

PD-ART-038

10/2/5



**Final Report**  
**TMG/OFDA Support Contract**  
**USAID/BHR/OFDA**  
**Contract No. AOT-0000-C-00-4121-00**

**The Mitchell Group, Inc.**  
**1816 11<sup>th</sup> St., NW**  
**Washington, DC 20001**  
**January 31, 2001**

A



The Mitchell Group, Inc.  
1816 11th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001 USA  
Tel (202) 745-1919  
Fax (202) 234-1697  
E-Mail [tmgwww@erols.com](mailto:tmgwww@erols.com)

January 31, 2001

U.S Agency for International Development  
ATTN: Ms. Jean Hacken, Cognizant Technical Officer  
Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/BHR/OFDA)  
RRB 8.07.068  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, D. C. 20523-8602

**SUBJECT: Final Report of The Mitchell Group/OFDA Support Contract No.  
AOT-0000-C-00-4121-00**

This is the final report submitted by The Mitchell Group, Inc. (TMG) under the USAID/OFDA Support Contract AOT-0000-C-00-4121-00 awarded July 16, 1994. As required, TMG is forwarding four copies to the Cognizant Technical Officer, two copies to CDIE, and one copy to the Contracts Officer.

This report summarizes major challenges faced during the implementation of this contract, TMG's accomplishments, and our recommendations for future actions based on the lessons learned. We hope that OFDA will find this report helpful in reflecting on its current and future utilization of support services contracts. In turn, we request that OFDA complete a final contractor performance evaluation report of our management, technical, and personnel assistance as soon as possible to assist us in closing out TMG's responsibility to this contract as the prime contractor.

TMG was honored to support USAID/OFDA's efforts to assist people in need, and we hope to work with OFDA again in the future. If you have any questions or comments regarding this report or other topics, please do not hesitate to call us.

Sincerely,

  
Lloyd M. Mitchell  
President/CEO

Cc: CDIE/Development Experience Clearinghouse (2)  
OP/Contracts Officer (1)

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	i
1. Introduction .....	1
1.A. Background .....	1
1.B. Contract Requirements .....	1
1.C. Overall Contract Expected Results .....	1
2. Contract Component Activities and Expected Results	
2.A. Disaster Information Support .....	2
2.B. Management Information Systems/Computer Support .....	2
2.C. Training Support .....	2
2.D. Administrative and Logistics Support .....	3
2.E. LAN Administration/Training .....	3
3. Contract Performance	
3.A. Overall Staffing .....	4
3.B. Operational Units Performance .....	5
3.B.1. Information Support Unit .....	5
3.B.2. Management Information Systems Unit .....	10
3.B.3. Training Unit .....	13
3.B.4. Administrative and Logistics .....	17
4. Subcontracting .....	19
5. Overall Lessons Learned and Recommendations .....	20
6. Conclusion .....	23
7. Financial Summary .....	23
Appendix A Contract Modification Summary Table	

---

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the final report submitted by The Mitchell Group, Inc., (TMG) for contract number AOT-0000-C-00-4121-00 for support services to USAID/BHR/OFDA. USAID awarded the contract to TMG and its subcontractor, Labat-Anderson, Inc., on July 16, 1994. The contract, a five-year Level of Effort (LOE) contract, initially set at \$5,629,393 and 1,031 person months, called for the contractor to provide services in the areas of information support, communications and records, management information systems, and training. The contract was modified 11 times and was extended four times after its original termination date of July 15, 1999. At the end of the contract, on September 30, 2000, the contract had expanded to an authorized LOE of 1,491.6 person months and \$12,937,429.

TMG successfully supported OFDA through 403 declared disasters over the life of the contract. Some additional challenges that OFDA and TMG met included several moves, a government shutdown and subsequent furlough, a reduction in force, a momentous change in security requirements, Y2K, 2 changes in OFDA directorship, 2 reorganizations, workforce changes, two increases in LOE, 5 Project Managers, and substantial changes in information technology. Several major accomplishments shaped the successful implementation of this contract:

- Design and implementation of a training program that fostered relationships with other bureaus and offices within the agency and helped educate development staff about humanitarian assistance.
- Participation in the development and implementation of the Response Management Team.
- Computer support throughout 403 disaster responses, seven office relocations and Y2K preparations.

Several issues impacted the contract overall that should be reviewed and addressed as they will affect follow-on contracts. These issues, which include contract monitoring and evaluation, command and control, changing technologies, changing needs, and workforce stability, imparted several valuable lessons to TMG:

- A monitoring and evaluation plan must be developed for support services contracts in order to judge the contractor's performance and the true value of the contract to OFDA.
- There must be clarity of roles and responsibilities and tasking authority or the contractor will be faced with conflicting taskings from the same client.
- New technology must be incorporated into OFDA's workplace. Under-utilization of current technological tools increases the workload on staff, as well as the amount of time to complete tasks.

TMG hopes that OFDA will find this report helpful in managing its future support contracts.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the final report submitted by The Mitchell Group, Inc. (TMG) under USAID level of effort contract AOT-0000-00-4121-00 with subsequent modifications. This report, which presents a thumbnail sketch of major events and activities, illustrates the evolution of the contract in response to changes in OFDA's needs, and the ability of the contractor to respond to these needs. This summary should provide a quick historical reference for future CTOs and project managers.

This report will summarize the contract parameters, expenditures, and modifications, in addition to major challenges, accomplishments, and recommendations. The report provides a short description of the roles and responsibilities of the contractor for each functional area, as well as TMG's estimation of how well the goals were met for each functional area. The report also highlights some lessons learned regarding support services contracts.

Observations are based on quarterly reports, contract records on file in OFDA, comments derived from contract staff, and direct observation by TMG. No project evaluations were completed during the life of the contract, thus official comments by the COTR/CTO are not incorporated.

### 1.A. Background

TMG was awarded the OFDA Support Contract July 16, 1994. The contract, a five-year LOE contract, initially set at \$5,629,393 and 1,031 person months, called for the contractor to provide services in the areas of information support, communications and records, management information systems, and training. The contract was modified 11 times (see Annex A for a summary of the modifications). It was extended four times after its original termination date of July 15, 1999. The first extension dated from July 15, 1999 – March 31, 2000; the second extension ran from April 1, 2000 – June 30, 2000; the third extension was from July 1, 2000 – August 15, 2000; the last extension was from August 16, 2000 – September 30, 2000. The total budget obligated for the life of the contract including all extension periods reached \$12,937,429, of which \$12,337,423 was expended. The authorized LOE at the end of the contract reached 1491.6 person months, of which 1,393.12 person months was expended.

### 1.B. Contract Requirements

The contractor was required to provide disaster information support, including research and report writing, disaster data management, and administrative support; management information systems/computer support; internal and external training support; administrative and logistics support, including C&R, visa and passport services, tracking of PSC vouchers, and general courier services; and LAN administration/training. OFDA's mission required support to headquarters, field offices, and deployed teams, and necessitated frequent deployments of contract staff.

### 1.C. Overall Contract Expected Results

*As a result of the contractor's services in the five [functional] areas over the life of the contract, OFDA will reduce the incidence of loss of life, human suffering, and infrastructure damage stemming from natural disasters or complex emergencies.*

## 2. CONTRACT COMPONENT ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

### 2.A. Disaster Information Support: Tasks included:

- i. Research and Report Writing: Situation Reports; Fact Sheets and Information Bulletins; Case Reports/OFDA Annual Report; Action Officer's Handbook; Talking Points and Other Briefing Materials; Mission Disaster Relief Plans (MDRPs); Country Disaster Profiles; Conference Proceedings; General Information Requests;
- ii. Disaster Data Management: Disaster History Database; Commodity/Services Database; Mission Disaster Relief Officer (MDRO) Contact List; PMP Database; OFDA Library Catalog; Collection of lessons learned for inclusion in OFDA Action Officer's Handbook;
- iii. Administrative Support: Maintaining mailing lists, the stockpile report, map production and procurement; preparing meeting agendas; distributing written products to diverse audiences, and file maintenance.

