Final Evaluation
1997-2006

USAID and USDA/US Forest Service Interagency Agreement

Forest Resources Management Project (AAG-P-00-97-00003-00)

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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Evaluation Objectives & Methodology

For the past eight years, the USAID's Forestry Team (Office of Natural Resources Management, Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade Pillar Bureau) and other USAID units have invested nearly 41 million dollars in a 632 (b) Interagency Agreement (IAA) with the International Programs Office of the United States Forest Service (USFS), a part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This phase of the IAA began in 1997 and follows two earlier IAAs initiated originally in 1981. The IAA has been the major mechanism under the Forest Resources Management Project. The IAA activities are expected to contribute to the work of the Forestry Team and USAID environmental performance benchmarks.

Since 1997, IAA-related work has been conducted in 67 countries and the ceiling of 50 million dollars has nearly been reached. This work has been managed by a team of international resource management professionals in the Technical Cooperation Group (TC) of the USFS' International Program Office. Due to active marketing by TC and strong Mission interest in buy-ins, the closing date has been modified twice. Although there have been 16 amendments to this IAA, the primary changes in this IAA have been administrative rather than substantive. In 18 months, this agreement will end (September 30, 1997).

This evaluation assesses how well this interagency partnership has advanced both USAID and USFS objectives, identifies the operational strengths and weaknesses and recommends the conditions under which both agencies should consider undertaking a follow-on agreement. The evaluation focuses on the mechanics and accomplishments of the relationship between USAID and the USFS. For the large grants from EGAT that were disbursed through the IAA to third party organizations (totaling just over five million dollars or about twelve percent of total IAA funding), the evaluation addresses only their administrative dimensions. The evaluation methodology included document and web-site review, key informant interviews, an e-survey of a sample of USFS detailers and analysis of data from three databases (USFS travelers, USFS/International Programs financial tracking and personnel).

II. Assessment of IAA Performance

Feedback from informants indicates that the USAID-USFS IAA has been a highly successful endeavor. It has furthered the separate and joint agendas of both USAID and the USFS. The IAA has made significant contributions to the objectives of USAID's Forestry Team, USAID Missions, the Regional Bureaus, the agency as a whole and the State Department. It has also helped the USFS to globalize and energize its workforce, ground-truth its international policy efforts and mainstream international issues into the work of the National Forest System. An important benefit for both agencies is the development and deepening of their international partnerships.

The IAA has leveraged significant resources for both agencies compared to what they invest. With low overhead and a significant matching contribution of detailer salaries, some TC staff salaries and other resources, the IAA effectively leverages more than one dollar's worth of assistance for every two dollars of USAID funding.

From feedback provided by informants for this evaluation, it is clear that the USFS offers predominant capability for specific NRM technical services. Technically, many informants perceived the USFS as a global leader in multiple use approaches to the management of natural resources. As the number of USAID environmental staff declines in Missions, it has become particularly important for USAID to find ways to combine its development expertise with the technical expertise available from other U.S. Government agencies.

Apart from some constructive criticism, feedback from the interviewed "clients" (i.e., USAID Missions, State Department and other partners) was uniformly very positive with regard to the quality of technical and other support provided by the TC Group and detailers. The USFS had usually delivered high quality and timely services. The USFS staff have been able to work well with other international partners, singly or in combination, in multiple countries and under a variety of funding arrangements. USAID, the State Department and the USFS feel that they have achieved greater results by leveraging their resources for the same activities and partners. They have helped to build the capacity of USAID partner and other organizations. NGO collaboration is a frequent aspect of their work but they also have a unique capability to partner with host country resource management agencies. Their joint research efforts have yielded dividends for both the USFS and host country institutions. Their efforts to help host country and international partners find funds have been greatly appreciated.

USAID and other partners particularly value the governmental credibility, neutrality and experience that the USFS brings to joint work. Informants recognized that the USFS has some predominant capabilities that derive from its inherently governmental functions. As representatives of a government agency, USFS staff share some similar perspectives and experiences with government NRM professionals in other countries. For example, in countries where it has opted not to have a direct MOU with environmental institutions (e.g., Brazil), USAID has benefited from the direct MOU that exists between the USFS and Brazilian government resource management agencies. Some informants noted that the USFS, as a government technical agency, has had a comparative advantage over USAID as a neutral convener, facilitator and bridging agent in some situations. The USFS has played this role at the country level and also supported sub-regional dialogue and exchange. Some clients perceive their advice as more trustworthy than what has been offered by profit-motivated service providers.

In comparison to other USG providers, informants felt that the USFS offered more to partners because of its matching contributions to joint activities and its more self-starting, client-responsive, flexible approach. The cooperation between USFS and USAID and the State Department has also had tangible pay-offs in terms of contributing to a more united USG front on international policy, creating a USG brand in regions of the world where other countries have historically dominated international assistance

(e.g., West Africa) and helping the State Department to achieve outcomes related to the stabilization of fragile states.

Most of the arrangements associated with the current IAA have been satisfactory. Clients have usually been quite happy with the performance of the TC leadership and Group. They have appreciated the relatively low level of bureaucracy involved in using this mechanism. They have been generally been satisfied with the support received from the Forestry Team CTO for financial transfers. Although both are government agencies, the IP Office of the USFS was generally perceived as more nimble than USAID, with respect to IAA financial and administrative matters related to buy-ins and grants.

During this phase of the IAA, there has been much more recognition by IP that the USFS technical experts are in other units, including the National Forest System, State & Private Forestry, the Research Stations, specialized units and the Washington Office. Accordingly, there has been much greater emphasis placed on TC's role in administering and coordinating technical assistance rather than providing it themselves. Informants noticed a greater emphasis on partnerships, managing people and relationships and providing good service to USAID and partners. Because they have more budget available for travel, the TC staff have expanded the reach of the USAID/EGAT Forestry Team to the Missions.

The detailers generally received high marks on the quality of their work from USAID and the State Department and other partners. Clients noted that the detailers seemed particularly well-suited to highly technical and well-defined assignments. They were praised for being hard-working, practical, knowledgeable and rooted in the practice of the National Forest System. This practical orientation made the "rubber hit the road" for technical assistance and training with clients. Most of the USFS detailers went above and beyond the minimum requirements set forth in their Scopes of Work. For work entailing rough travel and accommodations, most of the USFS detailers seemed to thrive on difficult conditions and performed exceedingly well. In most cases, USFS detailers, as government staff, seemed readily able to establish rapport with counterpart staff from the forest agencies of host countries. Often, each side appeared to receive a morale boost from the experience. Teaming arrangements generally worked well when the Missions could afford it and were especially beneficial when experienced staff outnumbered new detailers and mentoring could be provided. In general, detailer reports were well-written and timely; they met the needs of USAID clients and partners.

There is also room for improvement in the current model. Feedback from informants has been grouped below into four areas: 1) Detailers; 2) TC Organization; 3) Communications, Knowledge Management and Constituency-Building; and 4) TC Operations:

Detailers

- Some clients and partners suggested that the types of USFS staff being sent on details could be further diversified. While the IAA has drawn upon USFS staff from the major divisions of the USFS, too few women (1 woman: 3 men ratio), mid-career and social scientists/community development staff have been tapped by TC staff for

detail assignments. Some detailers alienated others with paternalistic, nationalistic and/or close-minded attitudes or were overly reliant on outdated technology transfer approaches. In some situations, weak or absent language skills, listening skills and cultural sensitivity made the detailers less effective. Some Missions and partners felt dissatisfaction with short-term technical assistance in general, particularly for policy work. They felt that long-term resident advisors would be more effective but they wanted advisors who were current or former USFS staff, rather than non-USFS consultants.

