages will allow volunteers, in both the African Food Systems Initiative and biodiversity programs, to increase their natural resources management activities and at the same time provide a formal means to conduct the Agriculture Development Grant II monitoring. Increased support to The Peace Corps African Food Systems Initiative and biodiversity volunteers, especially in information management and logistics, will allow them to efficiently monitor improved natural resources management activities. The Agriculture Development Grant II should be sensitive to other demands on the volunteers' time.

6.2.2. Donor Coordination

Other donors, such as the Coopérative Danoise, Coopération Canadienne, and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation have the same concerns as the USAID on how to integrate their support into the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles. For example, the Agriculture Development Grant II is providing interim funding until the Coopération Canadienne initiated Dallol Bosso projects can receive World Bank funding through the first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project. Even though the World Bank's five test *Arrondissements* for gestion de terroir activities do not coincide with the Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural's seven test *Arrondissements*, there will be a need for the Agriculture Development Grant II to ensure that relevant resource tenure information is exchanged and to coordinate activities when appropriate. USAID and Coopération Canadienne are also assisting the World Bank in planning and developing the National Environment Action Plan. Through the International Resources Group team, the Agriculture Development Grant II could help the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations coordinate the development of a national soil conservation strategy and help United Nations Development Programme coordinate the development of a water resources master plan.

6.2.3. Role of the forest agent

Through the evolution of the Rural Code and Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles, the legal and institutional environment that evolves will define the role of forest agents. In addition to the studies that have already been conducted by International Resources

Group and the Land Tenure Center (McLain, 1993), the Agriculture Development Grant II can influence the direction of the Rural Code and Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles through test projects that can be financed through the nongovernmental-organization and private-enterprise fund. These test projects can be in the form of revegetation projects, which will need the skills of forest agents, such as natural regeneration (Sudan Interior Mission in Maradi) or direct seeding (Aldeski et al., 1994). The International Resources Group team can continue to monitor the role of forest agents through studies conducted by forestry projects: Coopérative Danoise and World Bank's Projet Energie II; Coopérative Danoise's SALAMA Project; German Agency for Technical Cooperation forestry projects; Lutheran World Relief's Projet Gestion de la Foret Classee de Gorou-Bassouga, near Gaya; the German bank KFW's Projet d'Amenagement de la Foret Naturelle de Hamadide 30 km from Niamey; Projet Amenagement de la Roneraie du Dallo Maouri near Gaya; The Direction de l'Environnement and the Ministère de l'Hydrolique et de l'Environnement's Projet Appui à la Gestion de Terroir 70 km from Niamey; The Direction de l'Environnement of the Ministère de Hydrauliques et Environnement's proposed Amenagement de la Foret de Baban Rafi south of Maradi.

6.2.4. Rural Code

The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II needs a full-time coordinator (Land Tenure Center or International Resources Group) in the Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural to support the development of the Rural Code. If the Agriculture Development Grant II's focus is reorientated, it can provide needed assistance in the development of guidelines, methodologies, and protocols for developing the Rural Code and resolving tenure conflicts. It can also lead to the development of guidelines for improved natural resources management interventions to avoid inflaming resource tenure disputes or marginalizing the resource poor. These natural resources management guidelines would be useful to the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles and National Environment Action Plan, the World Bank's first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project, the Fond Européen de Développement's irrigation projects, as well as the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II and Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation program of USAID's nongovernmental organizations and private enterprise grants. The Agriculture Development Grant II support of the Rural Code should compliment the activities of the FAC-funded legal specialist that will be posted in the Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural.

6.2.5. Impact monitoring

Until the nongovernmental-organization and private-enterprise grants program is operational, the Agriculture Development Grant II will have to depend on evaluations and reports on improved natural resources management impacts from other donors projects and the Government of Niger. As part of the Agriculture Development Grant II's role in coordinating Government of Niger and donor activities, the International Resources Group team can compile an indicator list of improved natural resources management-related activities and

impacts as the team reviews reports and evaluations from other natural resources management projects and activities.

6.3. Review of changes in the country situation and identification of changes in priority concerning natural resources management policy reforms

Over the past 10 years, Niger's infant mortality rates have increased in rural Niger, while there has been a noticeable increase of wealth in urban areas (e.g., more automobiles, motorcycles, and buildings). Infant mortality rates in rural Niger are currently among the highest in the world, excluding conflict areas (Blum, 1994). The rural population seems to be worse off than it was 10 years ago, even after the 1984 drought.