**Expected result: accurate and timely reports and information designed to help OFDA carry out its disaster response and mitigation functions.**

**Result: TMG's Information Support Unit successfully accomplished this mission, responding to 403 disaster declarations, completing 578 Fact Sheets, Situation Reports, and Information Bulletins, and providing numerous other information products and services under tight deadlines. Several tasks were eliminated from the scope of work as OFDA's requirements evolved. Annual Reports were completed but not in a timely manner.**

### 2.B. Management Information Systems/Computer Support Function: Tasks include management and administration of OFDA's MIS to assure that it is up-to-date, properly documented, compatible with Agency and Bureau MIS standards, and meets OFDA, Bureau, and Agency needs. Collateral tasks include technical support related to the design, implementation, and maintenance of selected OFDA computer databases.

**Expected result: OFDA will have the computer platform and tools to create and exchange information in the disaster response and mitigation community.**

**Result: TMG's Management Information Systems Unit supplied OFDA with the computer support necessary for information exchange. TMG purchased and maintained several hundred thousand dollars worth of computer equipment, software, and licenses over the life of the contract, and responded to an estimated 7,200 user support calls<sup>1</sup>. Computer databases were maintained but not updated as technology advanced.**

### 2.C. Training Support: Tasks include technical and administrative support of OFDA's internal and external training. Responsibilities include conducting training activities;

---

<sup>1</sup> Monthly numbers were not available for the entirety of the contract period. Extrapolation is based on average of 300 calls/quarter over 24 quarters. In some quarters this number was considerably higher (1200 during one move period) while in the majority of quarters it was less.

designing and facilitating OFDA retreats and workshops; handling new employee orientations; developing overall training strategy; and providing technical support to the DRM Division, enabling it to effectively conduct the training elements of its programs.

**Expected results: (1) strengthened OFDA staff skills; and (2) improved design, delivery, and follow-up of training in the fields of disaster response and mitigation for OFDA grantees.**

**Results: TMG's Training Unit successfully worked with OFDA staff to provide identified and requested training interventions and worked with regional advisers to successfully improve external training. It is impossible to state whether, or to what extent, staff skills were strengthened.<sup>2</sup>**

- 2.D. Administrative and Logistics Support:** Tasks include support of OFDA's communications and records function, logging in, sorting, and distribution of cables, filing, data inputs to the NMS, visa and passport services, clerical duties with regard to PSC records, and general courier services.

**Expected result: improved OFDA record keeping and its ability to service the administrative and logistical requirements of the office.**

**Result: TMG successfully provided administrative and logistics support.**

- 2.E. LAN Administration/Training:**<sup>3</sup> Tasks include administering two LANs at the Ronald Reagan Building and 1201 Pennsylvania for approximately 150 users. Responsibilities include ongoing management and monitoring of the OFDA Computer Network, including data back up, periodic deletion of files, and troubleshooting and solving problems; coordinating with IRM; installing new software; and providing general computer training. Other tasks include developing specifications for and installation of LANs at other sites, both domestically and abroad.

**Expected result: a well functioning, technically sophisticated and state-of-the-art computer network and users skillful in its use.**

**Result: TMG's MIS successfully installed and administered the LANs, backed-up data, provided trouble-shooting, coordinated with IRM, and installed new software, both in Washington and overseas. TMG addressed and resolved issues with LAN performance in the latter portion of the contract that evolved due to the lack of file-saving/deletion/archiving protocols and the outgrown computer system configuration.**

---

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to section 3.B.3.c/d for additional comments.

<sup>3</sup> From here on, Management Information Systems/Computer Support and LAN Administration/Training will be grouped under MIS.

### 3. CONTRACT PERFORMANCE

Despite the challenges of supporting a humanitarian response organization, TMG successfully delivered the services required, exhibiting a significant degree of flexibility and willingness to tackle new challenges. TMG often went beyond the contract scope of work to support OFDA's needs. Overall contract relationships were good and contract staff were able to integrate so seamlessly that they were viewed as a critical segment of OFDA's workforce.

#### 3.A. OVERALL STAFFING

There were four key positions under this contract: Project Manager, Training Specialist, MIS Manager, and ISU Manager. The ISU Manager generally acted as an informal Deputy Project Manager, or acting PM during the PM's absence. The number and type of key positions remained constant throughout the life of the contract. Authorized full-time staff numbers increased from a total of 14 to approximately 35<sup>4</sup> over the life of the contract as the client base that TMG supported nearly doubled in size, growing from approximately 100 people to 200 people. As a result of changes going on within OFDA, several adjustments were made in staffing size and positions.

#### **Factors Affecting Staffing Changes:**

Several key factors affected contract staffing patterns. First, OFDA's workforce grew, nearly doubling over the life of the contract. Second, the make-up of the organization changed as OFDA sought to establish more internal technical capacity. Third, OFDA reorganized into a team structure. Last, OFDA became more operational as the agency sought to heighten the visibility of its humanitarian response activities. These changes impacted the utilization of human resources within OFDA (as more types of employment mechanisms were used to bring on more full-time technical personnel, including other USG agency direct hires and PSCes). They also broadened the types of work in which OFDA was involved (i.e. much more direct involvement in health, water/sanitation, and shelter) and increased the visibility of personnel and response activities.

The workforce composition and type of work performed directly affected the training unit as training needs changed, and plans and courses had to be adapted. These also affected the ISU as it was required to provide support to a broader and more diverse client base. The growth in workforce size affected the MIS and the C&R specialist, as they had more people to support. The increase in visibility and operational focus impacted the ISU, as the tempo of deployments/activations and reporting requirements increased, and affected the TU as well, which increased the number of training offerings (especially orientation sessions) required to bring people up to OFDA's required minimum knowledge base. The reorganization affected all of the units, although the TU was most directly impacted. All of the factors cited influenced the organizational development needs of the office, which severely impacted the training unit, while affecting the other contract units to lesser degrees.

---

<sup>4</sup> This does not include personnel providing short term technical assistance.

Major contract staff increases occurred in the winter of FY 1998 and in the summer/fall of FY 2000. The FY 1998 increase was attributed to the advent of Presidential Decision Directive 50, which attempted to codify the USG's coordination of foreign disasters, and the development of OFDA's Five-DART Strategy following a particularly active operational period. The FY 2000 increase was authorized as key OFDA personnel reviewed the contract requirements in light of the upcoming re-compete and determined that the level of effort needed to increase in order to meet operational demands. This increase was authorized even though this was during the contract extension period.

Given the six-year time span of the contract it is impossible to capture everything that occurred<sup>5</sup>, but there are specific accomplishments, challenges, and managerial information that should be highlighted to help inform and guide future contract design and implementation. The following section will address each component of the contract, including staffing issues, roles and responsibilities, actual performance, and recommendations.

### **3.B. OPERATIONAL UNITS PERFORMANCE**

#### **3.B.1. ISU**

##### **3.B.1.a. Staffing:**

There were five different ISU Managers over the course of the contract. The ISU Manager also held the informal position of Deputy Project Manager. The size and the operations of the ISU necessitated a deputy ISU Manager, a position that was informally established within the unit although never written into the scope of work. The size of the ISU overall remained fairly stable with small increases in personnel numbers until the contract was extended. At this point, the ISU was authorized to augment its staff by five additional personnel, taking the total ISU staffing level to 17 personnel. The additional positions added included a cartographer, a Technical Assistance Group information specialist, and three regional information specialists. The cartographer worked with a RSSA cartographer on OFDA's staff to develop geographic information systems capabilities for OFDA in addition to developing maps.

