

**AGADIR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT SERVICES
PROGRESS REPORT #3**

THIRD QUARTER 2001

**Prepared for:
USAID/Morocco**

**Under Delivery Order No. OUT-PCE-I-809-98-00015-00
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**Submitted by:
Chemonics International Inc.**

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BACKGROUND

Technical assistance for implementation of the Agadir Activity Management Services is provided by Chemonics International Inc. under a Task Order, with a total estimated cost of \$1,983,649. The objective of the Task Order under the GBTI IQC PCE-98-000 -15-00 is to strengthen the institutional effectiveness of three key industry associations (APEFEL, GRIT and FIPROMER) of the Souss-Massa-Draa Region and to develop Total Quality Management at the Commercial Court of Agadir. The three key associations are to be used as intermediaries to deliver business support services to small and medium enterprises in the region. The overall goal of the activity is to improve the competitiveness of Moroccan products in world markets by raising of professional standards and lower costs for all of the associations' members. Chemonics International also has the mandate to provide technical assistance, training and commodities needed for the Commercial Court of Agadir to increase its efficiency and effectiveness.

Summary

Our work in this last Quarter was slightly slowed down by the fact that many Moroccans do not work in August. Nonetheless we feel that the speed of implementation is increasing to our satisfaction and that of our partners. This being said we acknowledge that working with as many small suppliers from Agadir as possible contributes to a slower paced implementation. In the Annex are listed the national procurements of goods and services since the beginning of the project. Because associations rely on volunteer work as well as on paid staff, we also often have to accommodate their own constraints which, while building local capacity, can slow implementation.

In the case of the Commercial Court of Agadir, substantial progress was also made. All procurements have been completed (only shipping and installation remain) and computer training as well as general training are currently being offered to judges and court staff.

SECTION 1: ADMINISTRATION

Administrative tasks are now mastered by the local team. The office has administrative, accounting, and filing systems for proper management in place. It is also more familiar with USAID procedures, which greatly ease its work. This quarter some time was devoted to verify the accuracy and completeness of our files. As part of off-hour training provided by Chemonics, the Agadir team followed a 10 (ten) hour training on computer and network management. The training focused on trouble shooting with the network and software. While before training we experienced problems daily with our network and/or electronic communications, since we took this course we have not had any problems. This newly acquired technical expertise provides for more efficiency as less time is wasted waiting for technicians to assist us and/or finding alternative means of communication.

SECTION 2: THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Our main activity with the three associations was to translate the assessments of the three sectoral experts, Daniel Malenfant, Jacques Gobeil and James MacGregor, into concrete action plans and activities agreed by everyone. We also sought to complete the acquisition of equipment. This was done for GRIT and APEFEL and implementation of the activities are now proceeding at a higher speed. They both understand the value of USAID assistance and how New Information Technology fits into their strategic development.

Communication with our partners is a task that requires careful management and much time. Small initiatives can sometime be of great benefit, as was the case for the proposed implementation calendars and brief descriptions of activities that we drafted. They were well appreciated and are an easy tool of communication that can be used by all. They also require little time to up-date.

APEFEL

APEFEL's unified membership came close to coming apart for a while as a small group of active members questioned the political orientations of the association and its management by current President Mr. Mouisset and Executive Director Mr. Akrim. Discontentment rested mostly with APEFEL's support for the current government's position on open trade with Europe. Among other things, a small group of members were in disagreement with European producers moving to the Souss where they have unrestricted access to land and water, while tomato exports to European markets are restricted. As a result, five members of the current National Bureau of fifteen resigned. The Bureau decided to hold a General Assembly to provide the opportunity to members to decide between the two groups. This meeting will be held on October 27th at the Complexe Horticole of Eit Melloul. We met with APEFEL staff and then with its President Mr. Mouisset on xxxx to discuss the current situation. Mr. Mouisset thinks that the most democratic way to solve issues like those is to present the membership with the two sets of arguments and to let members decide. The APEFEL staff considers that the issue is already resolved and they do not expect that the five members will try to convince anyone of their arguments. It is hoped by APEFEL staff and the general members that that the five administrators of APEFEL will resume their activities with the National Bureau.

A key element of Daniel Malenfant's report and recommendations that we focused on was APEFEL lacking precise knowledge of its constituents. Rather, decisions tend to be based on the association's knowledge of overall agricultural problems and communities, not on the basis of members' specific concerns and problems.

