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REPORT ON AID  
PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING  
TO SELECTED  
PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUESTS

Submitted Under Contract No:  
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Washington, D.C. 20527

Reference: PIO/T 2195003 Public Information Study

Dear Mr. Calhoun:

This final report concludes our analysis of the public information activity of the Agency for International Development. The Study confirmed that AID's system for responding to public requests is inadequate, except for the tight management and controls exercised by ES for those addressed to the Administrator and the Deputy Administrator and those addressed to LEG by members of Congress. Otherwise, our major findings and conclusions are:

- Agency guidance is vague and ambiguous and a major cause of the existing situation.
- Procedures to manage the receipt and distribution, control, and response preparation sub-activities are largely informal. Responsibility for the public information activity is not clearly fixed, although the largest portion of the burden falls by default upon OPA and DIC.
- The situation is more complex than it appears on the surface. Some of these complexities will persist regardless of the alternative solution selected.

The report provides detailed designs for three alternative solutions for handling written requests:

- A: Centralized Receipt and Distribution, Control, and Response Preparation in the Office of Public Affairs
- B: Centralized Control in OPA, with Response Preparation Performed by Offices and Bureaus Which Have Primary Access to Records Required to Provide the Response



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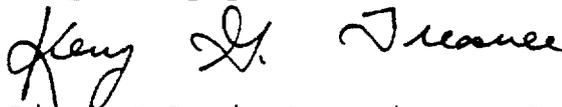
- C: Decentralized Receipt, Control, and Response Preparation by all Offices and Bureaus in AID

We make a number of recommendations that apply equally to all three alternatives. The major one is that a centralized telephone inquiries service be established in OPA, regardless of how written requests are handled.

Finally, we recommend that Alternative A be given the most serious consideration by AID management. It provides the greatest assurance that public requests will receive prompt, courteous, consistent attention. We believe that it is most consistent with AID's stated policy of keeping "open" communications with the public.

We look forward to discussing this report with you and with interested staff from the Office of Public Affairs, the Bureau for Development Support, and other Offices concerned with the study. We have enjoyed the opportunity to participate in this assignment and express appreciation to the many AID staff who cooperated in this effort.

Very truly yours,



Kerry G. Treasure  
Vice President

Birch & Davis Associates, Inc.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year, AID receives well over 50,000 written requests and a large, uncounted number of telephone requests for information from the public. These requests run the gamut from simple requests for general information to highly complex and unique requests related to the scientific, political, and technical activities of the Agency. Requests are sent by school children and college professors, by irate taxpayers and foreign assistance supporters, by Congress and the White House, and by individuals seeking employment, selling a product, writing a book, making news, and representing a foreign country.

A large percentage of these requests is addressed to a specific and appropriate AID Bureau or Office; these apparently are handled promptly by the Office to which they are addressed. Other requests clearly reference the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Privacy Act, or EO 11652 (concerning declassification), or concern matters for which the Office of the Executive Secretary (AID/ES) or the Office of Legislative Affairs (AID/LEG) has formal responsibility; these inquiries, too, normally receive prompt attention.

1. ALTHOUGH MANY PUBLIC INQUIRIES ARE HANDLED EXPEDITIOUSLY, THE EXCEPTIONS CONSTITUTE AN IMPORTANT PROBLEM

The problematic inquiries are the 10,000 to 15,000 written requests and the large number of telephone requests that are not directed to a specific Bureau or Office or are inappropriately directed. It is difficult to handle these requests for a number of reasons:

- The complexity of AID's mission--which transcends geographic, scientific, and technical boundaries--precludes the easy assignment of responsibility for classes of requests along geographic, scientific, technical, or any other obvious lines.
- The sheer volume of AID documents and records compounds the problem of locating and accessing the information necessary to respond to the request.
- *Diff. has been* The absence of a single indexing system that identifies and classifies all AID documents and publications makes it difficult to identify publications that might be useful in making the response.
- The requests vary considerably with respect to the amount of information requested, the level of detail required, the topic, the urgency and importance, and the clarity of the question.
- Even when referrals are made to the appropriate Office, this does not ensure prompt and considerate response.

None of the AID Bureaus or Offices has a specific, well-defined mandate to handle these public inquiries. At best, this task is seen as ancillary to some other, primary function; it often is considered something of a nuisance and, consequently, is accorded low priority. This feeling of non-responsibility is pervasive, despite the admonition codified in Handbook 18 that all Offices actively participate in "responding to the need for an accurately informed public." The Handbook does not elaborate, however, on the means by which they are to participate or the extent of the participation.

Finally, the absence of clear Agency guidance delineating responsibility for responding to the public and providing adequate staff for doing so has precluded the establishment of a formal response system. The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) is required by Handbook 17 to "ensure that information about AID policies, objectives, and operations is disseminated freely and fully to the public." Among other responsibilities, OPA is expected to respond to "...public requests and to requests for information filed under the Freedom of Information Act..." Part III of Handbook 18 elaborates on this responsibility, calling OPA the "focal point" in preparing and releasing public information and, in Chapter 10, details the "rules and procedures which govern the processing of requests from the public." Unfortunately, clear guidance is provided mainly with respect to FOIA requests (which comprise only a small percentage of the total requests); only fleeting attention is paid to the non-FOIA requests--the 10 to 15,000 difficult requests mentioned above. OPA's responsibility for these requests is described in such general terms that the guidance cannot be taken literally and, therefore, is difficult to implement and enforce.

As a result of these problems, no one monitors incoming requests or outgoing replies, the nature of requests cannot be determined, and the quality and timeliness of responses cannot be assured. Wasteful duplication of effort, frustration (on the part of the requestor and the responder), and inter-office conflict result. These problems are experienced throughout AID, but are felt most acutely by the Office of Public Affairs and the Bureau for Development Support, Office of Development Information and Utilization. Although neither Office is clearly charged with processing general public inquiries, both are widely perceived by other Agency staff as having the major, if not the sole, responsibility for performing this service.

The problems noted above are associated with both written and telephone requests. In addition, telephone requests occasion a unique set of problems. Most members of the public do not have an AID telephone book and, if they do, may still find it difficult to use or out of date. Centrex operators are not trained "information" operators and are largely unfamiliar with AID operations; consequently, they cannot provide direction for many callers. Even if the appropriate respondent is eventually located, chances are high that the call cannot be transferred because it crosses Centrex zones.\* In such cases, the requestor must place the call again; this is especially troublesome when a long distance call is required.

In light of AID's stated policy of maintaining an open line of communication with the public, these unsatisfied requests from the public constitute a serious shortcoming. Although public relations is a matter of concern to any Federal agency, it is especially important for AID. Along with the Department of State, AID is in a unique position among Federal agencies: it enjoys no natural American public constituency. Unlike HEW, DOL, HUD, or USDA, whose services and programs have a continuous and highly visible impact on every American citizen, AID's services are frequently misunderstood by, if not a complete mystery to U.S. taxpayers. Thus, AID has at once a great need for gaining the understanding of the American public and few opportunities for doing so.

This situation can be remedied at a relatively low cost. Despite the reality of AID's personnel ceiling, we find that the problems identified herein are of such magnitude and importance to the Agency to justify the small number of additional staff required to implement our recommendations.

## 2. OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES HAVE DEVELOPED A VARIETY OF MECHANISMS FOR RESPONDING TO PUBLIC INQUIRIES

As one means of identifying alternatives to the present AID approach, interviews were conducted in four other Federal agencies to determine how public inquiries are handled there. A wide range of procedures was found. The Department of Commerce, like AID, has a centralized system for handling FOIA requests, but is more liberal than AID in defining an FOIA request. Also like AID, this Department has no centralized or controlled system for processing non-FOIA requests.

In the Department of Agriculture, FOIA requests are decentralized, with an FOIA officer assigned to each major Office. Non-FOIA requests are also handled by these autonomous FOIA officers but are not subject to the stringent FOIA processing procedures.

The International Communicationn Agency, unlike all others reviewed, makes the broadest possible interpretation of the FOIA, including

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\*Due to the physical dispersion of AID, there are three Centrex zones supporting Agency telephones. Centrex zones cover calls within a limited, contiguous geographic area. Calls cannot be transferred from one zone to another.

almost all inquiries under the Act and, therefore, subjecting almost all inquiries to the strict FOIA processing requirements. The volume of requests received by this Agency, however, is much smaller than the volume received by AID.

Finally, the Department of State (State) was reviewed. Here, the number of requests for information is considerably greater than in AID. FOIA and non-FOIA requests are handled by two separate Offices (Bureau of Public Affairs and the Office of Public Communications, respectively). The latter are processed by a highly automated system which produces computer generated responses for about ninety percent of the written requests. The requests received by State, however, are much more homogeneous than those received by AID and, thus, are more amenable to "canned" responses.

In addition, State operates a recently implemented telephone inquiries service, similar to the one recommended later in this report.

3. SEVERAL BASIC IMPROVEMENTS ARE NECESSARY TO IMPROVE AID'S HANDLING OF PUBLIC INQUIRIES

A number of alternative approaches to handling public inquiries in AID were suggested by the experiences of the four other Federal agencies described above, by a detailed analysis of the current situation in AID, and by personal interviews with sixty AID personnel most directly involved in responding to public inquiries. These alternatives are considered in the next section of this Summary.

Regardless of which alternative is eventually adopted, there are several basic improvements which should be made in the way public inquiries are handled in AID:

- Effective controls to ensure expeditious processing of public inquiries should be established, regardless of the Office(s) in which this processing is done.
- All AID personnel should be reminded frequently, through a variety of internal communication mechanisms and in periodic campaigns, that they each have an important responsibility for ensuring that public inquiries are answered promptly and thoughtfully.
- An accessible inventory of available AID publications should be established and maintained to assist Offices responding to public inquiries in locating the appropriate sources of information. OPA or DIU should be added to the list of Offices that are routinely advised of requisitions to publish new documents.
- Most important, a central telephone inquiries service is required to address the unique problems associated

with telephone calls. This service should be established in OPA to answer and route calls received from the public. The degree of control and locus of responsibility for preparing the response will be determined by the overall alternative solution selected (as discussed immediately below). It is also recommended that the AID telephone book be improved. This could be done in a separate book (i.e., are not coupled with the State book) or in a joint AID-State book in which the sections dealing with AID are more clearly segregated and marked. The telephone book should clearly highlight the existence of the telephone inquiries service and should provide an expanded functional listing to direct callers to the most frequently called Offices. Second, the Centrex directory should clearly indicate the number of the new service and operators should be informed of the number and role of the service and encouraged to transfer all requestors to OPA directly. Approximately one staff person at the GS 7 or 9 level would be required to operate this service. Other resources required (e.g., telephone lines, space) are minimal.

4. THREE ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO HANDLING WRITTEN PUBLIC INQUIRIES IN AID WERE STUDIED

With respect to handling written public inquiries not addressed to a specific AID Bureau or Office, seven alternative approaches were identified. Four of these were rejected early in the study for convincing reasons\*. The three others, varying principally in the locus of responsibility and the extent of centralization, were analyzed more closely:

- Alternative A, Maximum Centralization In OPA
- Alternative B, Partial Centralization in OPA, With Response Preparation Shared By Other Offices And Bureaus
- Alternative C, Maximum Decentralization To Offices And Bureaus Throughout AID, Similar To The Existing Situation

The advantages and disadvantages of each alternative are summarized in Exhibit E-1, which folds out from the back of this Summary. These are elaborated as each alternative is explained below.

\*See Appendix E, Volume II for details.

(1) Alternative A, Maximum Centralization

Under Alternative A, all incoming mail not addressed to a specific, identifiable AID Bureau or Office would be received and opened in OPA/PI, rather than in the SER/MO Mail Room as is now the case. As requests come to its attention, OPA/PI would be responsible for:

- Preparing the responses to most requests, making infrequent referrals to other Offices and Bureaus
- Controlling the action on all requests to assure a timely and adequate response.

Alternative A would provide the greatest degree of centralization and control and, consequently, the greatest certainty of providing adequate, timely responses. It also has these important advantages:

- OPA is currently viewed throughout the Agency as having a logical, almost de facto responsibility for answering public inquiries. With adequate staffing, OPA and other Agency staff could easily adjust to this new procedure.
- The response burden on other Offices and Bureaus would be kept to an absolute minimum. This means that these staff can have more time for their primary responsibilities. It also means that on the less frequent occasions when a referral is required, other Offices and Bureaus would be more likely to be responsive.
- As the Office responsible for overall public relations, it is helpful if OPA has a means of assessing changing public attitudes and concerns. Centralized responsibility would put OPA in contact with more requests than either of the other two options.
- Considerable concern has been expressed about how differently FOIA and non-FOIA requests are processed. Under this alternative, non-FOIA requests would be handled by the same staff that processes FOIA requests, thus reducing the current disparity in treatment.
- When requests are originally addressed to a geographic or technical bureau which does not

wish to or is unable to respond, the requestor will receive better service than is now the case, for the request can be legitimately referred to OPA for action.

- The economies of scale and efficiency of this alternative are the greatest.
- Finally, this alternative resolves the current ambiguity between the roles of OPA and DS/DIU.

These advantages must be weighed against the drawbacks of Alternative A, which include:

- The existing OPA/PI Reading Room (required by the FOIA) contains only modest holdings, so considerable effort would be involved to develop the required inventory. Moreover, the enlarged holdings may duplicate, to some extent, the holdings of other Offices and Bureaus, especially the DS/DIU library.
- Considerable training of new staff is required; in the other alternatives, new staff would be located next to people who already perform similar search function and who can, therefore, provide on-the-job training to the new staff.
- Because non-FOIA requests would be handled in the same Office as FOIA requests, staff may experience some conflict in priorities between FOIA requests (with their legally binding due dates) and non-FOIA requests. Unless spheres of responsibility are clearly defined, the non-FOIA staff may be pressured to attend to FOIA requests, to the detriment of other public inquiries.
- Some of the mail opened by OPA would not contain requests and would, therefore, experience a delay in proper routing.

Four staff (two at the GS 7 and two at the GS 9 level) would be required to implement this alternative; this includes the one staff person already mentioned who will operate the telephone inquiries service. One office (approximately 400 square feet, with 100 feet of shelving) also would be needed.

(2) Alternative B, Partial Centralization

Under Alternative B, all incoming mail not addressed to a specific, identifiable AID Bureau or Office would be opened, as at present, in the SER/MO Mail Room. Letters so opened would be forwarded directly to OPA if they contained a request

for information, unless a referral could be made to another Office with certainty that it can be answered easily by that other Office (e.g., personnel inquiries). The Office of the Director, OPA would then be responsible for:

- Preparing responses, if the limited material on hand in OPA is adequate, or referring the request to the Office or Bureau with jurisdiction over the information required for the response.
- Controlling the action on all requests to assure a timely and adequate response.

The primary advantage of Alternative B is that it would rely on existing patterns of recordkeeping and, thus, would not duplicate inventories and other files and documents already held and controlled by other Offices and Bureaus. OPA would still be privy to the nature of public interest in the Agency, but the responses would be prepared by the Office or Bureau most knowledgeable about the subject.

These strengths are offset by several disadvantages of this alternative:

- The control responsibility would be separated from the response preparation responsibility. This would increase the difficulty of managing the response effort and, consequently, reduce the likelihood of success.
- The burden of responding would fall heavily but not entirely on the geographic and technical offices, a responsibility they are often unable or unwilling to assume.
- It is sometimes difficult to determine precisely which Office has "primary" control over the subject information and this may lead to disagreement about roles.

Three staff would be needed to implement this alternative: one GS 9 in the DS/DIU library and two GS 7s in OPA (this includes the staff necessary to operate the telephone inquiries service). A relatively small office (about 180 square feet) would be needed in OPA and half as much space would be required in DS/DIU.

(3) Alternative C, Maximum Decentralization

Basically, Alternative C would formalize the existing situation by lodging responsibility for all requests in the Office which

first receives the request. Mail would be routed from the SER/MO Mail Room as it is now. Each Bureau and Office would establish a central correspondence control point which would:

- Route requests within and outside the Office or Bureau for response
- Control all requests until action is taken. This means that the correspondence control point in one Office might have control authority over a response that is being prepared by another Office.

The most compelling advantage of Alternative C is that it builds upon the existing situation. There would be no duplication of documents or files and responses would often be prepared by the Office or Bureau that is the authority on the subject.

There are three disadvantages to this alternative. First, the system's operation hinges on the personal responsibility of more than a dozen individuals who each work in a separate Office or Bureau and report to a different supervisor. Without the continuous and enthusiastic support of top management in each Office or Bureau, this alternative could easily deteriorate into a replica of the system now in operation. Considering the other responsibilities of these Offices and Bureaus, it is somewhat doubtful that responding to public inquiries will ever be a top priority.

The second disadvantage is the duplication of effort and loss of economies of scale. Individuals throughout the Agency will be preparing responses without benefit of information about prior responses and without an accumulation of experience in searching for documents and making contacts throughout the Agency. Thus, although the visible direct labor requirements of this alternative are less than in the other two choices, the actual staff time required to prepare and control responses may be greater.

Finally, there is a high possibility that an inordinate number of requests will continue to "default" to OPA or to the DS/DIU library for response, despite the ostensible change in the lines of responsibility. If this occurs, the situation will be improved only slightly from the current one--to the extent that the telephone service is effective.

This alternative would require the addition of one GS 9 librarian in the DS/DIU library to prepare the large number of responses that would be expected to be referred there for action. (As noted above, one GS 7 staff would also be required in OPA to operate the telephone inquiries service.) A small space in both DS/DIU and OPA (approximately 90 square feet) would be required.

5. ALTERNATIVE A IS RECOMMENDED AS THE OPTION WITH THE HIGHEST PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS

Implementation of any of the three alternatives would improve AID's responsiveness to the public. However, we recommend that Alternative A be given the most serious consideration by AID management, believing that it has the highest chance of developing into a stable, efficient, and effective system for responding to telephone and written inquiries from the public. We are convinced that it will prove satisfactory, in terms of:

- Providing timely, consistent, and appropriate responses
- Withstanding the pressures of time and shifts in Agency organization and staffing
- Being accepted easily and widely throughout the Agency
- Reducing the conflict and tension that have, in the past, resulted from an unclear division of responsibility

If Alternative A is rejected because of limited resources, then we recommend that Alternative B be accepted as a reasonable compromise.

During the interim period while AID management select and implement a preferred alternative, we recommend that several steps be taken to alleviate the current situation. First, work should begin on the Document Inventory List, without which none of the alternatives can proceed. The OPA Research Librarian can take a lead role in developing the list but should not be expected to develop the list without help. Thus, temporary duty staff will be required for about one month to establish the baseline list and the procedures for updating the information.

Second, the telephone inquiries service should be established along the lines described in Alternative C. Under this alternative, the service would simply answer and route calls, not prepare a preponderance of responses. If Alternative C is eventually implemented, no modifications will be necessary. If either of the other two alternatives is selected, the telephone inquiries service can be built on this initial foundation.

Third, the existence of the new telephone inquiries service and its immediate scope of responsibility should be widely publicized via general memoranda to AID staff and to the Centrex operators who serve the various AID buildings.

## EXHIBIT E-1

SUMMARY OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF  
ALTERNATIVES A, B, AND C

ALTERNATIVE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<p>A. Centralized Receipt &amp; Distribution, Control, &amp; Response Preparation in the Office of Public Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● OPA is already widely perceived as the logical focal point for this responsibility.</li> <li>● OPA has the opportunity to provide leadership in information policy.</li> <li>● OPA would receive feedback from public regarding attitudes and concerns.</li> <li>● The disparity between treatment of FOIA and non-FOIA requests would be reduced.</li> <li>● The adequacy and efficiency of responses would be greatly improved.</li> <li>● Fewer requests would "fall through the cracks" by providing the most comprehensive control and the most direct response.</li> <li>● Routing of mail with invalid addresses would be improved.</li> <li>● Ambiguity between roles of DIU and OPA would be eliminated.</li> <li>● There would be reduced burden on other Office and Bureau staffs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● OPA's current holdings are small; consequently, start up and acquisition time would be required.</li> <li>● The OPA/PI Reading Room would duplicate the holdings of other Offices and Bureaus.</li> <li>● OPA Public Information Specialists would have to experience a slow learning curve compared to DIU librarians--for library holdings and computer retrieval.</li> <li>● This option would create the most complex control procedures.</li> <li>● Direct costs would be the greatest.</li> <li>● OPA Public Information Specialists might have difficulty defending against excessive involvement in answering the high priority FOIA requests.</li> </ul>
<p>B. Centralized Control in OPA with Response Preparation Performed by Offices &amp; Bureaus with Primary Access to Records Required to Provide the Response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Existing resources in DIU would be used and duplication would be minimized.</li> <li>● Additional staff would be provided to optimize DIU efficiency.</li> <li>● OPA would be relieved of responsibility for preparing requests when other Offices and Bureaus have information.</li> <li>● OPA would be established as the public liaison and DIU as the central information center which is consonant with their existing functional responsibilities.</li> <li>● OPA would maintain contact with public attitudes and sensitivities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The separation of control from response preparation might cause trouble between the controller and the responder.</li> <li>● Other Offices and Bureaus might dispute their responsibilities for preparing requests when responsibility cannot be firmly fixed.</li> <li>● It might be difficult to integrate the new responsibilities with existing Office and Bureau responsibilities.</li> <li>● There might be a conflict in priorities between DIU's traditional clients and the public.</li> <li>● Other Offices might increase the load on DIU as they perceive an increase in staff.</li> </ul>
<p>C. Decentralized Receipt, Control, &amp; Response Preparation by All Offices &amp; Bureaus in AID</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formalization of current procedures.</li> <li>● Smallest direct incremental costs are required.</li> <li>● The public will be able to track many unanswered requests to original addressee.</li> <li>● If the logging system is fully implemented, better data about the number and types of requests Agency-wide will be available.</li> <li>● There would be no duplication of effort in creating central information sources.</li> <li>● There would be minimal training costs for AID staff.</li> <li>● The probability of losing requests would be minimized because requests would be controlled from the minute they are received.</li> <li>● Minimal space and technical resources would be required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There would be no central oversight control authority so system malfunctions might go unnoticed or uncorrected.</li> <li>● Control across Office boundary lines might cause jurisdictional problems.</li> <li>● OPA might lose touch with public attitudes and interests.</li> <li>● The opportunity for excessive defaulting to DIC or for excessive "buck-passing" exists.</li> <li>● Requests might get unequal attention because the control and response activities are dispersed.</li> <li>● There would be large number of communication links and, so, more opportunity for miscommunications.</li> <li>● The increase workload for Bureau and Office staff who have, traditionally, referred to OPA or DIC might be unacceptable to Office and Bureau staff.</li> <li>● Requests might sometimes be controlled by an Office or Bureau which has no logical jurisdiction over the subject information.</li> </ul>

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

## I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Along with the Department of State, the Agency for International Development (AID) is in a unique position among Federal agencies: it enjoys no natural American public constituency. Unlike HEW, DOL, HUD, or USDA, whose services and programs have a continuous and highly visible impact on every American citizen, AID's services are frequently misunderstood by, if not a complete mystery to U.S. taxpayers. Thus, AID has at once a great need for gaining the understanding of the American public and few opportunities for doing so. It is important that AID provide prompt, courteous responses to public inquiries.

Every year, the Agency for International Development receives well over 50,000 requests for information from the public. Requests run the gamut, from simple requests for general information, to highly complex and unique requests related to the scientific, political, and technical activities of the Agency. Requests are sent by school children and college professors, by irate taxpayers and foreign assistance supporters, by Congress and the White House, and by individuals seeking employment, selling a product, writing a book, making news, and representing a foreign country.

As a matter of stated policy, AID is interested in keeping open communications with the public and in providing adequate, timely, and courteous answers to all questions. Yet, the Agency has no formal, systematic procedures for implementing this policy. In fact, the available Agency guidance on this subject is vague and contradictory.

The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) is required by Handbook 17 to "ensure that information about AID policies, objectives, and operations is disseminated freely and fully to the public." Among other responsibilities, OPA is expected to respond to "...public inquiries and to requests for information filed under the Freedom of Information Act ..." (FOIA). Part III of Handbook 18 elaborates on this responsibility, calling OPA "the focal point" in preparing and releasing public information and, in Chapter 10, details the "rules and procedures which govern the processing of requests from the public."

Unfortunately, clear guidance is provided mainly with respect to FOIA requests (which comprise only a small percentage of the total requests); only fleeting attention is paid to non-FOIA

requests. OPA's responsibility for non-FOIA requests is described in such general terms that the guidance cannot be taken literally and, therefore, is difficult to implement and enforce. Information about "policies, objectives, and operations" includes all AID records; surely, OPA is not expected to be acquainted with and have access to this vast amount of material.

Understandably, OPA has responded to the firm, clear guidance on FOIA requests by creating a specific staff and procedure; in contrast, it has responded to the vague and impossible non-FOIA guidance with ad hoc procedures and insufficient staffing.

Within the past several years, OPA has received and responded to an increasing number of requests from the public. This has detracted from their other responsibilities. Despite OPA's efforts, the public information activity has not been performed adequately. Accordingly, OPA seeks an improvement in the situation and some relief for itself--in the form of clarified Agency guidance and, either, additional resources or diminished workload.

Despite the ambiguity and voids in the guidance and OPA's understandably skewed organizational response, staff in most other Offices and Bureaus share a firm belief that OPA bears almost exclusive responsibility for the public information activity. This feeling of non-responsibility persists, in spite of the admonition codified in Handbook 18 that all Offices actively participate in "responding to the need for an accurately informed public." The Handbook does not elaborate, however, on the means by which they are to participate or the extent of the participation.

Thus, there is general agreement that the public information activity is important and that it should be attended to with care. There is considerable disagreement and confusion about where this responsibility should be lodged and how it should be performed. Birch & Davis Associates, Inc. was engaged to study this situation and then to describe possible alternatives available to improve it. This report concludes that eight-week study. The four remaining chapters describe:

- The major findings regarding the current situation
- A mechanism for responding to telephone requests
- Three alternatives for responding to written requests
- The overall conclusions and recommendations from the study

Volume II contains the methodology used to conduct the study, as well as supportive tables, flowcharts, and diagrams.

CHAPTER II

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

## II. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study confirmed that AID's system for responding to public requests is inadequate and that there is considerable room for improvement. The procedures employed for receiving, distributing, controlling, and responding to written and telephone requests for information are informal and unevenly applied. All aspects of the request process are decentralized. While ES, OPA/PI and LEG have formal tracking and control systems, most other Offices and Bureaus do not.

Moreover, because of the wide diversity of requests and the complexity of AID's document inventory and recordkeeping systems, the response preparation process is the most taxing problem. There is no central repository of information useful in preparing responses, nor are there directories to guide the process. Consequently, a large portion of the public inquiries are handled in OPA or DIC by default, rather than by design. The greatest degree of dissatisfaction and disagreement over the current situation is related to the response preparation sub-activity--not to the control or management sub-activities. Many requests are complex and lengthy. Simply stated, it takes a long time to prepare an adequate response and most staff feel too pressed by other responsibilities to take the time.

Just how long it takes to respond, or how many requests are processed, however, is a very difficult question to answer. The study also found that it is impossible to determine precisely how many public requests for information are received because recordkeeping procedures are inadequate. Neither can the disposition of the requests be determined with any precision. We conclude that, as modifications are made in the current situation, careful watch must be kept on the workloads to validate or change the planning estimates and, concomitantly, the plans that are based on those planning estimates.

Finally we conclude that although the situation is highly complex and not amenable to an easy solution, striking improvements can be made by establishing a telephone inquiries service and by implementing one of the three alternatives for handling written requests, as set forth in Chapter III.