##### **3.B.1.b. Roles and Responsibilities:**

(1) Developed under previous contracts as more of a research and publications branch, under this contract the ISU became more much involved in operations. Deployment levels were the most obvious demonstration of this changed role, as information specialists participated on more and more DARTs and assessment teams.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Please refer to quarterly reports for detailed summaries of activities.

<sup>6</sup> This follows with OFDA's gradual development of the DART concept.

## **The ISU fulfilled many different roles for OFDA:**

- Intelligence (DARTs, assessments, monitoring reports, Information Centers e.g. Great Lakes Information Center and RMTs, databases, maps);
- Executive secretariat (correspondence, speeches, talking points, proceedings, taskers);
- Public affairs (information requests, annual reports, fact sheets);
- Historian (library, document archives, lessons learned); and
- Program support (procedures handbooks, tracking grant expenditures, participating in proposal reviews, etc).

(2) Much of the work the ISU performed was geared toward informing external personnel of what OFDA and other organizations were doing rather than providing internal personnel with information that could be used for decision-making purposes. The time required to gather, synthesize, clear, and disseminate information products meant the information itself was dated and of limited use to decision-makers for other than publicity purposes. The exceptions to this were cables from field operations, monitoring reports, and the outputs from the Information Centers. The ISU played a valuable role in keeping the public and media aware of OFDA's efforts.

(3) ISU members took an active role in many OFDA efforts. Info specialists participated on the El Nino Southern Oscillation team, on the External Information Team, the Paperwork Reduction team, the Y2K preparation team, and other work groups. They provided training on cables and information management to OFDA staff. They worked with BHR and OFDA management to craft communications pieces to use in front of the NSC and for congressional testimonies. They researched disaster trends to help the mitigation practitioners in OFDA determine future activities and budgets. They arranged logistics of VIP visits to the field, escorting congressional delegations to disaster sites. They also drafted press releases to assist Legislative and Public Affairs personnel.

(4) The use of information specialists to assist with program work obfuscated their role within the office. Although info specialists always were used to some degree to track program information and backstop OFDA staff, the reorganization OFDA went through in 1998 fostered this to a much higher degree. Most information specialists were assigned to specific teams under the new regional team structure with core and/or enhanced team members. Information specialists assigned to these teams slowly went from enhanced members to core members, which effected a change in the level of their involvement in program support activities. This was especially true in teams with large personnel turnover and/or very small teams. Some regional teams relied heavily on ISU members to help with program work, although others utilized them more in keeping with the purpose of the contract.

(5) ISU members made infrequent attempts to refocus on information support when program support began to overwhelm their ability to perform contractual requirements, but the nature of OFDA's mission and structure made this extremely difficult. ISU members were seen as – and wished to be seen as - OFDA employees, as did other OFDA contractors. Over the life of the contract, several ISU members moved over to OFDA to assume program positions, leaving the contractor to recruit and train new personnel.

### **3.B.1.c. Performance:**

(1) The ISU successfully achieved its mission of providing accurate and timely reports and information to help OFDA carry out its disaster response and mitigation functions. The ISU was consistently cited for superior performance by OFDA, both formally<sup>7</sup> and informally. The ISU participated in numerous disaster responses alongside OFDA staff to keep information flowing. Over the six year contract period, the ISU responded to 403 disaster declarations and wrote 578 Fact Sheets, Situation Reports, and Information Bulletins, in addition to the numerous cables, information memos, talking points, briefing books, etc. that were required. The flexibility and willingness of ISU staff to deploy on short notice, to work late hours, to come in on weekends and holidays, to take on additional tasks, etc., mirrored the requirements of OFDA staff. This team attitude complemented OFDA's work style, enabling the ISU to maintain good working relationships with client staff.

(2) The ISU staff balanced numerous different roles, operating at all levels. The same ISU members who drafted correspondence responding to constituent inquiries about disaster responses acted as DART leaders in Albania and Turkey when the situations required. While obviously outside the scope of work of the contract, not filling this role would have placed the client in a tenuous position. Information specialists were able and willing to provide this service under extreme circumstances.

(3) Many products completed by the ISU required close integration with efforts of other USAID offices, including the regional desks and LPA, which often used the products as the basis for their press releases. This became especially true once the Response Management Team concept was established and Info Officers were part of the regular staffing. The working relationships established between information specialists and their information resources/reviewing authorities greatly enhanced the quality and timeliness of the information being disseminated to the public.

(4) The ISU was affected significantly by the increased operational tempo of OFDA. As more DARTs were deployed and the Operations Center was activated more often, the ISU was forced to stretch to provide adequate coverage to on-going major disasters while still responding to other contract requirements. Combined with security clearance concerns during the contract extension periods, it became very challenging to fulfill OFDA's needs.

(5) One area in which the ISU continually faced problems was the development of the OFDA Annual Report (AR). The AR typically was not completed until August of the following fiscal year i.e. the 1997 AR would not be finalized and distributed until August of 1998. This is a significant lag-time, particularly when many other organizations complete their annual reports and post them to Websites approximately 3-4 months following the end of the fiscal year. This delay in production was normal for this contract, due to the numerous other activities with which the ISU was tasked, and the low priority of the AR. This was particularly true of the 1998 AR, which was not completed until February 2000 due to the number of deployments of ISU staff.

(6) The ISU was able to complete the FY99 AR and distribute it the beginning of August 2000. Although this was still late into the next fiscal year, it represented a three-month reduction in

---

<sup>7</sup> Particular praise was earned for ISU members deploying on DARTs, who often received letters from the embassies they assisted, or were included in group awards presented by the Agency.

production time. The ISU immediately began work on the FY00 AR, with a target release date of mid-January. Subsequent ARs were to be completed by the end of the same calendar year, as per discussions between OFDA's Deputy Director, Tami Halmrast-Sanchez, and the ISU Manager. If the current contractor is to meet this goal, it will require strict adherence to timelines by the ISU and the recognition by OFDA senior managers and staff that other peripheral tasks can not be allowed to overtake the AR production.

(6.a.) **Recommendation:** Set up a publications section within the ISU that will be responsible for the Annual Report, editing of manuals, development of brochures, web-site design, conference proceedings, and other publication relations materials. This unit should be comprised of dedicated personnel assets who are not raided for deployments, RMTs, and other assignments. This unit should have the resources and capability to perform the desktop publishing functions required for the Annual Report and other products in order to lessen dependence on outside contractors.

### **3.B.1.d. Contract Requirement Changes:**

(1) Several of the original information support requirements were eliminated or otherwise effected as the contract evolved, including the OFDA library, the Disaster History Database, MDRO database, and country profiles.<sup>8</sup> The following paragraphs outline the reasons why these changes occurred, as well as recommendations for follow-up, where needed.

(2) **Library:** The OFDA library was dismantled in 1996 under the direction of the OFDA Director. Books were reviewed by CDIE, which took many of them. The rest were donated to Sue Lautze at the Tufts Famine Mitigation Center. The demise of the OFDA library went unnoticed by many but caused a systemic problem that was not addressed. This became evident as OFDA staff continued to request technical books and magazines from the ISU, which were ordered through the contract. Without the library, however, there was no system for maintaining accountability of books ordered and for circulating these books among a broader audience. The end result was that books were ordered and often became part of an individual's private collection rather than an office-wide resource.