- Other informants wanted a broader menu of technical assistance. Several people mentioned the sustainability problems associated with once-off training models and preferred training-technical assistance follow-up combinations. Sometimes, senior staff in host country institutions needed individual coaching on management issues rather than group training. In other settings, partners preferred funding for regional partner training and exchange rather than detailer visits.

TC Organization

- In terms of the types of staff and internal organization, there were several concerns. Some of the USFS clients and partners were not entirely satisfied with the preponderance of younger and more junior staff within TC, especially those TC staff without NRM and/or USFS backgrounds. They felt that this mismatch with USAID and USFS detailer counterparts sometimes impeded rapport and resulted in missed opportunities for technical assistance. A slow-to-resolve personality rift between USAID's ANE Regional Bureau staff and TC staff, as well as separate Asia and Middle East teams, have hindered TC marketing efforts in the ANE Region. Generally, TC staffing levels have been appropriate for the level of work to date but some individual buy-ins have been quite large and management-intensive and the overall number of buy-ins has been increasing over time. Management of the LAC PASA staff by the TC LAC Regional Team Coordinator on a half-time basis has potential for conflicts of interest, particularly for IAA marketing. In addition, this arrangement also divides the attention of the TC LAC Regional Team Coordinator.

Communications, Knowledge Management and Constituency-Building

- Several issues in these areas require greater attention. Although communications are generally quite good between TC staff and USAID, some of the TC staff do not have much face-to-face contact with USAID/Washington staff, despite the relatively short distance between the TC and USAID offices. In addition, visitors to either the USFS/IP web-site or the USAID web-site would not readily be able to understand which work was attributable to the IAA. It is also not possible to find detailer reports on either website.

- Internally, the USFS has not done much to expand horizontal networking and highlight its commitment to internationalization. There have been no efforts to date to build critical mass amongst USFS returning detailers, as well as others within the USFS that have international experience or interests. The commitment of senior

USFS leaders to USFS internationalization is not reinforced by their current agency strategic plan.

TC Operations

- There are some partnership issues to address. For example, some host country partners feel confused and a little mistrustful because they assume that TC has an overall strategy for their country for the short- to medium-term. They would like to participate in and discuss these plans.
- In terms of marketing, there are two issues: lack of clarity about options for the USFS to participate in Indefinite Quantity Contracts and lack of systematic data collection and analysis regarding non-buy-in Missions.
- With regard to internal systems, reporting, amendment procedures, the current model could be improved. There has been a lack of standardized systems related to detailer management, including detailer databases, detailer orientation, feedback from both detailers and those assisted. The current traveler database was not intended to track detailer demographics, assignment topics, IAA-related details, etc. Although it could provide an important check-and-balance for the IAA, the USAID CTO has typically not been very involved in the feedback loop regarding Missions and partner satisfaction with USFS services. Missions and the CTO wanted more consistent and periodic progress information, on both financial matters and results, on individual buy-ins and their component activities. While buy-ins were quite easy for Missions and Regional Bureaus, the amendment process is somewhat arduous for the CTO and EGAT/PAICO.
- There are two areas in which mission creep appears to be a potential issue for the IAA. The delayed reimbursement by the USFS to some of the large third-party grant recipients is a significant problem and the IAA may not be the best mechanism for managing these grants. The IAA has also been used as the vehicle for several large disaster mitigation activities managed by another unit in the International Programs Office but these activities have not always been the best fit for this particular IAA.

III. Recommendations Regarding the Future USAID-USFS Relationship

Overall, the evaluation feedback regarding the IAA was highly positive. Accordingly, it is not surprising that there was universal support for continuation of the USAID-USFS IAA. Most informants used the same word, “absolutely” when asked whether the relationship between USAID and the USFS continue and if there should be a follow-on IAA. They felt that a follow-on IAA would be beneficial to all parties and further solidify programmatic progress and partnerships.

What are the alternatives for the USAID/EGAT Forestry Team? It has limited staff available for management and both program and travel funds have suffered cutbacks. In this context, there are a number of advantages to using one primary mechanism but disadvantages related to “mission creep” for the IAA and issues related to being overly dependent on one provider. With respect to IAAs, it appears that most USAID partners perceive that the USFS brings much more to the table, in terms of matching resources, than many other USG providers. While the private sector may be able to provide consultants with greater language skills, international experience, greater schedule

flexibility and a wider range of environmental specialties than the USFS staff, these firms charge full salaries and much higher overhead rates for their services. The IAA arrangement with the USFS allows the Forestry Team to maximize its program funds and minimize management costs, while leveraging additional resources for USAID work.

Therefore, the findings and conclusions of this evaluation support the following recommendations regarding a follow-on IAA:

- *USAID should continue its IAA relationship with the USFS to provide "clients" with the services that they need, build upon partnerships and maximize capacity building that contributes to better management of natural resources.*
- *The duration of the next IAA should be for at least five years or the maximum period possible.*
- *The initial ceiling should be at least equal to the current ceiling of 50 million dollars.*

With respect to Activity Areas and Priority Issues, the new IAA should reflect the strategy for the USAID/EGAT Natural Resources Management Office and current USAID emphases. The Natural Resources Management Office's new Strategic Objective is: Increased social, economic and environmental benefits through healthy ecosystems and sustainable resource management. Four Intermediate Results (IRs) focus on landscape management and conservation, equitable natural resources governance and management of natural resources conflicts, increasing economic opportunities and capacity building for USAID operating units and partners. In generally, the new IAA should emphasize the broader NRM capacities of the USFS rather than its more traditional forestry resources, as well as cross-regional or sub-regional thematic learning on NRM topics. This re-branding of the new IAA will require the involvement of the both TC staff and the CTO in marketing activities. All report recommendations, including suggested responsibilities and timeframes for implementation, can be found in the table in the next section.

Table of Recommendations, Responsibilities and Timeframe

#	Issues	Recommendations	USFS Action	USAID Action	Current IAA	Future IAA
1	IAA Renewal	*USAID should continue its IAA relationship with the USFS to provide "clients" with the services that they need, build upon partnerships and maximize capacity building that contributes to better management of natural resources.*	X	X		X
2	Future IAA Duration	*The duration of the next IAA should be for at least five years or the maximum period possible.*	X	X		X
3	Future IAA Ceiling	*The initial ceiling should be at least equal to the current ceiling of 50 million dollars.*	X	X		X
4	*Linkages to Current USAID SOs & IRs*	Activity Areas and Priority Issues of the new IAA should reflect the new NRM Office Strategic Objective and Intermediate Results. The new SO is: " Increased social, economic and environmental benefits through healthy ecosystems and sustainable resource management." The four IRs focus on landscape management and conservation (IR1); equitable NR governance and management of NR conflicts (IR2); economic opportunities from natural resource-based products and services (production, marketing trade) (IR3) and strengthening USAID operating units and partners through field support, technical leadership and knowledge management (IR4). *The future IAA should continue to be a field support mechanism (IR4) for Missions and their partners. Its Activity Areas and Priority Issues should be derived from Intermediate Results 1-3. It should continue to emphasize approaches (or issues) related to: institution-building, outreach and research and collaborations with NGOs. An increased emphasis on knowledge management, particularly cross-regional thematic learning, could allow the Forestry Team to make an expanded contribution to technical leadership for forestry and other NRM topics. For IR2 in particular, the USFS will need to identify how USFS staff skills sets can be applied to this area.*	X	X		X