1. THE EXISTING SYSTEM IS DECENTRALIZED, YET A LARGE PORTION OF THE BURDEN FALLS UPON OPA AND DIC

Three important sub-activities comprise the public information activity: receipt and distribution, control, and response preparation. Currently, all three sub-activities are decentralized and somewhat informal.

Current procedures for receipt and distribution of written and telephone requests fail to "catch" all requests; thus, the problem of responding begins when the request is received by the wrong office or, worse, lost altogether. Written requests for information are received in every Office and Bureau.\* Re-routing is common, often without an attempt to ascertain that the referee Office will be able to respond better than the Office that received the request originally. Receipt and distribution of requests by telephone is equally decentralized because there is no central information number for AID. The situation is exacerbated by the telephone exchange configuration. Due to the physical dispersion of AID, there are three Centrex systems supporting Agency telephones. Calls cannot be transferred from one Centrex to another. In addition, in the State Department building, central government operators provide directory assistance for AID and three other agencies. While these operators can help locate the number if the proper Office or Bureau is known, they are not familiar with the functions of the Agency and therefore cannot provide assistance to callers who do not have a specific individual or Office in mind.

We conclude that there is no such thing as an "average" response time--for either written or telephone requests--some requests are easily satisfied and some require hours, or even days of searching.

Except for the specific control procedures established in ES, LEG, and OPA/PI, the Offices and Bureaus are allowed considerable flexibility and discretion in establishing control systems for public requests and other correspondence. Each independent Office and Bureau has a designated Correspondence Coordinator who must log and control requests referred by ES, LEG, and OPA/PI (for FOIA requests). Generally, the systems used by these Coordinators follow the advice of the old Manual Order 510.0, if the response is to be provided within that Office. If the request is referred outside the Bureau or Office, control is usually abandoned. In some of the Offices where requests are both high in number and very similar in nature (e.g., Personnel Management, Contract Management and Program Policy Coordination), informal but apparently workable systems

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\* Unless otherwise specified, reference to "Bureaus and Offices" refers to Bureaus and independent Offices in the AID organization.

of control have been established; this is possible when 1) it is common knowledge who has responsibility for the requested information and 2) there are standard replies or packets of information that can be supplied "as is" in response to most questions.

As noted above, response preparation is the most time-consuming and controversial sub-activity in this process. This sub-activity is complicated by a number of factors. For example:

- The absence of a document inventory system makes it difficult to locate sources of information, consequently, requests are often re-routed inappropriately and delays occur.
- There are inconsistencies in the way various requests are handled. For example, the response to two identical requests may vary considerably.
  - Staff with different skills and expertise may prepare the response.
  - Response times may vary in length by weeks.
  - One response may be satisfied free, the other at a cost to the requestor.

From all this dispersion and diversity, four Offices emerge as primary participants in responding to general requests from the public.

- The Office of Public Affairs
- The Development Information Centers
- The SER/MO Mail Room
- The Publications and Audio/Visual Arts Division

In addition, systems employed by LEG and ES were reviewed to identify analogs for the solution to the problem.

(1) OPA Has "Official" Responsibility For Handling Requests From The Public, But Lacks The Resources For Doing So

OPA is charged with the responsibility of "information policy leadership and coordination" which includes producing

\* PPC, PM and CM are excluded from detailed analysis. Although they handle a large number of requests, their roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and not problematic.

materials for mass communications media, scheduling press conferences, declassifying documents, publishing periodicals (e.g., Front Lines), and responding to public requests, including those filed under the Freedom of Information Act. The staff of 36 is divided among four organizational units:

- The Media and Publications Division, with a staff of 9
- The Press and Publications Division, with a staff of 14
- The Public Inquiries Staff of 7
- The Office of the Director, with a staff of 6

The Public Inquiries Staff is devoted primarily to FOIA, Privacy Act, and EO 11652 activities.\* They also handle some general public inquiries as time permits. Most of the responsibility for public requests falls upon a single Research Librarian in the Office of the Director. This individual is responsible for 14 primary duties; only one of which is:

"Receives, researches and responds to large volume of daily public information inquiries--written, telephonic or walk-in. Refers the inquiries or inquirers to other OPA or AID offices as appropriate. Develops standard replies, designs procedures and forms to ensure prompt and responsive handling of public requests."

This one duty consumes more than 80 percent of the Librarian's time, leaving very little time for library research and other aspects of the position.

To support the public information activity, OPA keeps on hand bulk volumes of the 18 general documents listed in Exhibit II-1. \*\* The requests which cannot be satisfied by this supply are referred to offices which are known or assumed to have the needed information. It is frequently difficult to identify an appropriate referee. When this occurs, OPA often passes the request on to OPA/PI or DIC, even though another Office, if known, would be a more appropriate choice. This practice creates considerable conflict and tension among the staffs of these three organizations. Once the requests are referred, OPA maintains no control and thus, has no idea how or whether response is made. The flow diagram in Exhibit II-2. \*\* describes the procedures used by OPA to handle written and telephone requests.

\*Regarding declassification of Federal documents

\*\*See Appendix B, Volume II.

The OPA Librarian also receives many telephone calls from the public. Several years ago his telephone number was published in a syndicated column and identified as the number to call for information about AID. Thus, a *de facto* telephone inquiries service was created by chance; resources to support the service have never been made available.

OPA receives an average of 245 incoming mail requests per month, 15 percent of which are FOIA or Privacy Act requests and are referred to OPA/PI. The Research Librarian screens the non-FOIA and non-Privacy Act requests and is able to satisfy 60 percent of the requests using 1) the 18 documents in his inventory, 2) the Catalogue of Research Literature for Development or 3) abstracted information from general reference books at his disposal. In addition, an average 176 telephone requests are received by OPA per month; about 60 percent of them are also handled by the Research Librarian himself. Thus, a full 40 percent of the requests received by OPA are not responded to or controlled by OPA and, as a result, OPA is not in the position to assure that the public information activity is being performed well.

(2) The Development Information Centers Are The Largest Single Repository Of Information And Therefore Are Called Upon To Respond To Many Requests

The Office of Development Information and Utilization (DS/DIU) administers the Development Information Centers (DIC) to provide "professional library and reference services to technical information flowing from DS and Geographic Bureau supported research activities." While Handbook 17 states that the Development Information Center "serves as the focal point for development information inquiries from the field, LDCs and the general public," the primary function of DS/DIU is to provide a "comprehensive program of development information service to Missions and Bureaus."

- In supporting DS technical offices, geographic bureaus, other AID offices and collaborating institutions, DS/DIU:
  - Provides access to stored technical and experimental information
  - Interprets requests for information
  - Routes substantive requests to DS technical experts for evaluative response

- Makes comprehensive literature searches
- In supporting Mission and LDC institutions, the division also provides assistance in the development of technical libraries and documentation systems.

The two Development Information Centers--located in Room 1656 in the State Department building and Room 105 in the Rosslyn Plaza Center--are staffed by six librarians who satisfy an average of 530 requests per month. The procedure for responding to these requests is diagrammed in the flow chart in Exhibit II-3.\* Less than 25 percent of the requests handled by DIC are addressed directly to the library. The other 75 percent have been referred to DIC by the SER/MO Mail Room, (i.e., mail with an invalid address) or by another Office.

About 25 percent of the requests received by DIC are from the public (i.e., not from LDC, Mission, AID/W, PVO or collaborating institution staff). DIC attempts to satisfy as many requests as possible, including public requests which have been referred by OPA, even though DIC's official mandate does not require that it serve the public. DIC also bears a large *de facto* responsibility for serving members of the public who "walk in" with a request for information or assistance.\*\* DIC's response rate is about 85 percent. When unable to make a direct response, DIC communicates directly with the requester if the document cannot be located within AID or if the document can be obtained from another government agency or private organization. Only rarely will DIC refer a request elsewhere within AID for a response.

DIC has no internal controls for monitoring or keeping track of requests and feels that none are needed because most of the response work is completed by library staff. They do not track the occasional referrals sent to another Office or Bureau for action. DIC has the technical capacity to respond to many requests, having the following resources at its disposal:

- AID Research and Development Abstracts (ARDA) (Quarterly publication)
- Development Information Systems, (on-line):
  - Research and Development Data Base
  - Project Data Base

\*See Appendix B, Volume II.

\*\*These walk-ins are included in the 530 monthly workload cited above.

- Bibliographic Data Base

- Card catalogs for about 60,000 volumes
- Shelf materials (e.g., reference materials, periodicals)
- Government Printing Office Repository Library
- External data bases, such as National Technical Information Service (NTIS) (on-line)
- AID liaison librarian in the USDA National Agricultural Library
- Project literature
- Interlibrary loan program
- AID Funded Regional Information Centers (e.g., Population Information Center at George Washington University and the Appropriate Technology Information Center, University of Georgia).

(3) The Office Of The Executive Secretary And The Office Of Legislative Affairs Have Well-Defined Areas Of Responsibility And Highly Formalized Systems For Controlling Certain Types Of Requests

Two types of requests receive special attention: those addressed directly to the Administrator or Deputy Administrator and those from a member of Congress. ES and LEG, respectively, operate long established, very formalized and effective systems for handling these special categories of requests.

Although the scope of this study did not anticipate major changes in these existing systems, it did review the ES and LEG operations to identify practices that might be useful in establishing a better system for general requests.

As the Agency's liaison with the Congress, LEG has established a small Congressional Inquiries staff. In contrast with the ES staff which rarely prepares a direct response, LEG staff most frequently obtains the necessary information from other Offices and Bureaus and prepares and sends the response directly. Agency staff are allowed three working days to provide the information requested in a "Congressional" and LEG staff monitors this deadline closely.

As the channel of communication between the Office of the Administrator and the Agency's senior staff, ES has established a correspondence control system to ensure that all

mail addressed to the Administrator or his staff is answered promptly by the appropriate party. The eight member correspondence control staff in ES determines response responsibility, and then:

- Assigns action and due date to a Correspondence Coordinator at the Bureau or independent Office level. Three days are allowed for a Congressional request, four for a White House request, and seven for other requests.
- Requires a copy of the responses or an original letter for ES signature on the majority of assignments.
- Maintains a Correspondence Alert Suspense List to track assignments and responses.
- Uses four-part briefs, a cross-reference filing system, and daily logs for tight control.

ES receives an average of 458 letters per month. Only five percent of these letters are answered directly by the Administrator or his staff; the rest are prepared by other Agency staff and are often reviewed by ES staff to assure the adequacy and appropriateness of the response.\* Due to the visibility and the tight control, requests assigned to other offices are generally satisfied within the allotted time period.

(4) The SER/MO Mail Room Plays An Important Role In Routing Many Requests From The Public Which Were Inadequately Addressed

The SER/MO Mail Room receives about 7,000 pieces of pouch and U.S. Mail each day. Ninety-nine percent of this mail bears a *bona fide* address and, in accordance with Handbook 21\*\*, is forwarded directly to the addressee. The remaining one percent (approximately 70 pieces of mail per day) are inspected and routed by Mail Room personnel. The Mail Room does not have adequate guidance for routing much of this mail. Mail Room staff use the guidelines for routing cable traffic, according to which OPA should receive mail related only to:

\*Based on FY 1978 ES Management reports.

\*\*With few agreed upon exceptions, all mail addressed to an individual or to a specific organizational unit in AID/W is routed unopened to the employee or office concerned. Mail which is not addressed to a specific individual or office is opened and routed according to the content and subject matter involved.

- The Press
- OPA Periodicals
- Media Activities and Functions

DIC staff complain that inappropriate requests are routed there for action by the Mail Room. Primarily, these are requests from individuals, universities, libraries and businesses for publications to which DIC has no access. Apparently, the Mail Room tends to send most requests for specific publications to DIC and requests for information (general and specific but not citing a specific publication) to OPA.

(5) The Publications And Audio/Visual Arts Division Is Responsible For Managing The Printing Process For Agency Documents

The Publications and Audio/Visuals Arts Division (SER/MO/PAV) provides graphics, printing and document distribution warehousing functions for the Agency. The Division also maintains 100 mailing lists and controls internal forms. Although original distribution of documents is made by PAV, the Office responsible for the publication authorizes the number of copies to be printed and the disposition of the surplus, including instructions for storing surplus on unmonitored shelves in PAV. Though stored in PAV, no inventory documents or distribution guidelines are available for reference. Although the stored documents might prove useful to OPA or DIC in responding to public requests, these documents are more or less inaccessible because no inventories are maintained. It is very difficult, then, for OPA or DIC to know what materials are on hand in PAV.

2. AVAILABLE STATISTICS ON WORKLOADS HAVE SERIOUS LIMITATIONS BUT ARE USEFUL IN PLANNING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

The work plan for this study anticipated collecting and analyzing a statistical sample of requests processed by OPA and DIC. Statistics on the average volumes, distribution and disposition of requests were to be calculated. In addition, average and ranges for workloads per staff were to be computed.

Unfortunately, the recordkeeping systems employed by DIC and OPA are inadequate to support a sophisticated statistical sample. The limited statistical findings that were possible under the existing constraints are discussed below:

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(1) The Ten AID Offices Surveyed Received Approximately 53,000 Requests From The Public Each Year

Ten AID Offices and Bureaus were reviewed to determine the volume of public requests handled each year. In OPA, DIC and ES, we reviewed available management reports to identify the volumes. In the other seven Offices, the Correspondence Coordinators and other respondents estimated the number of telephone and written requests. Exhibit II-4 shows the actual and estimated volumes of public requests and also the number of responses prepared. The Office for Personnel Management, ES, and Contract Management receive and process by far the greatest number of public requests (30,000, 6,700 and 6,000 respectively). These are fairly homogenous and, so, it is relatively easy for these three Offices to respond. The figures on this chart must be viewed with two limitations in mind:

- First, because of multiple referrals, the same request may be received and reported by more than one Office; consequently, the total requests actually received is probably less than the total shown on the bar graph.
- Second, the difference between the requests received and those for which a response was prepared does not necessarily indicate the number of requests not satisfied. Many of these were referred elsewhere for a response and usually no record of disposition is kept by the referrer.

(2) Workload Measurements Reveal More Differences Than Similarities Among Offices

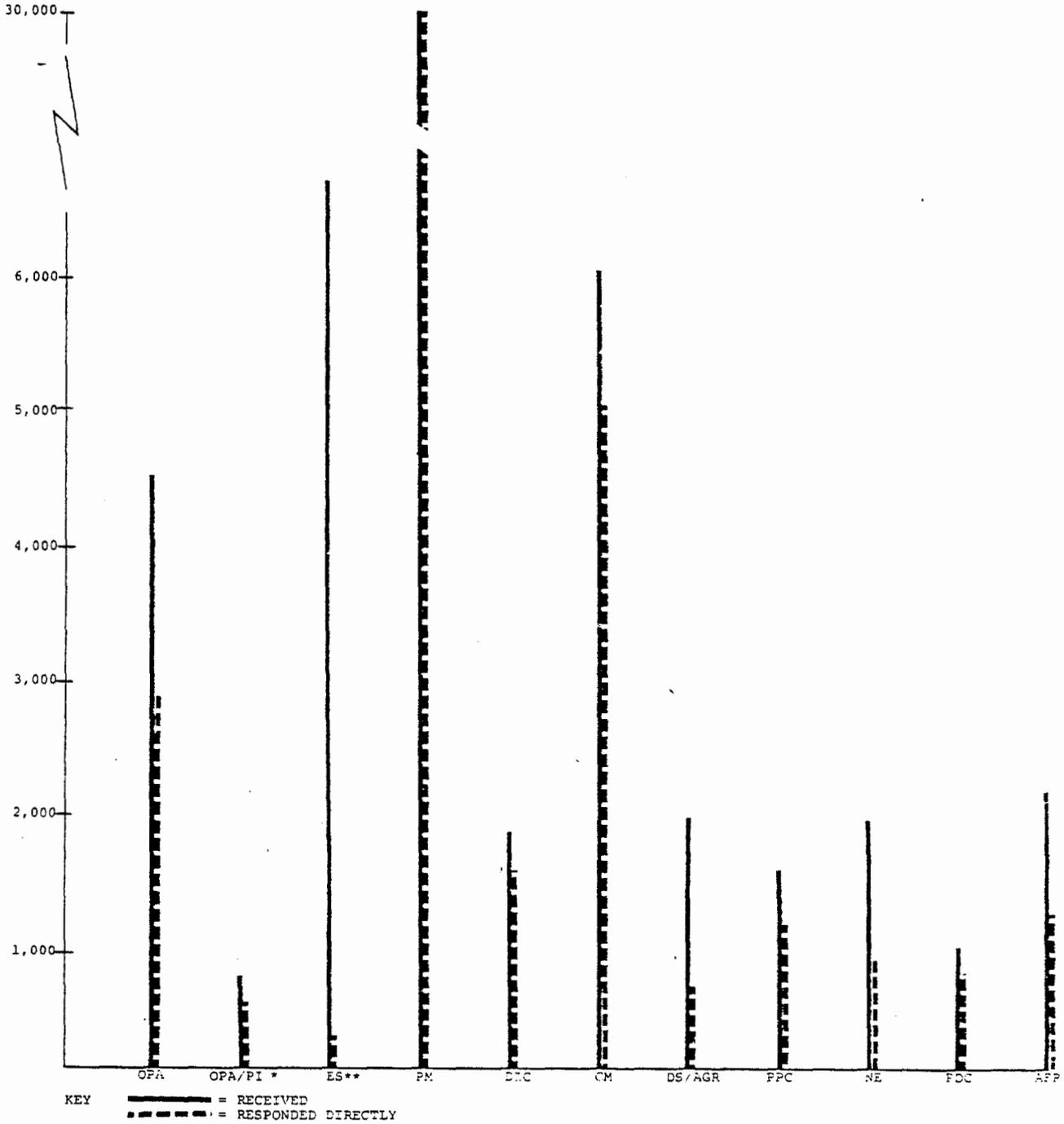
To help develop staffing plans for alternative solutions, it is useful to have measures such as workload-to-staff ratios, and time required to fulfill the average request. Although available data did not support precise computations, information available from the AID and State Offices with substantial public information activity revealed:

- In OPA, the ratio of requests received to staff is the highest of all offices for which data are available: 5,300 compared to simple average of 3,009 for the other four Offices.
- In OPA, approximately 20 minutes were consumed per request received, compared to a simple average of 35 minutes for the other four Offices.

EXHIBIT II-4

REQUESTS  
PER YEAR

PUBLIC REQUESTS  
RECEIVED  
BY TEN  
OFFICES



\*Excludes FOIA, Privacy Act, and EO 11652 (Declassification of Federal Documents)

\*\*ES receives approximately 6700 requests per year from institutions, members of Congress, businesses, other government agencies and AID personnel. Of this total, approximately 1850 are from the public.

The computations used to derive these rates are shown in Exhibit II-5. \* Caution must be employed when analyzing these figures. Some anomalies are not immediately apparent but, nonetheless, greatly affect the comparability of the calculations. For instance:

- The staff who perform these tasks are not all engaged in comparable activities.
  - In OPA, there is no control, only 60 percent of the requests are filled directly, and OPA rarely performs library work to prepare the response.
  - In DIC, there is no control, 85 percent of the requests are responded to directly, and considerable library work is required.
  - In ES, extensive control is performed with virtually no intraoffice response preparation.
  - In State, the telephone service is only recently implemented and, so, not yet up to full capacity. Almost all written requests are responded to with materials on hand and a computer generated letter.
- The types of requests vary considerably. Most of DIC's requests, for example, are not from the public but, rather, from technical staff of PVOs, Missions, AID/W, and LDCs; OPA's requests are more likely to come from the general public and range in their technicality.
- The resources available for responding to the requests vary among the Offices and, consequently, so does the time required to respond. In State, for example, a personal response is provided for each request, whereas OPA rarely prepares a personal letter.

In spite of their shortcomings, the available data do provide some general guidelines concerning reasonable work levels. These productivity measures are used in Chapters III and IV to staff the three alternative solutions.

### 3. A NUMBER OF FACTORS COMPLICATE THE PROCESS OF THE RESPONDING TO PUBLIC INQUIRIES

There are a number of factors which transcend the inadequacies of existing policies and procedures related to public information

\*See Appendix B, Volume II

requests. The complications stem, in part, from the organization and mission of the Agency. To the extent that the complications are systemic, they cannot be solved entirely by the proposed alternatives although, in some cases, recommendations are provided to mute or accommodate inbred factors.

- The Agency addresses topics which cross geographic, functional and project boundaries. As a result, resources and the knowledge to respond to requests are widely dispersed throughout the Agency.
- The autonomy of the Bureaus makes it difficult to establish central control over publications and documents produced for Bureau-related activities. While creation of the new Publications Review Board will improve control over publications, Bureaus will continue to maintain some authority over the publications and distribution processes.
- In addition to publications, AID has literally millions of other records and documents that may be required to prepare responses. The filing and retrieval problems associated with this volume of records are obvious. The situation is compounded by AID's physical dispersion among numerous buildings in Washington and dozens of foreign countries.

In addition to organizational impediments, personnel responsible for public inquiries also face the problem of responding to requests which vary tremendously in:

- Detail required
- Topic
- Urgency and importance
- Clarity

Efficiency and adequacy of response are also constrained by the dilemma responders face when documents are out of print, out of stock, or too voluminous to reproduce. The question arises, then, as to what degree of effort and expense should be expended to satisfy public inquiries. This question cannot be answered easily by our study team but should be a matter for management policy decision once the final alternative is selected.

4. OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES HAVE DEVELOPED A VARIETY OF MECHANISMS FOR RESPONDING TO PUBLIC INQUIRIES

Personnel in other Federal agencies were interviewed to identify and

describe various methodologies for responding to public inquiries. Our findings indicate that a wide range of procedures are employed, most of them different from the public inquiries process in operation at AID.

This finding was echoed in a recent study by the Comptroller General entitled, "Difficulties In Evaluating Public Affairs Government-Wide and at the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare." The report determined that the evaluation of public affairs is difficult because agencies do not uniformly define "public affairs" and are not consistent in reporting and evaluating their public affairs costs. Generally, public affairs includes such activities as press releases, reports, news conferences, photographs, speeches, publications, audiovisual materials and facilities for answering daily questions from journalists and taxpayers, although any combination of priorities related to these activities is possible.

The public information systems employed by the four agencies included in the study reflect this wide diversity, although each revolves to some extent around the procedures for handling FOIA requests.

- Department of Commerce: The Department has centralized systems to separate FOIA from non-FOIA requests. Their interpretation of FOIA requests, however, is not a strict one and includes "administrative requests" i.e., those requesting information not normally disseminated to the general public. FOIA requests are then tightly controlled by this centralized system, while non-FOIA requests are referred throughout the Department for response, with no further control.
- Department of Agriculture: An FOIA officer is assigned to each Agency within the Department. These officers are responsible for responding to FOIA requests related to their Agency. The system is decentralized, with FOIA discretion residing within each Agency rather than in a single location, as in AID. Non-FOIA requests are also processed by this system but a lesser degree of attention is paid to these requests.
- International Communications Agency (ICA): ICA uses a broad interpretation of the Freedom of Information Act to control all requests for information. Based on this interpretation, all requests fall under the Act and therefore, all requests are controlled. The volume of requests which are received by the agency, however, is substantially lower than the volume received by AID.

- Department of State (STATE): The number of requests for information received by State is significantly greater than the number of requests received by AID. It is not surprising, then, to find highly centralized systems, replete with a large staff and automated equipment. The separation of functions in the department is as follows:

- The Foreign Affairs Document and Reference Center (O/FADRC) has several key public information responsibilities:
  - It maintains the Library
  - The Publishing and Reproduction Division (FADRC/PBR) controls the publication, distribution and storage of all State documents
  - The Document Analysis and Processing Division (FADRC/DA) is responsible for the receipt and distribution of all mail and pouch communications.
- The Bureau of Public Affairs has a FOIA Staff (PA/FOI) to respond to FOIA requests and an Office of Public Communications (PA/PC) to respond to White House and general public requests. PC, which handles both written and telephone requests, is able to satisfy the majority of these requests because of the large document inventory it maintains and its close relationship with FADRC.

The procedures used by FADRC and PA to control the flow and response of requests are centralized. Responsibilities are clear-cut and, as a result, the public information activity runs smoothly.

CHAPTER III

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS  
FOR HANDLING WRITTEN REQUESTS

### III. ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR HANDLING WRITTEN REQUESTS

As described in Chapter II, there are various--equally legitimate--approaches for responding to requests from the public. This chapter describes three alternative solutions for handling written requests. Appendix E, Volume II, describes several other alternatives which were considered early in the study but later rejected.

#### 1. THE THREE ALTERNATIVES SHARE SEVERAL COMMON FEATURES

The three alternatives described later in this chapter offer discrete options for responding to written inquiries. Despite their differences, however, all alternatives reflect several common features:

- SER/MO retains responsibility for routing almost all agency mail: In two of the alternatives, the SER/MO Mail Room continues to function more or less as it does now; in one option, mail that is now opened by SER/MO because of an incorrect or insufficient address will, instead, be opened by OPA. In all cases, however, mail with a valid address will be routed directly to the addressee. The reasons for this are simple. First, about 99 percent of the incoming mail has a valid address; presumably, most of these addresses are appropriate. Second, only a few of the 7,000 pieces of mail received by AID each day contain requests from the public. If all of this mail were to be reviewed each day to isolate additional requests from the public, a full-time staff of about 25 would be required,\* an additional day of processing time would be added to non-request mail, and, most likely, only a small number of additional requests for public information would come to light.
- A strong degree of control is essential: Although the locus of control varies among the options, each proposes much stronger control of incoming requests and outgoing responses than is now the case (except for requests now controlled by ES and LEG). Standard logging, filing, and tracking procedures are provided in Appendix C for all three options.
- A central telephone inquiries service is required: This recommendation is discussed fully in Chapter IV.

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\*40 pieces of mail per hour, for seven hours per day.

- An inventory of available AID publications will be developed and maintained: Identification of available publications and documents is crucial to the success of all three alternatives. A Document Inventory List (see example in Exhibit III-1,\* Appendix B) would catalogue documents (or categories of documents) for which a *ready* inventory exists. The list would be updated monthly and would minimize search time and inappropriate referrals. Word processing equipment recommended for each alternative would help in maintaining the list.
- OPA and DIC will receive an information copy of all requests for publications: Currently, SER/MO/PAV, which is in charge of publishing most AID documents, solicits approval from Offices which control the budget and quantity on publications. Although both OPA and DIC are members of the Communications Review Board, they should be added to the routing of Form GPO 3019 "for information purposes" so that they can keep abreast of new holdings.
- Two to four Public or Technical Information Specialists are required to handle mail and telephone requests: Although the placement and estimated workload of new staff varies in the three alternatives, each requires the addition of specifically trained Public or Technical Information Specialists at the GS 7 or 9 level who will operate the telephone inquiries service, maintain the Document Inventory List, and provide some response preparation. In two of the options, control is also performed by this proposed new staff.
- Every bureau and Office retains an important responsibility for being responsive to the public: Although responses are prepared officially in the three alternatives, responsibility for the success of each alternative is shared by all Agency staff. Without unequivocal and ongoing support from top Agency management, the public information activity of AID will not succeed. Thus, each alternative is based on the fundamental assumption that all AID employees will be alerted frequently to the need for responding rapidly, enthusiastically, and thoroughly to the public, regardless of the formal mechanisms established for doing so. In addition, the importance of this activity can be underscored by periodic evaluations, the results of which are widely published.