(2.a.) **Recommendations:** Two possibilities for addressing this problem exist. One is to revive the library, another is to utilize the USAID library more. If OFDA wishes to revive the library, it must have someone fulfill a librarian function to maintain accountability of the materials. A system must be established that will ensure accountability of resources. Alternately, OFDA (through the ISU) should establish closer relations with the USAID library and request more disaster-related materials. These materials could be advertised on the USAID Intranet, or their availability could be indicated to the ISU librarian, who could then relay the information to OFDA staff.

(3) The ISU also produced country profiles with specific information on hazards and vulnerabilities. These books were written primarily in the 1980s, but continued to be listed as a deliverable under this contract (and the scope of work for the new contract), even though they were too labor-intensive to do. Country profiles were available through many other sources,

---

<sup>8</sup> PMPP abstracts were also eliminated when DRM and PMPP merged

including CDIE, the Overseas Briefing Center, and Internet sites, making continuation of production under the OFDA contract redundant.

**(4) Disaster History Database (DHD) Database:** The ISU also was tasked with maintaining OFDA's databases. The DHD was incorporated into a database established, with partial funding from OFDA, by the Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED). The CRED database compiled disaster information from many sources, and was designed to provide much more analytic capacity than OFDA's DHD. The ISU continued to maintain information in the DHD from 1995 and prior years, but ceased to update the information in it.

**(4.a.) Recommendation:** The CRED database has tremendous promise as a research tool for OFDA, but it is only as good as the information that is provided to CRED. The largest obstacle to fully utilizing this tool lies in the timely provision of information to CRED on the disasters to which OFDA is responding. The ISU should devise a process by which the disaster history blurbs are provided to CRED in a more timely manner, so the information can be quickly added to the database.

**(5) The MDRO database** is actually a word document maintained by the ISU information support assistant. The "database" is extremely difficult to update given sparse response to the yearly cable sent out requesting current information on MDROs. The ISU decided in the summer of 2000 to work with OFDA's PSC regional information specialists<sup>9</sup> to gather the necessary information for the MDRO database. The PSCes had regular contact with the missions, including the MDROs, and were better positioned to obtain the updates.<sup>10</sup> This information would then be fed to the ISU to be added to the centralized list.

**(5.a.) Recommendations:** 1.) Institutionalize this process, including this responsibility in the regional information specialists' scope of work. 2.) Develop a real database.

**(6) The C/S database** was still in use at the end of this contract but it has become archaic. Both the C/S and the DHD were written in dBase 3 and thus have limited search parameters. The C/S is managed inefficiently in that the data is obtained from a print-out from OFDA's Finance and Budget Section and then re-entered into the ISU database. This information is not made available to the ISU until the information is reconciled by the FAB in October/November of the next fiscal year. The data entry takes at least one week of solid effort to complete. This affects the timeliness of the Annual Report, which is compiled with information gleaned from the C/S.

**(6.a.) Recommendations:** 1.) Set up the C/S database such that the information can be imported from the FAB's databases in order to eliminate the double data entry requirement.<sup>11</sup> 2.) Improve the timeliness of this process. 3.) Review the needs of OFDA staff and external

---

<sup>9</sup> The regional information specialists were a relatively new development at that point, and roles and responsibilities between these PSCes and the contract information specialists still were being delineated.

<sup>10</sup> The State Department does not maintain a current list of MDROs, thus the requirement for OFDA to do so. Two training specialists examined the MDRO issue as part of an overall mission preparedness review. While the best course would be for State to compile such a list and make it available, it was not foreseen that this would happen in the near future.

<sup>11</sup> This recommendation is made with cognizance that contractors are not allowed to access the NMS to perform this function themselves, or to eliminate the need to do so.

researchers for information from the C/S database, identify new fields, and re-design to the extent possible.

**(7) Additional Recommendations:**

- a. In addition to updating all the databases, they all should be moved off of the ISU information support person's PC and made accessible to OFDA staff.
- b. The ISU should work with the Telecommunications contractor to make these accessible via the OFDA intranet.
- c. The ISU should make more use of the USAID internet to post frequently requested information, such as the commodity/services information and disaster declaration lists. Open access to this information would reduce the amount of support needed for information requests and provide better public relations for the office.

**3.B.2. Management Information Systems (MIS) unit**

**3.B.2.a. Staffing:**

The MIS grew and changed over the course of the contract. As OFDA's staff size grew and contractors were separated into different office spaces, more MIS personnel were needed to service OFDA's computer needs. Two MIS personnel, a systems administrator and a PC specialist, were added to the roster in FY 1998, making a total of eight computer support staff. During the contract extension, another two positions were added. The make-up of the MIS overall changed, growing more technically oriented as OFDA changed. The data entry clerk position that worked with PIO/Ts was eliminated with the advent of the NMS. Two other, lower level positions were upgraded as well, as increases in technology necessitated the hiring of more high-tech workers. The increase in salaries and compensation packages for scarce high-tech workers caused by external market forces made it extremely difficult to recruit and retain MIS personnel for any length of time under the contract.

**3.B.2.b. Roles and Responsibilities:**

Originally envisioned as primarily a Washington support function, during one period, MIS personnel were deployed extensively to support DARTs and other field personnel. This later changed as another contractor was hired to handle telecommunications. MIS personnel continued to deploy, but in support of regional offices. The MIS also evolved as technology evolved. As external organizations adopted new technology, the MIS struggled to stay abreast of the technology, while also adhering to USAID's standardized computer configurations. The MIS was required to balance needs for both archaic systems and the latest high-tech capabilities.

**3.B.2.c. Performance:**

(1) The MIS unit proved to be the most challenging function of the contract, given factors listed above, plus several others. During the first half of the contract, OFDA was housed in the Department of State building, and a small number of contractors from Macfadden and TMG were located in SA-1. In 1995 approximately half of the office, some from Main State and all of the contractors from SA-1, moved to SA-14 in Rosslyn. This move precipitated a pronounced spike in the support calls the MIS answered; service calls jumped from an average of approximately 300/quarter to 1200/quarter. In 1997-1998, OFDA employees were consolidated into the Ronald Reagan Building at 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. After several months of see-sawing

between OFDA and the rental company that managed SA-14, the remaining contractors in SA-14 were told to move out of SA-14.

(2) Staff relocated to Alexandria for several months, traveling between the Alexandria office and the Ronald Reagan Building. In 1998 TMG procured space at 1201 Pennsylvania Ave., and moved its employees into a small section of the space while construction was completed on the other portion. The Macfadden employees remained in Old Town during this time. Once construction was finished on one portion of 1201, staff moved into the other portion so the build-out could be completed. This took several months, at the end of which the staff, including Macfadden employees, was moved again to fit into all the new office space. This series of moves presented severe challenges to the MIS in maintaining computer connectivity between these various sites, in addition to the telecommunications warehouse in Shirlington. MIS coordinated the Shirlington connectivity with the Space Warfare Command (SPAWAR) and its telecommunications subcontractor, Darlington.

(3) Throughout these moves the MIS continued to support disaster response as well, through DART deployments of computer staff, regional office support (particularly to Costa Rica), deployment of computer equipment to numerous locations, and constant set-up of computer systems in the operations center and in 1201 Pennsylvania. The MIS also performed the constant upgrade of software and hardware, going from BlueMail to HappyMail to Beyond Mail to preparation for the move to Outlook, and from DOS to Windows with WordPerfect to MicroSoft Office, along with other upgrades. The software upgrades caused additional training workloads as staff needed considerable assistance. The MIS also contended with the implementation of the agency-wide NMS, which caused considerable computer complications due to incompatibility, frequent patches, and incomplete modules, as well as the prohibition of contractors to work with NMS.