Table of Recommendations, Responsibilities and Timeframe

#	Issues	Recommendations	USFS Action	USAID Action	Current IAA	Future IAA
5	Suggested Priority Topics	*Based on the new IRs, a number of emphasis areas and cross-sectoral linkages were suggested by evaluation informants as being relevant to current Mission and partner priorities:* ▪ *Landscapes: multiple use mapping and planning; watershed management and water resources, range management, habitat management; restoration ecology and management of degraded lands; recreation; protected areas; plant/forest inventories and mapping; climate change.* ▪ *Governance/Conflicts: Improved institutions in fragile states; environmental security/border area issues; planning processes and conflict management; co-management, sub-national resource management and governance and interagency coordination; forest concession transparency and anti-corruption efforts* ▪ *Economic Opportunities: Community economic development; support for the enabling policy and management skills needed for community-based resource management; tourism/eco-tourism, public-private partnerships for management; certification; global markets, trade, regional trade agreements and forest commodities; wood products processing; markets for environmental/ecosystem services; infrastructure linkages; Millennium Development Goals.*	X	X		X
6	Shifting from Forestry to NRM Emphasis	*While language for the Activity Areas of the current IAA focus on forestry (e.g., sustainable forestry practices, integrated forest monitoring, public involvement in forest management), the new IAA may have greater appeal to other NRM Office Teams and Missions if the diverse natural resource management capacities of the USFS are emphasized.*	X	X		X
7	*Emphasize Cross-Regional or Sub-Regional Thematic Learning*	*Given USAID interest in thematic learning within and across regions (e.g., CARPE, Amazon Basin Conservation Initiative, etc.), the new IAA should be designed so as to encourage this type of learning within TC and to have TC serve as a catalyst and convener for these types of activities.*	X	X		X

Table of Recommendations, Responsibilities and Timeframe

#	Issues	Recommendations	USFS Action	USAID Action	Current IAA	Future IAA
8	*Re-Branding & Marketing New IAA*	*In order to help existing and new partners understand the reorientation of the new IAA, both the TC staff and the USAID CTO should engage in a significant marketing effort at the initiation of the new IAA.*	X	X		X
9	*Tapping a Broader Range of USFS Expertise*	*Under a future IAA, USAID should continue to tap the core technical strengths of USFS staff but greater efforts should be made by the TC Team to market and include USFS staff with community, social and economic expertise on multi-disciplinary teams for IAA assignments. USAID activities will benefit from expanded detailer participation by women resource management professionals from the United States. To ensure continuity of support to USAID, a mix of senior and mid-level detailers should be tapped. While maintaining the participation of a cadre of experienced detailers, TC staff should look for new opportunities to identify and encourage participation by a broader pool of USFS experts.*	X		X	X
10	*Avoiding Technology Transfer Models*	*The USFS and IP leadership, as well as the TC staff could develop detailer guidance that encourages prospective and experienced detailers to take a partnership/joint learning approach to technical assistance. Several alternatives can help to get this message across to detailers, including a standardized orientation letter from the Chief of the USFS regarding the official USFS view of the aims of international technical assistance, orientation materials provided by TC that help detailers understand more about the specific cultures that they are visiting and be more sensitive to issues related to cross-cultural communication, verbal advice about the professional and personal risks associated with verbalizing paternalistic or nationalistic attitudes. Orientation materials might also identify issues of national pride and significant accomplishments for specific countries and cultures. In addition, TC regional staff may want to adopt some screening questions about attitudes toward the role of the US and the USFS overseas to filter out staff with less open-minded attitudes.*	X		X	X

Table of Recommendations, Responsibilities and Timeframe

#	Issues	Recommendations	USFS Action	USAID Action	Current IAA	Future IAA
11	*Strengthening Detailer Capacities and Orientations*	*Language skills, cross-cultural communication skills, listening skills and cultural sensitivity/understanding need to be strengthened for some detailers. Language skills could be considered part of professional development training for interested USFS professionals and the TC Group could maintain a lending library of basic conversational tapes for at least French and Spanish. For the other areas, on-going communications, diversity and leadership trainings could be broadened to include cross-cultural issues. In addition, TC could provide a more consistent cultural orientation, including print materials and web-based resources (i.e., an intra-net web-site for detailers that would have country and cultural information, cross-cultural communication articles and a chat room for detailer-to-detailer dialogue).*	X		X	X
12	*Expanding the Types of Assistance Offered*	*For future buy-ins and the future IAA, TC should discuss a broader range of assistance with USAID Missions and Partners. There was significant interest in training/technical assistance follow-up or sequential training models. In addition, countries with an emergent local service provider sector, either NGOs or the private sector, were interested in more capacity building activities for this group. In some sub-regions, partners wanted more partner-to-partner exchange opportunities rather than technical assistance visits from experts. In some situations, the senior and mid-level leadership of other forestry agencies either one-on-one or small group mentoring or coaching, particularly from current or recently retired senior level staff of the USFS. For some options, the USFS arrangement with METI, Inc. or other similar provider could provide the necessary flexibility.*	X		X	X

Table of Recommendations, Responsibilities and Timeframe

#	Issues	Recommendations	USFS Action	USAID Action	Current IAA	Future IAA
13	*Hiring or Detailing Resident Advisors*	*While TC has the capacity via METI, Inc. to hire or detail resident advisors for medium-term and long-term assistance, TC leadership should make a decision as to whether or not it is in the best interests of the USFS to use representatives who have not worked for the USFS in the past. Other possible options for these positions could include volunteer retired USFS employees or USFS staff on sabbaticals.*	X			X
14	*Balancing Staff and Building Capacities*	*While the number of TC staff seem appropriate for the current level of work, the work and relationships of the TC group may benefit from a more balanced mix of senior, mid- and junior international professionals with both natural resources background and strong interpersonal skills. TC staff familiarity with the USFS could be enhanced through shadowing arrangements on the National Forests or with State & Private Forestry units.*	X		X	X
15	*Revisiting TC Regional Team Division*	*To maximize coordination with USAID and the ANE region, TC should consider realigning its regional team structure with USAID's regions and merge the now-separate Asia and Middle East teams.*	X		X	X
16	*Charging TC Management Time to Buy-Ins*	*For the new IAA, USAID and TC may want to consider the conditions under which it would be possible for TC to charge some backstopping time to the buy-ins. This arrangement could be based on a specified annual funding level or a certain number of buy-ins or the scale of an individual buy-in.*	X			X
17	*Strengthening Communications*	*Regional TC staff should balance face-to-face meetings with other types of communication for dialogue with Regional Bureau and other USAID/Washington staff.*	X	X	X	X

Table of Recommendations, Responsibilities and Timeframe

#	Issues	Recommendations	USFS Action	USAID Action	Current IAA	Future IAA
18	*Improving Branding*	*With USAID's increasing interest in branding for activities that it supports, IP should more clearly identify USAID-funded activities on the TC portion of its web-site and include the USAID logo on all detailer and other reports. Similarly, USAID may want to consider raising the visual profile of the USFS and IAA activities on its web-site, including both the environmental pages and the Success Stories section.*	X	X	X	X
19	*Improving Knowledge Management*	*TC staff should list detailer reports, or at least a sample of the more substantial ones, on the USFS/IP web-site and a detailer intra-net.*	X	X	X	X
20	*Conducting Marketing Analysis*	*To improve the success of marketing activities, TC staff and the USAID CTO should systematically collect and analyze information from Missions that have chosen not to buy into the IAA after TC visits and/or subsidized technical assistance. This type of analysis is especially needed for the ANE and EE regions.*	X	X		X
21	*Exploring Options for USFS Participation in IQCs*	*Given increasing Mission reliance on large USAID/Washington IQCs for environmental work, TC should explore options and the waivers needed for greater USFS participation in IQC work.*	X	X		X
22	*Improving IAA-LAC/PASA Arrangements*	*To fully tap TC regional staff capacity and minimize potentially awkward arrangements, IP should move the management of PASA staff from the LAC Regional Team to the IP Director's Office or the TC Director. However, in doing so, it will be important to provide PASA staff with an IP or TC staff person who can provide dedicated administrative backstopping.*	X		X	X
23	*Sharing TC Plans with USAID and Partners*	*TC should consider sharing its draft annual regional plans with USAID partners in Washington and others. While TC does not currently develop regional or country plans beyond an annual basis, it may want to consider using a participatory planning approach to develop three to five-year country plans with partners.*	X	X	X	X