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\*See Appendix B, Volume II

- Requestors should be kept informed on the status of the request: When a request is referred to another Office and referrer expects that the Office will require more than a few days to respond, the referrer should satisfy the requestor (using a simple form letter) of the referral action.
- Certain categories of requests are eliminated from the control process: None of the alternatives change the way certain classes of requests are processed:
  - Requests addressed to or regarding the Administrator or Deputy: referred to ES
  - Requests related to Personnel Management: referred directly to PM
  - Requests related to Contract Management: referred directly to CM
  - Routine passport questions: referred to State Department
  - Requests from Congress: referred to LEG
  - Requests from an LDC, PVO, AID/W, or mission representative: referred to DIC
  - Requests under FOIA, the Privacy Act, or EO 11652\*: referred to OPA/PI

The balance of this chapter is divided into three parts, one for each of these alternatives:

- Alternative A: Centralized Receipt and Distribution, Control, and Response Preparation in the Office of Public Affairs
- Alternative B: Centralized Control in OPA, with Response Preparation Performed by Offices and Bureaus with Primary Access to Records Required to Provide the Response
- Alternative C: Decentralized Control and Response Preparation in Each Bureau and Office with Response Preparation Defaulting to the Development Information Centers

\*Regarding declassification of Federal documents

Each alternative is described in terms of the organizational and functional responsibilities of various Offices and Bureaus, required changes in Handbooks 17, 18, and 21, resource requirements, implementation considerations, and advantages and disadvantages.

Exhibit III-2 which folds out from the back of this chapter summarizes the key characteristics of each alternative.

2. ALTERNATIVE A: CENTRALIZED RECEIPT AND DISTRIBUTION, CONTROL, AND RESPONSE PREPARATION IN THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

As discussed on page III-1, tight management of the incoming requests and outgoing responses is a key characteristic of all alternatives. In Alternative A, this control is by far the most centralized and the strongest. According to the current AID organization guidance (promulgated in Handbook 17 and 18), the primary responsibility of the Office of Public Affairs is "information policy leadership and coordination" to ensure that "information about AID policies, objectives, and operations is disseminated fully and freely to the ...public." One activity cited as part of this responsibility is "disseminate information through public affairs programs... and by *responding to public inquiries*." Although Handbook 18 also notes that all other Offices and Bureaus share in this responsibility, the individual descriptions of these other Offices and Bureaus (Handbook 17) makes scant, if any, mention of this specific function. Thus, it is not surprising that many personnel in Offices and Bureaus throughout AID view OPA as the Agency's liaison with the public and, consequently, as the primary (if not sole) organization which must control requests and prepare responses.

Alternative A, then, is built upon this widespread conception of OPA and, also, upon the fact that many of the requests from the public\* are *already* being channeled to OPA for control and response. Alternative A would formalize a system that now is hinted at in the Handbooks and is partially in *de facto* operation. Equally important, it would provide OPA with the technical and personnel resources needed to perform its more clearly defined role. Currently, OPA is responsible for many varied public affairs programs, only one of which is responding to public requests for information. As a result of this diverse and pressing workload, OPA has not been able to give adequate priority to public requests, nor has the Office integrated the

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\*This refers only to the general and diverse requests, not to the easily classified requests, such as those related to contracts management and personnel management.

public information activity with overall Office affairs. Under Alternative A, this activity would be stressed as OPA assumes responsibility for all three important sub-activities:

- Receipt and Distribution: OPA would open and review all mail (approximately 70 pieces per day) that is now opened, reviewed, and routed by SER/MO. This assumes that (1) the subject mail can be expeditiously forwarded to OPA so that only small additional time is added to the routing of these letters, and (2) because of its responsibility for maintaining the Document Inventory List, OPA staff would be better equipped than SER/MO staff to perform this function.
- Control: OPA would follow and control requests that come to its attention. Offices and Bureaus which receive a request by accident or by design and are *able to respond*, need not forward the request to OPA. All other requests would be forwarded to OPA and controlled from that point forward.
- Response Preparation: OPA would attempt to provide direct responses to as many requests as possible, with absolutely minimal numbers of referrals to the geographic and technical offices and to DIC. OPA would greatly enhance its own delivery system by enlarging its holdings, maintaining a Document Inventory List, and accessing DIU's computerized data base.

(1) The OPA Public Inquiries Staff Would Handle Both FOIA And Non-FOIA Requests From The Public

Handbook 18 sets forth clear policies and procedures by which OPA must respond to requests from the public under the Freedom of Information Act. Under Alternative A, these OPA responsibilities for FOIA requests would be expanded to embrace all public requests explicitly, whether FOIA is cited or not. This new category of requests would not be subject to the FOIA regulations\* but rather to the guidelines described in this chapter and to the changes in Handbook 18. Exhibit III-3\*\*, provides draft Handbook changes. Exhibit III-4\*\*, is a flow chart describing the major processes and procedures required to implement Alternative A. These procedures are also described below:

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\*I.e., the ten day limit on responses, filing requirements and report to Congress would not be applicable to non-FOIA requests.

\*\*See Appendix B, Volume I.

- Mail received by AID without a deliverable address or addressed to OPA: OPA would assume the role now played by the SER/MO Mail Room and review all mail which does not have a specific deliverable address. Letters would be referred out of OPA without further control if they are related to Personnel Management, Contracts Management, routine passport processing, or are addressed to the Administrator or Deputy Administrator. They are also referred if the requestor is a member of Congress or from AID/W, Missions, LDCs or PVOs (referred to LEG and DIC respectively). All other written requests would be logged and filed using the system shown in Appendix C and would be controlled by OPA until the request is satisfied.

- Written requests received by other Offices and Bureaus directly from the public: For a variety of reasons (e.g., prior relationships, knowledge of Agency organization and functions), other Offices and Bureaus will continue to receive written requests directly from the public. These Offices and Bureaus would have four possible means of handling the request:

- If the Office or Bureau is able to respond to the request with readily available materials, it *must* respond to the request without involvement by OPA. The Office or Bureau may, at its own discretion, provide OPA with an information copy\* of the request and the response.
- If the request is clearly related to personnel, contracts, and the Administrator or Deputy Administrator, FOIA, Privacy Act, EO 11652, or if it is from a member of Congress, it should be forwarded directly to the cognizant Office (see page III-3). These requests need not be controlled by the initial Office or Bureau that receives them and should not be sent to OPA.

\*There are two conditions under which OPA should be informed of requests. First, if the request is related to an issue of widespread public concern and might help OPA keep in touch with public attitudes, and, second, if the response provided might help OPA respond to a similar request (directly) in the future.

- If the request is related to materials held by the Office or Bureau but will require substantial research, or if it is related to more than one Office or Bureau, it should be forwarded to OPA. OPA may then, in turn, request assistance from the initial Office or Bureau but OPA would assume responsibility for managing the response preparation.
- If the request does not fall into the three categories described above, it should be forwarded to OPA for control and action. The original receiving Office or Bureau should not route requests outside its own boundaries except to OPA (and the other exceptions noted immediately above). It may, however, advise OPA of the appropriate locus of referral, if known.

Once OPA receives a *bona fide* request via (1) its review of mail without a deliverable address, (2) mail originally addressed to OPA, or (3) referred mail requests, it would have several major responsibilities:

- First, all requests must be logged and tracked until a satisfactory response is made. (See Appendix C).
- Second, OPA would have the major responsibility for preparing the response. The major objective of this alternative would be to minimize the burden on the other Offices and Bureaus. Nonetheless, Offices and Bureaus might still be asked to assist in three situations:
  - When the request is highly technical and complex
  - When the question involves a policy that is not well defined or is very sensitive
  - When the material that OPA is able to identify appears insufficient, the Bureau or Office may be asked to review the response to verify its completeness or provide additional information.

OPA would be responsible for carrying out a number of activities related to this new control and response preparation activity:

- Create and maintain a reference and resource stock point: This stock point would contain bulk copies of all OPA publications and copies and documents published by other Offices and Bureaus in sufficient quantity to satisfy demand. It would also contain copies of reference material (e.g., Congressional Presentation, "Green Books," AID Handbooks, and DIC reference catalogues) from which commonly received requests can be answered. This stock point is not intended to expand the research function of OPA or to duplicate the research capability of DIU/DIC. Rather, it is intended solely to facilitate responses to the most commonly answered general questions. The Document Inventory List, discussed on page III- 2, is a major mechanism for keeping the stock point current.
- Publish new documents to satisfy common requests: Using the request logs, OPA would monitor the nature of public requests to identify topics for which no documentation currently exists. This may include reissues of out-of-print documents, original writing of new materials, or printing excerpts of compilations from existing documents.
- Become familiar with and employ the DIC resources: Under this option, DIC libraries would remain responsive primarily to LDC, AID/W, PVO and Mission clientele, as well as to walk-ins. The OPA Public Information Specialist would be expected to use DIC resources to obtain needed information. These resources would include computerized data bases, card catalogues, and shelf material.
- Identify and track delinquent responses which have been referred to other Bureaus and Offices: OPA staff would assign reasonable due dates to each referral based upon the perceived urgency of the request and the difficulty of preparing a response.

- Ongoing assessment of OPA's resources to handle its new responsibilities: Because the statistics on which the staff projections are based are so tentative and incomplete, they would be monitored carefully; it is possible that additional staff would be required as Agency staff come to rely on OPA more and more to control and prepare responses to requests.
- Sponsor periodic (at least semi-annual) campaigns: These Agency-wide promotional activities would inform staff of new procedures and resources and remind them of their responsibility.

(2) Under Alternative A, OPA Would Require About Four New Staff Positions, Additional Space, And Word Processing Equipment

Alternative A would require substantial increases in staff and other resources in OPA. The large increase in responsibilities, including the majority of receipt and distribution, control, and response preparation sub-activities, would require the addition of:

- Between one and two full-time equivalent Public Information Specialists (GS 9): As described in the position descriptions in Appendix D, these individuals would be responsible for managing the Document Inventory List, preparing the majority of responses, and, in general, managing the public information activity (non-FOIA only).
- Between two and three full-time equivalent Public Information Specialists (GS 7): The position descriptions for these individuals are also contained in Appendix D. The specialists would route mail and prepare responses that can be answered with information on hand in OPA. (These same staff would also help support the telephone inquiry service discussed in Chapter IV.

Exhibit III-5\* provides the assumptions regarding work load and productivity that were used to develop these estimates and shows that 1.7 GS 9 and 2.7 GS 7 staff are needed. If this alternative is selected, we recommend that two people be assigned full-time for each grade and that existing OPA

\*See Appendix B, Volume II.

staff be used to take up the slack. The GS 7 staff would be expected to operate the word processor; clerical time would be minimal, due to use of the word processor and form letters. OPA clerical staff would back up these new staff for their minimal clerical needs. If this is not possible, several other courses of action are available:

- Hire two GS 9 and two GS 7 staff until the workload can be determined with more certainty, and until the utility of the word processor can be assessed. If only three staff are hired, the word processor becomes more necessary. (See below.)
- Hire one GS 9 and three GS 7 staff under the same condition.

Other resources would be required to implement this option:

- Space: In many ways, space in AID is a more sparse resource than personnel. The Agency is already physically dispersed and virtually every Office and Bureau now experiences some inconvenience due to inadequate or physically disparate space. Nonetheless, the success of this alternative would rest, to a large degree, on having new staff and stock point. Working space for four and shelf space for 500 to 800 documents would be required. It would be most desirable to have this space located near or in the OPA/PI staff, since the new staff would report to the Chief of the Staff and so that the PI staff also would have access to the materials. This may result in some duplication of materials now held by (and presumably remaining) in the Office of the Director of OPA (OPA/D); consequently, it is not illogical to consider placing the new staff physically near the existing library in OPA/D, if space permits. In any event, this staff would have to be located in the New State Building, rather than in Rosslyn, so that proximity to the DIU would be assured.
- Word processing equipment: Word processing equipment would be useful, although not essential unless the full recommended staff is not available. This equipment can help support three major functions of the new staff:

- Maintain the Document Inventory List. The list would be stored on the word processing equipment and easily updated.
- Prepare responses to common requests. At a minimum, standard introductory and closing paragraphs could be employed. Other uses would include: (1) preparing instructions for ordering publications, (2) notifying requestors that the information they seek is out of print or unavailable, (3) handling peak request issues, such as requests for the CP when it is first published and policies on international news items that generate considerable levels of requests.
- Query the R & D data base in the DIU to obtain information on publications and prepare bibliographies.

As can be seen from Exhibit III-6\*, these functions would require only about a quarter of the available annual machine time for a stand-alone word processor. Thus, it would be feasible to procure this equipment only if other activities of OPA (or even of Offices and Bureaus outside of OPA) would use the balance of the machine time. Exhibit III-6\* also indicates some of the other OPA functions that might be assisted by word processing and the estimated level of usage. Both of these functions combined would utilize 87 percent of the available time of the word processor, making this an efficient, cost-effective addition to the alternative.

Other resources also would be required but their costs cannot be estimated easily. For example, furniture, telephone connections and long distance service, and additional supervisory time would be required. The direct ongoing costs of \$62,720 for this alternative do not include these indirect costs.

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\*See Appendix B, Volume II.

3. ALTERNATIVE B: CENTRALIZED CONTROL IN OPA WITH RESPONSE PREPARATION PERFORMED BY OFFICES AND BUREAUS WITH PRIMARY ACCESS TO RECORDS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THE RESPONSE

As discussed earlier, the ambiguity and lack of precision in Agency guidance is one cause of the current problem. Alternative B would clarify the existing guidance to reflect what, we are told, was the original intent of the guidance. Specifically, Alternative B would rest on two assumptions:

- There is a need for a central focal point to which the public can address requests. Traditionally-- both in AID and other Federal agencies--this focal point has been the OPA or a similarly named counterpart. As the central focal point, OPA bears the responsibility for controlling (i.e., managing) the requests to assure that appropriate and timely responses are provided.
- Information about AID's "policies, objectives, and operations" is dispersed throughout every Office and Bureau in the Agency. OPA cannot be expected to be familiar with this vast collection of materials, nor can it physically assemble this information in a central location. Consequently, each Office and Bureau must continue to share responsibility for preparing responses that require information held by that Office or Bureau.

The main features of this alternative are summarized below:

- Receipt and Distribution: The SER/MO Mail Room would continue to review mail without a deliverable address sending some requests for information to OPA and others elsewhere *if a referral elsewhere can be made with certainty* (e.g., for Personnel Management or Contract Management).
- Control: OPA would have major, but not sole, responsibility for controlling written requests from the public, assuming that these requests come to their attention. Other Offices and Bureaus would share this responsibility by controlling requests which are appropriately addressed to that Office or Bureau by a member of the public *or* routed to that Office or Bureau by the Mail Room according to pre-defined criteria, and which are to be responded to with records located in that Office or Bureau.

- Response Preparation: OPA would enhance its own response preparation capability by making a modest increase in its holdings and by inventorying the many dispersed AID holdings. Like ES, however, OPA would continue to rely heavily on other Offices and Bureaus to prepare responses that are clearly in the province of that Office or Bureau. DIC would play a major role in providing responses which require information not available elsewhere, or requiring a library search.

OPA would be provided Public Information Specialists to help perform this enlarged responsibility. This staff would inventory the Agency's holdings, prepare publications for use in responding to common requests, and track the progress of requests that are referred elsewhere in the Agency for response. DIC would require a Technical Information Specialist to prepare responses related to their vast holdings.

- (1) The Office Of The Director, OPA, Would Be The Focal Point For Non-FOIA Requests From The Public

Handbook 18 (Part III, page 1-1) states as its basic policy that:

"The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) is the focal point for the preparation and release of public information. But the important task of informing the public is not left to any single Office. There must be a continuing, comprehensive, Agency-wide concern for producing and disseminating timely and accurate information. OPA can stimulate, program and coordinate these efforts, but must rely on the active participation of all major Offices in AID in responding to the need for an accurately informed public. Beyond this, there are certain procedures to be followed by all AID Offices and Bureaus to assure coordination and effectiveness in the production and release of public information. This handbook sets forth procedures to be followed in handling public information materials."

Under this alternative, this basic policy would persist. FOIA requests, as well as those filed under the Privacy Act and EO 11652, would continue to be handled by OPA's Public Inquiries Staff. Nothing in this alternative changes the procedures for responding to these three categories of requests.

All other requests from the public would be eligible for processing by the Office of the Director, OPA (hereafter referred to simply as OPA). This aspect of Alternative B would require substantial changes in Handbooks 17 and 18. Draft changes are shown in Exhibit III-7\*. The flow chart shown in Exhibit III-8\* illustrates these procedures in detail; they are discussed below:

- Written requests received by OPA directly from the public or via another Office or Bureau: The SER/MO Mail Room would operate as it does now, except that OPA would provide assistance in preparing more descriptive criteria for routing invalidly addressed requests. Written requests received by OPA (directly from the Mail Room or as a referral from another Office or Bureau) would be reviewed to determine the nature of the request. Requests would be referred out of OPA without further control if they are related to Personnel Management, Contract Management, routine passport processing, OPA/PI staff responsibilities, if they are addressed to the Administrator or Deputy Administrator, or if they are received directly from a member of Congress. All other written requests would be logged (according to the logging and filing system shown in Appendix C) and handled in one of two ways:
  - OPA would fill the request with materials on hand. OPA would be responsible for collecting or producing an inventory of documents that provide general and frequently requested information about the Agency.
  - OPA would refer the request to the Office or Bureau which has primary control over the subject information. The request could be referred to either (1) the designated Correspondence Coordinator in the Office or Bureau (i.e., the individual used as a communication control point by ES), (2) the specific individual within the Office or Bureau who is known to have the information or, (3) DIC if a

\*See Appendix B, Volume II.

specific information source cannot be identified. If Alternative B is selected, we recommend that the latter two choices be selected to reduce the number of referral steps and to minimize the number of control mechanisms through which the request must be processed.

OPA would enhance its ability to make appropriate referrals by (1) developing and maintaining the Document Inventory List and (2) identifying a specific individual (by telephone) prior to making the referral to be certain that the referral is appropriate. The referral notice (see Appendix C for an example) would indicate whether the referee should (1) send the response directly and notify OPA of the action taken or (2) return the information to OPA for mailing. In either case, OPA would record the action taken to satisfy each request and would take corrective action on delinquent requests that have been referred outside of OPA.

Written requests received by other Offices and Bureaus directly from the public or the SER/MO Mail Room (i.e., not requests referred by OPA): Despite the establishment of a prime role in OPA for handling public requests, other Offices and Bureaus would continue to receive written requests directly from the public (via the Mail Room). These requests would be processed in one of three ways:

- If the Office receiving the request has primary access to the subject records, it *must* control and respond to the request without involvement by OPA. The Office or Bureau might, at its own discretion, provide OPA with an information copy\* of the request and the response.

There are two conditions under which OPA should be informed of requests. First, if the request is related to an issue of wide-spread public concern, and might help OPA keep in touch with public attitudes, and, second, if the response provided might help OPA respond to a similar request (directly) in the future.

- If the request is clearly related to personnel, contracts, the Administrator or Deputy Administrator, FOIA, Privacy Act, EO 11652, or if it is from a member of the Congress, it would be forwarded directly to the cognizant Office (see page III- 2). These requests need not be controlled by the initial Office or Bureau that receives them and should not be sent to OPA.
- All other requests would be forwarded to OPA for control and action. The original recipient should not route requests outside its own boundaries except to OPA (and the other exceptions noted immediately above).

The Office of the Director, OPA, would have several other new responsibilities if this alternative is selected. First, OPA would develop and maintain a Document Inventory List which describes the location and accessibility of major AID documents. This list would reduce the system's reliance on one or two "old-timers" who have the relevant information stored mentally, but nowhere else. Second, OPA would prepare brief monthly reports on the number and nature of the written and telephone requests, as well as on their disposition. These reports would be used for three purposes:

- Ongoing assessment of OPA's resources to handle its new responsibilities. Because the statistics on which the staff projections are based are so tentative and incomplete, this would have to be monitored carefully; it is possible that additional staff would be required as Agency staff come to rely on OPA more and more to control and prepare responses to requests.
- Identifying and tracking delinquent responses as a part of OPA's oversight responsibility for following up on referrals to other Offices and Bureaus.
- Monitoring trends in the types of information requested so that OPA can produce a wide range of general purpose documents for use in responding to the public.

Third, OPA would be responsible for launching frequent campaigns to inform other Agency Offices and Bureaus of their ongoing responsibilities to the public.

(2) Other Offices And Bureaus, Particularly DIC,  
Would Retain Responsibilities Under This Alternative

The increased scope of activities for OPA would not relieve other Offices and Bureaus of their responsibility to the public. DIC especially would bear a new responsibility for responding to the public where, in the past, their primary responsibility was to clientele comprised of LDC, Mission, PVO and AID/W requestor. DIC would continue to be responsible for providing assistance to members of the public who wish to visit the DIC libraries personally (i.e., "walk-ins").

Other Offices and Bureaus would be expected to be responsive to referrals from OPA, to assist in keeping the Document Inventory List current, and in forwarding the requests they cannot handle to OPA for action.

(3) Under Alternative B, OPA Would Require One Or Two  
New Staff Positions, Additional Space, And Word  
Processing Equipment; DIC Would Require One New  
Staff Position

Alternative B would require an increase in staff and other resources in both OPA and DIC. The increase in responsibilities would be prepared by OPA and DIC, and would require the addition of:

- Between one and two full-time equivalent Public Information Specialists (GS 9) in OPA: As described in the position descriptions in Appendix D, these individuals would be responsible for maintaining the Document Inventory List, preparing responses that can be answered with materials on hand, and controlling requests which are referred to other Offices for response. This same staff would operate the telephone inquiries service described in Chapter IV.
- One full-time equivalent Technical Information Specialist (GS 7) in DIC: The position description for this individual is also contained in Appendix D. The Specialist would be responsible for handling public inquiries that are addressed specifically to DIC or referred by OPA to DIC. This individual would maintain close contact with OPA's Public Information Specialist to ensure that the Document Inventory List remains current and response resources are optimized.

Exhibit III-9\* provides the assumptions regarding workload and productivity that were used to develop these estimates and shows that 1 GS 9 and 1.4 GS 7 staff are needed by DIC and OPA respectively. If this alternative is selected, we recommend that two people be hired full-time for OPA rather than hiring staff part-time. In this way, OPA's telephone and mail functions can be separated, and tighter control can be exercised over referred requests. If this is not possible, existing staff in OPA would have to assume responsibility for the part-time workload. Other resources are required to implement this alternative:

- Space: The observation made on space in Alternative A is equally valid for Alternative B. The matter is tempered, however, by the lessened space requirements in this alternative. With the renovation of the library in Room 1656, ample space would be available for the Technical Information Specialist in DIC. It would be most desirable if the OPA Public Information Specialist(s), the telephone service, and the OPA Reading Room could be housed on the fourth floor in the area of the Office of the Deputy Director of OPA.
- Word Processing Equipment: Word processing equipment would be useful (although not essential) in implementing this alternative. This equipment could help support two major functions of the new staff:
  - The Document Inventory List could be stored on the word processing equipment and updated easily.
  - Responses to common requests could be prepared. Requestors could be notified that the information they seek is out of print or unavailable, and peak volumes of requests for particular information (e.g., the CP when first published) could be handled.

DIC would continue to have the terminal for querying the R & D data bases. As can be seen from Exhibit III-10\*, these functions would require a small percentage of the available annual machine time for a standard word processing equipment. While it is feasible to procure this equipment only if it is shared with DIC or if other activities of OPA will use the balance of the machine time, maintenance of the

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\*See Appendix B, Volume II.

Document Inventory List would involve a great deal more effort without this equipment. In addition, the workload on the secretarial staff would be increased without this equipment.

Other resources, e.g., furniture, telephone connections and long distance service, and additional supervisory time, also would be required but their costs are not easily estimated. The direct on-going cost of \$45,257 does not include these direct costs.

4. ALTERNATIVE C: DECENTRALIZED RECEIPT, CONTROL, AND RESPONSE BY ALL OFFICES AND BUREAUS IN AID

Under Alternative C, the processing of written responses would be decentralized to all AID offices and bureaus. This alternative is based on the following assumptions:

- Currently, the public writes directly to the many individuals and organizational entities within AID, presumably with some understanding that the information they desire is located at that address.
- The requests can be controlled most closely and efficiently if the control is initiated by or near the point of initial receipt, rather than after several routings through the Agency. Moreover, fewer requests will get lost "through the cracks" if all requests are controlled from the point of receipt rather than being referred to another Office. Finally, the disputes about which Office should perform the control function would be put to rest by this alternative. Although the assignment of responsibility for control may be inappropriate (or even ludicrous) in some cases, no Office or Bureau would be able to dispute or deny its responsibility; the request is controlled by the Office in which it first lands.

The main features of this alternative are summarized below:

- Receipt and Distribution: The Mail Room would continue to receive and distribute written requests and be aided by an up-to-date Document Inventory List and services list.

- Control: Control would be exercised in the Office of the Assistant Administrator or Director of the first bureau or office to receive the request. Any request received by this control point would be controlled unless the response point is well known (e.g., if the source document is listed on the Document Inventory List).
- Response Preparation: Each Office and Bureau would make an exhaustive attempt to locate the requested information within its boundaries and would refer outside its own boundaries only after validating by a telephone call that the referral is appropriate.

One additional Public Information Specialist would be required in OPA only to operate the telephone inquiries service as discussed in Chapter IV. DIC would require one more Technical Information Specialist to help prepare responses related to its diverse holdings. Exhibit III-11\* indicates the Handbook changes that would be required if this alternative is selected. Exhibit III-12\* is a flow chart of the major processes which constitute this option.

(1) The SER/MO Mail Room Would Continue To Receive And Distribute Incoming Requests

Two types of mail are received by AID each day: those with a complete deliverable address and those without such an address. The Mail Room would continue to open mail that lack a deliverable address to determine a proper addressee. This analysis would be assisted by two additional reference aids:

- A quick reference of the AID functional service duties, which is now being compiled by SER/MO
- A Document Inventory List, to be compiled and updated by DIC

These tools should reduce the number of requests that are inappropriately routed. When there is doubt about the proper specific address (i.e., below independent Offices or Bureaus), the mail would be sent to the Correspondence Coordinator in the Office of the Assistant Administrator or Director at the Office or Bureau most likely to have the information. Vague requests *would not* default automatically to OPA or DIC if some other Office or Bureau is more likely to have the information.

\*See Appendix B, Volume II.

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Other mail with complete addresses undoubtedly contain many requests from the public. These requests would continue to be received by all organizational levels within the Agency. Such requests would meet one of three fates:

- If the addressee is below the Bureau level and can provide the response, he or she should do so without informing or involving the Correspondence Coordinator.
- If the request is related to PM, CM, ES or LEG functions; to FOIA, the Privacy Act, or EO 11652, or if it is from an LDC, Mission, or PVO, the receiving Office or Bureau should forward the letter to the Office with jurisdiction.
- If the recipient cannot provide the response or make a definite referral to one of the above categories, he or she should send the request to the Correspondence Coordinator in the Office or Bureau. Control procedures for these requests are described in section (2), below.

This latter category of mail requests would be the only one eligible for control by the Correspondence Coordinator at the independent Office and Bureau level.

(2) Control Would Be Exercised In Each Office And Bureau At The Assistant Administrator Or Director Level

Correspondence Coordinators in independent Offices and Bureaus would control all action requests which are referred to that level from (1) within the Office or Bureau, (2) the SER/MO Mail Room, or (3) another Correspondence Coordinator. Control would be accomplished using the logging and filing system shown in Appendix C. Official control would cross Office and Bureau boundaries and the Assistant Administrator or Director of each Office may be called upon to resolve delinquent cases. In addition, each Correspondence Coordinator would be responsible for making a monthly tally of the number and type of requests and for sharing these reports with OPA so that the latter may keep informed regarding the public's interests.