(4) During the extension period in 1999<sup>12</sup> the MIS became severely short-staffed as employees looked for stable employment elsewhere. Trying to hire employees with such short employment prospects proved difficult. The lack of security clearances caused considerable difficulty for those new employees that TMG was able to hire. Staff without security clearances had to be escorted at all times in the RRB, including in the computer room. Thus "uncleared" staff could not respond to service calls without a cleared employee escorting them; nor could they stay to monitor the computer room while the cleared employee went to perform service calls. At one point, there was only one cleared MIS person on staff.

(5) It was during this period that the computer system became increasingly unstable, as the Banyan Vines<sup>13</sup> parameters were taxed due to the increases in staff size, the large numbers of e-mails and files stored on the system, and the original system configurations.

---

<sup>12</sup> TMG was informed originally that the MIS would not be extended with the rest of the contract areas; this portion of the contract was to end March 31. This was later changed as OFDA worked with OP to identify another avenue for computer support.

<sup>13</sup> A study of OFDA's computer system performed by Trellis in March 1998 indicated that an additional server was needed, but it apparently was not added. The author was unable to determine from the documentation reviewed why this occurred. One possibility is that the move was deemed unnecessary in light of the "impending" migration to NT.

(6) The Banyan Vines server was performing the work of at least four servers of its class. The configuration that was used resulted in slow email access, slow file access, and frequent computer freeze-ups. In addition to these problems, additions and deletions in user accounts elsewhere in the agency were not being seen by OFDA users because the STDA account had not been updated recently or regularly.

- The industry standard email limit is 1,000 email. Some users had four to ten times this number of e-mails on their systems.
- Industry practice is to have users save non-shared files on their hard disks. The OFDA network was configured so that user files were automatically saved on the single network server, thus critically overloading the system's capabilities.
- The speed of the phone circuit that served as an ethernet link between the two buildings should have been 100Mbit, not 10Mbit. More than 30 users at 1201 were sharing a connection normally used by one PC.
- The connection between the computer room in the RRB and the 1201 Penn. Suite traveled through two routers on each side of the 10Mbit phone circuit. The routers, which caused transmission delays, were not necessary as there was only one Vines server to which the PCs connected.

(7) Having analyzed the system problems during his first month on the contract, TMG's new MIS Manager identified the need for, and planned to implement, a major computer network upgrade at the end of November. Frustrated, however, by the slowdown occasioned by these computer problems, the Deputy Cognizant Technical Officer sent an email to TMG on November 24. The email stated that OFDA would hold TMG in default of the contract unless 'substantial improvements in the performance of the OFDA network were in place by Friday, December 3, 1999.'

(8) The MIS moved ahead quickly with its planned upgrade, purchasing three new servers and additional Banyan Vines licenses. Employees moved the shared user drives off the non-Y2K compliant Vines server and onto the two existing NT servers with faster processors and hard disks. One of the new servers was then configured as an email server, and another server was configured to maintain user accounts and the STDA service. MIS also removed the network printing services from the Vines server and put them onto the NT servers. They then upgraded non-complaint software. These upgrades substantially improved the performance of the OFDA network, thus avoiding the possible contract default.

#### **3.B.2.d. Recommendations:**

1. Recognizing recent market forces affecting the IT field, particularly salaries of IT personnel and the rapid pace of change, the client and follow-up contractor must allocate sufficient resources to provide experienced IT personnel and to keep OFDA's IT infrastructure up-to-date.
2. Undertake comprehensive reviews on a regular basis to determine if/when major upgrades are needed.
3. Follow through with development of a Help Desk and accompanying tools to capture and analyze system problems. Personnel providing user support must improve their communications

with users and should give users some basic instructions on how to resolve common, simple errors.

4. Provide or identify more training opportunities for staff on the core software and hardware used in OFDA.

5. Provide a brief, consistently applied monthly status report to the CTO regarding computer functions.

6. Determine how IT can enhance:

a.) document/information management (esp. ISU archives);

b.) database management (upgrade ISU databases, and review for redundancies/gaps with CRED and other OFDA databases (i.e. financial/program, training, human resource); and

c.) knowledge management (making accessible knowledge from training program and ISU databases, files, etc. that capture the institutional knowledge of OFDA).

### **3.B.3. Training Unit (TU)**

#### **3.B.3.a. Staffing:**

(1) The TU grew from one and a half people in 1996<sup>14</sup> to two people in 1997 to five and a half people in 2000. This function initially was divided such that one full-time training specialist worked on internal training, while the Project Manager doubled as an external trainer, reviewing prevention, mitigation and preparedness field training activities and proposals. The PM continued in this dual capacity for several years until growth in the contract staff and other requirements (specifically the move from SA-14 to the space at 1201 Pennsylvania Ave., and MIS issues) directed him to cease those efforts. This occurred approximately three months after a second internal training specialist was hired.

(2) The TU functioned for three years with two trainers as the workload burgeoned. The workload growth mirrored the expansion of OFDA's staff and the increasing breadth of the type of work they performed. It also reflected the gutting of USAID training courses over a several year period as the agency focused its monetary resources on the design and implementation of the New Management System. Faced with increasing staff numbers, more training demands, and fewer training courses available through the agency OFDA was convinced that additional training resources were needed. At the end of the project, there were positions for a Training Manager, two internal training specialists, one external training specialist, one training program assistant, and one part-time administrative assistant. The addition of the training program assistant enabled the TU to begin documenting curricula, developing substantive tracking and registration systems, and organizing common files. The administrative assistant followed

---

<sup>14</sup> In addition to the internal trainer position, the project manager position was also designated as a part-time training position, working on PMP external training/capacity building initiatives. This part-time work decreased as the number of contract staff and responsibilities increased.

through with room reservations, set-up and registration, which tied neatly into the facilities management role she also played.

**3B.3.b. Roles and Responsibilities:**

The TU took on considerable extra responsibilities under the contract, as it helped to fill an organizational development and human resource development void in the office, while designing and delivering platform training in support of field operations and headquarters operations. The TU worked extensively with OFDA's senior management on stress management (1996) and an office-wide reorganization (1998-99). In addition to trying to strengthen the skills of OFDA's internal personnel, the TU also worked with the DASP and USPHS to train USDA and USPHS personnel in order to augment OFDA staff. It also collaborated with the NGO Coordinator on conference design and delivery for PVOs, NGOs and others.

**3.B.3.c. Performance:**

(1) The training unit was extremely successful in expanding the training program, as well as providing organizational development guidance to senior managers in response to OFDA's internal changes. The trainers stressed informal learning opportunities, such as coaching, mentoring, and cross-training, in addition to the formal courses offered. Development of emotional competencies was emphasized in lieu of strict step-by-step procedural learning due to the broad expanse of OFDA's mandate and training needs, as well as the lack of clear-cut (or clearly followed) procedures in several areas. Without clearly defined, measurable, and evaluated knowledge, skills, and abilities for each position within OFDA (as within any organization), it is impossible to determine to what extent staff skills were strengthened. It is also difficult to determine causality between a training course and job performance. Therefore, in lieu of evaluations of individual performance improvement, success of the training unit was based on post-course participant surveys. Participants completed evaluations after major training events and the findings were used to enhance future offerings. Overall, the TU developed and collaborated on a vast number of learning opportunities that were extremely well received by participants. The unit was also extremely successful in collaborating with OFDA staff on efforts to improve organizational operations.

(2) One specific initiative undertaken by the TU as part of its training responsibilities that also affected operations was the effort to utilize more internal personnel in training courses rather than bringing in external consultants. Once OFDA began recruiting more technical staff the TU convinced OFDA's senior managers to utilize their technical knowledge, talent and knowledge of OFDA's policies and procedures to provide more relevant, targeted (and less expensive) training. In addition to improving the direct relevancy of the training given to people, the use of the internal technical staff in training helped raise their level of visibility in the office. This resulted in more interaction between the technical staff and the program staff in developing and implementing plans and reviewing proposals.