With the publication of the Principes d'Orientation du Code Rural there is an apparent decrease as shown in the publication in resource tenure security and increase in the number and intensity of disputes over resources (Lund, 1993; Ngaido, 1993).

The recent devaluation of the franc Communauté Financier Africain and a larger devaluation of the Nigerian nira has created an economic environment where livestock herding and agriculture are potentially more profitable than they have been in the past. This in turn may further increase competition and conflict over soil and vegetation resources.

There is a decrease in donor interest in natural forest management projects because of their failure to be socially sustainable. These projects have all centered around fuelwood production with agriculture and livestock receiving secondary interest. Ibro Adamou (1993) concludes that difficulties of past and current natural forest management projects are caused by (1) managers' insufficient attention to livestock management, (2) excessive complexity of cooperative organizations and their failure to match the social structure between villages, and (3) a lack of a functional system of incentives as well as disincentives for members to practice good management.

As mentioned in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II's program assistance approval document and project paper, representatives of the Sudan Interior Mission in Maradi have established agreements with forestry agents not to fine people for cutting protected species of shrubs and trees that naturally regenerate and grow in their agricultural fields. The most apparent benefits of these agreements are increased wood supplies, decreased time needed by women to collect firewood, and increased income for those villagers affected. The practice is spreading slower than anticipated. In some areas, farmers cite wood poaching as a problem, but tenure and usufruct constraints may be the largest impediments to this management technique. This is a possible site for the required, but not yet initiated, Land Tenure Center's study on tree tenure.

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6.4. Recommendations for the future of the policy reform component

6.4.1. Pull, don't push — The physics of development

The history of African development is full of examples where well meaning donors offered a system or technology that did not match this alien environment. USAID's Forest Land-use and Planning project was one of the first natural forestry management projects in West Africa and was very successful in demonstrating, through the example of its Guesselbodi Model Site, that Niger can manage its brushlands. Through this demonstration, USAID had an important impact on the development of the Rural Code, and numerous other donors funded natural forest management projects that immediately followed the example of USAID's Forest Land-use and Planning project. This replication of Guesselbodi by other donors, as discussed above, was hasty and now is considered unsustainable, not for technical reasons but for social ones. Nevertheless, progress was made by example: (1) encouragement of the Rural Code, (2) increased experience in natural forest management, and (3) the uncovering of other, more fundamental constraints to improved natural resources management.

the Agriculture Development Grant II is in an ideal position to help Niger take the next step by supporting other "model sites" that help identify and reduce social constraints (e.g., resource tenure). Successful demonstrations will encourage the Government of Niger along a clear path, however it will be a difficult and painful one. This next step is needed to resolve the contradictions between society and the environment. It will require much support, coordination, and commitment among donors because established economic, social, and political relationships will be disrupted. Inevitably these disruptions will occur and Niger will be forced to change, the increasing competition for natural resources requires an evolution of natural resources management.

6.4.2. Forest or range, a need for change in natural resources management orientation

The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II natural resource management program has a strong concentration on forestry activities. Factors affecting this orientation are: the chief of party's professional orientation, the forestry orientation of International Resources Group's personnel in the United States, the cooperation of the Direction de l'Environnement which was until recently and still is predominantly a Direction de Forêt, and the fact that the role of the forester is one of the four major themes in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II natural resources management program. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II project, conceived when Guesselbodi was considered a total success, needs to shift its orientation toward the more economically important sectors, agriculture and livestock. An indicator for this change is that people are killing and massacring each other over agriculture and livestock conflicts, not for stealing firewood.

The "success" of natural forest management projects is limited by their failure to resolve multiple-use and other social issues that plague the entire country, not just the relatively small

project areas that are presently being intensively exploited for firewood. Donors should continue supporting natural forest management of Niger's brushland in those open access areas where there is overharvesting of firewood. However, the issue that needs to be addressed for future projects is "how to manage grass, forbs, shrubs, and trees for agriculture and livestock in the face of severe pressure to harvest firewood," not "how to manage trees for firewood in the face of pressure from livestock and agriculture." In addition, donors should support a strong effort in natural range management, especially where frequent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists occur.

The concept of multiple-use-forestry was created in the United States, more to sustain government funding than to sustain environmental integrity, production, or biodiversity. If a way is not found to involve pastoralists in range management (e.g., direct seeding of important forage grasses, forbs, as well as fodder species of shrubs and trees; sustainable methods of trimming shrubs and trees for fodder production; and digging of wells for livestock) then it is highly unlikely that there will be a way to interest pastoralists in forest management where the main goal is to provide firewood to urban areas. If this is to be the case, then the Government of Niger and donors may have to consider livestock exclusion zones to assure a sustainable supply of firewood for urban areas. For example, the Government of Niger could establish very large zones with identifiable natural boundaries where patrolling enforcement agents would impose severe enough penalties that pastoralists and neighboring farmers would not risk allowing their livestock to violate the zone. This approach, if necessary, could provide parcel management of hay as well as firewood.