Table of Recommendations, Responsibilities and Timeframe

#	Issues	Recommendations	USFS Action	USAID Action	Current IAA	Future IAA
24	*Improving TC Standardized Systems for Managing Detailers*	*To enable new TC staff to more quickly master their jobs, improve TC management and help detailers to be as effective as possible, TC needs to establish standardized, cross-team procedures for detailer orientation, data collection on detailer travel, as well as written feedback forms for detailers). The existing International Traveler Database should be modified or a separate database should be created to allow monitoring of detailer information.*	X	X	X	X
25	*Improving Mission Options for Providing Feedback*	*Written feedback on detailer and TC staff performance, using a standardized form, should be routinely solicited and analyzed by the USAID CTO and the TC Regional Coordinators. The CTO should check with Missions at least twice a yr.*	X	X	X	X
26	*Improving Annual and Quarterly Reporting by TC*	*TC should improve its quarterly and annual reporting to the CTO and to Missions so that it is easier to understand, for each buy-in, the initiation, progress and completion of each activity, in both financial and narrative terms. Progress include both pipeline and burn-rate information. The new IAA should specify at least a minimum of two reports per yr.*	X	X	X	X
27	*Financial Transfers – Improving Amendment Procedures*	*Besides the end of the fiscal year amendment, TC and the CTO should establish and publicize a standard mid-year deadline for buy-ins to ensure no more than two amendments per year. TC should develop a simpler one-page summary form for buy-in activities and this form should appear immediately after the USAID cover pages.*	X	X		X
28	*Avoiding Mission Creep*	*To avoid diluting the core functions of the IAA, both IP and USAID should reconsider using this IAA for large grants to third party organizations and Disaster Mitigation buy-ins. Given the recent centralization of the USFS financial functions, USAID should investigate the services offered by DHHS' Division of Payment Management or others. IP should identify other financial transfer options and organizational arrangements for the Disaster Mitigation work.*	X	X		X

Table of Recommendations, Responsibilities and Timeframe

#	Issues	Recommendations	USFS Action	USAID Action	Current IAA	Future IAA
29	*Expanding the USFS Constituency for International Activities*	*There is still a great need to improve the awareness of USFS rank-and-file staff about international resource management issues, as well as the work of IP staff and USAID.* *IP and the Senior Leadership of the USFS should identify ways to help build a critical mass of internationally aware USFS staff via detailer networking and regular events, as well as other opportunities that get the message out to other USFS employees. While balancing its main domestic agenda, the USFS may want to consider making its international objectives more explicit in its next strategic plan.*	X		X	X

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List of Acronyms

AFR	Africa
ANE	Asia-Near East
AS	Asia
CADEFOR	Amazon Center for Sustainable Forest Enterprise
CARPE	Central African Regional Program for the Environment
CBFP	Congo Basin Forest Partnership
CFA	Caribbean Forestry Advisor
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CIPAM	Consortia for International Protected Area Management
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
DASP	Disaster Assistance Support Program
EE	Europe & Eurasia
ESP	Office of Environment and Science Policy, EGAT
EGAT	Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade Pillar Bureau
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FRM	Forest Resources Management Project
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GSA	General Services Administration
IAA	Interagency Agreement
ICLARM	International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management
ICRAF	International Center for Research in Agroforestry
IIEB	International Educational Institute of Brazil
IP	International Programs Office, USFS
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
IR	Intermediate Result
IRG	International Resources Group
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
LFI	Liberian Forestry Initiative
MAARD	Modified Acquisition and Assistance Request
ME	Middle East
MSF	Mission Support Funds
NRM	Natural Resources Management or Office of Natural Resources Mgt., EGAT
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIH	National Institute of Health (United States)
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OICD	Office of International Cooperation and Development
OYB	Operating Year Budget (Transfers)
PAICO	Office of Program Analysis, Implementation and Communication
PAPA	Participating Agency Program Agreement
PASA	Participating Agency Services Agreement
RFP	Request for Proposals
SO	Strategic Objective
TC	Technical Cooperation Group, International Programs Office, USFS
TFF	Tropical Forest Foundation/Funda? ao Floresta Tropical
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
USG	United States Government
USPC	United States Peace Corps
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

I. Evaluation Objectives

For the past eight years, the USAID's Forestry Team (Office of Natural Resources Management, Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade Pillar Bureau) and other USAID units have invested nearly 41 million dollars in an Interagency Agreement (IAA) with the United States Forest Service (USFS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In 18 months, this agreement will end (September 30, 1997). This evaluation assesses how well this interagency partnership has advanced both USAID and USFS objectives, identifies the operational strengths and weaknesses and recommends the conditions under which both agencies should consider undertaking a follow-on agreement. The evaluation focuses on the mechanics and accomplishments of the relationship between USAID and the USFS. For the large grants from EGAT that were disbursed through the IAA to third party organizations (totaling just over five million dollars or about twelve percent of total IAA funding), the evaluation addresses only their administrative dimensions.

II. Acknowledgements

Many people enthusiastically and generously contributed to this report. First of all, special thanks are due to USAID's Office of Program Analysis, Implementation and Communication (PAICO) Office for providing evaluation funding from the Pillar Bureau of Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT). Several staff also offered their perspectives on financial and administrative aspects, including amendment processing and IAA information. Both Erik Streed (USAID IAA Cognizant Technical Officer) and Alex Moad, Director of the Technical Cooperation Group of the USFS' International Program Office, designed and supervised the progress of the evaluation and provided encouragement and information at multiple points. I greatly appreciate the openness and responsiveness of other USFS staff that provided facts and perspectives, including those from the Technical Cooperation unit, the International Programs Office, the Chief's Office and a sample of detailers, former staff and others. The data analysis within this report was made possible by the analytical support of the IP Consultant from METI, Inc., Jonathan Midura, as well as two IP staff members, Ron Ingram and Alex Moad. From USAID, Washington, DC-based staff, along with Mission staff, provided important information about client satisfaction. The same is true for a number of international and host country partners.

III. Methodology

This USAID-commissioned evaluation was conducted by an independent consultant from January-March 2006. Data collection included the following sources:

- Project documents (e.g., the IAA and its amendments, some activity outputs).
- Agency-related documents for both the USFS and USAID.

- Key informant interviews (75) with individuals and groups via telephone or meetings[1] (see Appendix 1). Overseas interviews were conducted for ten countries or regions (Brazil, Honduras, Bolivia, Central Africa, West Africa, Madagascar, Guinea, India, Jordan and Russia) and included USAID Cognizant Technical Officers for the IAA, host country and international partners and a State Department representative. US-based informants included USFS and USAID leadership, the USAID Forestry Team and other USAID environmental staff, current and former members of the USFS Technical Cooperation Division within the International Programs Office and other USFS staff involved in the IAA and international NGO representatives. The USAID Forestry Team CTO and the USFS/IP/TC Team Leader identified the initial list of informants and other informants made additional suggestions.

- E-surveys returned by 26 USFS "detailers."[2]

- Data from three databases (USFS travelers, USFS/International Programs financial tracking and personnel).