(3) The TU also initiated a closer collaboration between internal and external training efforts geared toward increasing the number of personnel available to OFDA for response. The TU helped redesign and participated in several training sessions held for Public Health Service personnel and Department of Agriculture/International Forestry Service personnel who are used to augment OFDA's communications, logistics, health, and water/sanitation capabilities.

(4) At the end of this contract, the training program consisted of the following regularly offered formal sessions:

- Orientation to OFDA for new employees
- Orientation to OFDA for other personnel
- Introduction to Field Work
- Disaster Assistance Response Team training (in collaboration with the DASP)
- Introduction to Disaster Assessment
- Disaster Assistance Response Team training (in collaboration with InterWorks and the DASP)
- Information Resources
- Effective Presentations
- Cable training

(5) In addition to these offerings, the TU developed or coordinated training as needed on numerous other topics. Assessment modules in health and nutrition were piloted, and another for water/sanitation was designed, but other modules were not completed due to the drain on OFDA staff for overseas assignments. The TU also coordinated training/learning opportunities in the following areas: voucher preparation, proposal/grants management guidance, First Aid and CPR, the New Management System, procedures for using the IQCs, time management, a professional development series for the PS staff, supervisory/team leader training, team training, radiological assessment, and biological assessment.<sup>15</sup> The TU also collaborated with the telecommunications contractor, Darlington, to determine the type, content, and number of courses needed for deployment.

(6) Due to the workload undertaken by the two-person training team, curricula development often suffered. While training design and delivery was completed in record time, formal documentation of the training courses was seldom completed. The addition of a training program assistant helped immensely to codify the curricula that were developed by the trainers, as well as to develop a smooth registration and tracking system, and to organize a training library. The addition of the part-time training assistant (who served part-time as facilities manager) provided needed logistical support for training events.

(7) In addition to addressing normal training concerns, the TU took a broad perspective on human resource management issues, as these often affected human performance capacity. The TU worked with the staff advisory committee, which redesigned the OFDA Staff Handbook (formerly the Operations Manual) and designed the PSC evaluation form. The unit developed a supervisor's checklist for new employees and worked with supervisors to clarify their roles and responsibilities with new employees. The TU developed and delivered orientation sessions for new employees, short-term consultants, and other governmental employees who collaborate with OFDA, including numerous last minute orientation sessions for staff deploying as part of a DART.

---

<sup>15</sup> Please refer to the training review performed by consultants Mary Anne Zimmerman and Beverly Youmans for more complete information on the OFDA training program.

(8) The TU was frequently called upon to collaborate on office-wide organizational issues. The TU was responsible for facilitating a stress workshop for the office and for supervising follow-up activities, as well as organizing and facilitating staff retreats. The TU also worked closely with OFDA's senior managers beginning in 1999 as the new Director sought to address organizational development issues within the office. The trainers worked extensively with the senior managers and staff to design and implement an office-wide reorganization. The TU facilitated sessions for the senior managers, set up and facilitated focus groups of OFDA staff, and designed and delivered 6 separate modules in team training for over 90 personnel. The TU also facilitated additional team-building efforts for various OFDA teams. This participation in organizational development issues consumed a great number of person days over the life of the contract, especially during the last two years.

#### **3.B.3.d. Recommendations:**

1. OFDA should identify the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes necessary for specific positions, determine how these can be measured, develop a system and process through which these are measured, and evaluate personnel accordingly. This would require the commitment of additional resources skilled in human capacity development. The Forest Service has experience in this area and can provide examples that can be used as a starting point for discussions.
2. Emphasis on emotional competency development should continue<sup>16</sup>, however more practical exercises, based on established procedures, should be incorporated. This will require a commitment by the client to identify and publish these procedures. It may also require additional resources, both personnel and monetary, to successfully accomplish.
3. Human resource management and organizational development often are overlooked in OFDA due to the operational tempo inherent in its work. Direct-hire positions with these responsibilities do not exist within the office, and human resource management support from the bureau is limited to direct hire staff. OFDA staff recognized the ability of its contract staff to bridge this gap but, if it should desire to utilize this ability, it must outline this expectation clearly within the contract's scope of work and provide adequate funding and level of effort.

#### **3.B.4. Administrative and Logistics Support:**

The contract as originally designed did not contain administrative and logistics support. There was one person responsible for Correspondence and Records (C&R), who reported directly to the Project Manager. A couple of additional functions were added in 1997 and 1998, including a program assistant to the Project Manager<sup>17</sup> and a courier. The program assistant later became the facilities manager/training administrative assistant position under the July 1999 extension. The

---

<sup>16</sup> This approach corresponded to some degree with teachings by Fred Cuny on "Situational Awareness." Due to the nature of humanitarian response and the need for quick and often independent decisions on complex issues, Cuny advocated the enhancement of situational awareness in humanitarian workers. This required people to know the technical issues while also applying good judgement and problem-solving skills based on an understanding of bigger-picture issues.

<sup>17</sup> This position was originally designed as a program assistant for the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) team. When this scope of work was completed, the person assumed contract program assistant responsibilities for several months. This position fulfilled primarily facilities management, voucher tracking, and administrative support functions, focusing primarily on the move from SA-14 to Alexandria and then to 1201 Pennsylvania. The person left to take a position with OFDA and the position remained vacant for several months before being re-written.

Administrative and Logistics Support section was never formally designated a unit, but consisted instead of several functions performed by individuals reporting to the PM. These functions included C&R, Courier Service, and Facilities Management.

**3.B.4.a. Correspondence and Records (C&R):**

**3.B.4.a.1. Staffing:**

The C&R function remained at a staffing level of one during the contract period. As originally designed, the C& clerk augmented two direct hire staff. Upon the retirement of one of these government employees and the resignation of the second (@ 1996), the C&R clerk assumed responsibility for all functions previously performed by three people.

**3.B.4.a.2. Roles and Responsibilities:**

TMG was responsible for providing Communications and Records (C&R) support, sorting, copying and distributing classified and unclassified cables as well as executive correspondence on a daily basis. This position also helped the FAB section with data entry. Cable distribution was considered by the client to be an essential service.

**3.B.4.a.3. Performance:**

(a) TMG provided constancy in the C&R function for five and a half years with one person. The C&R clerk was extremely competent, responsible, and reliable, and was well-regarded by client staff. Once this person resigned at the end of contract extension #2, TMG trained three additional personnel to cover the function to ensure redundancy of coverage. While the contractor performed admirably overall in fulfilling this function, this one action should have been taken earlier, as coverage for cable distribution when the C&R clerk was on leave was a source of irritation to the client. In these instances, direct-hire or PSC staff from the Program Support division provided cable distribution, rather than another contractor.

**(b.) Recommendations:**

(1) Electronic cable distribution requires one full-time person to receive, sort, forward, and copy incoming traffic for OFDA staff. Given advances in technology, OFDA should discuss with the IRM/TCO the possibility of software programs that could perform this sort function. A COTS program might not do be able to perform the sort and forward function, but the outlay for a proprietary system could be recuperated quickly through savings on salary expenditures.

(2) Whether OFDA moves to computer-based cable distribution or continues using personnel to fill this position, redundancy is important. More than one person should know how to fulfill the function, and have the flexibility to do so. This would provide coverage in case the primary person is out of the office, or should a computer-based cable distribution system go down temporarily.