6.4.3. The role of forestry agents

Forest agents cannot effectively control the harvesting of shrubs and trees in classified forests much less the woody resources in the rest of the country. Responsibilities and rights to shrub and tree resources are being defined in the implementation of the Rural Code process. Once established, civil police and courts will settle disputes, and "policing" will be conducted by the resource users or parcel managers. It is a questionable role for this "five-year" project to initiate anything beyond discussion of the future role of forest agents since it does not provide direct support for the transition to their as yet undefined future role. Requiring new job descriptions for foresters as a condition precedent is a bit presumptuous. The Agriculture Development Grant II can use its nongovernmental-organization and private-enterprise fund to support projects and activities that place forest agent in new roles (e.g., managing seed collection for revegetation of rangelands) or encourage other donor projects to test new roles that require larger projects.

6.4.4. Resource tenure

Through the encouragement of the USAID, Niger is now at an extremely important time in developing a natural resource policy that can have either beneficial or disastrous social and environmental consequences. The Agriculture Development Grant II needs an increased, more

focused effort in resource tenure studies as well as increased support for the Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural. The Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural needs a full-time resource tenure specialist to help them develop a process of tenure reform, help train the representatives of Commissions Foncières, help coordinate translations and popularization activities, and direct and interpret research. Some of the studies conducted by the Land Tenure Center are perceived more as academic studies than as analyses that are helpful in resolving priority issues (e.g., the study about the "politics of manure" by Loofboro, 1993). In spite of those perceptions, the Land Tenure Center studies should continue to evaluate how different natural resources management practices affect resource tenure (as they have done for Africare's Gouré project) in addition to studies on the Rural Code process. The Land Tenure Center's independent role is needed to maintain transparency and avoid conflict-of-interest during the process of developing regulations and implementing the Rural Code. Closed-door decisions about land use in other Sahelian countries have not had pleasant consequences.

6.4.4.1. Fishermen

The fishing code is the same for lakes, ephemeral streams, and the Niger River. This has resulted in environmental disasters, such as the poisoning of lakes by outsiders to harvest fish. The Agriculture Sector Development Grant II can support the Government of Niger and the World Conservation Union in developing a more sustainable and equitable code.

6.4.4.2. Land-poor farmers

General confusion and insecurity has resulted from the years of mixed messages on land tenure rights (Kountche's 1974 declaration "land is to the tiller," Article 9 of the Code Rural, and the draft complementary text on *mise en valeur*). An independent study on *mise en valeur* is an urgently needed but yet-to-be fulfilled responsibility in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II contract with the Land Tenure Center. The Land Tenure Center attempted to do this study but Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural hired their own consultants. This study should include a macroeconomic perspective of the livestock and agricultural sectors, as well as incorporate the results of numerous studies on firewood economics. The study should also address the issue of how to encourage the reclamation of crusted abandoned land (e.g., water harvesting, or general rehabilitation by massive additions of animal manure). These crusty soils (*gangani* in Zarma) are often controlled by owners or village chiefs who are unable or unwilling to bring land back into production. Farmers excited about water-harvesting agriculture refer to "killing the *gangani*" with *demi-lunes* (McCormick, 1994). Of all the important resource tenure issues, releasing these "abandoned," crusty soils (that occur within village *terroirs*) "to the tiller" is likely to be the least contentious issue to resolve and will have immediate, direct, and positive benefits (e.g., benefits will be biased toward the land poor who have fewer labor constraints than the land rich, and the rehabilitation of these abandoned lands will immediately increase the agricultural production of Niger).

6.4.4.3. Pastoralists

A priority should be to delimit land that is uniquely rangeland (e.g., *terroirs d'attaches*) from that under control of villages (*terroirs villageois*) and to start developing general rules for rangeland management. This will begin the difficult task of resolving farmers' and pastoralists' competition for resources, which many donors have avoided in despair. The spatial and temporal scales of analysis must encompass both production systems and not just the individual boundaries of each *terroir*. The hope is that once clear and equitable boundaries are established, the rules that surround them will be respected and enforced.