As with all evaluations, certain limitations and potential biases were present and the evaluator is responsible for all omissions and errors. During the current and past IAA, the evaluator has known several members of the International Programs Office, the USAID Forestry Team and their partners. Time and budget precluded overseas site visits, language barriers did not allow for interviews with non-English speakers and telecommunication challenges precluded a few of the phone interviews. For data analysis, travel data from the USFS International Traveler Database was only available for the 2001-2006 period and data for 1999-2001 is unavailable.

IV. Report Overview

- The Executive Summary provides a quick overview of the report conclusions and recommendations.
- Readers can turn to Chapter 2 for the history of the IAA.
- Chapter 3 analyzes financial and resource contributions and expenditures for the IAA.
- Chapter 4 discusses IAA management issues.
- Chapter 5 addresses whether or not the IAA is meeting USAID objectives.
- Chapter 6 discusses the same issues for the USFS.
- Chapter 7 summarizes conclusions and recommendations.

[1] Due to scheduling conflicts or difficulty with phone connections, two field partners agreed to provide written comments rather than be interviewed.
[2] In USFS parlance, a person sent on temporary assignment to another duty station is referred to as a "detailer." In USAID vernacular, this person would be called a "TDYer."

CHAPTER 2
IAA BACKGROUND

I. IAA-Related Organizational Arrangements and Objectives: USAID

The USAID-USFS IAA is managed by USAID's Forestry Team, in the Office of Natural Resources Management in the Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade Pillar Bureau. From the IAA's initial inception in 1981, it has been the major mechanism for the Forest Resources Management Project. IAA-related work has been conducted in 67 countries and the ceiling of 50 million dollars has nearly been reached. The IAA activities are expected to contribute to the work of the Forestry Team and USAID environmental performance benchmarks. The USAID measures of its results include slowing the loss of both natural and plantation forests, improving the conservation of biologically significant habitat and preparing national environmental management strategies.

As one of four teams in USAID's Natural Resources Management Office, the Forestry Team focuses on advancing the conservation, rehabilitation and sustainable management of forests and wildlands. The Forestry Team supports activities that promote values of transparency, good governance and stakeholder participation. Through its staff, the USAID-USFS IAA and other activities, the Forestry Team provides information, technical assistance and other types of support to the forestry and natural resources management programs (NRM) of USAID Missions and Regional Bureaus. The Forestry Team focuses on five main task areas:

- Serving as the Agency's information clearinghouse on forests and forestry by supporting and influencing applied research activities, providing information dissemination, communication and outreach on sustainable forest management practices and policies,
- Developing cross-sectoral linkages and relationships with other Bureaus and Missions to increase support for activities in targeted thematic areas,
- Exploring opportunities to work with the State Department and improve communication with other donors,
- Explore public-private partnerships with the business community to develop activities around mutual goals (e.g., trade of sustainably produced forest products),
- Providing technical leadership within the Agency through targeted assistance and training.

II. IAA-Related Organizational Arrangements & Objectives: USFS

The USFS partner for the IAA agreement is the Washington, DC-based International Programs (IP) Office. IP is one of four designated offices under the Office of the Chief of the USFS and its appropriated budget is included as a line item for the State and Private Forestry branch of the USFS. IP directs its efforts to promoting sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation internationally. There are three programmatic Groups within IP: Technical Cooperation, Policy and Disaster Mitigation, and the Disaster Assistance Support Program. The IAA is managed by the Technical

Cooperation (TC) Group and its five regional teams: Africa (AFR), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Europe and Eurasia (EE), Asia (AS) and the Middle East (ME).

Support from the IAA, in addition to in-kind and other funding from the USFS, allows the USFS to meet its globalization objectives[3]. Although international goals are not explicit in the USFS' most recent Strategic Plan (2004-2008), IP focuses on educating colleagues about the connections between the domestic priorities of the USFS and international issues. The six domestic goals of the USFS are: 1) reducing the risk from catastrophic wildland fire, 2) reducing the impacts from invasive species, 3) providing outdoor recreation opportunities, 4) helping to meet energy resource needs, 5) improving watershed conditions, and 6) conducting Mission-related work in addition to that which supports the Agency's goals. IP views these same goals more globally, e.g., protecting the US from invasive species that are damaging or could damage U.S. forests and recovering US migratory bird species that are declining. Because there is interest at the highest levels of the USFS in globalizing its staff and programs, IP also aims to:

- Advance US interests at international policy deliberations, to be a leader in global environmental issues and to utilize lessons from overseas for improving forest management at home.
- Level the playing field in international trade and reducing the amount of under-priced timber on the world market through more sustainable forest management.
- Bring important research, knowledge and technology gained overseas back to the United States.
- Improve domestic disaster work by exposure to innovative methods and technologies during international assignments.
- Leverage USFS investments in workforce diversity awareness via cross-cultural experiences overseas for Agency personnel.
- Internationalize the Forest Service and prepare the Agency's workforce to work in an increasingly global environment.
- Pioneer USFS understanding and practice of community forest management by working with the pioneers in this field.

III. The Forest Resources Management (FRM) Project History

The FRM Project, including the IAA, has been USAID's main vehicle for global support of forestry activities since the early 1980s. There have been three phases: FRM I (FY 1981-91); FRM IIa (FY 1991-97) and FRM IIb (FY 1997-07).[4] While the USFS has never been the sole USAID partner under the FRM Project, it has been the primary partner for providing technical assistance to USAID field units.[5]

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[3] The leadership of IP and the USFS use the term, "globalization" to refer to both a process and desired state that involves staff awareness and attitude changes related to domestic-international resource management linkages, as well as increased overseas activities and partnerships.

[4] The designations, FRM IIa and IIb, are for the purpose of clarification in this report. However, in official USAID and USFS documents, both phases are simply called FRM II.

[5] During the first two phases, (FY 1981-97), the USFS and the US Peace Corps (USPC) were the primary implementers. During this time period, other funding or support went to two international research institutions, ICRAF and CIFOR and a separate cooperative agreement on community-based natural forest management with WWF that began in FY 93. Beginning in 1997

With respect to the USFS, there have been some important differences between the three phases:

- *IAA arrangements.* FRM I and IIa were Interagency Agreements (IAA) (see Box 1) with US Department of Agriculture (USDA) (Office of International Cooperation and Development or OICD). USAID was charged a 32 percent overhead rate. The overhead was split between OICD (14 percent) and the USFS (18 percent). For the current IAA, USAID opted to switch to a direct relationship with the USFS because of both budgetary and management issues. The new overhead rate paid by USAID/EGAT's Forestry Team was 18 percent. Missions that buy-in to the USFS IAA pay 18 percent overhead on their OYB transfers and MAARDs. For large grants funded by EGAT and disbursed via the IAA, the USFS charges a five percent overhead rate, with the remaining 13 percent used to fund joint activities.

- *Ceilings:* The ceilings for FRM IIa and IIb were 25 million and 50 million, respectively.

Box 1. Interagency Agreements (IAAs) and Participating Agency Program Agreements (PAPAs)

Under an IAA, two Federal agencies make an agreement in which one agency buys goods or services from the other. The USAID-USFS IAA is categorized as a PAPA. The USFS is expected to implement a program with relatively little day-to-day oversight or direct supervision by USAID. The functions of the USFS are to be primarily performed at a place other than at USAID. The PAPA is focused on technical assistance that will not be directly furnished to USAID or under USAID direction. The authorization for these agreements comes from the FAA, sections 632 (a) or (b), or other legislation. (Source: USAID ADS Chapter 306)

- *Project Duration.* FRM I went from a two-year to a ten-year project. Authorized for nine years, FRM IIa ended after six years because of the new direct IAA agreement and a new USAID Forestry/Global Climate Change Results Package for USAID's new strategy. The authorization for FRM IIb was extended from five to ten years.