(3) Security of classified cables and other documents continues to be a problem. A centralized control room, where classified cables would be stored and could be read, might help to cut down the number of security violations. In addition to required locks

and cabinets, the room could be equipped with chairs and tables so staff could read their documents there rather than removing them to their cubicles.<sup>18</sup>

### **3.B.4.b. Courier**

#### **3.B.4.b.1. Staffing:**

The courier was added to the contract under modification eight, replacing the PSC who formerly performed courier services.

#### **3.B.4.b.2. Roles and Responsibilities:**

The courier was responsible for visa services for OFDA personnel, its institutional contractors, and other partnering personnel. This included providing visa forms and typing correspondence to the embassies. The courier also was responsible for twice-daily mail distributions and pickups between the RRB and 1201 Pennsylvania, as well as processing and tracking PSC payment vouchers. The majority of the courier's time was devoted to travelling to various embassies to drop off and pick up visas and passports.

#### **3.B.4.b.3. Performance:**

Given the nature of OFDA's work, the courier obviously was frequently required to obtain passports and visas on very short notice. Even in cases where travelers had advance knowledge of required trips, however, travelers often waited until late in their travel planning to request their paperwork. This caused a great deal of frustration as travelers worried whether they would receive their paperwork in time to depart the country. Despite this and complications with varying procedures and policies at different embassies, the courier was able to obtain the required documents in a timely manner. The one area in which performance could have been improved was cost control for taxi reimbursement.

#### **3.B.4.b.4. Recommendations for Courier Service:**

(a) The procedures for obtaining passports and visas should be captured within the Staff Handbook, including timelines for processing requests and an explanation of what is required of the traveler. This is especially important in the case of multiple visas, which necessitate much longer processing times.

(b) Redundancy is needed for this position also. Another person should be identified to provide these services in case the primary person is on leave, or is overburdened with the number of requests to process in a short timeframe.<sup>19</sup>

### **3.B.4.c. Facilities Management**

#### **3.B.4.c.1. Staffing:**

A facilities manager/training administrative assistant was added to the TMG contract during the last extension period.

---

<sup>18</sup> Given the degree of concern regarding security violations, OFDA should explore requesting a waiver for the C&R clerk to remain full-time in the RRB to oversee this room. While contract staff are not normally allowed to remain in the RRB full-time, the Office of Security may see the merit of this action in light of the number of security violations that have occurred at USAID over the past year.

<sup>19</sup> TMG and Macfadden established an arrangement during the last year of this contract to have the Macfadden receptionist act as the courier's backstop. This kept the courier service functioning, but it did cause some difficulties since there was not a back-up for the receptionist.

### **3.B.4.c.2. Roles and Responsibilities:**

The Facilities Manager coordinated all services for the 1201 site, as well as serving part-time as the TU's administrative assistant. The facility at 1201 Pennsylvania measured over 14,000 square feet and housed approximately 40 people from four different contractors (TMG, LAI, Macfadden, and Darlington), personnel from the Forest Service, and detailers that came and went frequently. The FM oversaw telephone installations and services, equipment maintenance and repair, supply ordering and tracking, deliveries, room set-up and tear-down, janitorial services, signage, storage, keys, security systems, etc. In her role as training administrative assistant, the FM assisted by reserving and setting up training space, registering and greeting participants, preparing materials (copying, collating, and distributing), and policing participants.

### **3.B.4.c.3. Performance:**

TMG was able to maintain good relations and services for the many different personnel housed in and/or using the 1201 facility. The split functions of the FM and the open access to this facility made it challenging to stay abreast of concerns. Lack of sufficient storage space for computer equipment contributed to problems with facility cleanliness and inventory control. Facility security was a continual source of concern, given the number of personnel who went in and out of the 1201 site for meetings and conferences. Visitors often availed themselves of the office space of contractors to work on computers and use phones, thus causing problems with security and with financial accountability as telephone charges would greatly exceed budget forecasts.

### **3.B.4.c.4. Recommendation:**

(1) Access by non-contract personnel should be restricted and monitored, as at any other contract site. This will assist both the contractor and the client in adhering to budgets and security procedures.

## **4. SUBCONTRACTING**

Labat-Anderson Inc. (LAI), TMG's subcontractor, held several positions in the ISU. The original teaming arrangement called for LAI to provide seven full-time information specialists, one full-time supervisory information specialist, one full-time administrative assistant, and one part-time technical specialist – approximately 110 person months per year. TMG reduced this number to three in January 1997, as LAI was slow to replace personnel following a large turnover period. A fourth position was added when OFDA announced the first extension period and subsequent increase in authorized positions.

TMG and LAI worked well together to provide support to OFDA, although some inherent tensions existed due to the LOE decrease and the re-compete of the contract. The one area which was problematic is one common with teaming arrangements – that of different personnel policies. Although the two companies harmonized their policies during the teaming process, conflicts over overtime continued to plague personnel. As LAI was the previous incumbent contractor, it had billed substantial overtime to the contract. TMG's initiation of a new overtime policy, at the request of the CTO, caused friction between the two contractors. The promise of overtime had been used previously as a recruitment incentive to help augment the entry-level salaries of many of the information specialists. The decrease in overtime hours became a bone

of contention among ISU staff given the number of overtime hours required by the client's standard operating procedures for disaster response operations.

## **5. OVERALL LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

TMG learned numerous lessons in executing this contract. There are several issues that impacted the contract overall that should be reviewed and addressed as they will affect follow-on contracts. These issues include contract monitoring and evaluation, command and control, changing technologies, changing needs, and workforce stability.

### **5.A. Monitoring and Evaluation: A monitoring and evaluation plan must be developed for support services contracts in order to judge the contractor's performance and the true value of the contract to OFDA.**

It is impossible to state whether TMG's efforts assisted OFDA to meet the expected results as stated in paragraph 1.c., due to the difficulty of determining causality and the lack of systems for capturing and analyzing supporting data. This contract was awarded prior to the agency's attempts to quantify results in keeping with the Government Performance and Results Act and formal performance monitoring plans were not developed. The lack of performance appraisals by the client leaves a dearth of information upon which to base judgments, further complicating the ability to evaluate the contractor's overall performance. Additionally, the nature of a support contract, which is heavily dependent on (personnel) inputs and (paper) outputs rather than impact, complicates efforts to measure the results achieved.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1.) Develop realistic, measurable objectives and indicators against which to monitor and evaluate contract performance. While many of these will be based on input and output indicators rather than impact indicators, they will serve to provide more guidance to all parties involved and assist the contractor in taking more proactive measures.
- 2.) CTO complete yearly contract evaluations with input from client staff. These evaluations can serve as the catalyst for OFDA and the contractor to review not only the quality and promptness of the service provided, but also the relevancy of those services in the face of organizational and mission changes. Given the daily contact with OFDA staff and the nature of OFDA's structure, it is essential that client staff be polled for their evaluation of the contractor's performance in order to capture a holistic view.
- 3.) Undertake an in-depth review of potential and actual value-added of information services to OFDA. This review should identify the key information requirements for OFDA to accomplish its mission, review current resources to obtain this information, and determine what the role of the ISU should be to provide the most effective service for OFDA. The findings of this study of information requirements should then be utilized to establish the communications support systems (i.e. computer systems) needed to transmit and access information.

**5.B. Command and control: There must be clarity of roles and responsibilities and tasking authority or the contractor will be faced with conflicting taskings from the same client.**

Due to the nature of a support contract, TMG dealt with numerous sub-clients who often had competing demands and who did not understand the parameters of the contract. These sub-clients dealt with TMG contract employees daily on a direct level, and, in the case of regional team leaders, assumed tasking authority over individual contractors. OFDA's team structure resulted in contract staff being viewed as fungible assets to be tasked at will. Contract staff often had difficulty in discerning and adhering to contract parameters as well. For instance, contractors often were expected to, and wanted to, backstop or augment OFDA's program personnel, to the detriment of their own duties. Or contract employees would take on substantial work not specified within the scope of work as part of their effort to provide good customer service. The overall effect was a diffusion of efforts on contract requirements and confused client-contractor roles and responsibilities.