6.4.4.4. Women

There is an immediate need to develop rules of ownership for shrubs and trees in agricultural fields so that they encourage natural regeneration. This will increase the fuelwood supply near the villages and reduce the time needed by women to collect firewood. It will also increase the wealth and security of farmers by increasing their "liquid capital," in the form of standing wood reserves. Lack of clear ownership or management responsibilities on rented land and common fields pose the main problem for shrub and tree regeneration. A study on farm tree tenure is a yet-to-be fulfilled responsibility in the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II contract with the Land Tenure Center. The report by Issoufou and Sowers (1991) may help in the design of this study.

6.4.4.5. Environment

In areas of overexploitation of firewood, the Agriculture Development Grant II should encourage the experimentation with management methods so that the people responsible for cutting the wood reap the benefits and pastoralists are not excluded (e.g., a concessions system for individuals with enforced rules of management). "New" roles of the foresters could include identifying these areas, establishing the rules of concession management, and monitoring compliance to the management plan.

There is an environmental need to protect wetlands from agricultural encroachment. These wetlands are used by pastoralists who have historic claims to them. Some agricultural development projects have destroyed wildlife habitat through the development of irrigation in wetland areas and have also inflamed conflict between farmers and pastoralists (e.g., the old Projet Gouré by Africare). This destruction of habitat is indirectly encouraged by the Government of Niger by its tendency to side with farmers in resolving conflicts between farmers and pastoralists (Lund, 1993). However, some agricultural development projects can improve severely degraded wildlife habitat and also increase pasture resources. For example, some wetlands (i.e., ephemeral stream valleys or *bas fonds*) have been degraded through the overgrazing of their watersheds. The increased rainfall runoff from degraded watersheds can cause gullied stream channels and reduced flooding of the floodplains. In these areas a series of *gabion* check-dams increases flooding of the floodplain and improves agriculture yields, pastures, and wildlife habitat.

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6.4.4.6. Rural Population

Before significant progress can be made in resolving inter-village tenure conflicts, the Government of Niger needs to identify the traditionally recognized or claimed boundaries between *terroirs villageois* (and *terroirs d'attaches* as mentioned above) to better understand the problems. It will be a beginning to a more complete understanding of the complexities involved in resource management by outsiders, which can be weighted along with the economic interests of the nation and the history of resource tenure claims. The goal is not a perfect solution but an equitable resolution.

Land-use, relative land value, and productivity (by conventional management methods) can be described, identified, and mapped by the villagers with technical help. The Land Tenure Center could select areas to develop and test methodologies that the Government of Niger can use to identify and record *terroirs*. (This methodology would also be useful to the World Bank's *gestion de terroir* program.) At the same time that boundaries are identified by village representatives, representatives of the *Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural* and *Commissions Foncières* could be involved to develop conflict resolution methodologies. This process could also be used to evaluate the size of region best served by the *Commissions Foncières* (e.g., *arrondissements* vs. smaller or larger areas). This act of forcing tenure issues will result in increased conflict but at least it will be under the control of mediators who will be able to learn from their experiences and develop general methodologies for the rest of the country.

Global positioning system and geographic information system can be used to inexpensively and accurately define *terroir* boundaries. Outsiders can obtain a spatial and temporal understanding of *terroir* management or conflict when its limits are presented in association with other resource and land-use information (coverages) that can be obtained through interviews, aerial photographs, or satellite images. Relatively inexpensive post-processed differential global positioning system receivers have the resolution sufficient to record *terroir* boundaries and they require much less skill and time than conventional cadastral surveying. Stored global positioning system coordinates can be downloaded from receivers to a geographic information system for storage and analysis. A more expensive real-time differential global positioning system receiver is required to find the global positioning system locations that were previously recorded. This cost-effective use of collecting geographic information system compatible information may be the catalyst that is needed to start the expensive conversion of other spatial information into a geographic information system useable format.

There is and will continue to be a need to summarize and revise Rural Code *articles*, *ordonnances*, and *arrêtés* in simple language, group them topically (e.g., agriculture, range and forestry, water, and fishing) translate them into local languages, disperse the texts throughout the country, and broadcast the information they contain on the radio. The Land Tenure Center and International Resources Group can support the *Secrétariat permanent du Code Rural* in this task. These texts would also support activities of the *Commissions Foncières*.