Of course, the strengthening of the control function at this level would relieve the other organizational entities at lower levels of their responsibility for establishing management controls on all correspondences. These organizations should continue to comply with the guidance in Handbook 21.

(3) Responses Would Be Prepared By The Office Or Bureau Which Has Control Over The Records In Question

The Document Inventory List would be used to help establish the Office or Bureau with cognizant authority over the requested information. Each Office and Bureau would be expected to provide the necessary information and be responsive in fulfilling requests that originate in the Office or Bureau or that are referred there. Because of DIC's vast holdings, many requests for information would be referred there for action (for preparation, not control). Other Offices and Bureaus would refrain from referring requests to DIC when the information is also available in the Office or Bureau. Finally, each Office and Bureau would be required to help DIC staff keep the Document Inventory List up to date by alerting them to new publications and significant changes in available quantities.

(4) Alternative C Would Require About Two New Staff Positions, Additional Space, And Word Processing Equipment

Alternative C would require minimal increases in staff and other resources in OPA and DIC. The incremental responsibilities, which would include the addition of a central telephone inquiries service in OPA and the new public inquiries responsibilities of DIC, would require the addition of:

- One full-time equivalent Technical Information Specialist (GS 9) in DIC: As described in the position description in Appendix D, this individual would be responsible for managing the Document Inventory List and preparing the DIC responses.
- One full-time equivalent Public Information Specialist (GS 7) in OPA: The position description for this individual is also contained in Appendix D. In addition to routing and controlling mail addressed specifically to OPA and preparing responses that can be answered with information on hand in OPA, this individual will also operate the central telephone inquiries services discussed in Chapter IV.

Exhibit III-13\* provides the assumptions regarding workload and productivity that were used to develop these estimates and shows that 1.2 GS 9 and 1.0 GS 7 staff are needed. Exhibit III-14\* documents other resource assumptions. If this alternative is selected, we recommend that one person be hired full-time for each grade, rather than hiring part-time individuals. Other resources are required to implement this option:

- Space: In DIC, space would be required for one additional librarian. This could be accommodated within the recently renovated library space in the new State Department building. In OPA, working space for one person and shelf space for 15 to 25 documents would be required but already allocated to this activity; this placement is appropriate since the new staff reports to the Deputy Director of OPA.
- Automated Equipment: Automated equipment would be useful (but less essential than in Alternative for B) in implementing DIC's new role under this alternative. Word processing equipment and the existing terminal in DIC could help support two major functions of the new staff:
  - The existing terminal would be used to query the R & D data base, obtain information on publications, print out document prices, and to prepare bibliographies. Form letters would be used to transmit these computer printed bibliographies.
  - Maintain the Document Inventory List. The list can be stored on word processing equipment and easily updated. A DIU Lexitron or other shared currently existing word processing equipment could be utilized for this function since only about 100 hours (5 percent utilization) are required. An alternative would be the use of an existing terminal and some new computer programs to utilize the main AID computer. This alternative is not costed because of the availability of shared existing word processing equipment.

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\*See Appendix B, Volume II

Other required resources cannot be easily costed or represent the utilization of current "sunk"\* costs. These include:

- Telephone service and FTS service
- Furniture and shelving
- Continued assistance by staff and management in other offices and bureaus
- Computer time accessing the DIS data bases

Because these costs are minor and, for the most part, not incremental, they have not been documented. The total direct costs of this alternative are \$31,000.

5. THE THREE ALTERNATIVES WOULD HAVE SIMILAR IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULES AND COSTS

Regardless of the alternative selected, 14 tasks would be required before implementation can occur. Exhibit III-15 lists these tasks and shows that between four and five months would be required to launch the new procedures, with Alternative C being slightly less time-consuming. Exhibit III-16 provides estimates of the level of effort (in terms of person-weeks\*\*) required for each alternative, by task. As might be expected, Alternative A requires the most investment in start-up, although not substantially more than Alternatives B or C.

6. EACH OF THE ALTERNATIVES HAS DISTINCT ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

As is evident from the preceding sections, the alternatives vary considerably in the locus of responsibility for receipt and distribution of public requests, for control over requests, and for preparation of responses. They also vary in start-up and ongoing costs. Each configuration of responsibility is associated with some important advantages and some disadvantages that require serious weighing by AID management. Exhibit E-1 in the Executive Summary summarizes the primary benefits and limitations of each alternative and these are described more fully below:

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\*Refers to costs which would be incurred regardless of the implementation of the activities in question.

\*\*These person weeks are not converted to dollars because the individuals involved have a wide range of salaries.

EXHIBIT III-15

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

TASK	MONTH					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Select Preferred Alternative	-----					
2. Draft Handbook Changes	-----	-----				
3. Obtain Approval For Handbook Changes		-----	-----			
4. Prepare Position Description	-----					
5. Obtain Personnel Approvals And Recruit Staff*		A ----- B ----- C -----				
6. Train In DIC Inventory And System				A ----- B ----- C -----		
7. Train In New Procedures					-----	
8. Train In Computer And Word Processing Equipment					A ----- B ----- C -----	
9. Prepare DIL And Launch Acquisition Effort					A ----- B ----- C -----	
10. Install Telephone Service					A & B ----- C -----	
11. Procure Equipment & Prepare Input	A -----					
12. Design Forms And Obtain Approval		B ----- C -----				
13. Publicize New Procedures Agency-Wide					-----	
14. Evaluate The New System As An On-Going Effort					-----	
		Implementation Period-Alternatives A and B				
		Implementation Period-Alternative C				
*Assumes that staff will be recruited from within the Agency						

EXHIBIT III-16

LEVEL OF EFFORT  
FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TASK	ALTERNATIVE A		ALTERNATIVE B		ALTERNATIVE C	
	ASSUMPTION	PERSON WEEKS	ASSUMPTION	PERSON WEEKS	ASSUMPTION	PERSON WEEKS
1. Select preferred Alternative	20 Upper Mgt. Persons	15	Same	15	Same	15
2. Draft Handbook Changes	One Writer, Half Time Secretary, Half Time Manager	4	Same	4	Same	4
3. Obtain Approval For Handbook Changes	20 Upper Mgt. Persons	30	Same	30	Same	30
4. Prepare Position Description	One Writer, Half Time Secretary, Half Time Mgr.	1	Same	1	Same	1
5. Obtain Personnel Approvals and Recruit Staff*	Two Weeks Per New Hire	8	Same	6	Same	4
6. Train In DIC Inventory And System	Four Trainees, One Trainer	3	Three Trainees, One Trainer	2	Two Trainees, One Trainer	2
7. Train In New Procedures	Four Trainees, One Trainer	3	Three Trainees, One Trainer	2	19 Trainees, One Trainer, Two Day	8
8. Train In Computer And Word Processing Equipment	Four Trainees, One Trainer, 2 Weeks	9	Two Trainees, One Trainer	6	One Trainee, One Trainer	5
9. Prepare DIL, Launch Acquisition Effort	One Person	4	Same	4	Same	3
10. Install Telephone Service	One Person	1	Same	1	Same	1
11. Procure Equipment And Prepare Input	5 Mgt., Class I, Programmer	9	5 Mgt., Class I, Programmer	5	5 Mgt., Class I	2
12. Design Form And Obtain Approval	Drafter, Mgt., Procurement	3	Same	3	Same	3
13. Publicize New Procedures Agency Wide	One Writer, 20 Upper Mgt.	3	Same	3	Same	3
14. Evaluate The New System As An Ongoing Effort	Operational Cost	NA	Same	NA	Same	NA
Total Person Weeks Required For Implementation		93		82		83
*Assumes that staff will be recruited from within the Agency.						

(1) Alternative A Provides The Greatest Assurance That Public Requests Will Receive Prompt, Courteous Attention

Alternative A provides the greatest degree of centralization and, consequently, has the greatest chance of success in providing adequate, timely responses. At the same time it has the highest direct costs for implementation and for ongoing operations. This alternative also has these advantages:

- OPA's current mandate strongly suggests that OPA has main, if not primary, responsibility for public requests. Under this alternative, OPA would have the resources necessary to carry out this mandate in a manner that satisfies the overall Agency objectives related to public responsiveness.
- OPA is widely viewed throughout AID as the Office with ultimate and primary responsibility for handling this important function. There would be little disagreement among Agency staff and organizational entities if OPA were asked to increase its role, whereas, in the other options, considerable in-fighting and disagreement about the precise division of responsibility may occur. Equally important, the response burden on the other Offices and Bureaus can be kept to an absolute minimum. This means that these staff can have more time for their primary responsibilities. It also means that when a referral is required, other Offices and Bureaus would be more likely to be responsive.
- Regardless of the role OPA plays in providing responses to individual public requests, it would continue to perform many public liaison functions. To perform these other activities adequately, OPA must be sensitive to and knowledgeable about the current attitudes and concerns of the public. It is difficult to keep tabs on these ever-changing sentiments unless the letters and telephone calls from the public are monitored closely. Although the other alternatives contain some mechanisms for providing feedback to OPA, they would not provide it as completely and as sensitively as in Alternative A.

- Considerable concern has been expressed about the disparity with which FOIA and non-FOIA requests are processed. Regulation 12 states clearly that a *bona fide* FOIA request must be clearly marked as such. Nonetheless, the spirit of the Act suggests that all requests from the public be handled expeditiously and equitably. Under this alternative, non-FOIA requests would not be subjected to the very stringent procedural requirements of the FOIA regulations. They would, however, be handled in the same Office, by the same staff, and with the same resources used in responding to FOIA requests. Non-FOIA requests would also be handled by a staff whose *primary* purpose is service to the public, whereas, in other Alternatives, the Office in which the cognizant staff reside is concerned with other, often conflicting priorities; in these latter cases, the needs of the public may not receive the attention they would in Alternative A.
  
- Although the incremental direct costs of implementing and operating this alternative are greater than the costs of the other alternatives, this Alternative is the most efficient overall. In this option, the great majority of the costs associated with responding to the public are centralized in OPA and, therefore, easily measurable. In the other alternatives, the response burden is dispersed throughout the Agency and is "hidden" in the overall costs of the other Offices and Bureaus. If these hidden costs could be measured, we believe that they would exceed the costs of operating a central correspondence control service in OPA, for a number of reasons:
  - The dispersed staff required to provide the responses in Alternatives B and C are not highly trained in locating information or in preparing diplomatic, courteous requests to the public. Staff in Alternative A are more specifically trained and equipped to provide this service quickly and effectively.
  
  - The information is located at numerous points throughout the Agency, so many requests have to pass through at least two parties for a response; in Alternative A, a great deal of the information is available in OPA, and, thus routing and referrals are kept to a minimum.

- In the other Alternatives, staff may be tempted to overlook or "lose" requests, rather than prepare a reply. In Alternative A, even the most delinquent staff may be motivated to pass the requests on to OPA, since OPA would, in many, many cases, prepare the response itself rather than pass the burden back to the other Offices and Bureaus.
- Currently, many letters (containing requests and other information) are received with invalid addresses; the SER/MO Mail Room lacks the resources to refer these letters with precision and, as a result, many requests fail to come to the attention of the proper Office. Under Alternative A, these requests have a greater chance of being identified and processed promptly and accurately.
- Finally, this alternative would resolve the current ambiguity between the roles of DIC and OPA. The relative responsibilities of the two offices would be demarcated by clientele: OPA would be responsive to the public (including US universities, corporations, and foreign requestors not from an LDC).

These advantages must be weighed against the drawbacks of Alternative A which include these:

- OPA's current Reading Room holdings are very modest so a considerable effort must be made to develop the required inventory.
- Considerable training of new staff would be required; in the other Alternatives, new staff will be co-located with existing staff and therefore can be trained by staff who already perform similar and related activities.

The largest space is required by this Alternative; in AID, space is exceedingly difficult to obtain. Without adequate contiguous space, this alternative could fail, even if all other resources and procedures are adequate.

- Because the request would be handled in the same Office as FOIA requests, staff may experience some conflict in priorities between FOIA requests (with their legally binding due dates) and non-FOIA requests. Unless spheres of responsibility are clearly defined, the non-FOIA staff may be pressured to attend to FOIA requests, to the detriment of other public inquiries.

(2) Alternative B Relies On Existing Collections Of Information But May Cause Confusion Over Roles And Responsibilities

The primary advantages of Alternative B are:

- It relies on existing patterns of record keeping and, thus, does not duplicate inventories and other records held and controlled by other Offices and Bureaus.
- Responses are made by the Office or Bureau most knowledgeable about the subject.

Ironically, these two strengths contribute to the major disadvantages of the alternative:

- The control responsibility is separated from the response preparation responsibility. This increases the difficulty of managing the response effort, and, consequently, reduces the likelihood of success for the system.
- The burden for responding falls on the geographic and technical offices, a responsibility they are often unwilling to assume.
- It is sometimes difficult to determine precisely which Office or Bureau has "primary" control over the subject records and this may lead to disagreements about roles among the Offices.

These issues comprise the crux of the debate about Alternative B. This alternative is a compromise between Alternative A and C. It requires less start-up and direct costs than Alternative A; it can operate in a smaller space than Alternative A can operate and requires more space than Alternative C. It provides about the same degree of control as Alternative C but less than Alternative A and, the burden on other Offices and Bureaus on this option is greater than in A but less than in C.

(3) Alternative C Is The Least Disruptive To The Existing Situation But Puts The Most Burden On The Geographic And Technical Office Staffs

The most compelling advantage of Alternative C is that it involves the least disruption to the existing situation and builds upon a system that AID staff are somewhat familiar with. It also creates the least arduous procedures and controls and has the smallest direct costs. Control and service delivery would not be changed fundamentally from the current practices but merely tightened up and supported. There would be no duplication of files and documents. If the system operates as it is intended, the majority of requests would be controlled and processed correctly.

The major disadvantage of this alternative, of course, is the very large number of control points in the system. A system which hinges on the personal responsibility of more than a dozen individuals (i.e., the Correspondence Coordinators) is somewhat risky. It is especially fallible if there is no central authority or oversight responsibility point within the Agency. Without the continuous and enthusiastic support of top management in each Office or Bureau, this alternative could easily lapse into a replica of the system now in operation.

Another point worthy of consideration is the possibility of requests defaulting heavily to OPA or DIC. While the system clearly outlines the conditions under which this should occur, the habitual thinking of agency personnel may nullify newly established procedures which rely on an "honor system."

## SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THREE ALTERNATIVES

ALTERNATIVE	RECEIPT & DISTRIBUTION			CONTROL			RESPONSE PREPARATION		
	OPA	DIC	OTHER OFFICES & BUREAUS*	OPA	DIC	OTHER OFFICES & BUREAUS*	OPA	DIC	OTHER OFFICES & BUREAUS*
A. Centralized Receipt & Distribution, Control & Response Preparation in the Office of Public Affairs	Reviews all mail which does not have a valid address & routes, as appropriate  Receives central telephone requests	Continues to receive requests addressed directly to DIC, but may forward requests from the public to OPA for control & action	Continues to receive requests directly from the public. If the request is not related to material controlled in that office, the request is forwarded for control & action by OPA	Controls all written & telephone requests which come to its attention, across Office & Bureau boundaries	Internal controls only	Internal controls only	Assembles relatively large holdings, maintains DIL, conducts library searches & makes minimal referrals	Prepares responses to requests from LDCs, Missions, PVO and AID/W requests	Prepares responses to scientific, technical & policy questions for which OPA cannot provide an adequate response
B. Centralized Control in OPA with Response Preparation Performed by Offices & Bureaus with Primary Access to Records Required to Provide the Response	Receives mail addressed to OPA (via SER/MO Mail Room) & requests from Mail Room & other Offices & Bureaus if the request is for general information.  Receives central telephone requests	Receives mail addressed to DIC from public & from LDC, AID/W, PVO & Mission requests. Routes requests for general information to OPA	Receives mail addressed directly to Office & Bureau or routed from Mail Room. Retains requests that rely on in-office information. Sends all requests it cannot answer to OPA for action & control	Controls & tracks requests across Bureau & Office boundaries	Internal controls only	Internal controls only	Assembles a modest inventory of documents, maintains DIL, refers requests that cannot be answered with information on hand	Prepares responses to all public requests when DIC is the primary source of information	Prepares responses to all public requests when Office or Bureau is the primary source of information
C. Decentralized Receipt, Control, & Response Preparation by All Offices & Bureaus	Receives mail addressed directly to OPA & Mail Room referrals containing requests for general information  Receives & distributes central telephone calls	Receives mail addressed specifically to DIC & Mail Room referrals containing requests for publications	Receives mail addressed specifically to Office or Bureau & Mail Room referrals containing requests related to functional responsibility of Office & Bureau	Controls all requests that come to its attention; controls cross Office & Bureau boundaries	Controls all requests that come to its attention; controls cross Office & Bureau boundaries	Controls all requests that come to its attention; controls cross Office & Bureau boundaries	Collects only documents containing the most general information about AID  Responds directly only to requests that can be satisfied by information on hand	Maintains DIL & prepares responses to the public when DIC is primary holder of records related to the request	Prepares responses when Office or Bureau is primary keeper of records that contain desired information

\*Does not refer to current procedures in ES or LEG.

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CHAPTER IV

TELEPHONE REQUESTS

#### IV. TELEPHONE REQUESTS

Regardless of the approach taken to responding to written requests, we conclude that a central telephone inquiries service is required to give direction to the many callers requesting information. In all three alternatives, the telephone inquiries service would be located in OPA--in the Public Inquiries Staff for Alternative A and in the Office of the Director for Alternatives B and C.

Telephone calls received by OPA (directly from the public, via the Centrex operator, or referred from another Office or Bureau) may be handled in a number of ways. In all cases, the objective of the telephone inquiries service is to minimize caller frustration and expense. The desires of the caller would determine which of the following courses of action are to be pursued:

- OPA would transfer or refer the call *only* if (1) the name and number provided to the caller would be certain to provide an adequate response and (2) the caller wishes to place another call. These calls would include those related to PM, CM, passports, and LEG and ES affairs, as well as those in which the caller wants to locate an individual, an organizational entity or an Office responsible for a specific project or policy.
- The call would be developed into a "written request" (i.e., a clear, specific message would be taken). This written request would then be handled just as if it were a letter request:
  - In Alternative A, OPA would control the request until a satisfactory answer is assured and would prepare the majority of responses (see page III-4 for details about OPA's responsibility for controlling requests and preparing responses).
  - In Alternative B, OPA would control the requests until a satisfactory answer is assured and would either prepare the response with materials on hand or would refer the "message" elsewhere for a response. (See page III-12 for details about OPA's responsibility for controlling requests and preparing responses).
  - In Alternative C, OPA would serve as a referral network and would be responsible for controlling and answering only those requests which bear directly upon OPA's other specific responsibilities.

When an individual in another Office or Bureau receives a call requesting information, one of two actions would be taken:

- First, the individual in the Office or Bureau who initially receives the call would attempt to satisfy the request with available information. If the call would be handled within the Office or Bureau, the call would be transferred for response within the Bureau or a message would be taken. If a message is taken, the initial recipient must be certain that the message is clear and specific. In all cases, the initial Office or Bureau would avoid repeated transferring of the call from one location to another without first ascertaining the precise location of the requested information.
- Second, if the recipient of the call determines that the Office or Bureau cannot respond to the request with materials controlled by that Office or Bureau, the call would be transferred to the telephone inquiries service in OPA. If the call is long distance, the Office or Bureau may offer to have OPA return the call so that the caller will not be forced to pay for an additional toll charge. OPA then would process the call as discussed above.

To operate this service OPA would require a telephone with three sequential lines (e.g., 632-1234, 632-1235, 632-1236) connected by a "hunting"\* rotary. In this way the OPA staff would place a caller on hold to verify the source of information through a second telephone call and more than one case could be handled at once if staff are available.

When a referral is required, one of two situations would be encountered:

- If the referree is in the same Centrex system as OPA (e.g., located in the New State Department Building), a direct transfer would be made.
- If the referree is in another Centrex system (e.g., in Rosslyn Plaza), the call would not be transferred automatically. The caller would be given the choice of (1) making the call directly or (2) having the AID referree return the call. The latter probably would be more frequent when the initial call is long distance.

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\*Thus, if one dials 632-1234 and it is busy, the telephone will automatically "hunt" for the next free line.

Two additional steps would be required to improve the telephone information process. First, the AID telephone book should be improved. This could be done in a separate book (i.e., one not coupled with the State book) or in a joint AID-State book in which the sections dealing with AID are more clearly segregated and marked. The telephone book should clearly highlight the existence of the telephone inquiries service and should provide a functional listing to direct callers to the most frequently called offices. Second, the Centrex directory should clearly indicate the number of the new telephone inquiries service. Operators should be informed of the new number and the role of the service.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, we believe that there are several strategies available to AID for improving the manner in which the public information activity is performed. Some of these are generic, applying equally to all three suggested alternatives. As discussed more fully in Chapter IV, these include:

- A centralized telephone inquiries service should be established in OPA to receive and route calls from the public.
- The AID telephone directory should be improved to highlight the existence of the telephone inquiries service; a functional directory should also be included to help the public find the Offices most commonly desired (e.g., personnel and contracts).
- All mail that is received in AID with a complete, valid address should be forwarded to the addressee without intervention by OPA or the SER/MO Mail Room. Only mail with an incomplete or invalid address should be reviewed before routing.
- A strong degree of control is essential, regardless of the Office from which it is exercised.
- An inventory of available AID publications (i.e., the Document Inventory List) should be developed and maintained to assist the cognizant Office(s) in locating the appropriate source of information requested by the public.
- OPA and DIC should be added to the list of Offices that routinely review (for information purposes only) the order requests to publish new AID documents (i.e., GPO form 3019).
- Additional, adequately trained and skilled staff should be hired, and their new responsibilities clearly spelled out.
- Regardless of the alternative selected, all Offices and Bureaus in AID should be made aware of the new procedures and of their continued involvement in assuring that the new procedures operate effectively. Semi-annual campaigns--via memoranda, posters, or other media--should remind all Agency staff of the importance of this activity and their respective roles.

- Procedures for processing certain categories of requests should not be changed and these requests should not fall within the jurisdiction of the office(s) which assumes responsibility under one of the alternative solutions. Specifically, requests traditionally handled by PM, CM, STATE, ES, LEG, or the OPA/PI staff, as well as those from LDC, PVO, AID/W or mission staff should not be included.

We feel that, in this framework, any of the three alternatives will result in a substantial improvement over the current situation. They are not, however, equal in their prospects for success. We believe that Alternative A should be given the most serious consideration. Although it requires the largest investment of resources, it has the highest probability of success, measured in terms of:

- Providing timely, consistent, and appropriate responses to requests from the public
- Withstanding the pressures of time, as shifts in Agency organization and staffing occur
- Enjoying ready acceptance throughout the Agency
- Reducing the conflict and tension that has arisen from an unclear division of responsibility

If Alternative A is rejected because of the resources required, then we recommend that Alternative B be accepted. It is a reasonable compromise and, over time, the sphere of responsibility for OPA can be increased (towards an approximation of Alternative A) if desirable. If Alternative B is selected, the relative roles of DIC and OPA must be very clearly defined.

Alternative C is our last choice. Although it would be an improvement over the current situation, it bears the most risk of failure. There is no oversight authority and responsibility for the success of the system is dependent on many individuals, each with a host of other duties competing for priority.

While the Agency is selecting and implementing the preferred alternative, interim steps can be taken to alleviate the current situation. First, work should begin on the Document Inventory List, without which none of the alternatives can proceed. The OPA Research Librarian can take a *lead* in developing the list, but should not be expected to develop the list without substantial additional help. Thus, temporary duty staff will be required for about one month to establish the baseline list and procedures for updating the information.

Second, the telephone inquiries service should be established, as described in Alternative C. Under this alternative, the telephone inquiries staff responsibilities would be limited to answering the calls, routing calls, and providing responses to the simplest requests. If Alternative C is eventually implemented, no modifications will be necessary; if either of the other two alternatives is selected, the telephone inquiries service can be built on this foundation.

Third, the existence of the new telephone service and its immediate scope of responsibility should be widely publicized via general memoranda to AID staff and to the Centrex operators who serve the various AID buildings.

#6

REPORT ON AID  
PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING  
TO SELECTED  
PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUESTS

Submitted Under Contract No:  
AID/OTR-C-1693  
PIO/T 2195003

VOLUME II: APPENDICES



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APPENDIX A  
METHODOLOGY

A. METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed by Birch & Davis Associates, Inc. to conduct the public information study revolved around gaining a clear understanding of AID's mission, its organization, and its existing procedures for responding to public requests. Weekly meetings to maintain an interactive dialogue with MP and OPA, and to report the week's activities were an integral part of the methodology. The meetings provided feedback on prior work, guided activities planned for the following week, and provided a formal structure within which information gathered to date could be synthesized into three acceptable alternative solutions.

The following steps were taken to satisfy the requirements of the study:

- Defining the Problem
- Identifying Key Personnel
- Conducting Interviews
- Collecting Data
- Performing Analysis
- Developing Alternative Solutions
- Making Recommendations

1. THE PROBLEM AS DESCRIBED IN THE PIO/T IS THAT "THE AGENCY CURRENTLY LACKS AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM FOR RESPONDING TO INFORMATION REQUESTS FROM THE PUBLIC"

As stated in the PIO/T, the "lack of a clearly defined and efficiently functioning system has led to divergent perceptions...as to who has responsibility for responding to public inquiries." This hypothesis indicates the need to determine the volume, nature, distribution, and disposition of public requests received by the Agency. The information could then be used to assess how the existing procedures for responding to public inquiries corresponded to or contradicted the assignment of responsibilities described in AID Handbooks.

From the outset, we established certain boundaries within which to conduct the study. These boundaries, based on background information provided by MP, took into consideration some of the budgetary and organizational constraints governing Agency activities.

Basically, the boundaries provided a general work plan which concentrated on:

- Interviewing a highly selective sample of personnel who respond to public inquiries.
- Analyzing forms, procedures and filing systems in these offices.
- Noting redundancies, conflicts, and inconsistencies.
- Soliciting advice and support from offices involved in responding to certain types of public requests.
- Making on-going evaluations of how adequately the various offices respond to requests for information.

With these thoughts in mind, we proceeded to carry out the remaining six steps--each step overlapping adjacent steps and each contributing further to the definition of the problem.

2. MAJOR RECIPIENTS OF INFORMATION REQUESTS AND PERSONNEL IN ORGANIZATIONS WITH FORMAL CONTROL SYSTEMS WERE IDENTIFIED AND INTERVIEWED

Once the problem was defined, key personnel involved in the public information activity were identified in OPA and in the Bureau for Development Support, Office for Development Information and Utilization (DS/DIU). Within DS/DIU, particular attention was addressed also to the Development Information Center (DIC). In addition, the Office of the Executive Secretary (ES), which receives a large number of requests, is known to have a highly effective centralized tracking system for controlling specific categories of correspondence. For this reason, interviews were conducted with the four analysts and management staff in ES. Correspondence Coordinators in the geographic and technical bureaus who serve as the focal point for correspondence were also consulted. Other AID offices and staff with a role in responding to public requests were identified through interviews with these key staff and were then also interviewed.

Agencies outside of AID were also targeted for interviews. These included the Department of State, the Department of Commerce, (DOC) the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the International Communications Agency (ICA). The purpose of these interviews was to identify the numerous techniques employed by other Federal agencies and to determine whether these techniques could be transferred to AID.