**Recommendation:**

1.) The contractor must delineate for staff their roles and responsibilities and appropriate command and control channels. The contractor and CTO together should not only agree upon what tasks are considered part of the scope of work, but those that fall outside the scope of work. The contractor must then convey and continually reinforce this to contract personnel, while the CTO conveys and reinforces this to client staff.

2.) The client and contractor together must identify the contract's main priorities at a macro level, and the contractor must then identify the key activities for each operational unit. The client must communicate when priorities change or temporarily shift so the contractor does not keep operating under mistaken perceptions. While shifting priorities are inherent in managing multiple disaster responses, long-term goals should not be forgotten for the sake of the short-term, urgent but unimportant tasks.

3.) Providing humanitarian assistance requires people who are willing to go the extra mile, however, the contractor and client must carefully consider the ramifications of taking on new responsibilities. While a support contract inherently calls for flexibility, the contractor and client must *agree to and document changes or deviations* from contract requirements in order to provide sufficient accountability and to make sure key requirements are met. This documentation must include the reason for the deviation, and an acknowledgement of what other requirements may be affected.

**5.C. Changing Technologies: Under-utilization of current technological tools increases the workload on staff, as well as the amount of time to complete tasks.**

While OFDA remains on the cutting edge in certain areas of technology, it is seriously behind industry standards in other areas. This is particularly true of information technology for program support purposes. Telecommunications equipment is the most current possible, while at the same time tools such as databases remain archaic. OFDA is equivalent to a mid-sized company, yet lacks good human resource tracking mechanisms and good information archiving and research and analysis tools, among others. Staff time is not efficiently utilized. It is wasted

searching for ill-labeled or mis-filed documents; reinventing work that was previously done but no one is aware of or cannot find; or, sifting through massive amounts of paper files to locate and track information that could easily be located through electronic means.

**Recommendation:**

(1) Empower employees and contractors to identify tools that will help them simplify and accelerate their workload. Authorize a review of procedures and tools utilized by other organizations of a similar size and with similar requirements as OFDA. Determine which ones would be suitable for OFDA to adapt. Delegate responsibility to appropriate personnel to procure, set-up, maintain, and train people on, those tools. Specific areas that should be addressed include human resource management (to track employees' hire/termination dates, evaluation dates, etc.), research and analysis, program tracking, and operations center/RMT management.

(1.a.) Utilize additional personnel resources i.e. external consultants or more detailers (e.g. through DASP or other RSSA/PASA) to facilitate this process to ensure it is completed. Past experience indicates the difficulty of completing initiatives of this type due to conflicting demands and heavy workloads placed upon existing staff and contractors.

**5.D. Workforce stability: Active recruitment of contract staff by the client and other on-site contractors denigrates the ability of the overall effort, not just that of the contractor.**

Contract personnel often were highly encouraged to apply for OFDA program positions, thus draining the contractor's ability to meet its requirements and necessitating additional time, effort, and money to be directed into recruitment and training efforts. In addition, contractors also recruited staff from other on-site contractors. While any organization must recognize and encourage the need for career advancement, the practice of recruiting away contract staff severely impacts the contractor's ability to perform its requirements. In the case of competing firms, it causes friction between the contractors. In the end, it becomes an end-sum game, as there is no increase in the number of personnel serving OFDA, rather just a shifting of assets.

**Recommendation:**

Follow industry policy and discourage active recruitment of contractor staff by client staff or other contractors.

## 6. FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

Administrative Information for the period of August 1, 2000, to September 30, 2000.

I. Contract Data	
Total level of effort	1,491.60
Total estimated cost	12,937,429.00
1 Level of effort (last two months)	33.22
2 Cumulative level of effort	1,393.12
3 Unused level of effort	98.48
4 Expenditures (last two months)	560,601.49
5 Cumulative expenditures	\$12,849,179.37
6 Remaining unexpended balance	\$ 88,249.63

The dollar amount of the contract increased over 200% over the original commitment. Over the life of the contract TMG spent over \$466,000 on travel expenses (foreign and domestic) and approximately \$573,000 on commodity procurements.

Despite the increase in contract staff and support requirements in OFDA, TMG was able to continue providing headquarters support to the contract with a minimum number of person months per year.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Providing support services in the context in which OFDA functions, is particularly challenging. TMG successfully delivered services required under the OFDA Support contract through six tumultuous years – including several moves, a government shutdown and subsequent furlough, a RIF, a radical change in security requirements, Y2K, 403 declared disasters, 2 directors, 2 reorganizations, workforce changes, two increases in LOE, 5 Project Managers, and substantial changes in the information technology field. While several issues cropped up during the life of the contract, particularly in the area of computer support, TMG was able to address and resolve them, working closely with the CTO. OFDA will face similar challenges with the follow-on contract, however, unless some of the issues raised in this report are addressed, particularly those of monitoring and evaluation and command and control.

Although the challenges inherent in performing this contract were great, TMG also reaped numerous rewards in learning more about humanitarian assistance and supporting the USG's efforts to assist people in need. TMG would like to thank OFDA for selecting it as its prime contractor and hopes to work with OFDA again in the future.

**Appendix A  
USAID/BHR/OFDA  
Contract Modification Summary**

Amend	Date	New Obligation	Total Obligation	Revised Total Est. Cost	LOE	Purpose
Basic	07/16/1994	1,060,436	1,060,436		1,031	Correct address of prime contractor
2	07/12/1995	1,085,942	2,146,378	2,146,378		Exercise option year 1, obligate funds
3	07/10/1996	1,127,951	3,274,329	3,274,329		Obligate \$225,000 for 2.5 months of option year 2; exercise option year 3 and obligate \$902,951; additional MIS positions - 2 sys admin, 1 PC spc.
4	09/18/1996	522,080	3,274,329			Provide \$522,080 incremental funding
4	01/30/1997	3,000,000	6,274,329	7,956,941	1,229	Obligate \$3,000,000 for remaining months of option year 3; Provides funding to cover revised/increased LOE of 198 PM (36 pm for STTA, 18 home office, 36 training spc, 36 sys admin, 36 PC spc, 36 admin asst.
5	09/30/1997	1,682,612	7,956,941			Obligate \$1,682,612 incremental funding based on increased LOE approved in mod 4.
6	05/08/1998	1,000,000	8,958,941	9,024,942		Provide \$1,068,001 (only obligates \$1.0) in funding for office space and associated support costs. (office \$941,093, G&A \$105,967, fee \$20,941).
7	05/17/1999	68,001	9,024,942	9,024,942		Obligate \$68,001 incremental funding (mod 6)
8	07/12/1999	3,600,000	12,624,942	12,687,429	1,492	Extend contract from 7/15/99 to 3/31/00; increase LOE by 262.6 PM; obligate incremental funding
9	02/17/2000					No-cost extension from 3/31/00 to 6/30/00; revises security requirements (now through DISCO)
10	06/26/2000					No-cost extension from 6/30/00 to 8/15/00
11	08/15/2000	250,000	12,874,942	12,937,429		Extend contract from 8/15/00 to 9/30/00; obligate incremental funding \$250,000; increase total est. cost by \$250,000.
						<b>Note:</b> exercised option year 2 in letter from Lisa Builder dated 5/8/96. No accompanying mod.
						<b>Note:</b> Modifications misnumbered - two mod 4s.