6.4.5. Training and technical support

Some of the soil and water conservation structures designed by Genie Rural and other project personnel are less than useful. For example, Genie Rural's design and layout of *demi-lunes* is hindering its adoption by farmers, farmer replication of their design is more of an indicator of desperation than that of an optimal design. Also, the numerous *demi-lunes* ineffectually pointing up hill is an indicator that better training and extension is needed. (Genie Rural's design is excessively labor demanding and the density and method of their layout reduces the *demi-lune's* effectiveness.)

Field level training (e.g., each participant digging *demi-lunes*) can be conducted by qualified local project technicians that are funded through the nongovernmental-organization and private-sector grant. In cases where expatriate technical assistance is needed International Resources Group consultants can more effectively service the nongovernmental organizations community than individual nongovernmental organizations contracting for separate technical assistance. Funds can be used more effectively if the International Resources Group and RONCO's Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation program of USAID coordinate their technical assistance. Also, in order for the Programme National de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles to be effective, field personnel from the different Government of Niger services need to be up-to-date on improved natural resources management practices. The Agriculture Development Grant II funding of natural resources management training will support the World Bank's first phase Gestion des Ressources Naturelles project.

6.4.6. Monitoring and evaluation

The Agriculture Development Grant II will be better able to monitor field level impacts when direct linkages are developed between the Agriculture Development Grant II and organizations that conduct field level activities. Once International Resources Group's Grants Management Unit starts funding nongovernmental-organization and private-enterprise activities then field level impacts can be monitored directly by the Agriculture Development Grant II. Impacts of the Rural Code will be more easily followed once the Commissions Foncières are functional.

8. Participation of nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions in natural resources management

8.1. Review of the actual and potential role that nongovernmental organizations play in rural development, in natural resources management technology transfer, and in providing feedback for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II policy dialogue in Niger

The role of nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions is not well defined in Niger. Through donor support of these institutions and the example they provide to the Gov-

ernment of Niger, a progressive evolution of their role should be expected. Although the histories of nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions in Niger is not very long, lessons learned from Niger and other Sahelian countries suggest a slow, careful approach.

Donors, nongovernmental organizations, and other rural institutions need to avoid activities that marginalize the people they are trying to help. If aid is not well targeted, the powerful and resource rich, within villages and larger political units, are likely to receive the greatest benefit that can further marginalize the poor, especially in the long term. For example, natural forest management projects have commonly established firewood cooperatives as an incentive to manage the brushlands and forests, the benefits of which would be passed on to woodcutters who are at the lower levels of the village hierarchy. The cooperatives end up being managed by the village elites who are not dependent on its success, funds disappear and the cooperatives fail. Similar results surround the distribution of grainmills for women.

Donors, nongovernmental organizations, and other rural institutions can be used by groups to stake their claim on natural resources and as a result be caught in the middle of tenure disputes (e.g., irrigation development of interdune depressions where pastoralists have historical claims but the recipient farmers do not mention this fact to project personnel).

the Agriculture Development Grant II should avoid duplicating the technical capacity that is or potentially could be provided by the Government of Niger services. The support of nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions should be for other roles unless the area that they are servicing is without government agents.

There are a thousand different activities that nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions can do in Niger (Pelletier, 1994), a few of which are described in Aldeski et al. (1994).

8.2. Regulatory, administrative, and funding assessment on nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions

The number of national nongovernmental organizations in Niger is growing: there were 6 in 1989 when the program assistance approval document and project paper was written; 12 in 1990; and between 80 and 100 today. The numbers are speculative since many of the nongovernmental organizations are nonfunctioning "post office boxes." Even so, this level of activity is encouraging and unexpected "given the economic and political context in Niger" (page 116 of the program assistance approval document and project paper). The Groupement des Aides Privées is a organization of active nongovernmental organizations whose membership is also growing, now thirty-four members and two associations out of around 145 national and international nongovernmental organizations in Niger. Since most of the nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions in Niger are nonfunctioning and without experience, training in basic accounting, management, and organization should be a major function of the Agriculture Development Grant II's grants management.

The International Resources Group team has already provided technical and financial support for a workshop to review nongovernmental organizations progress in Niger. Groupement des Aides Privées, however, strongly disagrees with the conclusions of the International Resources Group consultant's report reviewing the workshop, especially with the analysis of Groupement des Aides Privées. According to its officials, Groupement des Aides Privées is willing to help the development of nonmember nongovernmental organizations that cannot afford its membership fee. They also feel that as a national organization of experienced and functioning nongovernmental organizations they have a role in helping donors select nongovernmental organizations since many are only "post office boxes." The nongovernmental organizations workshop also concluded that no new legislation is needed at this time for nongovernmental organizations development, however some of the nongovernmental organizations that were interviewed complained that official recognition of *groupements* is needed.