### 3. INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED WITH SIXTY INDIVIDUALS

Sixty individuals with a direct involvement in the public information function were interviewed and are listed in Exhibit A-I. The interviews solicited the respondents' assessment of the following subjects:

- The kinds of requests received
- The volume of requests received
- Logging and tracking systems used
- The filing system used to support the public information activity
- The kinds of requests which could be answered by the office with information on hand
- The procedures for routing requests which could not be answered directly
- The perceived level and locus of responsibility for the public information activity
- The inter-office relationships that were created to accommodate this activity and any strains in these relationships
- The location, availability, and accessibility of sources of information in AID (e.g., publications, reference materials)
- The overall perception of the adequacy of the public information activity

This line of questioning proved fruitful. The respondents varied in their experience level and their understanding of the problem; yet they were very cooperative and were able to provide us with sufficient information to better frame the problem, to identify additional candidates for interviews, and to pinpoint available data sources for further analysis.

### 4. DATA COLLECTION HAD SOME SET-BACKS

The data collection process was divided into two major activities:

- A three-week sample of all requests received by OPA and DIC was to be the basis of the request analysis phase.

## EXHIBIT A-I(1)

## PERSONNEL INTERVIEWED

AID	SER/MP/I Chief	Richard Calhoun
AID	OPA Deputy Director	Christine Camp
AID	OPA/PI Chief	Arnold Dadian
AID	OPA Librarian	James Bednar
AID	ES Deputy Executive Secretary	Douglas Clark
AID	ES Communications Coordinator	Angella Greene
AID	ES Staff Staff Staff Staff	Ruby Eggesston Vernice Johnson Mary Wills Larry Frazier
AID	DS/DIU Director	Lida Allen
AID	DS/DIU Deputy Director	Maury Brown
AID	DS/DIU/DIC Chief	Edna Flabo
AID	DS/DIU/DIC Staff	Jane Nida
AID	DS/DIU/DIC Librarian	Joanne Paskar
AID	DS/DIU/DIC Librarian	Susan Weintraub
AID	DS/DIU/DIC Staff	Margaret Pope
AID	DS/DIU Staff	Lee White
AID	DS Staff	Charlotte Kjellmark
AID	DS/AGR Staff	Lennie Jordan
AID	SER/MO Communications and Record Management Chief	Stanley Holladay
AID	SER/MO General Services Chief	Clyde Laursen
AID	SER/MO/PAV Chief	Roger Mieras
AID	SER/MO/PAV Staff	David Hughes
AID	SER/MO Staff	Aundrae Teague
AID	SER/DM Director	James McMahan
AID	SER/DM Data Systems	Willard Lee
AID	SER/MO Staff	James Russell
AID	SER/CM/SB Staff	Nedra Rowe
AID	PM Recruitment Chief	Sandy Stone
AID	PM Staff	Vivian Bryant
AID	FM Staff	Marian Nelli
AID	LEG Staff	Elve King
AID	PPC Staff	Fuki Seki
AID	PPC/PDPR Staff	Beverly Farrell
AID	PPC/WID Chief	Arvonne Fraser
AID	PPC/WID Librarian	Eleanor Sajeski
AID	PPC/PIAS Staff	Kay Lee
AID	PPC/PIAS Statistics and Reports	Albert Huntington
AID	AG Special Assistant	Delacy Cox
AID	AG Staff	Vivian Pimberton

EXHIBIT A-I(2)

AID GC Staff	Joan Novotny
AID PDC Staff	Justine Baylor
AID EOP Staff	Jo Williams
AID IIA Staff	Mary Brock
AID AA/AFR Staff	Diane Blount
AID ASIA/EMS Director	Fred Fischer
AID ASIA/EMS Staff	Jerry Nathan
AID NE Staff	Del Davis
AID LAC Staff	Bette Cook
State PA/PC Chief	Paul Auerswald
State PA/PC Correspondence Management	Susan Haufe
State PA/PC Public Information	Peter Knecht
State FADRC/DA Chief	William Parks
State FADRC/LR Chief	Conrad Eaton
State FADRC/PBR/Distribu- tion Chief	Virginia Butler
ICA/FOI Public and Congressional Liaison	Charles Jones
USDA Office of Government and Public Affairs	Hal Taylor
USDC Public Information	Joe Slye
DOC/FOI	Anthony Sturm

During the first week, we asked the two managing librarians of DIC, the Research Librarian in OPA, and the Chief of OPA/PI to copy all mail and telephone inquiries from the public which came to their attention and to annotate the request describing the action taken. The purpose of this request was to establish a statistical data base of the volume, distribution and disposition of public requests. This sample could not be developed as planned for two reasons:

- Because the main DIU/DIC library was closed for renovation during this period, librarians were unable to collect data for the sample.
- DIC and OPA personnel felt that the extra time required to explain why a particular action was taken for each request, in addition to logging all requests and copying those referred to other offices, would greatly detract from their ability to respond. In addition, both OPA/PI and the Rosslyn library were short of staff during this period and therefore could not provide the information requested. Consequently, only the Research Librarian in OPA complied fully with our request.

Instead, statistics were collected by studying historical files which contain requests and responses by month. In addition management reports, internal memoranda resource files were reviewed. The major limitation of this collection method was the inability to determine the volume, distribution and disposition of referrals. Interviews with other offices, however, provided enough information to overcome this limitation.

• Data and estimates were also collected from Correspondence Coordinators and individuals in bureaus and offices who respond to public inquiries. The purpose of this effort was to obtain an indication of the total volume of public inquiries, and the number of personnel assigned to satisfy these requests. This determination was important for two reasons:

- With this information, we could estimate the distribution of referred requests and conjecture about the ability of offices and bureaus to respond to these requests.
- We could determine the increase in workload and time requirements which would fall on any office recommended to receive and distribute, control and respond to requests.

Data collection was also supplemented with information gathered from interviews with non-AID personnel. Although these interviews served mainly to assess the applicability of their systems to AID's environment, they also provided us with correlation figures which were used to confirm staff productivity standards used in Chapters III and IV.

5. A SUFFICIENT AMOUNT OF INFORMATION WAS GATHERED FOR THE REQUIRED DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was a four-step process:

- First, all of the information was classified and converted to yearly figures for requests, responses, and staff hours.
- Next, data were graphed to visualize the magnitude of differences in these figures.
- In conjunction with these activities, data concerning publications, documents, and other technical resources were analyzed to determine the feasibility and necessity of compiling an inventory of available information.
- Finally, the data were cast against a number of processing options to determine the basic feasibility and practicality of the approach.

6. THREE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS, APPROVED BY OPA, DS/DIU AND MP WERE DEVELOPED

Flow charts and general analysis of three alternative solutions were presented to OPA, DS/DIU and MP at the end of the fifth week of effort. A narrative on each alternative included the premise on which the alternative was based and a description of the organization and functions which would be recommended with each alternative. These alternatives were discussed with personnel in organizations which would be most affected by these solutions. At this point, it was necessary to have the support of any organization which would be accepting a greater responsibility in the area of responding to public inquiries. Concurrently, it was necessary to verify that those organizations eliminated from playing a major role in any solution had no desire to do so.

At the end of the sixth week, representatives from DS/DIU, OPA and MP gathered to decide whether the three tentative alternatives were worthy of more detailed analysis and consideration. One alternative was eliminated at this point and a hybrid of the remaining two alternatives was added.

The recommended solution for handling telephone inquiries is described in Chapter III. Three alternatives for processing written requests are presented in Chapter IV.

7. A RECOMMENDATION WAS MADE BASED ON BOTH LONG-TERM AND SHORT-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

Before determining which of the three alternatives was preferable, we established criteria which would be used to make this evaluation:

- The most important consideration was the degree to which the alternative would be accepted and endorsed by the Agency as a whole and by the individuals and organizations which would be most greatly affected by the change.
- The second consideration was the degree of efficiency and success that could be anticipated from the new system. This was expressed in terms of:
  - Clarity in roles and responsibilities among various offices.
  - The validity of the logical premise on which the alternative is based.
  - Stability and longevity of the system.
  - Responsiveness--with respect to the quality, consistency, and timeliness of the response.
- Finally, the implementation and on-going costs were assessed against the other two criteria.

The three alternatives were ranked against these criteria and a recommended alternative was selected.

APPENDIX B  
SUPPORTING EXHIBITS

The Challenge Brochure

A Fact Sheet

Why Foreign Aid

Front Line

AGENDA

AID's Work In Health

AID's Work In Nutrition

AGENDA Articles on Population

AGENDA Articles On Agriculture

Appropriations Bill

CP Main Volume

Development Issues

Trade Policies Toward Developing Countries

Green Books

Food For Peace

Current Technical Services Contract

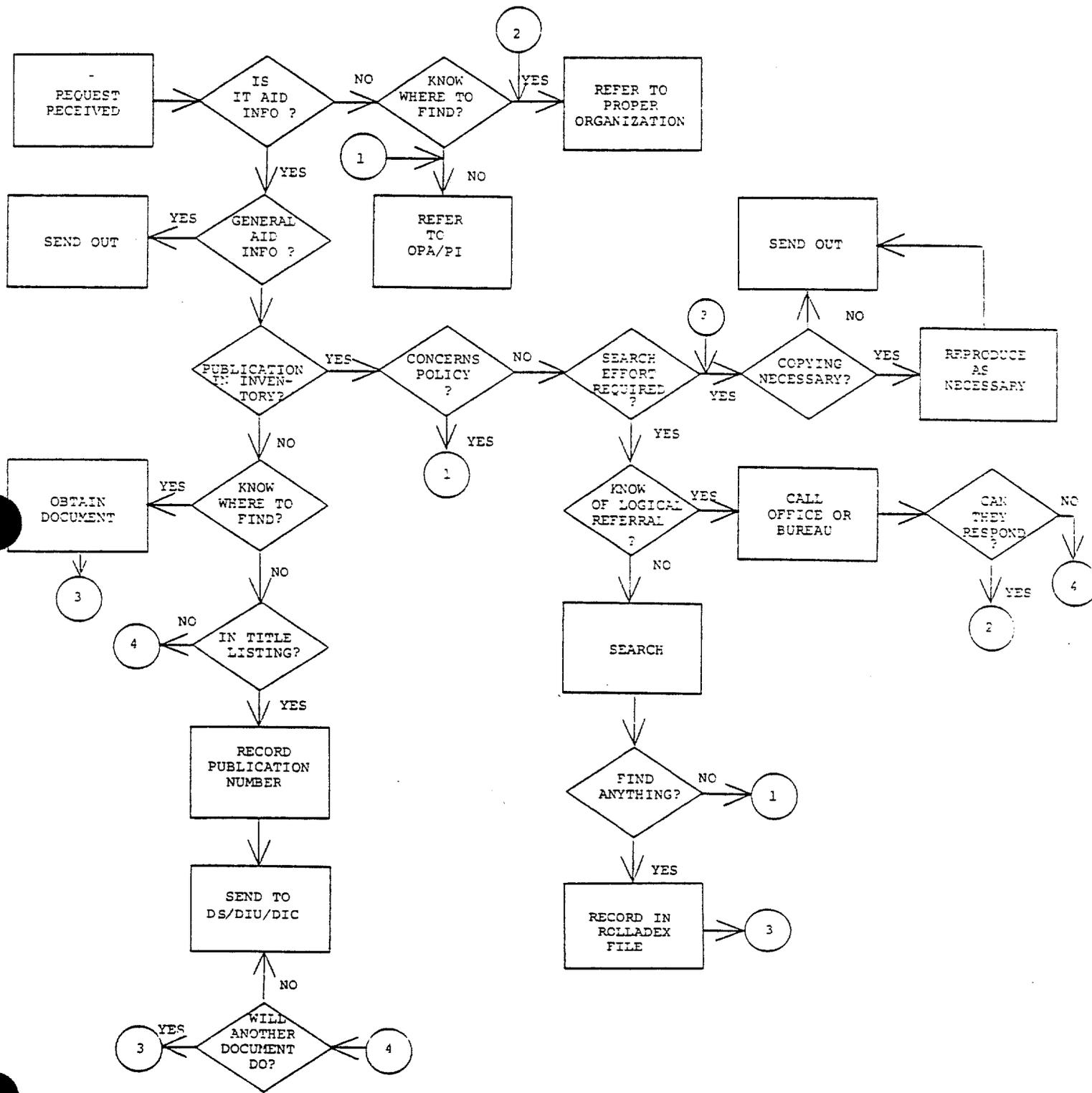
AID FINANCED UNIVERSITIES

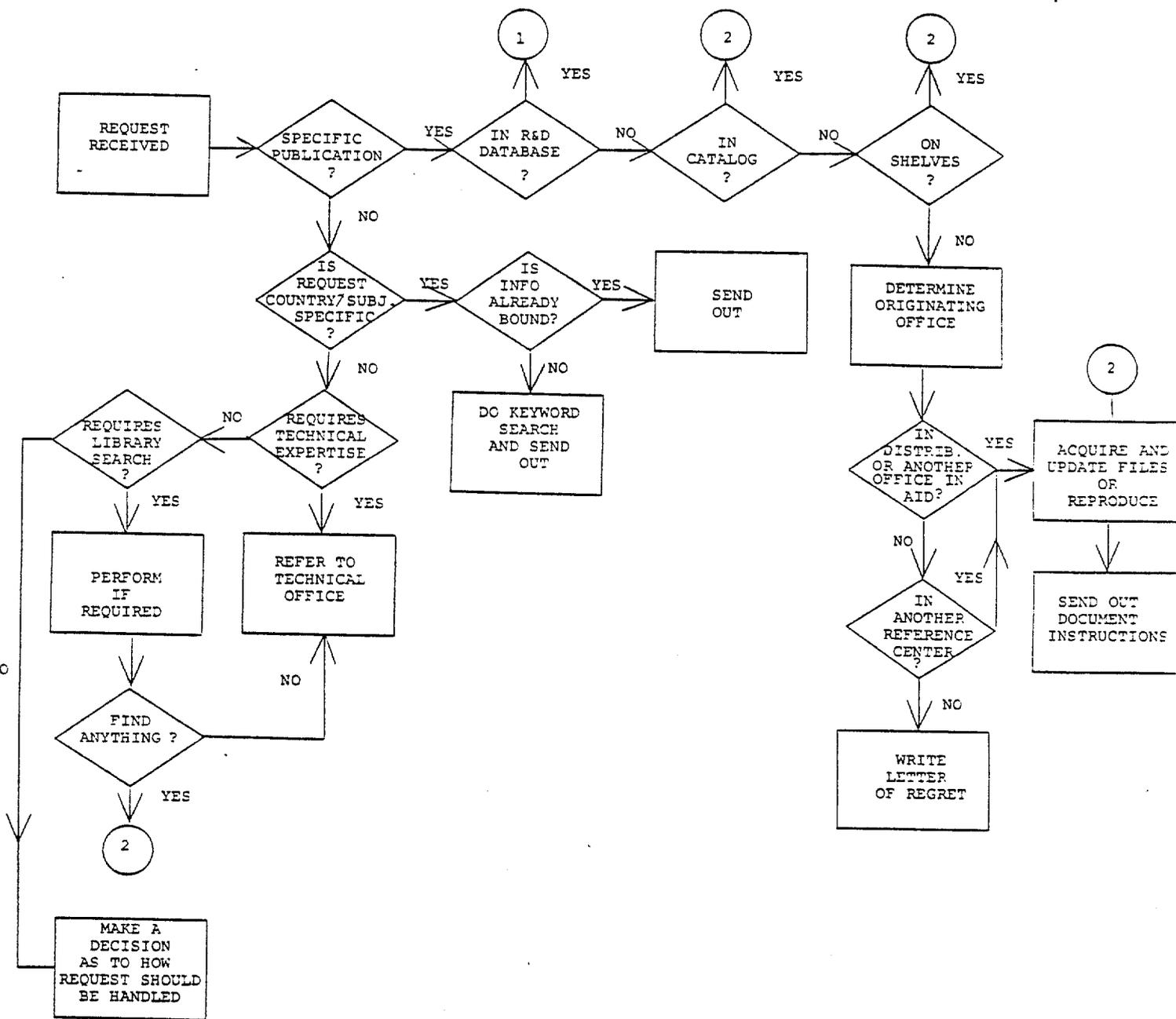
Master Copy of Organization Chart in Handbook

US Response to Sahel Drought

EXHIBIT II-2

OPA RESEARCH LIBRARIAN OPERATIONS





WORKLOAD FACTORS FOR THE  
PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITYAVERAGE TIME REQUIRED TO PROCESS A REQUEST\*

1. OPA Research Librarian (85%<sup>1/</sup>x 1656<sup>2/</sup>) ÷ (4500 requests)<sup>3/</sup> = 19 minutes per request  
FOIA Officer (15%<sup>1/</sup>x 1656<sup>2/</sup>) ÷ (800 requests)<sup>4/</sup> = 19 minutes per request
2. DIC (6 Librarians) x (60%<sup>1/</sup>x 1656<sup>2/</sup>) ÷ (7480 requests)<sup>3/</sup> = 47 minutes per request
3. ES (4 Analysts) x (100%<sup>1/</sup>x 1656<sup>2/</sup>) ÷ (6700 requests)<sup>3/</sup> = 30 minutes per request
4. State Telephone (4 staff) x (100% x 1656) ÷ (10,008 requests)<sup>3/</sup> = 39 minutes<sup>5/</sup> per request  
Written (13 staff) x (100% x 1656) ÷ (53,400 requests)<sup>3/</sup> = 24 minutes <sup>5/</sup> per request

STAFF-TO-REQUEST WORKLOAD RATIO  
(ANNUAL)

- |               |         |                           |         |
|---------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|
| 1. <u>OPA</u> | 1:5,300 | 4. <u>State-Telephone</u> | 1:2,502 |
| 2. <u>DIC</u> | 1:2,078 | 5. <u>State-Written</u>   | 1:4,108 |
| 3. <u>ES</u>  | 1:3,350 |                           |         |

\*Staff and request volume based on office management reports and AID staff estimate.

- <sup>1/</sup> Estimated percentage of available time spent processing requests.
- <sup>2/</sup> Available hours per year less vacation and sick and 10 percent down time.
- <sup>3/</sup> All requests, including some not from the public.
- <sup>4/</sup> Non-FOIA only.
- <sup>5/</sup> During startup period, expected to decrease overtime as service becomes more widely known.

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EXHIBIT III-1

DOCUMENT INVENTORY LIST, ILLUSTRATIVE

SPECIFICATIONS FOR DOCUMENT INVENTORY LIST

1. Data Elements
  - Title of Document
  - Publish Date or Frequency
  - Location of Main Inventory
  - PUB Number (GPO, Hampton, NTIS, Etc.)
  - Two Key Words
2. Organization of List
  - Sort on First Meaningful Descriptive Noun in Title and Print
  - Sort on Location and Print for Verification
  - Sort on Either of Two Key words and Print
3. Types of Documents on List
  - Must be Current and in a Hard Copy Inventory

DOCUMENT INVENTORY LIST					
TITLE	PUBLISHED	LOCATION	PUBLICATION NUMBER	KEY WORD	
				ONE	TWO
Africa Economic Growth Trends	0376	PPC/PIAS	None	Economic	Statistics
Asia Economic Growth Trends	0577	PPC/PIAS	None	Economic	Statistics
Agricultural Development	0678		DN-RIA-201-159/79	Policy	
Bilateral Development Assistance Prog, A Strategy for	0378	PPC	DN-AAA-216-158/79	Policy	
Congressional Presentation, Annex III, LAC	Annual	LAC	None	Presenta- tion	LAC
Development Digest	Quarter	GPO	GPC 1978 0-261-404/4	Accomplish	Excerpts
Development Issues	Annual	OPA	None	Accomplish	Statistics
Loans and Grants, Ass't FM Internat'l Organ., U.S. Overseas	Annual	PPC/PIAS	None	Grants	Organization

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APPENDIX B(6)  
EXHIBIT III-3(1)  
DRAFT CHANGES IN HANDBOOKS, ALTERNATIVE A

CURRENT HANDBOOK GUIDANCE

DRAFT CHANGES

Handbook 17, all offices and bureaus have a functional statement that may or may not address the specific responsibilities related to responding to public inquiries.

The following statement will be added to the functional statement for each office and bureau, except for OPA:

"Subject office or bureau is responsible for cooperating with OPA in assuring timely, appropriate responses to public requests. The office or bureau will:

- Answer directly any requests addressed or telephoned to that office if the information is recorded in that office or bureau.
- Refer inappropriately addressed requests to OPA.
- Respond to referrals from OPA whenever said office or bureau is the major repository of the specific information required to answer the request.
- Keep OPA informed of public inquiries that are important indicators of public attitudes and of new publications and documents held by that office or bureau."

This section will be amended to read as follows:

"Receives, reviews, researches, coordinates, refers, and oversees preparation of timely responses to public inquiries filed under: (a) the Freedom of Information Act; (b) the Privacy Act; and (c) Executive Order 11652, concerning the declassification of AID documents and records."

2. Handbook 17, Page 13-3, Paragraph 13C-1:

Receives, reviews, researches, coordinates, and oversees preparation of timely responses to public inquiries filed under: (a) the Freedom of Information Act; (b) the Privacy Act; and (c) Executive Order 11652, concerning the declassification of AID documents and records.

3. Handbook 17, Page 13-3, Paragraph 13C-2:

Researches and prepares timely responses to mail inquiries received from the American public and/or from the Congress about the foreign assistance program and AID history, operations, and objectives.

13C-2 will be amended to include the following activities:

- "Operate a central telephone intake service to receive and route or respond to inquiries from the public.
  - Written or telephone requests addressed to OPA directly unless they are related to CM, PM, routine passports, Congressional inquiries, or the personal affairs of the Administrator or Deputy Administrator. In addition, FOIA, Privacy Act, and EO 11652 requests will not be handled in Office of the Director.
  - Written or telephone requests referred to OPA by other offices and bureaus which are unable to provide an appropriate response with information available in that office or bureau.
- Develop an extensive inventory of documents which is needed to respond to frequently received information requests and provide this information directly to the public.
- Maintain a current (i.e., updated monthly) list of Agency resources and records and use the list to refer all requests that cannot be answered by the holdings of OPA."

4. Handbook 18, Part III, Pages 10-1 through 10-11, Chapter 10, Public Access to AID Records.

This chapter will be retitled "Public Access to AID Records Under the Freedom of Information Act" and rewritten to make explicit that the "published rules" require that FOIA requests be marked as such on the envelope and letter itself. Then, every reference in Chapter 10 to a public request will be preceded by the term "FOIA." The purpose of this specification is to separate the procedures governing Public Inquiries Staff who handle FOIA requests from those governing Public Inquiries Staff who handle non-FOIA requests.

## EXHIBIT III-3(2)

CURRENT HANDBOOK GUIDANCEDRAFT CHANGES

Handbook 18, Part III, Page 2-1:

The range of services rendered by OPA is reflected in its component organization units. OPA is responsible for developing public information policies, preparing informational materials, disseminating information about the foreign assistance program to the U.S. public, and preparing certain informational materials for internal Agency distribution.

5. A new chapter on non-FOIA requests will be added to Handbook 18, Part III.

This section will be changed to say:

"The range of services rendered by OPA is reflected in its component organization units. OPA is responsible for developing public information policies, operating a central telephone inquiries service, controlling all requests which come to its attention, responding directly to requests for information, and referring specific or technical requests to other offices and bureaus which have primary access to the records needed to provide the response. It also will prepare informational materials for distribution to the public and for internal Agency distribution."

The new chapter will be titled "Public Access to Records In General (i.e., Not Under FOIA)". The chapter will contain the following sections:

A. PURPOSE

This chapter sets forth rules and procedures which govern the processing of non-FOIA requests from the public.

B. POLICY

It is the policy of the Agency that requests which do not specifically cite the FOIA in accordance with the published rules (regulation 12) be, nonetheless, responded to with care and diligence. These requests are not, however, governed by the strict rules which govern the bona fide FOIA requests.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. OPA

OPA is responsible for controlling written and telephone requests that come to its attention 1) directly, 2) by referral, 3) from the Mail Room, labeled "NON-SPECIFIC ADDRESS." It is also responsible for providing direct responses to requests, for referring technical and highly specific questions to other offices and bureaus for action, and for opening, sorting, and routing mail which is not addressed to a specific individual or office.

2. Other Offices and Bureaus

Other offices and bureaus are responsible for:

- Answering directly requests addressed or telephoned to the office or bureau if the requested information is available in that office or bureau.
- Referring inappropriately addressed requests to OPA.
- Responding to referrals from OPA whenever they are made.
- Keeping OPA informed of public inquiries that are important indicators of public attitudes and of new publications and documents held by that office or bureau."

This paragraph will be amended to read as follows:

"With a few agreed upon exceptions all other mail addressed to an individual or to a specific organizational unit in AID/W is routed unopened to the employee or office concerned. Mail which is not addressed to a specific individual or office will be routed to OPA, labeled "NON-SPECIFIC ADDRESS." This mail will be hand-delivered to OPA daily to expedite processing."

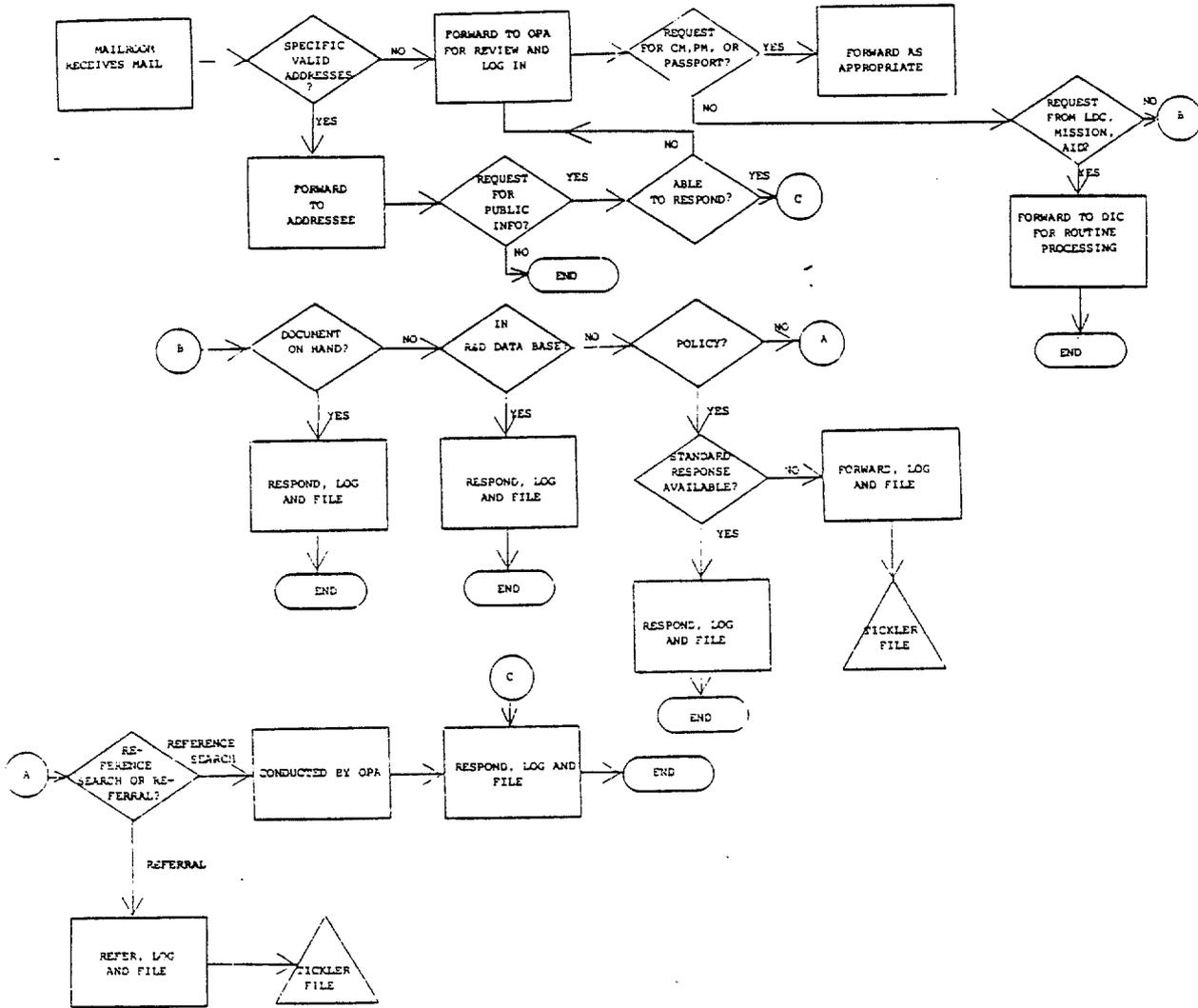
Handbook 21, Part II, Paragraph c:

With a few agreed upon exceptions, all other mail addressed to an individual or to a specific organizational unit in AID/W is routed unopened to the employee or office concerned. Mail which is not addressed to a specific individual or office is opened and routed according to the content and subject matter involved.