- *Emphases.* Although technology transfer has been part of all three phases, the other emphases of the FRM Project have changed in response to agency and external trends in international forestry and development. Several key reports influenced USAID's priorities for the FRM Project, including several documents about international forestry, biodiversity and environmental priorities in the 1980s, a 1992 mid-term review of FRM IIa (Parker and Dickinson), a 2000 review of USAID's Forestry Program (Byers) and a 2002 Chemonics International, Inc. review of USAID's natural forest management program options. Through the early 1990s, the budget expanded for both USAID's forestry activities and the USFS' international

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under FRM IIb, USAID stopped funding for the USPC and continued to fund the USFS and the two international institutions. In addition, USAID FRM IIb funds are disbursed, via the IAA, for a public-private Global Development Alliance, the Sustainable Forest Products Global Alliance (WWF, Forest Trends and Home Depot), as well as work by the Oregon-based NGO, Metafore. In addition, funds go to the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology of the University of Arizona.

activities. As budget reductions began in 1994, USAID reassessed programming priorities. The USFS International Programs Office streamlined its operations and hired fewer USFS staff. The emphases of the two earlier phases are summarized below:

- *FRM I (1981-1991).* FRM I was USAID's first centrally funded, technical support project in forestry. It was "an important catalyst in the five-fold growth (from $27 million in FY 1981 to $125 million in FY 1991) of USAID's forestry programming" (ENRIC 1994). The focus of FRM I was to better respond to Mission and host country needs for information and research. The project provided short-term technical assistance to Africa, Latin America and Asia/Near East regions via core international staff and USFS detailers and posted three long-term regional forestry advisors. Workshops and conferences were also part of the agreement. At the time, USAID had few environmental staff so access to the USFS staff would strengthen USAID's capacity to support Missions. Perhaps in response to the fuelwood crisis that emerged in the late 1970s, the technical areas mentioned in the Project Paper focus on reforestation, seed orchard establishment, nursery management and forest sciences research. The USFS developed and managed the Forest Resources Support Network (FRSN) via an international unit that became known as the Forestry Support Program (FSP).

- *FRM IIa (1991-1997).* The FSP operated in a similar fashion during this phase but the topical emphasis shifted somewhat. There was greater emphasis on getting the institutions right via institutional strengthening, technology transfer and supporting commercial forestry activities. There was concern with improving the impact of food aid-related forestry and natural resource activities. FSP assumed a greater role in enhancing communication among public and private agencies, as well as professionals, involved in forestry and facilitating greater donor collaboration. During this phase, the emphasis was on developing a locus of international expertise within the predecessor office of IP. Each USAID region had a dedicated USFS staff person but these individuals undertook both independently initiated and direct USAID support activities. Their outputs included a variety of handbooks and other products. Their partners were more often the staff of USAID/Washington and the forest agencies of other countries. The challenge was to find the right balance between USAID support and other USFS activities, especially when funding from both USAID and the USFS was declining. During this period, some USAID staff and USFS staff felt that the USFS staff needed to be more responsive and pro-active with USAID Missions. IP had to make significant staff and program cuts in 1995 when the USFS made large cuts to its budget.

IV. The Current IAA

IV.A. Type of Agreement, Emphases and Activity Areas

On August 6, 1997, USAID and the USFS entered into a direct, five-year Interagency Agreement (IAA) for the 1997-2002 period. Due to strong Mission interest in buy-ins, the closing date was modified twice. It now stands at September 30, 2007. Although there have been 16 amendments to this IAA, the primary changes in this IAA have been administrative rather than substantive.

The offices involved in negotiating this agreement were the Environment Center of USAID's Global Bureau (now the Natural Resources Management Office of the Economic Growth and Trade Pillar Bureau) and the International Programs Office of the USFS. This agreement was authorized under section 632(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961. This section justifies the use of governmental providers rather than the private sector if the tasks involve "inherently government functions" (see Box 2).

Box 2. "Inherently Governmental Functions"

An IAA is not merely the provision of goods and services that might also be obtainable from private sources. Under FAA section 632 (b), USAID is directed to engage another Federal Agency via an IAA when assistance is needed to carry out inherently governmental functions. For the USFS, USAID has justified its long-standing interagency relationship because of the following areas of predominate capability: 1) the leading role that the USFS has played in U.S. forestry and related natural resource management issues, 2) the diverse topical expertise offered by the 30,000 members of the USFS, 3) the Forest Service's long history of engagement with scientific and technical exchange with other countries (i.e., specifically Latin America, the Caribbean, Pacific Islands, Asia), and 4) its provision of "consistent, high-quality" technical assistance and international program support under prior IAAs.

Based on the USFS' predominant capability in multiple use management of natural resources and its long history of international activities in specific countries, USAID identified six activity areas for the current IAA. These topics were intended to be revisited on an annual basis and modified, as need, by mutual agreement. The emphasis was on cross-sectoral linkages and public-private partnerships. The six activity areas were:

1. Technical assistance to USAID forestry activities,
2. Sustainable forestry practices,
3. Integrated forest monitoring,
4. Public involvement in forest management,
5. In-kind support to the Environment Centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), including the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) and the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM).

6. Program coordination by the USFS' Office of International Programs for the technical assistance and other activities.

In terms of priority issues, the IAA identified the following: "urban, social and agroforestry in support of sustainable agriculture and biodiversity, participatory natural forest management, institution-building, outreach and research, collaboration with non-governmental organizations, global climate change issues, and remote sensing, including geographic information systems and global positioning systems." Apart from the environmental topics, other issues are more accurately categorized as approaches that could be applied to a variety of assignments (i.e., institution-building, outreach and research, collaboration with non-governmental organizations). For its work with international institutions, USAID wanted the USFS to collaborate on delivering "... comprehensive programs of modeling, research, training and demonstrations on global climate change and biodiversity conservation issues."

CHAPTER 3
IAA FUNDING, IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS & EXPENDITURES

I. Funding from USAID

From inception on August 6, 1997 to the most recent Amendment (#16) of September 28, 2005, the total contribution of funds from USAID has been $ 40,757,642. Due to considerable USAID Mission interest, the ceiling of the IAA was raised twice and now stands at $50,000,000. The amendment details can be found below in Table 1. Although the amendment year listed refers to each document's approval dates, all funding listed in each amendment represents forward funding, for one or more years, for specific activities

Funding that passed through the IAA can be grouped into four categories:

- *Mission Support Funds* (also referred to as Core Funds) from the EGAT Forestry Team that are spent by the USFS on salaries (6 FTEs) in TC, international travel costs for TC and other USFS staff, miscellaneous program and overhead costs ($9,373,548 or 23 percent of total). Over the Life of the IAA (103 months from 8/6/07-4/30/06), the USFS received $7,943,685 for direct management expenses from EGAT Mission Support Funds.

- *Tied Funds* from the EGAT Forestry Team that are designated for specific regional, country or types of activities ($479,756 or 1.1 percent).

- *Grant & Contract Funds*, from the EGAT Forestry Team, which passed through the IAA but were awarded to third party organizations ($5,040,062 or 12.4 percent). Recipients of these applied research-related funds included work by Colorado State University on a Soil Organic Carbon Assessment for Global Climate Change (EGAT/ESP money), and the Sustainable Forest Product Alliance partners (Certified Product Council, Metafore, Forest Trends) and METI, Inc. for the IAA evaluation.

- *Regional Bureau and Mission Funding,* collectively referred to as buy-ins. These 90 buy-ins include both Operating Year Budget (OYB) Transfers (79) and Modified Acquisition and Assistance Request (MAARDs) (11). They have supported detailer activities and travel expenses related to specific USAID programming ($25,864,269 or 63.5 percent). Apart from regional funding, 26 Missions have done buy-ins.