8.3. Review of natural resources management projects funded by donors, nongovernmental organizations, and other rural institutions

Nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions need to be funded with the minimum of conditions and with good will. Actions and responses must be quick and the organizations must have basic accounting and bookkeeping skills. They should be treated as a private enterprise, subject to audits and strict evaluations of performance in meeting clearly stated contracts, such as 50 percent of goal - budget cut 50 percent; 150 percent of goal - budget increased 50 percent). Association Française des Volontaires de Progrès has had good success using this simple but tough approach with their *plougeur* (well improvement) training and other programs (Pelletier, 1994).

Larger nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions have discovered that it is desirable to work with multiple government services to reduce the risk that a project will be completely blocked should some disagreement occur.

Of the international nongovernmental organizations visited, Catholic Relief Services and SWISSAID in Tahoua seem to have a good low-profile, participatory approach to working with villagers. Of the national nongovernmental organizations visited Association pour la Ré-dynamisation de l'Élevage au Niger was by far the most interesting and should be evaluated more closely by the Agriculture Development Grant II. For example, the Association pour la redynamisation de l'élevage au Niger was commissioned by the Comité Technique Régional of the Department of Tillabéri to do a "Bilan diagnostique de la gestion intégrée de l'espace agro-pastoral du Département de Tillabéri." The 57-page report was completed in March 1994 and will be used as a support document for the future Commissions Foncières.

8.4. International Resources Group team role in nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions activities

As previously discussed, Agriculture Sector Development Grant II support of nongovernmental organizations and other rural institutions activities should be targeted to test policy assumptions, used as a vehicle to identify and reduce resource tenure conflicts, and used to monitor improved natural resources management impacts. Possible specific linkages between the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II and other organizations were also discussed.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

9.1. Progress in developing a monitoring and evaluation plan for the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II

According to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program assistance approval document and project paper:

"The first phase in program monitoring is to establish the baseline data to be used as a benchmark against which to measure progress. Determination of the data sets to be collected for baseline will be made during year 1, with the assistance of the Agricultural Policy Analysis II project, the University of Michigan team assigned to the Agriculture Sector Development Grant I Program, and through assistance from natural resources management experts in Niger" (page 90).

There has not been significant progress in determining the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II impact indicators, however the International Resources Group report on environmental information systems (Hecht, 1994) includes a good inventory of possible data sets that will be needed for selecting indicators that have a historical baseline. On April 6, 1994, the International Resources Group team produced "Notes on possible indicators for monitoring the impact of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II program." Many of the possible indicators described in these notes have the same problems as the indicators described in the program assistance approval document and project paper. They are (1) difficult and expensive to measure, (2) easy to measure but not representative, (3) measurements of activity (e.g., numbers or hectares per year; numbers of "nongovernmental organizations") and not necessarily of progress, (4) ignoring the incompatibility between the project's time-frame and the time required to monitor significant change in dynamic systems, (5) many of the assumptions about the constraints on natural resources management are overly simplistic (i.e., the assumed boundary conditions of the hypothesis to be tested are false), or (6) depended on organizations that do not have formal linkages (i.e., incentives) with the Agriculture Development Grant II to collect, organize, and distribute data.

The program assistance approval document and project paper also states:

"Monitoring of changes at beneficiary level (farmers, herders) will rely extensively on surveys conducted at sites which benefit from financing under the nongovernmental-organization and private-sector fund" (page 90).

Until the nongovernmental organizations and private sector fund is operational, monitoring field-level impact and measuring performance should not be expected. Also, the low priority that has been placed on indicator development by the USAID's natural resources management specialist and International Resources Group team can be justified considering the other needs of the project.

9.3. What methodologies, indicators, and databases are most useful for simplified monitoring and impact assessment of the program?

"USAID does not anticipate seeing more than process indicators of impact by program assistance completion date" (page 82, program assistance approval document and project paper) and many of the condition precedents are good indicators for measuring progress of the process.

With respect to intermediate indicators, the program assistance approval document and project paper states: "Specific targets [to indicate progress] will be established following gathering of baseline data. In general, however, it is expected that an overall target of 266,000 hectares of new land will be put under sustainable production through the establishment of natural resources management systems promoted by the Agriculture Development Grant II" (Page 83). Limiting the evaluation of these two sentences to the legal obligation of the Agriculture Development Grant II, the monitoring of progress of intermediate indicators can be achieved by recording the progress of other projects (e.g., through quarterly reports and project evaluations) that are implementing activities promoted by the Agriculture Development Grant II.