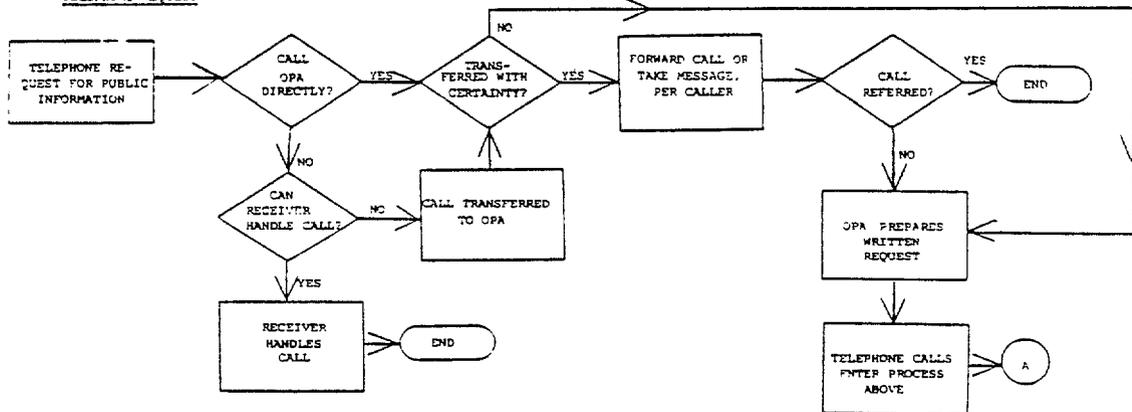
EXHIBIT III-4

WRITTEN REQUEST

FLOW CHART OF PROCEDURES FOR ALTERNATIVE A



TELEPHONE REQUEST



\* PUBLIC AFFAIRS: CM, PM, PASSPORTS, POLICY

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## EXHIBIT III-5(1)

STAFFING ASSUMPTIONS  
ALTERNATIVE A1. TIME REQUIRED TO HANDLE TELEPHONE REQUESTS

- 176 calls per month currently received in OPA. This will triple over the next year as the telephone inquiry service becomes more publicized and is used as a default by the other offices and bureaus. Estimate 528 calls per month or 6,336 per year. Round to 6,500 for calculation purposes.
- The goal of Alternative A is to handle as many calls as possible with information on hand. There are four possible outcomes for the calls received by OPA. These are summarized and analyzed in the table below:

TYPE OF CALL	% of All Calls	Average Time	Requests	Total Mins.	GS 9	GS 7
• Transfer or refer call without control	40%	5 min.	2600	13,000	---	13,000
• Take a written message and send materials on hand	30%	15 min.	1950	29,250	---	29,250
• Take a written message and search for response	15%	60 min.	975	58,500	43,875	14,625
• Take a written message and refer out of OPA for response	15%	15 min. (OPA)	975	14,625	---	14,625
TOTAL MINUTES REQUIRED				115,375	43,875	71,500
STAFF HOURS REQUIRED				1923	731	1191
FTEs REQUIRED*				2.16	.44	.72

2. TIME REQUIRED TO OPEN AND ROUTE INVALIDLY ADDRESSED MAIL

- Approximately 70 pieces of invalidly addressed mail are received each day. This is about 17,500 pieces annually.
- Many of these letters will not contain requests for information and will simply be routed by OPA (approximately 70%). The 17,500 pieces of mail will be handled as described in the table below:

TYPE OF LETTER	% of All Letters	Average Time	Requests/ Letters	Total Mins.	GS 9	GS 7
• Letter referred without control	70%	5 min.	12,250	61,250	---	61,250
• Send materials on hand	14%	15 min.	2450	36,750	---	36,750
• Search for response	8%	60 min.	1400	84,000	63,000	21,000
• Refer out of OPA for response	8%	45 min.	1400	21,000	---	21,000
TOTAL MINUTES REQUIRED				203,000	63,000	140,000
STAFF HOURS REQUIRED				3383	1050	2333
FTEs REQUIRED*				2.04	.63	1.41

\*FTE = 2080 hours, less 160 hours leave, 80 hours sick time, and at 90% efficiency

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3. TIME REQUIRED TO HANDLE OTHER WRITTEN REQUESTS

- Currently, 2500 requests are received in OPA each year. This will increase by about 50% to 3750 per year as the new mechanism becomes well-known.
- Again, the objective of Alternative A is to respond to as many requests as possible with materials on hand or with searching done by OPA staff, to minimize the burden on the geographic and technical bureaus. The chart below shows the outcomes and volumes of the requests that will be handled by OPA:

TYPE OF REQUEST	% of All Requests	Average Time	Requests	Total Mins.	GS 9	GS 7
• Refer without control	5%	5 min.	188	940	---	940
• Send materials on hand	47%	15 min.	1763	26,445	---	26,445
• Search for response	24%	60 min.	900	54,000	40,500	13,500
• Refer out of OPA	24%	15 min.	900	13,500	---	13,500
TOTAL MINUTES REQUIRED				94,885	40,500	54,385
STAFF HOURS REQUIRED				1581	675	906
FTEs REQUIRED*				1.96	.41	1.55

4. TIME REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN THE DOCUMENT INVENTORY LIST

- Once the list is established, it will take approximately three days per month to maintain it.
- (3 days per month) X (12 months per year) / 1656 work days per year = .17 FTE, GS 9.

5. TIME REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY (FTEs)

	GS 9	GS 7
• Time required to handle telephone requests	.44	.72
• Time required to open and route invalidly addressed mail	.63	1.41
• Time required to handle other written requests	.41	.55
• Time required to maintain Document Inventory List	.17	---
TOTAL TIME REQUIRED	1.65	2.68

6. STAFF TO REQUEST RATIO -- 1:4,031

(Excludes staff time spent on telephone and written requests referred without control and time required to maintain the Document Inventory List.)

\*FTE = 2080 hours, less 160 hours leave, 80 hours sick time, and at 90% efficiency

## EXHIBIT III-6

OTHER RESOURCE ASSUMPTIONS, ALTERNATIVE A

PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

- Two GS 9 Public Information Specialists (@ \$17,000)<sup>1/</sup> \$34,000
- Two GS 7 Public Information Specialists (@ \$14,000)<sup>2/</sup> \$28,000

WORD PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

- Public Information Activities
  - Maintain Document Inventory List 100 hours
  - Prepare responses (2360 responses)<sup>2.1/</sup> (@ 6 minutes)<sup>3.1/</sup> 236 hours
  - Query DIU data base (433 queries)<sup>4.1/</sup> (@ 20 minutes) 144 hours
  - SUBTOTAL HOURS 480 hours (24% usage)
- Other OPA Activities
  - Text editing 250 hours
  - Maintain mailing lists 114 hours
  - Print mailing labels 880 hours
  - SUBTOTAL HOURS 1244 hours (63% usage)
- TOTAL HOURS 1724 hours (87% usage)
- Word processing assumptions:
  - Purchase price \$15,000 <sup>5.1/</sup>
  - Useful life 5 years - \$3,000 per year
  - 2,000 hours per year = \$1.50 per hour<sup>6.1/</sup>
  - \$1.50 X 480 hours \$720

OTHER RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Telephone lines and long distance service for new staff including at least one two-button rotary telephone (expense not calculated)
- Furniture for new staff, including book shelves for OPA Reading Room (assumes that furniture is available in AID or GSA inventory)
- Indirect costs not calculated:
  - Continued assistance by staff in other offices and bureaus
  - Additional on-line time on the DIC DIS system

TOTAL DIRECT COSTS OF ALTERNATIVE A\$62,720

1. Does not include fringe benefits.
2. 25% of requests filled with materials on hand and 25% of requests filled by an OPA search (see Exhibit IV-5).
3. Department of State spends 35 minutes per written response of which 15 percent of the time involves the word processing equipment. This comes to 6 minutes per response.
4. Ten percent of requests requiring a search.
5. Industry average with Government discount.
6. Assumes 100% utilization of machine for other purposes.

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## EXHIBIT III-7(1)

DRAFT CHANGES IN HANDBOOKS, ALTERNATIVE B

CURRENT HANDBOOK GUIDANCEDRAFT CHANGES

1. Handbook 17, all offices and bureaus have a functional statement that may or may not address the specific responsibilities related to responding to public inquiries.

The following statement will be added to the functional statement for each office and bureau, except for OPA:

"Subject office or bureau is responsible for cooperating with OPA in assuring timely, appropriate responses to public requests. The office or bureau will:

- Answer directly any requests addressed or telephoned to that office if the information is recorded in that office or bureau.
- Refer inappropriately addressed requests to OPA.
- Respond to referrals from OPA whenever said office or bureau is the major repository of the specific information required to answer the request.
- Keep OPA informed of public inquiries that are important indicators of public attitudes and of new publications and documents held by that office or bureau."

2. Handbook 17, Page 13-3, Paragraph 13B-13:

On referral from other AID offices, responds to telephone and mail inquiries from the American public and the Congress relating to the general activities of AID.

13B-13 will be amended to include the following activities:

- "Operate a central telephone inquiries service to receive and route or respond to inquiries from the public.
- Control (i.e., log and follow-up to assure appropriate action) the following types of requests:
  - Written or telephone requests addressed to OPA directly unless they are related to CM, PM, routine passports, Congressional inquiries, or the personal affairs of the Administrator or Deputy Administrator. In addition, FOIA, Privacy Act, and EO 11652 requests will not be handled in Office of the Director.
  - Written or telephone requests referred to OPA by other offices and bureaus which are unable to provide an appropriate response with information available in that office or bureau.
- Develop and keep on hand whatever documents are needed to respond to the most general, frequently received information requests and provide this information directly to the public.
- Maintain a current (i.e., updated monthly) list of Agency resources and records and use the list to refer all requests that cannot be answered by the general holdings of OPA."

3. Handbook 17, Page 13-3, Paragraph 13C-1:

Receives, reviews, researches, coordinates, and oversees preparation of timely responses to public inquiries filed under: (a) the Freedom of Information Act; (b) the Privacy Act; and (c) Executive Order 11652, concerning the declassification of AID documents and records.

This section will be amended to read as follows:

"Receives, reviews, researches, coordinates, and oversees preparation of timely responses to public inquiries filed under: (a) the Freedom of Information Act; (b) the Privacy Act; and (c) Executive Order 11652, concerning the declassification of AID documents and records."

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## EXHIBIT III-7(2)

CURRENT HANDBOOK GUIDANCEDRAFT CHANGES

Handbook 17, Page 13-3, Paragraph 13C-2:

Researches and prepares timely responses to mail inquiries received from the American public and/or from the Congress about the foreign assistance program and AID history, operations, and objectives.

5. Handbook 18, Part III, Page 2-1:

The range of services rendered by OPA is reflected in its component organization units. OPA is responsible for developing public information policies, preparing informational materials, disseminating information about the foreign assistance program to the U.S. public, and preparing certain informational materials for internal Agency distribution.

6. Handbook 18, Part III, Pages 10-1 through 10-11, Chapter 10, Public Access to AID records.

7. A new chapter on non-FOIA requests will be added to Handbook 18, Part III.

Omit this section. The responsibilities of the Public Inquiries Staff will be limited to handling the requests described in Handbook 17, Page 13-3, Paragraph 13C-1.

This section will be changed to say:

"The range of services rendered by OPA is reflected in its component organization units. OPA is responsible for developing public information policies, operating a central telephone inquiries service, controlling all requests which come to its attention, responding directly to requests for general information, and referring specific or technical requests to other offices and bureaus which have primary access to the records needed to provide the response. It also will prepare informational materials for distribution to the public and for internal Agency distribution."

This chapter will be rewritten to make explicit that the "published rules" retitled "Public Access to AID Records Under the Freedom of Information Act" require that FOIA requests must be marked as such on the envelope and letter itself. Then, every reference in Chapter 10 to a public request will be preceded by the term "FOIA." The purpose of these changes is to clearly demark the responsibilities of the Public Inquiries Staff (FOIA requests) and the Office of the Director (non-FOIA requests).

The new chapter will be titled "Public Access to Records In General" (i.e., Not Under FOIA). The chapter will contain the following sections:

A. "PURPOSE"

This chapter sets forth rules and procedures which govern the processing of non-FOIA requests from the public.

B. POLICY

It is the policy of the Agency that requests which do not specifically cite the FOIA in accordance with the published rules (regulation 12) be, nonetheless, responded to with care and diligence. These requests are not, however, governed by the strict rules which govern the ~~same~~ FOIA requests.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. OPA

OPA is responsible for controlling requests that come to its attention 1) directly, 2) by appropriate referral, 3) from the Mail Room. It is also responsible for providing direct responses to general requests and for referring technical and highly specific questions to other offices and bureaus for action.

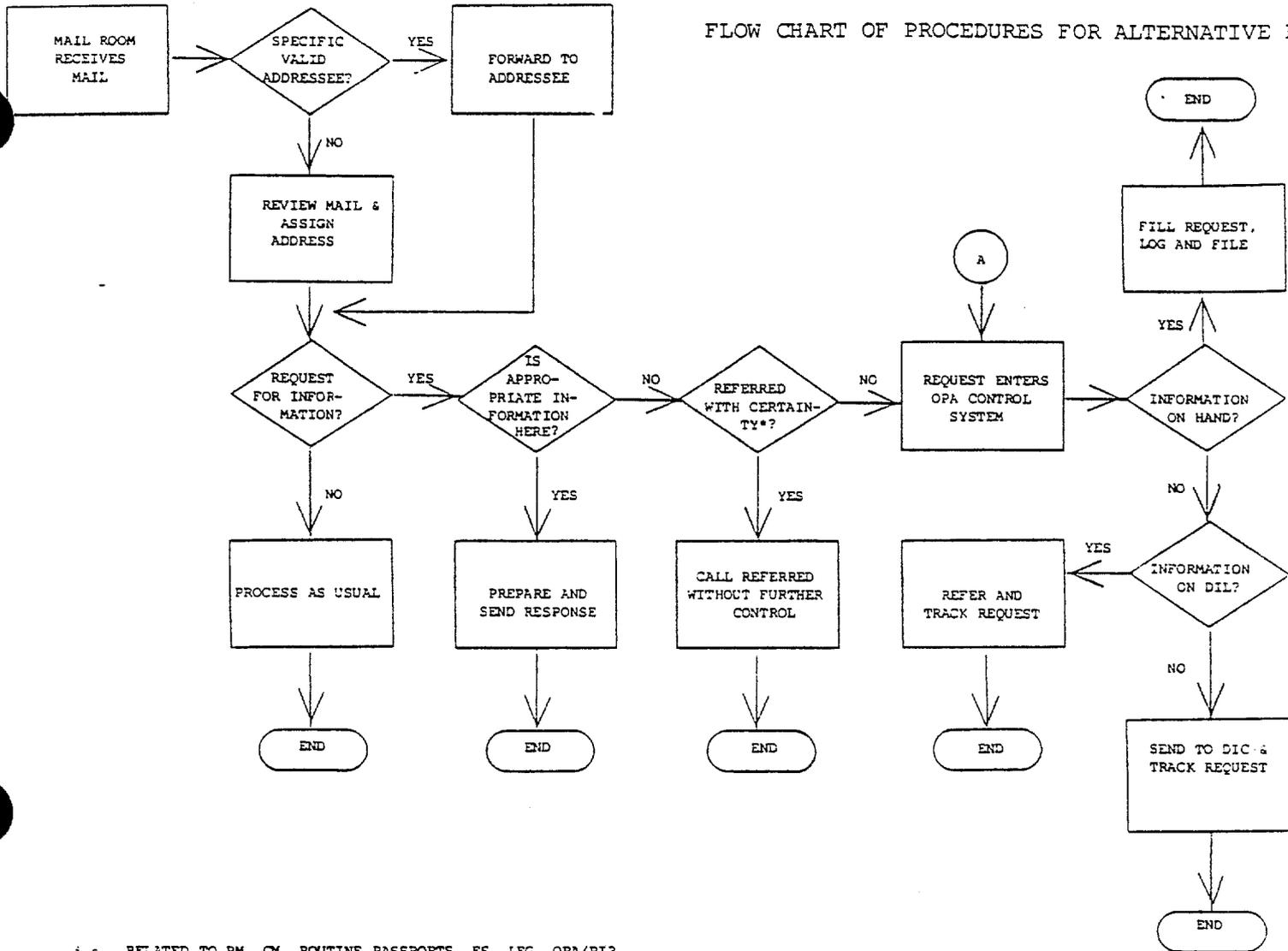
2. Other Offices and Bureaus

Other offices and bureaus are responsible for:

- Answering directly requests addressed or telephoned to the office or bureau if the requested information is controlled by that office or bureau.
- Referring inappropriately addressed requests to OPA.
- Responding to referrals from OPA whenever they are made.
- Keeping OPA informed of public inquiries that are important indicators of public attitudes and of new publications and documents held by that office or bureau."

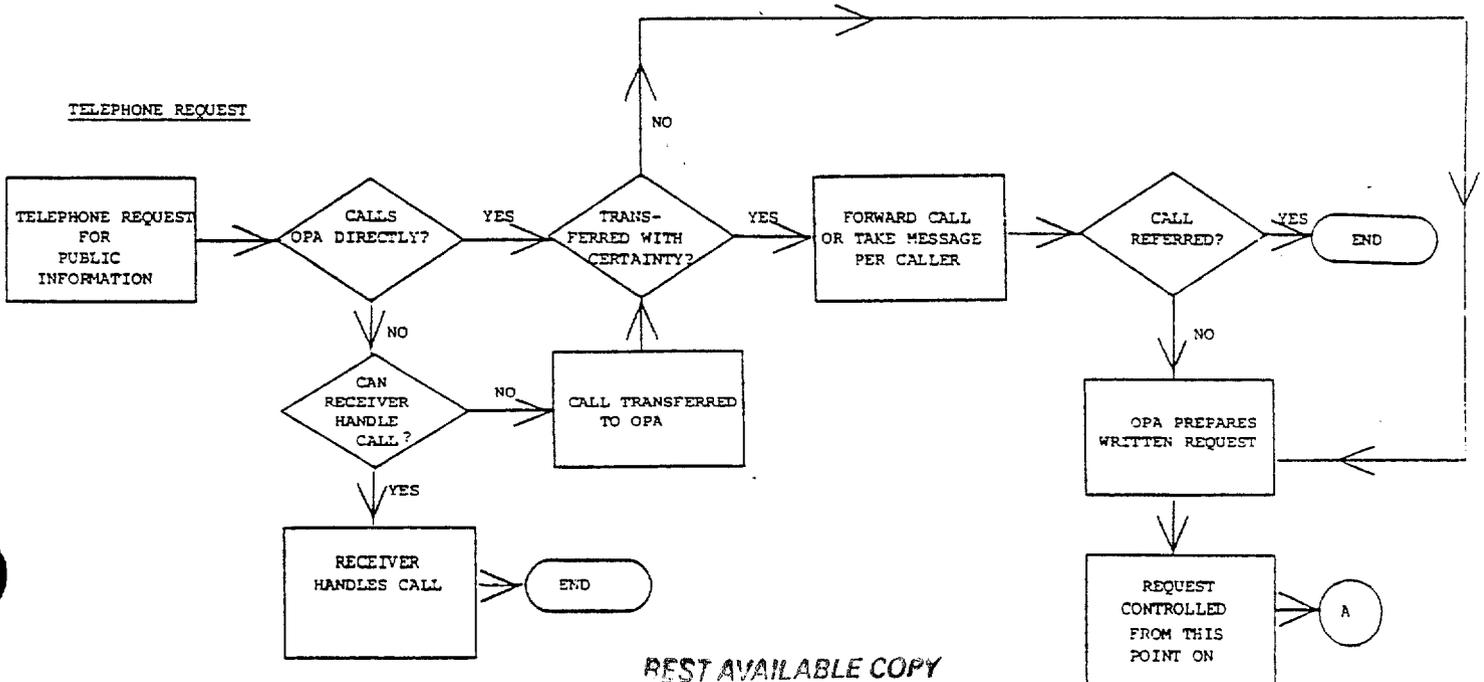
FLOW CHART OF PROCEDURES FOR ALTERNATIVE B

WRITTEN REQUEST



i.e., RELATED TO PM, CM, ROUTINE PASSPORTS, ES, LEG, OPA/PI?

TELEPHONE REQUEST



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1. TIME REQUIRED TO HANDLE TELEPHONE REQUESTS

- 176 calls per month currently received in OPA. This will triple over the next year as the telephone inquiry service becomes more publicized and is used as a default by the other offices and bureaus. Estimate 528 calls per month or 6336 per year. Round to 6500 for calculation purposes.
- The goal of Alternative B is to handle as many calls as possible with information on hand. There are four possible outcomes for the calls received by OPA. These are summarized in the table below:

TYPE OF CALL	% of All Calls	Average Time	Requests	Total Mins.	GS 9	GS 7
• Transfer or refer call without control	40%	5 min. (OPA)	2600	13,000	---	13,000
• Take a written message and send materials on hand	24%	15 min. (OPA)	1560	23,400	---	23,400
• Take a written message and refer to DIC	21%	15 min. (OPA) 30 min. (DIC)	1365	61,425	40,950	20,475
• Take a written message and refer to another office or bureau	15%	15 min. (OPA)	975	14,625	---	14,625
TOTAL MINUTES REQUIRED				112,450	40,950	71,500
STAFF HOURS REQUIRED				1875	683	1192
FTEs REQUIRED*				1.13	.41	.71

2. TIME REQUIRED TO HANDLE WRITTEN REQUESTS

- Currently, 2500 requests are received in OPA each year. This will increase by 850: 30% of the mail referred to DIC by bureaus and offices will be referred to OPA in this alternative. Total requests received by OPA, then, will be 3350. DIC will process 850 requests.
- Again, the objective of Alternative B is to respond to as many requests as possible with materials on hand and provide control for requests referred to other offices and bureaus. The chart below shows the outcomes and volumes of the requests that will be handled by the Public Information Specialists:

TYPE OF REQUEST	% of All Requests	Average Time	Requests	Total Mins.	GS 9	GS 7
• Refer without control	5%	5 min.	167	835	---	835
• Send materials on hand	38%	15 min.	1273	19,095	---	19,095
• Refer by OPA to DIC	29%	15 min. (OPA) 30 min. (DIC)	972	43,740	29,160	14,580
• Refer to another office of bureau	28%	15 min.	938	14,070	---	14,070
• Received by DIC from other sources	100%	30 min.	850	25,500	25,500	---
TOTAL MINUTES REQUIRED				103,240	54,660	48,580
STAFF HOURS REQUIRED				1721	911	810
FTEs REQUIRED*				1.04	.55	.49

\*FTE = 2080 hours, less 160 hours leave, 80 hours sick time, and at 90% efficiency

3. TIME REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN THE DOCUMENT INVENTORY LIST

- Once the list is established, it will take approximately three days per month to maintain it.
- (3 days per month) X (12 months per year) / 1656 work days per year = .17 FTE, GS 7.

4. TIME REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY (PTEs)

	<u>GS 9 (DIC)</u>	<u>GS 7 (OPAR)</u>
• Time required to handle telephone	.41	.72
• Time required to handle written requests	.55	.49
• Time required to maintain Document Inventory List		.17
TOTAL TIME REQUIRED	.96	1.38

5. STAFF TO REQUEST RATIO -- 1:3,526

(Excludes staff time spent on telephone and written requests referred without control and time required to maintain the Document Inventory List.)

APPENDIX B (17)  
EXHIBIT III-10

OTHER RESOURCE ASSUMPTIONS, ALTERNATIVE B

PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

- One GS 9 Public Information Specialist (@ \$17,000)<sup>1/</sup> \$17,000
- Two GS 7 Public Information Specialists (@ \$14,000)<sup>1/</sup> \$28,000

WORD PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

- Public Information Activities
  - Maintain Document Inventory List 100 hours
  - Prepare responses (710 responses)<sup>2/</sup> (@ 6 minutes)<sup>3/</sup> 71 hours
  - SUBTOTAL HOURS 171 hours (9% usage)
- Word processing assumptions:
  - Purchase price \$15,000 <sup>4/</sup>
  - Useful life 5 years - \$3000 per year
  - 2,000 hours per year = \$1.50 per hour <sup>5/</sup>
  - \$1.50 X 171 hours \$257

OTHER RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Telephone lines and charges for new staff including at least one two-button rotary telephone (expense not calculated)
- Furniture for new staff, including book shelves for OPA Reading Room (assumes that furniture is available in AID or GSA inventory)
- Indirect costs not calculated:
  - Continued assistance by staff in other offices and bureaus
  - Additional on-line time on the DIC DIS system

TOTAL DIRECT COSTS OF ALTERNATIVE B

\$45,257

1. Does not include fringe benefits.
2. 25% of requests filled with materials on hand (see Exhibit IV-9)
3. Department of State spends 25 minutes per written response of which 15 percent of the time involves the word processing equipment. This comes to 6 minutes per response.
4. Industry average with Government discount.
5. Assumes 100% utilization of machine for other purposes.

## EXHIBIT III-11(1)

## DRAFT CHANGES IN HANDBOOKS, ALTERNATIVE C

CURRENT HANDBOOK GUIDANCE

1. Handbook 17, all offices and bureaus have a functional statement that may or may not address the specific responsibilities related to responding to public inquiries.
  
2. Handbook 17, Page 13-3, Paragraph 13B-13:  
On referral from other AID offices, responds to telephone and mail inquiries from the American public and the Congress relating to the general activities of AID.

3. Handbook 17, Page 13-3, Paragraph 13C-1:  
Receives, reviews, researches, coordinates, and oversees preparation of timely responses to public inquiries filed under: (a) the Freedom of Information Act; (b) the Privacy Act; and (c) Executive Order 11652, concerning the declassification of AID documents and records.

Handbook 17, Page 13-3, Paragraph 13C-2:  
Researches and prepares timely responses to mail inquiries received from the American public and/or from the Congress about the foreign assistance program and AID history, operations, and objectives.