Figure 1: USAID Funding for IAA

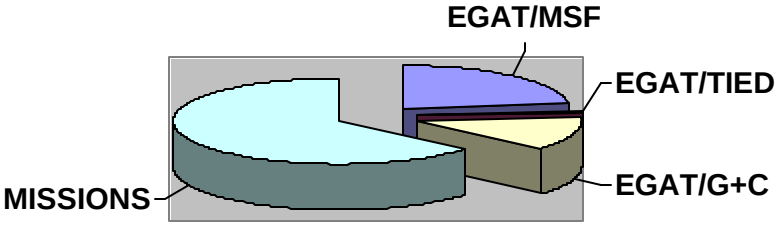


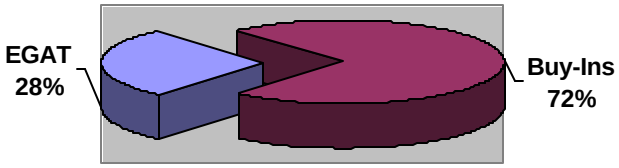
Table 1. Disbursement of USAID IAA funds by amendment, year and category

	Fiscal Year (year of approval)	EGAT Mission Support Funds	EGAT Tied Funds	EGAT Grants & Contracts Funds	Regional Bureau and Missions Funds	Amendment Total
Original	1997	1,214,000				1,214,000
1	1998	657,524	300,000		2,642,997	3,600,521
2	1998				1,450,000	1,450,000
3	1999	1,057,800			3,814,875	4,872,675
4	2000				454,665	454,665
5	2000	1,105,000			2,162,338	3,267,338
6	2001	1,225,000			1,695,000	2,920,000
7	2002				906,712	906,712
8	2002	1,026,530		1,550,000	2,211,000	4,787,530
9	2002			325,000		325,000
10	2003	1,022,064		1,100,000	1,790,000	3,912,064
11	2004				800,000	800,000
12	2004			155,000	2,026,106	2,181,106
13	2004	1,072,000		981,602	1,290,115	3,343,717
14	2005				1,130,000	1,130,000
15	2005				285,185	285,185
16	2005	993,630	129,756	978,460	3,205,286	5,307,132
Totals		**9,373,548**	**429,756**	**5,090,062**	**25,864,269**	**40,757,645**

The total USAID funds available for use by the USFS total $35,721,621. EGAT Mission Support Funds and Tied Funds equaled $9,803,304 and Regional Bureau and Mission Funds totaled $25,864,269. The overhead for grant and contract activity was $54,048.[6]

Figure 2 contrasts the two major components of USAID support. The total EGAT contribution was 28 percent in comparison to 72 percent from the Regional Bureau and Mission Buy-Ins during the 1997-2005 window. Over the life of the project, the average annual ratio of Core (EGAT) to Buy-In Funds was 1 to 2.6. Figure 3 shows the yearly variations in the relative funding levels with the highest ratios in 2004 and 1998 (1:4.9 and 1:4.4, respectively) and the lowest ratios in the first two years (1:0 and 1:0.7).

Figure 2:
EGAT and Buy-In Funding (%)



[6] The overhead for grant and contract activity includes the 18 percent overhead received on an EGAT/ESP global climate change research activity ($27,900), 5 percent overhead for administering the other EGAT large grants ($24,555) and 10 percent for this IAA Evaluation Contract administered by METI, Inc. ($1,593).

Figure 3: Relative Funding by Year - EGAT vs. Buy-Ins ($)

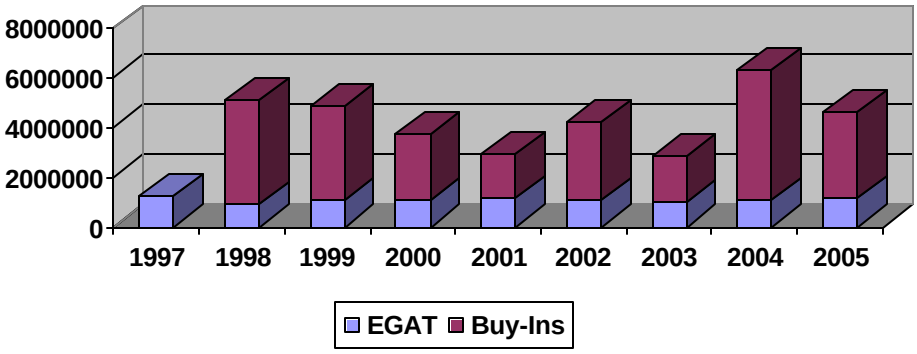
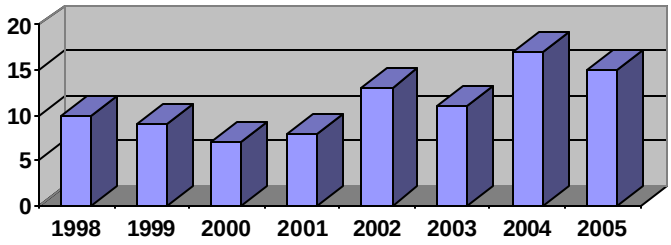


Figure 4:
Annual Number of Buy-Ins (1998-2005)



Since 1998, there have been a total of 90 buy-ins from Missions and Regional Bureaus[7] over eight years (see Figure 4).[8] The average number of buy-ins per year has been 11. The range has been 7-17.

Figure 5 shows the trend over time for each region, as well as the comparative regional values for each year. Some of the buy-ins covered multi-year periods and this explains why declines often followed peak years. For example, in the LAC region, there were buy-ins every year of the IAA but declines followed two peak years in 2000 and 2004. For the AFR region, buy-ins have steadily increased, with peak years in 2005 and 2002 and only one decline in 2003. The pattern for the ANE region is bowl-shaped with two peak years in 1998 and 2005. Increases in funds in this region were generally in response to natural disasters such as fires, earthquakes and the tsunami. For the EE region, funding peaked in 1998 and 1999, which reflects declines in USAID funding to this region and for environmental sector activities within the EE region.

[7] Under Amendment 11 in 2004, another USAID/Washington Bureau, BHR/OFDA, bought into the IAA for disaster-related assistance in Asia. This $800,000 is counted with other buy-ins.
[8] The actual number of transfers was slightly less due to bundling of buy-ins, primarily by the LAC Bureau.

Figure 5: Buy-Ins by Region and Year ($) (1998-2005)

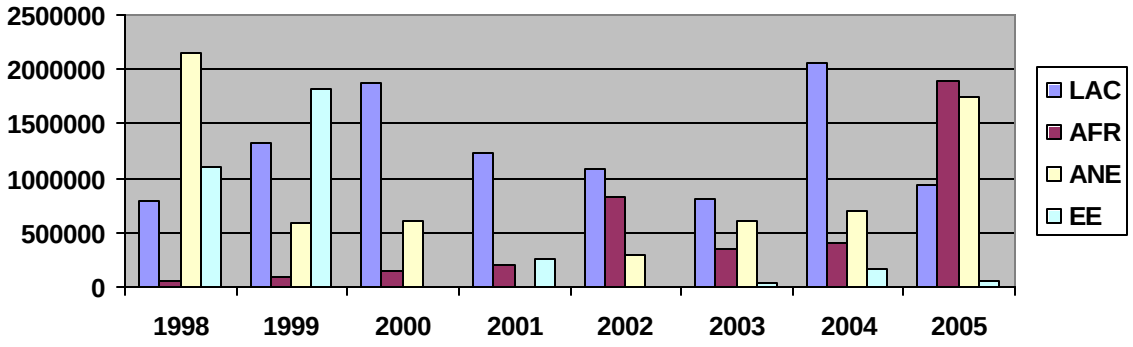


Figure 6:
Buy-In Funding Levels by Region ($)
(1998-2005)