Many of the data sources that were identified in the program assistance approval document and project paper (e.g., HAPLEX studies) to help monitor biophysical indicators do not have a baseline of information that is readily available, much less relevant to the development of indicators for this project for reasons describe in the previous section. For example, a commonly identified biophysical indicator for this and other USAID natural resources management projects is "measurement of soil erosion" which is extremely difficult and expensive to measure for small areas, much less collect meaningful data for a region. Millions of dollars on research have been spent to develop empirical models for estimating erosion in the United States (Universal Soil Loss Equation, United States Soil Conservation Service and Watershed Erosion Prediction Project, United States Agricultural Research Service) and a similar effort would be needed to estimate soil erosion in the Sahel, since the models are only relevant for the areas where they were developed.

In terms of socioeconomic indicators, USAID and the Agriculture Development Grant II should consider removing or modifying these indicators. Seasonal migration is a necessary component of the economic strategy of rural families in Niger and across the Sahel. In terms of the environmental benefit, migration reduces the need for local natural resource extraction to produce required income. In many ways, such as education, Niger should encourage seasonal migration to help maintain its natural resource capital and increase family incomes.

Under the existing social system in Niger, it will be highly unlikely that the USAID and the Agriculture Development Grant II will be able to "reduce women's workloads." They can, however, promote policies and activities to increase the efficiency of the work they do, and provide better income-generating opportunities.

The Agriculture Development Grant II's responsibility for biophysical and socioeconomic indicators should be the assurance that a baseline of information is collected from which the impacts of this project can be determined, long after the program assistance completion date. The resources that the Agriculture Development Grant II has to accomplish this responsibility are \$300,000 of the \$8.2 million allocated for monitoring and evaluation and \$1.1 million allocated to studies, some of which can help support monitoring.

Sections 9.3.1–9.3.4 include suggested modifications for the list of impact indicators on pages 82–84 of the program assistance approval document and project paper (Annex 3). The numbering and headings are the same as the program assistance approval document and project paper.

9.3.1. Process monitoring of the USAID Level I

9.3.1.1. National natural resources management policy development

Meeting the requirements of the related condition precedents is an efficient method to monitor this process.

9.3.1.2. Donor coordination

The International Resources Group and the Land Tenure Center's quarterly reports that include this information should allow USAID to effectively monitor this process.

9.3.1.3. National conservation strategy development

The condition precedent related to this process has been fulfilled. Further progress is dependent on the programs of other donors. The International Resources Group and the Land Tenure Center's quarterly reports should contain information related to further progress for this process.

9.3.1.4. Rural Code program

Meeting the requirements of the related condition precedents is one method to monitor this process. Additional Land Tenure Center studies and communication effort are needed and would indicate progress. Land registration, transitory measure, and *arrêtés* are a measure of activity but not of progress and should be removed as process indicators. They can easily complicate the developing of a coherent integrated Rural Code. Evaluation and evolution of conflicts is being monitored through the Land Tenure Center's research and is being developed into short- and long-term monitoring systems for the Government of Niger. A list of priority research needs should be developed from this and other Land Tenure Center research.

9.3.1.5. Nongovernmental organizations policy reform

The indicators identified here represent the activity of the nongovernmental organizations members of Groupement des Aides Privées. They do not indicate quality or quantity of improved natural resources management activities. Quarterly reports from the USAID Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation program of USAID project and the soon-to-be-established grants management unit of the Agriculture Development Grant II should contain information on the ability to support nongovernmental organizations activities and the quality of work in progress.

9.3.1.6. Decentralization of natural resources management programs

If this aspect of the Agriculture Sector Development Grant II project remains a component of the project, then the fulfillment of the condition precedents should replace the indicators identified in this process.

9.3.1.7. Forester role reform

As mentioned in the policy reform section of this evaluation annex, it is not realistic to assume that a change in the forestry agents' job attributions, on a nationwide basis, is possible or desirable during the life of this project. Fulfillment of the condition precedents should replace the indicators for this process.

9.3.2. Intermediate indicators of the USAID Level II

9.3.2.1. Land management

Strike "Number land registration & size" insert number of *terroirs villagois* and *terroirs d'attaches* identified. Insert "improved" before "natural resources management practices." It is unlikely that the Government of Niger's agencies identified in this section will collect this information. Monthly and annual reports of USAID's Agriculture Development Grant II and the Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation program of the USAID's grants management units (through their own monitoring and evaluation activities) should contain information on these

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amended indicators. Also, the research on tenure conflicts by the Land Tenure Center may develop into a meaningful method of analysis that is within the means of the Government of Niger to monitor.