DRAFT CHANGES

The following statement will be added to the functional statement for each office and bureau, except for OPA:

"Subject office or bureau is responsible for cooperating with OPA in assuring timely, appropriate responses to public requests. The office or bureau will:

- Answer directly any requests addressed or telephoned to that office if the information is recorded in that office or bureau.
- Act as primary correspondence control point and refer inappropriately addressed requests to other offices or bureaus in accordance with AID Handbook 21, Part II, ID. 3.
- Respond to referrals from other offices and bureaus whenever subject office or bureau is the major repository of the specific information required to answer the request.
- Keep OPA informed of public inquiries that are important indicators of public attitudes and of new publications and documents held by that office or bureau."

13B-13 will be amended to include the following activities:

- "Operate a central telephone intake service to receive and route or respond to inquiries from the public.
- Provide responses to the following types of requests:
  - Written or telephone requests addressed to OPA directly unless they are related to CM, PM, routine passports, Congressional inquiries, or the personal affairs of the Administrator or Deputy Administrator. In addition, FOIA, Privacy Act, and EO 11652 requests will not be handled in Office of the Director.
  - Written or telephone request for general information referred by other offices or bureaus.
  - Respond to or route telephone requests referred to OPA by other offices and bureaus which are unable to provide an appropriate response with information available in that office or bureau.
- Develop and keep on hand whatever documents are needed to respond to the most general, frequently received information requests and provide this information directly to the public."

This section will be amended to read as follows:

"Receives, reviews, researches, coordinates, and oversees preparation of timely responses to public inquiries filed under: (a) the Freedom of Information Act; (b) the Privacy Act; and (c) Executive Order 11652, concerning the declassification of AID documents and records."

Omit this section. The responsibilities of the Public Inquiries Staff will be limited to handling the requests described in Handbook 17, Page 13-3, Paragraph 13C-1.

CURRENT HANDBOOK GUIDANCEDRAFT CHANGES

Handbook 17, Page 20-10, Paragraph 20F-2.a.:

Supports DS technical offices, Geographic Bureaus, other AID offices and collaborating institutions by providing access to stored technical and experiential information; interprets requests for information, routes substantive requests to DS technical experts for evaluative response, makes comprehensive literature searches, and develops outreach programs through announcements, catalogues, abstracts, and other devices.

This section will be amended to read as follows:

"Supports DS technical offices, Geographic Bureaus, other AID offices, collaborating institutions, and the *general public* by providing access to stored technical and experiential information; interprets requests for information, routes requests to DS technical experts for evaluative response, makes comprehensive literature searches, and develops outreach programs through announcements, catalogues, abstracts, and other devices."

6. Handbook 17, Page 20-10, Paragraph 20B.2.b.:

Administers the AID Development Information Center which provides professional library and reference services to technical information flowing from DS and Geographic Bureau supported research activities. Makes available to Agency personnel and personnel of collaborating development assistance institutions, publications, abstracts and microfiche records of documents prepared by AID and AID-supported institutions. Acquires pertinent technical publications, periodicals, and other documents useful to AID personnel.

This section will be amended to read as follows:

Administers the AID Development Information Center which provides professional library and reference services to technical information flowing from DS and Geographic Bureau supported research activities. "Makes available to Agency personnel, personnel of collaborating development assistance institutions and the *general public*, publications, abstracts, and microfiche records of documents prepared by AID and AID-supported institutions. Acquires pertinent technical publications, periodicals, and other documents useful to AID personnel."

7. Handbook 17, Page 20-11, Paragraph 20F.2.i.:

Assists other DIU units and DS technical offices in the preparation of bibliographies and compendiums designed to bring the latest literature in development assistance to the attention of interested officials.

This section will be amended to read as follows:

"Assists other DIU units and DS technical offices in the preparation of bibliographies and compendiums designed to bring the latest literature in development assistance to the attention of interested officials. Maintains a current (i.e., updated monthly) list of all agency publications that are held in inventory for distribution and the location of that inventory."

Handbook 18, Part III, Pages 10-1 through 10-11, Chapter 10, Public Access to AID Records.

This chapter will be rewritten to make explicit that the "published rules" retitled "Public Access to AID Records Under the Freedom of Information Act" require that FOIA requests must be marked as such on the envelope and letter itself. Then, every reference in Chapter 10 to a public request will be preceded by the term "FOIA." The purpose of these changes is to clearly demark the responsibilities of the Public Inquiries Staff (FOIA requests) and the Office of the Director (non-FOIA requests).

9. Handbook 18, Part III, Page 2-1:

The range of services rendered by OPA is reflected in its component organization units. OPA is responsible for developing public information policies, preparing informational materials, disseminating information about the foreign assistance program to the U.S. public, and preparing certain informational materials for internal Agency distribution.

This section will be changed to say:

"The range of services rendered by OPA is reflected in its component organization units. OPA is responsible for developing public information policies, operating a central telephone inquiries service, controlling all requests which are addressed to OPA by the public, responding directly to requests for *general* information, and referring specific or technical requests to other offices and bureaus which have primary access to the records needed to provide the response. It also will prepare *general* informational materials for distribution to the public and for internal Agency distribution."

CURRENT HANDBOOK GUIDANCE

A new chapter on non-FOIA requests will be added to Handbook 18, Part III.

DRAFT CHANGES

The new chapter will be titled "Public Access to Records in General (i.e., Not Under FOIA)." The chapter will contain the following sections:

A. "PURPOSE

This chapter sets forth rules and procedures which govern the processing of non-FOIA requests from the public.

B. POLICY

It is the policy of the Agency that requests which do not specifically cite the FOIA in accordance with the published rules (regulation 12) be, nonetheless, responded to with care and diligence. These requests are not, however, governed by the strict rules which govern the *bona fide* FOIA requests.

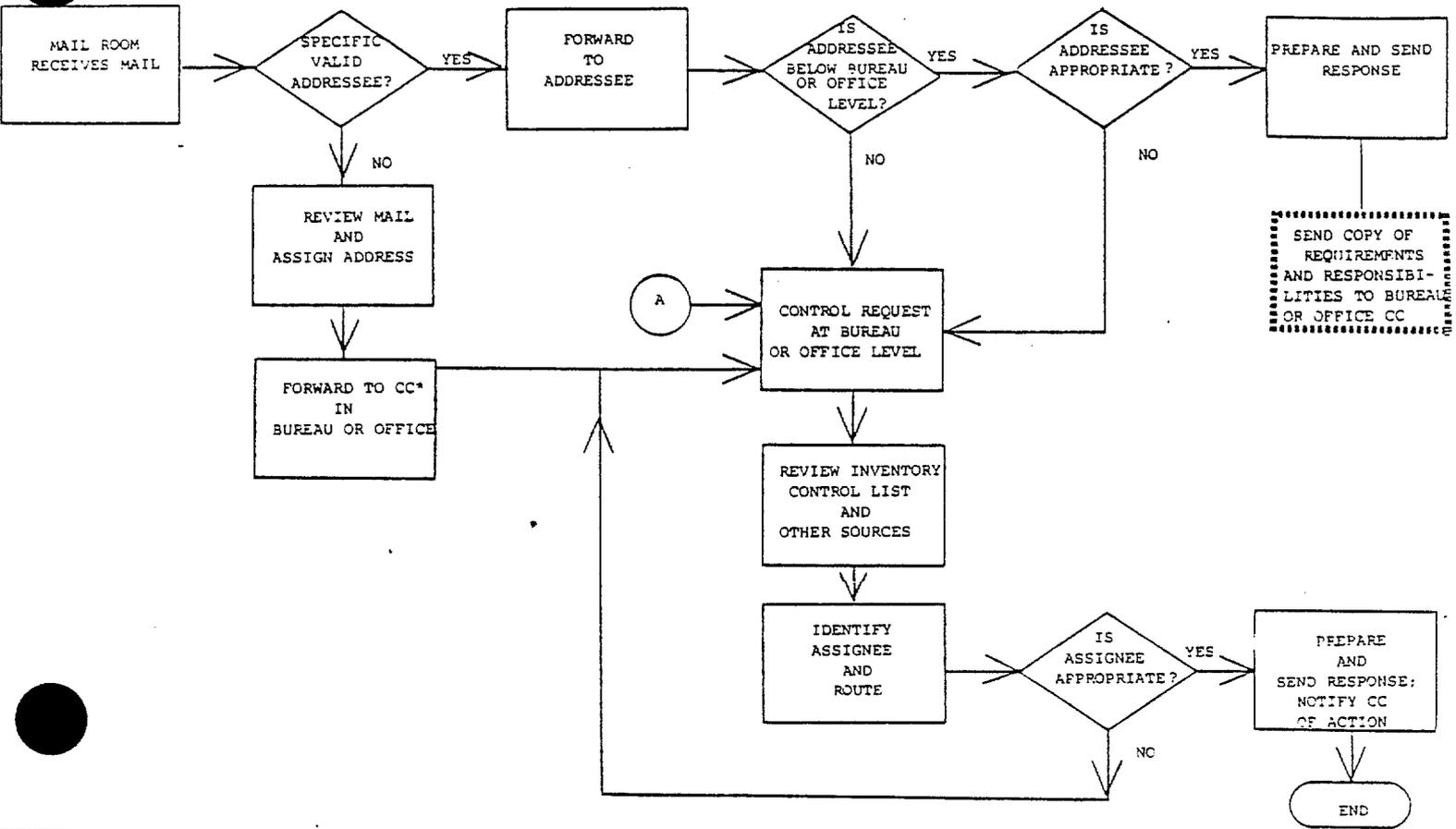
C. RESPONSIBILITIES

- All offices and bureaus are equally responsible for controlling written and telephone requests that come to their attention 1) directly, 2) by appropriate referral, 3) from the Mail Room. They are responsible for providing direct responses to requests for general, technical and highly specific questions when the records which contain this information is held by the office or bureau. When the information is located elsewhere, the request may be referred for action but control remains in the originating office or bureau.
- All offices and bureaus are all responsible for establishing a central control point and designating a Correspondence Coordinator to manage correspondence in accordance with Handbook 21, Part III, ID. 3.3.
- All offices and bureaus must respond to requests that are referred appropriately from other offices and bureaus.
- All offices and bureaus should keep CPA informed of public inquiries that are important indicators of public attitudes.
- All offices and bureaus should keep DIC informed of new publications and documents held by that office or bureau."

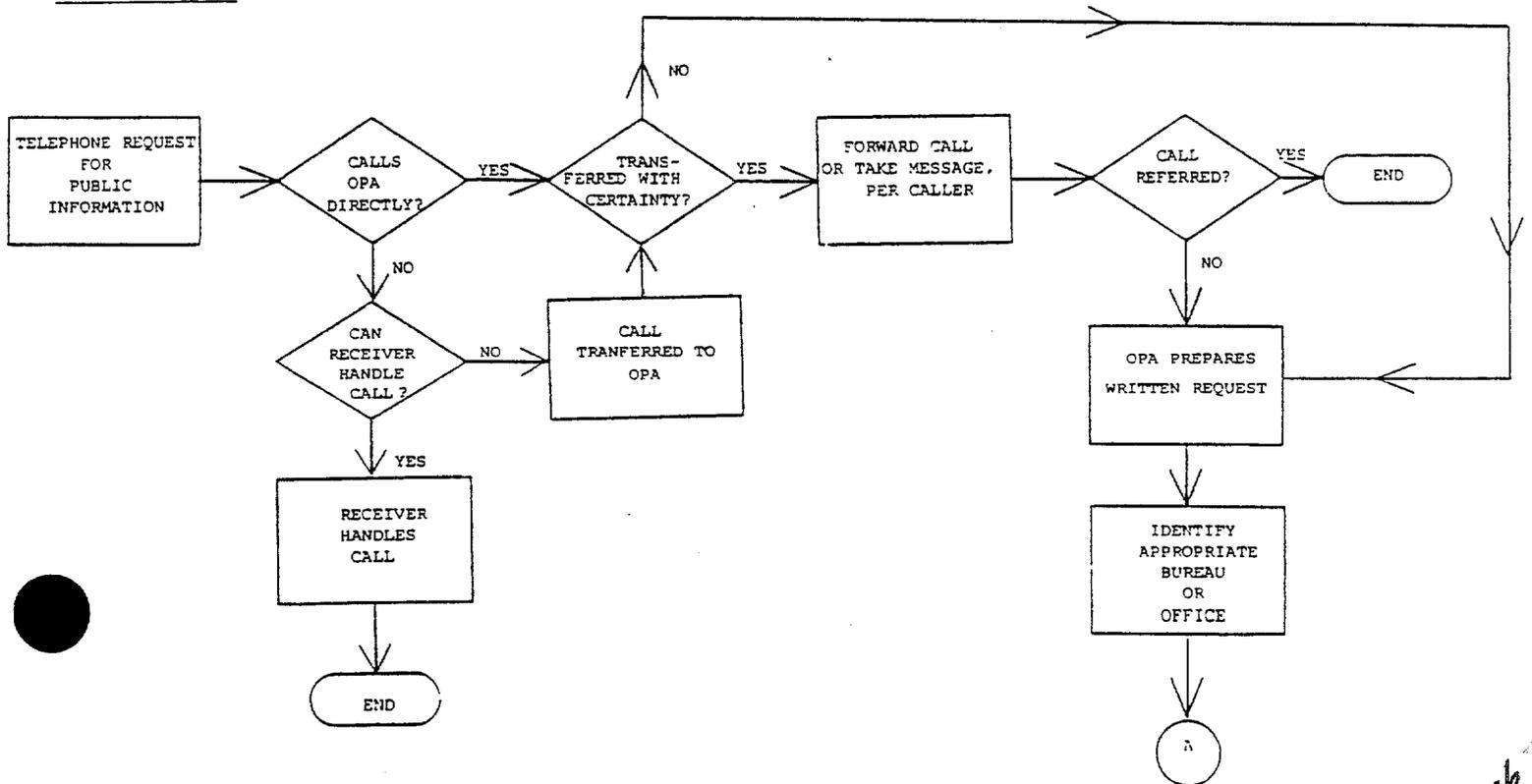
WRITTEN REQUEST

EXHIBIT III-12

FLOW CHART OF PROCEDURES FOR ALTERNATIVE C



TELEPHONE REQUEST



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APPENDIX B (22)  
EXHIBIT III-13(1)

STAFFING ASSUMPTIONS  
ALTERNATIVE C

1. TIME REQUIRED TO HANDLE TELEPHONE REQUESTS

- 176 calls per month currently received in OPA. This will triple over the next year as the telephone inquiry service becomes more publicized and is used as a default by the other offices and bureaus. Estimate 528 calls per month or 6336 per year. Round to 6500 for calculation purposes.
- The goal of Alternative C is to handle as many calls as possible with information on hand. There are four possible outcomes for the calls received by OPA. These are summarized and analyzed in the table below:

TYPE OF CALL	% of All Calls	Average Time	Requests	Total Mins.	GS 9	GS 7
• Transfer or refer call without control	40%	5 min. (OPA)	2600	13,000	---	13,000
• Take a written message and send materials on hand	20%	15 min. (OPA)	1300	19,500	---	19,500
• Take a written message and refer to DIC for response	20%	15 min. (OPA) 30 min. (DIC)	1300	39,000	39,000	---
• Take a written message and refer to another office for response	20%	15 min. (OPA)	1300	19,500	---	19,500
TOTAL MINUTES REQUIRED				110,500	39,000	71,500
STAFF HOURS REQUIRED				1842	650	1192
FTEs REQUIRED*				1.11	.39	.72

2. TIME REQUIRED TO HANDLE WRITTEN REQUESTS

- Currently, 2500 requests are received in OPA each year. This will remain relatively constant under Alternative C. DIU/DIC will receive approximately 1200 requests from sources other than OPA.
- Again, the objective of Alternative C is to respond to as many requests as possible with materials on hand. The chart below shows the outcomes and volumes of the requests that will be handled by the Public Information Specialists.

TYPE OF REQUEST	% of All Requests	Average Time	Requests	Total Mins.	GS 9	GS 7
• Refer without control	5%	5 min. (OPA)	125	625	---	625
• Send materials on hand	31%	15 min. (OPA)	775	11,625	---	11,625
• Refer by OPA to DIC	32%	15 min. (OPA) 30 min. (DIC)	800	24,000	24,000	---
• Refer to another office or bureau	32%	15 min. (OPA)	800	12,000	---	12,000
• Received from other sources by DIC	100%	30 min. (DIC)	1200	36,000	36,000	---
TOTAL MINUTES REQUIRED				96,350	60,000	26,350
STAFF HOURS REQUIRED				1606	1000	606
FTEs REQUIRED*				.97	.60	.37

\*FTE = 2080 hours, less 160 hours leave, 80 hours sick time, and at 90% efficiency

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3. TIME REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN THE DOCUMENT INVENTORY LIST

- Once the list is established, it will take approximately three days per month to maintain it.
- (3 days per month) X (12 months per year) / 1656 work days per year = .17 FTE, GS 9.

4. TIME REQUIREMENTS STUDY (FTEs)

	<u>GS 9 (DIC)</u>	<u>GS 7 (OPA)</u>
● Time required to handle telephone requests	.39	.72
● Time required to open and route invalidly addressed mail	---	---
● Time required to handle other written requests	.60	.37
● Time required to maintain Document Inventory List	.17	---
TOTAL TIME REQUIRED	1.16	.99

5. STAFF TO REQUEST RATIO -- 1:5,014

(Excludes staff time spent on telephone and written requests referred without control and time required to maintain the Document Inventory List.)

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## EXHIBIT III-14

## OTHER RESOURCE ASSUMPTIONS, ALTERNATIVE C

PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| • One GS 9 Public Information Specialist (@ \$17,000) <u>1</u> / | <u>\$17,000</u> |
| • One GS 7 Public Information Specialist (@ \$14,000) <u>1</u> / | <u>\$14,000</u> |

WORD PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

- |   |           |      |
|---|-----------|------|
| • Maintain Document Inventory List  | 100 hours |      |
| • Word processing machine time will be acquired from other offices at no additional cost to AID (i.e., utilization of sunk costs). <u>2</u> / |           | None |

OTHER RESOURCES REQUIRED

- |  |  |      |
|--|--|------|
| • Telephone lines for new staff including at least one two-button rotary telephone (expense not calculated)                          |  |      |
| • Furniture for new staff, including book shelves for CPA Reading Room (assumes that furniture is available in AID or GSA inventory) |  |      |
| • Indirect costs not calculated:   |  |      |
| - Continued assistance by staff in other offices and bureaus   |  |      |
| - Additional on-line time on the DIS system  |  | None |

TOTAL DIRECT COSTS OF ALTERNATIVE C\$31,000

1. Does not include fringe benefits
2. Refers to costs which would be incurred regardless of the implementation of activities in question

APPENDIX C

STANDARD LOGGING AND FILING INSTRUCTIONS

STANDARD LOGGING AND FILING INSTRUCTIONS

Currently, Handbook 21 requires that:

"Each office is responsible for establishing and implementing internal controls and procedures to assure prompt attention to all action communications. Forms AID 3-27: Communications Log, and AID 3-29: Communications Control Card, may be used for this purpose." \*

This guidance will continue to be valid, regardless of the alternative selected. In addition, the office(s) which are designated as the central control point(s) will be required to use a more formal control system, similar to the one described below.

1. OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY

Heads of the office(s) assigned primary responsibility for the control of public requests for information are personally responsible for assuring that prompt and responsive action is taken for all incoming communications. They are further responsible for ensuring that the control system described below operates efficiently and effectively.

2. APPLICABILITY

The communication control system is used for all written requests that come to the attention of the primary correspondence control point(s), including telephone requests that have been converted to written requests.

3. CONTROL RESPONSIBILITY

The Public Information Specialist or Correspondence Coordinator determines the types of communications requiring control and acts as the primary control point by:

- Determining proper action responsibility
- Assigning appropriate response due dates
- Following up and expediting action on overdue communications

The action officer promptly informs the Public Information Specialist or Correspondence Coordinator when reply due dates cannot be met, when

the use of an interim reply is advisable, or when the action responsibility must be transferred to another office.

#### 4. FOLLOW UP OF OVERDUE REPLIES

A control system is no better than the diligence and effectiveness of follow up procedures. Follow up ensures compliance with response time standards and, ultimately, is the personal responsibility of the supervisors and heads of offices at all organizational levels. Follow up must be continuous and systematic. It includes identifying and resolving problems which delay the preparation of replies, and sending interim replies when necessary. Staff meeting agendas in the office(s) with primary responsibility for controlling requests should always include a discussion of the status of overdue communications.

- Report On Overdue Communications: A semimonthly report on all overdue requests will be prepared by the Public Information Specialist or Correspondence Coordinator. Exhibit C-I is an example of the report. The report shows the type and subject of each request, the date of receipt, the name of the action office or action officer, the overdue period, and the status of the reply action. Copies of the report will also be distributed to all action offices and officers with responsibility for overdue requests.
- Personal Follow Up By The Office Head: The Public Information Specialist or Correspondence Coordinator contacts each office and officer holding overdue requests, as the due date arrives. The reason for the delay will be determined and procedures to expedite the response will be identified. The office heads of the primary control points must be kept informed of the status of unanswered referred requests and must initiate effective corrective action to eliminate serious backlogs.

#### 5. CONTROL METHODS, FORMS, AND PROCEDURES

This section describes methods for controlling action requests (either letters or telephone requests recorded on the Telephone Referral Record, described below). Existing AID forms described in this section are available from SER/MO/PAV.

Optional form 102(4-75) is the basic tool used in this control system. A copy of the form is shown in Exhibit C-II. The form is utilized as follows:

- a. Fill out the form, indicating the referring office, subject, date of referral, office referred to, date reply due.
- b. Attach the first three copies to the original request and forward to the action office. If uncertain that the correct action office has been identified, verify by telephone before routing.

SAMPLE REPORT ON OVERDUE REFERRALS

STATUS REPORT: REQUESTS REFERRED

CONTROL NUMBER	TYPE	SUBJECT	DATE REC'd DATE REF'd	ACTION OFFICE ACTION OFFICER	DUE DATE
654476	Mail	Fertility Control	2/15/80 2/17/80	B. Brown DSIC	3/5/80
655902	Memorandum	Policy on Vietnam Refugees	1/17/80 1/18/80	S. Jordan RE	4/15/80

DATE OF REPORT: 3/10/80

PREPARED BY: J Smith

- c. File the fourth copy in a suspense file by date action is due.
- d. At the beginning of each working day, remove the fourth copy from the suspense file for the current date. Telephone the action office to determine the status of the response. If the due date is extended, write the new date on the fourth copy and refile according to the revised due date.
- e. When the action is completed, the original control record is returned with a copy of the original request and a copy of the response, if appropriate. Ensure that the type of action is noted on the original control record and file the control record by action office, by date of the request (i.e., in chronological order according to the pre-printed control number on the upper right corner of the control record). Clip the fourth copy from the suspense file to the original request and file these in chronological order.\*
- f. The completed action, files are to be maintained for one year. After one year, they can be destroyed or filed in a dead file.

When the action request and the original control record are received by an action officer, the officer determines the feasibility of completing the action within the assigned reply time. When it is decided that more time is needed, the action officer consults the Public Information Specialist or Correspondence Coordinator about extending the due date. If the requested information is not available in the action office, the control point is notified and arrangements are made for referring the request elsewhere. When the action has been completed, the action officer notes the action taken on the bottom of the original control record; the second and third copies can be kept on file in the action office, if desired. The original request and the original control record are returned to the control point.

#### 6. TELEPHONE REFERRAL RECORD

When a telephone request is received at a primary correspondence control point (in all three alternatives, this activity is in OPA), the request can be transferred or a written request can be prepared. If a written request is necessary and desired by the caller, a one part Telephone Referral Record is completed and is then handled as if it were mail. A copy of this form is shown in Exhibit C-III.

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\* These records are not to be filed by the name of the requestor. To do so creates a "system of records" under the Privacy Act and adds unnecessary reporting burdens to the staff.



## TELEPHONE REFERRAL RECORD

TELEPHONE REFERRAL RECORD			CONTROL NO.
REQUESTOR'S NAME	AFFILIATION	DATE OF REQUEST	
STREET ADDRESS	CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE		REQUEST TAKEN BY:
PHONE NO. (Area Code)	DOCUMENT ID		
DISPOSITION			
REFERRED TO	DATE	RESPONSE DUE	
NATURE OF REQUEST (Be as specific as possible)			

PERIODIC REPORTS

The new operation will require that a number of periodic workload reports be made so that the performance, adequacy of staff, and referral patterns are continually assessed. Three major reports are required, although the specific content of the forms will vary depending upon the alternative selected:

- Daily summary of telephone workload: This log will make a brief notation of every call received, regardless of whether or not the call is developed into a written request and controlled to completion. This will provide an indication of how well the telephone advertising campaign is doing, of the adequacy of staff ability to make appropriate referrals, and of the overall performance of the central telephone inquiry service. A sample of log is shown in Exhibit C-IV.
- Daily summary of mail reviewed and processed: This log will make a brief notation of every piece of mail received, regardless of how the mail is eventually processed. It will allow OPA to review (over time) the adequacy of its materials on hand, and the referral burden on other offices and bureaus. A sample of this form is shown in Exhibit C-V.
- Monthly report of activity: This will allow top management to determine easily how well the public information function is being performed and what degree of problem, if any is being created by delinquent referrals. A sample of this report is shown in Exhibit C-VI.

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DAILY TELEPHONE ACTIVITY\*

DAILY TELEPHONE ACTIVITY LOG		DATE: <u>1/27/80</u>
		<u>TOTALS</u>
1. Calls satisfied with materials on hand <del>111</del> <del>111</del> <del>111</del> <del>111</del>		1. <u>20</u>
2. Calls requiring search by OPA <del>111</del> 11		2. <u>7</u>
3. Calls referred out of OPA		
	Referred without Control	Referred with Control
AFR		1
AG		
ASIA		
CM	<del>111</del>	
DM		
DS/DIC		
DS--other		
ES		
FM	11	
GC		
IIA		
LAC		1
LEG	1	
OEO		
OPA		
PDC	1	
PM	11	
PPC		
Other		
TOTAL	A: <u>11</u>	B: <u>2</u> 3C: <u>13</u>
4. <u>TOTAL CALLS PER DAY</u>		<u><u>40</u></u>

\* This form will be slightly different depending on which alternative is selected.

DAILY MAIL REVIEW LOG\*

DAILY MAIL REVIEW LOG		DATE: <u>1/27/80</u>
		<u>TOTALS</u>
1. Total Mail Received and Reviewed		
A. Proper Address	<u>14</u>	
B. Invalid Address	<u>70</u>	1. <u>84</u>
2. Non-request Mail Referred Without Control:		
<u><del>111</del> <del>111</del> <del>111</del> 1</u>		2. <u>16</u>
3. Mail Referred Out of OPA		
	Referred With Control	Referred Without Controls
AFR	_____	_____
AG	_____	_____
ASIA	_____	_____
CM	<u>111</u>	<u>111</u>
DM	_____	_____
DS/DIC	_____	_____
DS/Other	_____	_____
ES	_____	1
FM	1	_____
GC	_____	_____
IIA	_____	_____
LAC	_____	_____
LEG	_____	<u>111</u>
OEO	1	_____
OPA	_____	_____
PDC	_____	_____
PM	<u>111</u>	<u>111</u>
PPC	_____	_____
Other	<u>State</u>	11
	<u>FOIA</u>	1
A: <u>10</u>		B: <u>15</u>
		3C: <u>25</u>
4. Requests Satisfied With Materials On Hand		
<u><del>111</del> <del>111</del> <del>111</del> <del>111</del> <del>111</del> <del>111</del> <del>111</del> 11</u>		4. <u>37</u>
5. Requests Requiring Additional Searches		
<u><del>111</del> 1</u>		5. <u>6</u>
Totals for items 2,3,4,5, and 6 should equal item 1.		