We first held a meeting with APEFEL staff and the National Bureau to discuss how to implement the activity given anticipated problems to reach members. APEFEL does not have any list or database of its members and relies on the corporate memory of older and active members to list members in their neighborhood. After several meetings a strategy was designed and Terms of Reference drafted for the sub-contract. Four suppliers were short listed (Fellah Conseil, ClassInformatique,

Formation, and Transparence Informatique), based on their experience working in the sector. Two proposals were received and the best offer in terms of quality and price from Transparence Informatique was selected. Mr, Sounoun has considerable experience offering computerized services to fruit and vegetable conditioning centers and producer cooperatives and his credentials are excellent. He knows APEFEL well and many of its members. A 4-month contract has been sent for approval and as soon as approval is granted, work will begin. The initial database of 200 members should be completed by late December. The sub-contractor must first identify APEFEL members, then contact them to verify information. Small producers do not have fax or telephone means of communication. Once reached they must then be visited by an agricultural technician. Only thereafter can the codification and data entry begin. The contract also includes training of APEFEL's staff on how to manage, use and up-date the database.

Another recommendation that we worked on was what Daniel Malenfant identified as the need for a better working structure to improve staff efficiency. APEFEL staff already provides numerous services to the associations' members. This comes, however, at a high cost. Staff is overworked. All requests for information are answered -- while no distinction is made between members and non-members (providing no incentive to become a paying member), or between information of specific interest to one producer and what is of general interest to a large number of producers. In his report, Mr. Malenfant suggested that a training in Quebec be organized. Key APEFEL staff would be teamed with a counterpart from a similar organization performing the same tasks as them. They would then see how other professionals operate in terms of maximum efficiency. A training program has been organized and APEFEL staff will depart on for Montreal, Canada on Oct. 7th and return on Oct. 16th.

When APEFEL staff return to Agadir and the General Assembly has been held, we will begin to work with APEFEL on the outreach centers APEFEL is hoping to open in the coming year. APEFEL will be interviewing agricultural technicians to be hired for the membership database. Providing their work is satisfactory, they could then be recruited to staff the three outreach centers.

GRIT

GRIT related work focused on the "Profil de la clientele" or Exit Questionnaire Survey. The questionnaire was designed by James MacGregor and revised by GRIT. It was then translated into French, Italian and German and is currently formatted by a graphic artist who will reproduce the number required for testing in each language. Larger numbers of questionnaire will then be printed.

We first had to obtain last year's data on arrivals to do a prior assessment of the scope of the survey. With arrivals peaking at around 20 000/month, we asked Mr. MacGregor to revise the survey design and to consult with a statistician to establish the size of a representative sample. The survey has to be reliable from a methodological point of view. We are planning a media event around the release of its preliminary results, and a presentation by James MacGregor in January 2002. Yet it also has to remain manageable and within GRIT's budgetary means. Mr.

MacGregor was meeting last week with a statistician from the Canadian Tourism Board and we expect to hear from him shortly. Potential sub-contractors for the survey have been identified and are awaiting our request for proposals to offer their services.

Mr. MacGregor was also requested to produce a questionnaire to be completed by Italian Tour Operators which will be holding their Annual Congress in Agadir in October 2001. They will constitute the first entries into GRIT's Tour Operators database.

GRIT devoted much time to the recruitment of local staff. It revised the layout of its office space to accommodate new equipment provided by USAID and future employees. It is now ready to have its network cables installed and the network installed.

FIPROMER

In late July, following Jacques Gobeil's report, FIPROMER President drafted a letter in which he asked a number of questions to all members. The query was on the association's future. No member answered. He then called on a general assembly. Some members attended and decision was taken to set up a small committee whose mandate was to meet with all members one by one and to ask their opinion and validate their interest in keeping the association alive. A report is due in October and we were asked to remain in full support until then. In the mean time, we ordered some equipment that is much needed by FIPROMER, and its staff will begin general computer training along with the staff of other associations. No other activities were programmed.

Funding is one of the major problems encountered by FIPROMER. A situation that was already precarious is aggravated by the re-organizing of other national fish product associations, such as l'UNICOP, l'AMASCOP and l'ANAFAP that have promoted their administrative independence from FIPROMER. FIPROMER's most active members – the Association des conservateurs--does not exist within FIPROMER anymore and joined UNICOP, while the "congélateurs" already created their own association and their presence is almost void within FIPROMER. Yet financial difficulties could be overcome should members decide so. For the time being it seems unlikely that FIPROMER will be able to solve its legitimacy and leadership problems and overwhelming financial difficulties. It may nonetheless continue to exist under the same type of agreement it is now using. Some minor activities could still be implemented and the bulk of funding be reallocated to APEFEL and GRIT. We do suggest, however, that USAID wait for the October report before discussing the issue and taking any decision.

SECTION 3: THE COMMERCIAL COURT OF AGADIR

Mr. Abderrahim Moumim, IT Director of the Commercial Court of Agadir, took part in two trainings on software development provided in Rabat and Casablanca. The first training was organized by the Ministry of Justice and the AMS provided for Mr. Moumim's transportation, lodging and per diem. It was held from July 9th to 27th and focused on SQL Servers and database management, Windows 2000 Professional

and Server, and Mastering WEB Application Development using Visual Interdev. The second training was organized by Chemonics at the request of the Ministry of Justice, who identified the supplier. It focused on Power building and was offered by Techniser of Rabat, August 22nd to Sept. 5th.