9.3.2.2. Water points management

Delete all the indicators in this section. It is unlikely that the Government of Niger's agency identified in this section will collect this information. Monthly and annual reports of USAID's Agriculture Development Grant II and the Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation program of USAID's grants management units should contain information on projects related to water points management. From monitoring and evaluation activities of these projects, realistic indicators can be developed and monitored. As mentioned above, research on tenure conflict by the Land Tenure Center may develop a meaningful and easy method of monitoring water points management.

9.3.2.3. Natural woodland management

As discussed above, woodlands in Niger are generally perceived as rangelands with woody resources, especially firewood. While range management should be the primary goal in these areas, woodland management becomes an important goal around population centers because of the overexploitation of firewood. Owing to the mixed results of past and current natural forest management projects, the assumption in the program assistance approval document and project paper of widespread and rapid adoption is not occurring.

Delete "income from sale of wood and other forest products" because it assumes a centralized "cooperative" approach which has yet to succeed in Niger without donor support.

9.3.2.4. Pasture management

Owing to political and security problems in the pastoral zone, USAID should not expect much progress with pasture management. The International Fund for Agricultural Development's Program Special National is working with *groupements mutualistes pastorales* and can provide information on this indicator.

9.3.3. Biophysical indicators - USAID Level III indicators

Delete all and redevelop with the help of someone with field experience in identifying indicators and monitoring them. As presented here, these indicators are difficult and expensive to measure, and without a defined purpose.

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9.3.4. Socioeconomic indicators - USAID Level IV

Delete and redevelop. The International Food Policy Research institute's contract consisted of small, but intensive, case studies that were not designed for the purpose of monitoring. Rural incomes and productivity can be monitored through mortality rates, especially of children, which is one of the better indicators of quality of life per the "Scientific American" in 1993.

9.4. Miscellaneous related points

9.4.1. Geographic information system

When appropriate, the Agriculture Development Grant II can collect information in a form that is compatible to a geographic information system but it does not need to establish a geographic information system since there are numerous systems already functioning in Niger. The Agriculture Development Grant II can contract geographic information systems processing of information more effectively on cost, if needed, than to install a system and train personnel to operate it.

9.4.2. Airborne Video

The International Resources Group plans to fly a airborne video mission in July to test its usefulness. This mission needs to be further developed and planned to assure maximum usefulness of funds. Many research articles have been published about the capabilities of airborne video (e.g., Marsh et al., 1990) so this knowledge can be compared to the monitoring needs of this project to evaluate how it is best suited to satisfy those needs. The following comments and questions should be considered when evaluating and planning this mission.

Time of year:

Early September may be the best time to fly the mission; vegetation is more developed and this can help in land use and crop identification, as well as for the identification of some shrub and tree species. It will also be the best time of the year to identify and remotely measure the crusty *gangani* soils which can be used as an indicator of soil degradation.

Area covered:

Is this to be a test mission for a national, regional, or specific terroir study and will this study match the goals and budget of monitoring component of the Agriculture Development Grant II? In order to validate conclusions from this mission a statistically valid sample frame approach should be used to account for the high degree of biophysical, climatic, and cultural variability that occurs in Niger (e.g., account for rainfall gradient, population and management gradient from towns and roads, and different physiographic types such as plateaus, sandy

plains, dallols, and dunes). Does the mission maximize the use of historical studies and inventories?

Spatial and temporal resolution:

What are the trade-offs of information quality between flying higher with less spatial resolution but greater coverage vs. flying lower with less coverage but better resolution? To compensate for these inherent trade-offs there are camera lenses that periodically zoom out and increase spatial resolution without sacrificing area of coverage.

How frequently will repeat missions be flown and will they follow the same flight line in order to do a direct change analysis?

Ground validation:

What effort will be needed to statistically validate the field observations of such aspects as species, density, and quality of vegetation; crop type and land use; soil type and degree of degradation; previous history of the area; and resource tenure of vegetation and soils?

Integration of instruments:

What composition of lenses and cameras are to be used (e.g., two video cameras with different lenses and one 35 mm camera)? What global positioning system (e.g., the more accurate real time differential) will be used to record global positioning system location on the video images? Will satellite images be used to extrapolate from the detailed video information so that a much larger area can be analyzed? Will the flights be coordinated with satellite image recordings (pass-overs) and will the images have to be prepurchased to assure that they are available for future use?

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