\* This form will be slightly different depending on which alternative is selected.

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MONTHLY REPORT		MONTH: <u>January</u>	
1.	Total pieces of mail opened (summary of item 1, DMRL)	<u>84</u>	
2.	Total telephone calls answered (summary of item 4, DTAL)	<u>40</u>	
3.	Total contacts with public (1+2)	<u>124</u>	
4.	Number and percent of requests handled with materials on hand (summary of item 1 DTAL, and item 4 DMRL, divided by item 3 above to obtain percentage)	<u>57</u> #	<u>46</u> %
5.	Number and percent of requests requiring OPA search (summary of item 2 DTAL and item 5 DMRL, divided by item 3 above to obtain percentage)	<u>13</u> #	<u>11</u> %
6.	Number and percent of requests referred with control (summary of items 3B DTAL, and 3A DMRL, divided by item 3 above to obtain percentage)	<u>12</u> #	<u>10</u> %
7.	Number and percent of requests referred without Control (summary of item 3A DTAL and items 2 and 3B DMRL divided by item 3 above to obtain percentage)	<u>42</u> #	<u>33</u> %
			<u>100</u> %
-----			
8.	Number of referred responses that are overdue		
	<u>1</u> 5days <u>2</u> 10days <u>1</u> more than 10 days		

\* This form will be slightly different depending on which alternative is selected.

APPENDIX D

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS FOR NEW POSITIONS

ALTERNATIVE A

JOB TITLE: Public Information Specialist (GS 9)

ORGANIZATION: Public Inquiries Staff, OPA

JOB PURPOSE: To coordinate and prepare AID's responses to non-FOIA requests and to telephone requests from the public.

## JOB DUTIES:

1. Maintains familiarity with the functional responsibilities of all AID organizational units. This includes maintaining a working relationship with the designated Correspondence Coordinator in each office and bureau.
2. Develops and maintains a Document Inventory List which lists the titles, quantities, and physical location of all current AID publications (not including the DIC holdings).
3. Originates, searches, locates, refers, reproduces, and otherwise develops and procures the responses to non-FOIA requests for information from the public. Assures the timeliness of replies, including tracking and following to resolution all requests referred out of OPA for action.
4. Contributes to the development and maintenance of the AID Reading Room. The Reading Room is the ultimate responsibility of the FOIA officer, but the Public Information Specialist will help collect materials, maintain stock, write or compile new materials for the reading room, and otherwise contribute to its smooth operation.
5. Becomes knowledgeable about the holdings of the DIC and, in particular, learns to use the automated retrieval equipment in DIC which is the source of many responses to public inquiries.
6. Prepares monthly statistical reports summarizing the number of public requests, the nature of the request, and the manner in which a response was made.
7. Supervises the performance of the GS 7 non-FOIA staff in the Public Inquiries Staff.
8. Assists in preparing FOIA responses, as available time permits.

9. Provides feedback to OPA staff concerning public needs, e.g., new brochures, reprints, publication updates.

CONTROLS OVER WORK:

Works under minimal supervision. Reports to the Chief, Public Inquiries Staff.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Demonstrated skills in library research, records management, and administration of small staffs.
2. Demonstrated ability to operate a computer terminal in an interactive mode with a complex data base.
3. Comprehensive knowledge of the functional responsibilities of the AID organization, of foreign economic assistance and U.S. foreign policy in general, and of AID's policies, projects, procedures, and history.
4. Diplomacy and tact in dealing with diverse individuals under time pressures and conflicting commitments.
5. Ability to write clearly and effectively about a range of general topics related to AID's policies, history, and activities.

ALTERNATIVE A

JOB TITLE: Public Information Specialist (GS 7)

ORGANIZATION: Public Inquiries Staff, OPA

JOB PURPOSE: To support the public information responsibility by operating a central telephone inquiry service and by reviewing requests from the public.

JOB DUTIES:

1. Operates the AID telephone inquiry service and either directs callers to the appropriate source of information or prepares a written request for attention by the Public Information Specialist (GS 9).
2. Reviews all mail from the SER/MO Mail Room which does not have a valid address and makes a determination about the appropriate referral for the letter. Isolates non-FOIA requests from the public for attention by the Public Information Specialist (GS 9).
3. Prepares responses to public requests that can be answered by information on hand in OPA's Reading Room.

CONTROLS OVER WORK:

Works under the direct supervision of the Public Information Specialist (GS 9) with ultimate responsibility to the Chief, Public Inquiries Staff.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Ability to deal with the public in a courteous, efficient, and productive manner.
2. Ability to operate word processing equipment.
3. Ability to administer a logging, filing, and tracking system.
4. Ability to use discretion in routing mail and telephone inquiries and in preparing responses from materials on hand in the OPA Reading Room.
5. Overall knowledge of foreign assistance policies and programs, AID policies and procedures, and the organization and history of AID.

ALTERNATIVE B

JOB TITLE: Public Information Specialists (GS 7)

ORGANIZATION: Office of the Director, OPA

JOB PURPOSE: To coordinate and manage AID's responses to non-FOIA requests and to telephone requests from the public.

## JOB DUTIES:

1. Maintains familiarity with the functional responsibilities of all AID organizational units. This includes maintaining a working relationship with the designated Correspondence Coordinator in each office and bureau.
2. Develops and maintains a Document Inventory List which lists the titles, quantities, and physical location of all current AID publications (not including the DIC holdings).
3. Contributes to the development and maintenance of a modest AID Reading Room. The Reading Room is the ultimate responsibility of the FOIA Officer, but this individual will assure that general documents and brochures are prepared in response to frequent requests and that adequate inventories are on hand.
4. Reviews requests that come to the attention of OPA and determines the appropriate course of action:
  - Refers the request to PM, CM, State, ES, LEG or the OPA/PI staff without further control
  - Refers the request to the AID office or bureau with cognizance over the material and follows up on the request to be sure that a response is made
  - Sends a response with information on hand
5. Operates the AID telephone inquiry service and either directs callers to the appropriate source of information or prepares a written request. These latter requests are handled in the same manner as written requests (item 4, above).
6. Prepares monthly statistical reports summarizing the number of public requests, the nature of the request, and the manner in which a response was made.

CONTROLS OVER WORK:

Works under the direct supervision of Deputy Director of OPA.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Ability to deal with the public in a courteous, efficient, and productive manner; diplomacy and tact in dealing with diverse individuals under time pressures and conflicting commitments.
2. Ability to operate word processing equipment.
3. Ability to administer a logging, filing, and tracking system.
4. Ability to use discretion in routing mail and telephone inquiries and in preparing responses from materials on hand in the OPA Reading Room.
5. Comprehensive knowledge of the functional responsibilities of the AID organization, of foreign economic assistance and U.S. foreign policy in general, and of AID's policies, projects, procedures, and history.

ALTERNATIVE B

JOB TITLE: Technical Information Specialist (GS 9)  
ORGANIZATION: Development Information Centers (DS/DIU/DIC)  
JOB PURPOSE: To review library holdings to prepare responses to non-FOIA requests from the public.

## JOB DUTIES:

1. Maintains familiarity with the functional responsibilities of all AID organizational units.
2. Originates, searches, locates, reproduces, and otherwise develops and procures the responses to non-FOIA requests for which no other AID office or bureau has available records.
3. Becomes knowledgeable about the holdings of the DIC and, in particular, learns to use the automated retrieval equipment in DIC which is the source of many responses to public inquiries.
4. Assists in other library duties, as time permits.
5. Maintains close contact with Public Information Specialist (GS 7) in OPA to optimize the resources employed in satisfying public inquiries.

## CONTROLS OVER WORK:

Works under minimal supervision. Reports to the DIC Chief Librarian.

## POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Demonstrated skills in library research, and records management.
2. Demonstrated ability to operate a computer terminal in an interactive mode with a complex data base.
3. Comprehensive knowledge of the functional responsibilities of the AID organization, of foreign economic assistance and U.S. foreign policy in general, and of AID's policies, projects, procedures, and history.
4. Diplomacy and tact in dealing with diverse individuals under time pressures and conflicting commitments.

ALTERNATIVE C

JOB TITLE: Public Information Specialist (GS 7)

ORGANIZATION: Office of the Director, OPA

JOB PURPOSE: To support the public information responsibility by operating a central telephone inquiry service and by providing general readily available information about AID.

JOB DUTIES:

1. Operates the AID telephone inquiry service and either directs callers to the appropriate source of information or prepares a written request to be referred to the appropriate location in the agency.
2. Prepares responses to public requests that can be answered by information on hand in OPA.
3. Controls requests for information when the information is contained in records held primarily by OPA.

CONTROLS OVER WORK:

Works under the direct supervision of the Deputy Director of Office of Public Affairs.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Ability to deal with the public in a courteous, efficient, and productive manner.
2. Ability to use discretion in routing mail and telephone inquiries and in preparing responses from materials on hand in the OPA Reading Room.
3. Ability to operate a modest interoffice control system for logging, filing, and tracking interoffice requests.

ALTERNATIVE C

JOB TITLE: Technical Information Specialist (GS 9)  
ORGANIZATION: Development Information Center (DS/DIU/DIC)  
JOB PURPOSE: To provide responses to requests for information from the public.

JOB DUTIES:

1. Maintains familiarity with the functional responsibilities of all AID organizational units.
2. Develops and maintains a Document Inventory List which lists the titles, quantities, and physical location of all current AID publications (not to duplicate the DIC holdings).
3. Originates, searches, locates, reproduces, and otherwise develops and procures the responses to non-FOIA requests for which no other AID office or bureau has available records.
4. Becomes knowledgeable about the holdings of the DIC and, in particular, learns to use the automated retrieval equipment in DIC which is the source of many responses to public inquiries.
5. Prepares monthly statistical reports summarizing the number of public requests, the nature of the request, and the manner in which a response was made.
6. Assists in other library duties as time permits.

CONTROLS OVER WORK:

Works under minimal supervision. Reports to the DIC Chief Librarian.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Demonstrated skills in library research, and records management.
2. Demonstrated ability to operate a computer terminal in an interactive mode with a complex data base.
3. Comprehensive knowledge of the functional responsibilities of the AID organization, of foreign economic assistance and U.S. foreign policy in general, and of AID's policies, projects, procedures, and history.

4. Diplomacy and tact in dealing with diverse individuals under time pressures and conflicting commitments.

APPENDIX E

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BRIEFLY

A. OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BRIEFLY

The three alternatives described in Part A represent what we believe are the most viable and acceptable choices. There are, in addition, several other choices which were considered during the course of the study and rejected for a number of reasons. To spare the reader the chore of envisioning these options and weighing their pros and cons, we will discuss each of these rejected alternatives briefly and present the reasons for the rejection.

1. TWO ALTERNATIVES INVOLVING THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY WERE CONSIDERED

Within AID, ES operates a well-established, highly respected, and effective system for routing requests for information and controlling requests to assure that appropriate timely action is taken. From the outset of the study, ES loomed as a potential candidate for taking on additional responsibility for all public requests. On the surface, it seems an easy solution to simply expand upon a system that already works well and is familiar to most staff throughout the Agency. Two alternatives were considered and rejected for the reasons described below:

(1) Central Control In ES And Response Preparation In The Other Offices And Bureaus In Aid

Under this alternative, ES would simply take on responsibility for controlling all requests from the public, in addition to those addressed to the Administrator or Deputy Administrator (the current limit of their responsibility). All public requests would be routed to ES, action responsibility would be determined there, and the request and dreaded "buck" slip would be routed to the appropriate office or bureau. Follow-up would be accomplished as it is now, lending ES's considerable clout to the effort. As now, ES would have no response preparation responsibility but, instead, would rely on other Agency staff to prepare the response.

This alternative has considerable intuitive appeal. Unfortunately, it fails to recognize that the most time-consuming and difficult sub-function in the public information process is response preparation, not control. Under this alternative, the burden on the other offices and bureaus would not decrease, since ES does not prepare any responses directly. In particular, the burden on OPA and DIC would not decrease and might even increase (e.g. time pressure). Because one major objective of the study was to provide some relief to these two staffs, this alternative was eliminated from serious consideration.

(2) Central Control And Service Delivery In ES

Having rejected the prior alternative because it fails to provide ES with response preparation capability, one is forced to consider an alternative in which ES is provided with that capability. At first glance, it appears that staff and responsibilities proposed for OPA in Alternative A can be simply transplanted into ES, thereby avoiding the brutal transition period always experienced in setting up entirely new procedures. This would almost double the amount of requests handled by ES each year (including telephone requests).

If this option were selected, it would be logical to perform the response preparation sub-activity for ES's traditional mail as well as for the other requests from the general public. The level of staff now proposed, to perform response preparation in Alternative A, would be inadequate to service these combined requests. Thus, one of two situations would occur:

- ES would be forced to maintain an artificial distinction between their traditional workload (i.e. requests addressed to the Administrator or Deputy) and other requests from the public providing service for the latter but not the former.
- ES would require additional response preparation staff.

Perhaps most important, ES has expressed very little interest in assuming an enlarged responsibility under any possible option. It now has a well-defined, smoothly operating system that is directly related to the larger mission of the ES--serving the Administrator and the Deputy. The additional responsibility of serving the public in general would be a distraction, not well integrated with overall office priorities.

2. AS THE LARGEST REPOSITORY OF INFORMATION IN AID, DIC IS A LOGICAL CANDIDATE FOR RESPONDING TO PUBLIC REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

From the beginning of the study, DIC was a serious contender for this new responsibility. Two factors make DIC an attractive choice:

- DIC has the largest single repository of information in AID. Many--although certainly not all--questions raised by the public can be answered by information available through the library.

- As part of its ongoing acquisition process, DIC is very familiar with the document holdings of other offices and bureaus throughout the Agency. Thus, when DIC itself was unable to provide a response, it would be in a good position to make an informed referral elsewhere for action. Because of these compelling advantages, this alternative was proposed to the project steering committee during the sixth week of the study. After lengthy, and lively discussion, the alternative was rejected for several reasons:

- DIC's major mission is to serve LDC, PVO, AID/W, and mission staff. The library has developed its holdings specifically to meet the unique needs of professionals in these very specialized areas. Although members of the general public are also sometimes interested in similar information, the library is not equipped to provide the wide range of general information (including answers to policy questions) the public desires.
- The library maintains working and reference copies on thousands of documents and also maintains several off-site development inventories of documents often requested by the professionals they serve. They do not have the space, however, to stock bulk copies of the more general literature frequently used to reply to the public.

Most important, however, is a strong feeling among library staff that dealing with the public is a very different and somewhat distracting experience. They do not feel that services to both the development assistance community and the public are easily wedded, and they are concerned that adding a new role may compromise their ability to perform the old one well. Although DIC is very willing to provide some support to the public information activity, it does not want this activity to compete with or override its traditional purpose.

3. A SYSTEM ANALOGOUS TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S OFFICE OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS WAS ALSO CONSIDERED

The State Department's Office of Public Communications enjoys a good reputation among the AID staff.

This system was examined carefully to determine how, if at all, the AID system might replicate its success. As described in Chapter III, their system is highly automated and processes four to five times as many requests (mail and telephone) as OPA. Alternative A incorporates some features of the State Department model, i.e. reviewing invalidly addressed mail, developing better shelf resources, establishing a central telephone inquiries services. The major feature of the State Department model--the automated letter writing system--was rejected for two reasons:

- The volume of requests in OPA is not adequate to justify the expense of developing and operating the system .
- More important, the types of requests received by AID vary widely and do not lend themselves to standard, uniform responses.

Thus, the choices faced by top AID management are varied and complex. Alternatives that seem logical and simple, are not so. Alternatives that bear the weight of scrutiny also are beset by important disadvantages. Moreover, other alternatives besides the three suggested and the four rejected in this Chapter exist. New alternatives can be created by changing any feature of the alternatives described here. We believe, however, that the three with the highest probability of success have been identified. In Chapter V, these three are ranked and recommendations for implementation are provided.

APPENDIX F

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

F. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Regardless of the alternative selected, 14 tasks would be required before implementation can occur. Exhibit F-I lists these tasks and shows that between four and five months would be required to launch the new procedures, with Alternative C being slightly less time-consuming. Exhibit F-II provides estimates of the level of effort (in terms of person-weeks\*) required for each alternative, by task. As might be expected, Alternative A requires the most investment in start-up, although not substantially more than Alternative B or C.

The 14 tasks listed in the exhibits are discussed below and the major differences among the alternatives are highlighted:

(1) Select Preferred Alternative

The first task is for the top AID management to select an alternative or some hybrid alternative. This would require circulation of the final report to all interested parties for comments and recommendations. Very little action can take place on the other tasks until decisive action is taken on this one.

Approximately two weeks are allocated for this task and up to 20 top managers would be involved in the review and comment process. The resources required for this task do not vary by alternative.

(2) Draft Handbook Changes

Once the alternative has been selected, the required Handbook changes will be drafted using the suggestions in this report as a point of departure. This task, which also does not vary by alternative, will require the skills of a writer and a secretary; management personnel will be needed to direct and review the changes. The elapsed time is one month and level of effort is four weeks for all alternatives.

(3) Obtain Approval For Handbook Changes

Once the new guidance is drafted, it must be disseminated to all interested parties for review and comment. Interested parties will be given three weeks to prepare written comments and these will be consolidated into the Handbook changes, as appropriate. This process is more or less identical for all alternatives and requires an estimated month and one-half elapsed time and 30 person-weeks.

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\* These person weeks are not converted to dollars because the individuals involved have a wide range of salaries.

EXHIBIT F-I

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

TASK	MONTH					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Select Preferred Alternative	-----					
2. Draft Handbook Changes	-----	-----				
3. Obtain Approval For Handbook Changes		-----	-----			
4. Prepare Position Description	-----					
5. Obtain Personnel Approvals And Recruit Staff*		A B C	-----	-----		
6. Train In DIC Inventory And System			C	A B		
7. Train In New Procedures				-----		
8. Train In Computer And Word Processing Equipment			C	B	A	
9. Prepare DIL And Launch Acquisition Effort			C	B	A	
10. Install Telephone Service				A & B C		
11. Procure Equipment & Prepare Input	A	B C	-----			
12. Design Forms And Obtain Approval		-----				
13. Publicize New Procedures Agency-Wide					-----	
14. Evaluate The New System As An On-Going Effort					-----	
				Implementation Period-Alternatives A and B		
				Implementation Period-Alternative C		
*Assumes that staff will be recruited from within the Agency						

EXHIBIT F-II

LEVEL OF EFFORT  
FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TASK	ALTERNATIVE A		ALTERNATIVE B		ALTERNATIVE C	
	ASSUMPTION	PERSON WEEKS	ASSUMPTION	PERSON WEEKS	ASSUMPTION	PERSON WEEKS
1. Select preferred Alternative	20 Upper Mgt. Persons	15	Same	15	Same	15
2. Draft Handbook Changes	One Writer, Half Time Secretary, Half Time Manager	4	Same	4	Same	4
3. Obtain Approval For Handbook Changes	20 Upper Mgt. Persons	30	Same	30	Same	30
4. Prepare Position Description	One Writer, Half Time Secretary, Half Time Mgr.	1	Same	1	Same	1
5. Obtain Personnel Approvals and Recruit Staff*	Two Weeks Per New Hire	6	Same	6	Same	4
6. Train In DIC Inventory And System	Four Trainees, One Trainer	3	Three Trainees, One Trainer	2	Two Trainees, One Trainer	1
7. Train In New Procedures	Four Trainees, One Trainer	3	Three Trainees, One Trainer	1	18 Trainees, One Trainer, Two Day	8
8. Train In Computer And Word Processing Equipment	Four Trainees, One Trainer, 2 Weeks	9	Two Trainees, One Trainer	6	One Trainee, One Trainer	5
9. Prepare DIL, Launch Acquisition Effort	One Person	4	Same	4	Same	3
10. Install Telephone Service	One Person	1	Same	1	Same	1
11. Procure Equipment And Prepare Input	5 Mgt., Class I, Programmer	9	5 Mgt., Class I, Programmer	5	5 Mgt., Class I	1
12. Design Form And Obtain Approval	Drafter, Mgt., Procurement	3	Same	3	Same	3
13. Publicize New Procedures Agency Wide	One Writer, 20 Upper Mgt.	3	Same	3	Same	3
14. Evaluate The New System As An Ongoing Effort	Operational Cost	NA	Same	NA	Same	NA
Total Person Weeks Required For Implementation		93		82		83
*Assumes that staff will be recruited from within the Agency.						

(4) Prepare Position Descriptions

Concurrent with the drafting of Handbook changes, work can begin on drafting position descriptions for the required new staff. These descriptions will include the purpose of the position, primary duties, level of supervision, and qualifications. The draft descriptions provided in Appendix B can be circulated and used as a starting point. Even though the number of staff varies among the alternatives, the number of position descriptions does not. Consequently, the same elapsed time (two weeks) and level of effort (one week) are required for Alternatives A through C.

(5) Obtain Personnel Approval And Recruit Staff

Approval for the specified number and levels of Public Information Specialists must next be obtained. While the same approval process applies to all alternatives, the elapsed time for recruiting and hiring depends 1) upon the size of the staff and 2) whether the Specialists will be hired from within or from outside the Agency. In the former case, the recruitment process can probably be completed within two months. If staff are recruited from outside of the Agency, six to eight months may be required. As shown in the position description in Appendix B, familiarity with agency operations is a major prerequisite. Consequently, we recommend that these positions be filled by existing Agency staff and the planning estimates shown in Exhibits F-I and F-II assume that this recommendation is accepted. If it is not, scheduling and level of effort estimates must be extended accordingly.

(6) Train In DIC Inventory And System

In each alternative, some of the new personnel will be required to become familiar with the DIC operation. We estimate that it will take one week in DIC under the tutelage of the Chief Librarian to obtain the necessary familiarity. A clear understanding of the nature, volume and location of Agency documents will be gained during the training period. In addition, the concentrated interaction between OPA and DIC will help establish rapport between the two staff and minimize future misunderstandings about respective roles and responsibilities. The level of effort required for this task varies according to the number of staff to be trained:

- Alternative A: Requires one week elapsed time and three person-weeks
- Alternative B: Requires one week elapsed time and two person-weeks
- Alternative C: Requires one week elapsed time and two person-weeks

(7) Train In New Procedures

After Handbook changes have been published and new personnel have been through orientation in DIC, attention will be given to establishing the new procedures required for system implementation. Supervisors to the Public Information Specialists will be required to help establish and document the new procedures and to train the staff in their new responsibilities. In Alternative C, Correspondence Coordinators from all of the second level offices and bureaus will be included in this phase of the training. The purpose of this effort is to ensure that all key personnel are well versed in the new procedures and are prepared to accept the attendant responsibilities. One week elapsed time is allowed in each alternative but the level of effort varies according to the number of staff to be trained:

- Alternative A: One week elapsed time and three person-weeks
- Alternative B: One week elapsed time and two person-weeks
- Alternative C: One week elapsed time and eight person-weeks

(8) Train In Computer And Word Processing Equipment

In Alternative A, OPA's office word processing equipment will also serve as a computer terminal. The one week training course for accessing the computerized data bases will be taught to the GS 9 Public Information Specialist by the DIC staff. In Alternative B, where the GS 9 specialist is assigned to DIC, the terminal and computer expertise is already available so training will be tailored to the existing operation.

In both of these alternatives, training in word processing equipment is also required. This will be provided by the vendor to all of the specialists who are assigned to OPA. The purpose of this is to ensure that its usage is integrated into the activities of all the specialists. It is also reasonable to expect that, with experience, more and more responses can be made efficiently with this equipment. In addition, maintenance of the Document Inventory List will be more easily controlled in this environment.

Maintenance of the Document Inventory List and the need for a word processor falls upon DIC in Alternative C. As recommended earlier, word processing equipment will be used. DIC will not acquire this equipment, however, but will instead rent time on one within the building. Arrangements for this will be provided by the office owning the equipment:

- Alternative A: Two weeks elapsed time and nine person-weeks

- Alternative B: Two weeks elapsed time and six person-weeks
- Alternative C: One week elapsed time and five person-weeks

(9) Prepare Document Inventory List And Launch The Acquisition Effort

As discussed earlier, the Document Inventory List is a key component of all three alternatives. Initially the list will facilitate the requisite acquisition process in Alternatives A and B. If Alternative A or B is implemented, acquisition will be an ongoing task with considerably more time required for Alternative A. The list, though not used for acquisition in Alternative C, will be very critical to the smooth operation of this system:

- Alternative A: At least five weeks elapsed time and four person-weeks
- Alternative B: Four weeks elapsed time and four person-weeks
- Alternative C: Three weeks elapsed time and three person-weeks

(10) Install Telephone Service

In all three alternatives, the telephone inquiries service will be installed in OPA. Although the timing of installation is earlier in Alternative C, the elapsed time (one week) and level of effort (one person-week) is the same for all three alternatives. This task includes completing the requisition process for ordering the proposed two-station rotary, determining service set-up, and alerting the Centrex operators to the existence of the new service.

(11) Procure Equipment And Prepare Input

While use of word processing equipment and a computer terminal is proposed for all of the alternatives, the time and effort required for incorporating this equipment into the system operation varies significantly. In Alternative A, a word processor also serving as a computer terminal will be selected. The number of paragraphs of input is greater in Alternative A than in Alternative B; hence, more elapsed and person time is scheduled. Alternative C will use the word processor for the Document Inventory List only and therefore does not involve the procurement of a word processor. Rather, time will be rented from an office which has excess time on an existing machine. The

effort required for exploring the availability of word processing equipment in Alternative C is included in the following estimates:

- Alternative A: Fourteen weeks elapsed time and nine person-weeks
- Alternative B: Ten weeks elapsed time and five person-weeks
- Alternative C: Three weeks elapsed time and two person-weeks

(12) Design Forms And Obtain Approval

Draftors, Graphic Artists and PAV personnel will be involved in this task. This activity can begin after the handbook changes have been approved. The proposed forms are more or less the same for all the alternatives and an estimated three weeks elapsed time and three person-weeks of effort are required.

(13) Publicize New Procedures Agency-Wide

In all three alternatives, a public information campaign will be initiated by OPA to introduce the new system and reacquaint agency personnel with the Agency's responsibilities to the public. A kick-off meeting will be held for all upper-level managers. This will be followed by six weeks of special notices, posters and promotional activities.

At least six weeks elapsed time and three person-weeks of effort are planned for each alternative.

(14) Evaluate The New System As An On-Going Effort

Once the preferred alternative is in operation, evaluation of the new system will be on-going. In Alternatives A and B, OPA will have this on-going management responsibility. In Alternative C, this responsibility can be 1) shared by all office and bureau heads or 2) assumed by a specific office or bureau, e.g., MP or OPA. The assessment will test the validity of the planning assumptions upon which the alternatives are based and indicate what, if any, changes or refinements should be made; this is especially crucial during the first six months of operation. The person-time involved in this effort will be considered as an operational cost and therefore is not included in Exhibit IV-16. This task, as a final and salient part of the implementation schedule, is included in the schedule to highlight the importance of dedicating the resources to continually evaluate the system and its value to the Agency.

In summary, the costs and elapsed time for implementation do not vary tremendously among the three alternatives. Certainly, the decision about which alternative to select will not hinge on these small differences in implementation effort. It is also important to remember that most of the implementation costs are sunk costs; that is, the staff who will be performing much of the review, processing and training are already employed full-time by AID and so very little incremental costs will be incurred.