The judges also completed a forty (40) hours training in general management provided by ENCG. The institution has been requested to provide a similar training of twenty (20) hours to the chief clerks.

This Quarter, a computer training room equipped with nine (9) computers was set up at the Commercial Court of Agadir. Computer training provided by OFPPT began on Sept. 17. The total of 84 hours of training per employee will be completed in early January. Two groups are being trained at the same time. One meets at the Commercial Court and the other one at OFPPT. Total computer training will take longer than planned because most of the training has to take place outside working hours in order not to disrupt the Court's normal activities. Training is provided from 17:00 to 20:00, four nights a week, one week out of two. Groups 1 & 2 are trained on the first and third week of each month while groups 3 & 4 take over alternative weeks. This schedule provides for 3 hours per day instead of 6 anticipated by the Ministry of Justice. Yet it seems difficult to ask Court's employees to stay longer at night.

On the alternative weeks, the judges will pursue their English as second language training. The English classes will begin the first week of October.

A request for proposals was issued and the best supplier (MTDS) was selected to proceed with the cabling of the Commercial Court. After a considerable delay in approving the contract (five (5) weeks), the contract was approved and supplier informed. Cabling will begin on Oct. 3rd and is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

Offers for services have been received from three (3) suppliers short-listed to develop professional training to the judges. The suppliers are IMRAD of Casablanca, Artemis of Casablanca, and the Cabinet of Maître Maria Bahnini of Rabat. Selection will be done in the coming week and a contract negotiated, in order for judge technical training to begin in January 2002, as soon as computer training is completed.

Preliminary work on the Judges' OST to North America was done. Yet following the unfortunate attacks against the US and the climate of uncertainty that prevailed internationally, the decision was taken to postpone the OST to a early January 2002. While we originally considered the OST as a minor activity among the various components of the Training Plan provided by the Ministry of Justice, we have since revised our position. We have had discussions with various international and Moroccan legal experts on the OST and they all stressed how important it was to expose the judges to different judicial experiences. Also, they emphasized how important it is to provide them with the opportunity to discuss and appreciate the role of magistrates in other democratic societies. As explained to us, judges trained several years ago in Morocco did not benefit from courses on ethics and were not given the opportunity to reflect on the essential role of justice with respect to development and politics. We therefore propose that the OST provide for visits to

both American and Canadian courts and judicial institutions. This will allow the Moroccan judges to share experiences in two well developed, albeit different, judicial systems reflecting the different political, economic, and legal structures of the two countries. Such an OST will highlight how commercial disputes are settled juridically, how courts are administered, how judges are trained and assisted on technical matters, and the value of adapting various legal and administrative approaches to Morocco's unique situation. While the costs will be higher for the planning and implementation of an OST to two countries, Chemonics' experience with a similar OST for Moroccan bankers demonstrates how much value can be accrued from such a comparative study tour. Moreover, given that this is likely to be the only OST for the judges, we feel strongly that this study tour take advantage of all possible learning experiences once the judges are in North America. Chemonics Home Office in Washington is preparing a detailed budget to submit to USAID in the coming weeks so that USAID and the Ministry of Justice can decide in light of adequate technical and financial information.

CONCLUSION

The Chemonics team in Agadir is satisfied with progress made in this 3rd Quarter. Consensus built in Agadir Activities Management Services during the last Quarter had a beneficial impact on the overall implementation rate and the results and outcomes of the activities undertaken.

We thank USAID/Rabat for its constant support and encouragement in implementing the Agadir Activities Management Services.

Annex

1. National procurements, sub-contractors and consultants.

American Language Center	202 140 dhs
Bestmark – Mr. Bennani Equipment for FIPROMER	163 440 dhs
Top Info – Hafid Mania Equipment for APEFEL and GRIT	565 280 dhs
Class Informatique – Rachid Achour Equipment for the training room at the Court	342 596 dhs
ENCG – Mr. Marzak Forty eight hour training in management to judges	38 020 dhs
ENCG – Mr. Marzak Twenty hour of management to chief clerks	24 300 dhs
OFPPT – Mohamed Atif Computer Training for the Court	135 240 dhs
MTDS – Karl Stanzick Cabling for the Court	330 000 dhs
Techliser SARL – Mr. Riyad Training for Anderrahim Moumin in Power Builder	24 144 dhs

Kamal Jbara Maître d'Ouvrage for the cabling	57 048 dhs
Transparence Informatique of Agadir – Mr. K. Souhnoun APEFEL DataBase (approbation not received yet)	420 000 dhs
FOCS – A. Daif Group Focus APEFEL and Training to suppliers	98 000 dhs
A. El Idrissi Co-facilitator for Group Focus GRIT et APEFEL	37 320 dhs
A. Daif (consultant) Animateur Group Focus GRIT	30 405 dhs