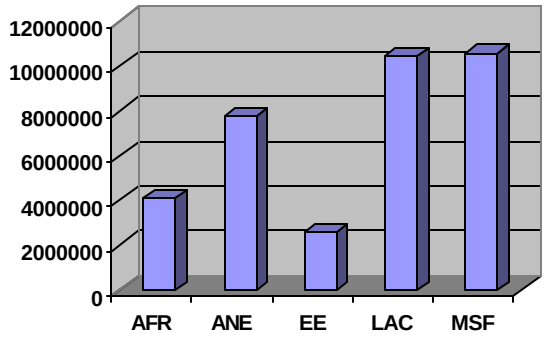


Figure 7:
Numbers of Buy-Ins by Region,
(1998-2005)

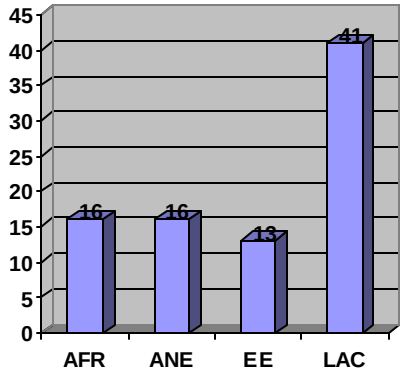


Figure 6 shows the relative distribution of all USAID funds by region and Figure 7 indicates the number of buy-ins for each region. Although the Mission Support Funds from EGAT are not tied to a particular region, they are included for comparative value as a separate column in Figure 6. The LAC region has had the highest level of buy-ins and number of buy-ins, followed by ANE, AFR and then EE in declining order.

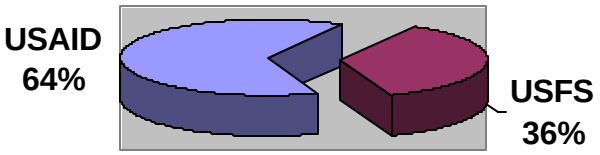
While the relative effectiveness of an individual TC staff member may explain some of the differences between regions, it is important to factor in regional funding patterns in USAID funding over the life of the IAA. For example, in the LAC region, the USFS already had some country partnerships that pre-dated the current IAA (e.g., Mexico and Brazil). In addition, regional USAID funding levels for forestry- and biodiversity-related activities in the LAC region have remained fairly high until recently. For ANE region, the high level of buy-in funding is likely to be attributable to rather large transfers for disaster response and management activities, including fire. For AFR, buy-ins have been steadily increasing over time, as have the number of countries involved. However, the

USFS had relatively few partnerships in this region when the IAA began. For the EE region, funding levels for environmental activities have fallen dramatically over the life of the IAA. Apart from a few locations such as the Russian Far East, Albania, etc., EE environmental funding has generally been more focused on pollution-related issues.

II. Funding and In-Kind Contributions from the USFS

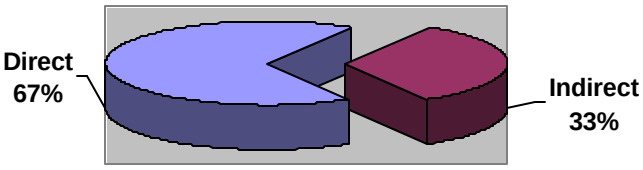
For every $2.00 that USAID has contributed to the IAA, the USFS provides just over one additional dollar of financial and in-kind resources (Figure 8). Under the IAA partnership, both sides positively view this type of financial leveraging. The USFS provide services to USAID in exchange for IAA funding. However, the relationship extends beyond strictly service provision. The USFS contributes its own appropriated funds and salaries for most detailers, as well as sharing its external relationships and positive reputation. Besides the financial contributions and technical expertise of the USFS, there are also unquantifiable contributions. These contributions include the cachet and credibility that the USFS staff is able to offer host country partners, particularly those working in host country forestry agencies. In interviews, many USFS, USAID and partner informants noted that these attributes set the IAA apart from fee-for-services contracts with the private sector.

Figure 8:
USAID Funding & USFS Match



Under a negotiated verbal agreement with USAID, the USFS provides two types of matching financial and in-kind resources. As shown in Figure 9, the Direct Match accounts for approximately two-thirds of the total USFS match; the remaining third is the Indirect Match:

Figure 9:
USFS Match Components($)



- The *Direct Match* is comprised of USFS appropriated support that directly benefits USAID field programs. For the Direct Match, USAID and its field partners have considerable input as to the nature and timing of USFS technical assistance. Workplans for USFS assistance in these activities are jointly negotiated between USAID and the USFS.
- The *Indirect Match* is comprised of activities or partner grants that have been initiated by the USFS. There is a verbal agreement between USAID and the USFS, revisited annually, as to what USFS activities count toward the Indirect Match. To

date, USAID has not yet played a significant role in decision-making for the USFS' Indirect Match activities. For the most part, Indirect Match activities are in USAID countries; USFS work in China has not been counted toward the Indirect Match.

Table 2. Estimated Funding for USFS Match Components (1998-2006)[9]

	Estimated Funding($)
Direct Match Total[10]	**$15,308,646**
1. TC Staff Salaries & Benefits (6 FTEs loaded salaries & 9.5 FTEs hired via METI, Inc.)	4,740,428
2. Regional Program Funds (LAC$ to Mexico & Brazil; EE $ to Russia)	4,787,000
3. Detailer Salaries & Benefits for USAID-Related Travel Days	5,013,918
4. Grants to USAID/USFS Partners	767,300
Indirect Match Total[11]	**$7,543,590**
1. 24 annual scholarships for USFS-sponsored, University-based International NRM Seminars in the United States (Tuition and travel paid for international participants, including both USAID Foreign Service Nationals and USAID field partners.	1,781,861
2. Other international seminar costs (i.e., grants to initiate two new seminars).	214,560
3. Grant to CIPAM grant for intl. protected area trainings (02-06)	858,335
4. Migratory Species Habitat Conservation[12] ▪ Partnerships with Ducks Unlimited (Mexico) ▪ Partnership with The Nature Conservancy ▪ Detailer travel related to migratory species/habitat, 2001-06 data	 DU: 1,701,430 TNC: 2,685,241 14,726
5. Mexico Sister Forests (Detailer salaries & benefits for travel days, 2001-06 data)	180,291
6. Mexico Biosphere Reserve (Detailer salaries & benefits for travel days, 2001-06 data)	107,146
TOTAL	**$22,852,236**

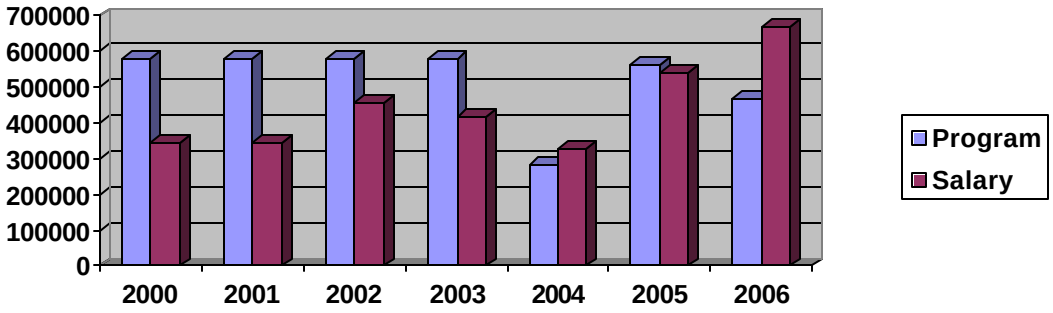
For the Direct Match component, two patterns are worthy of note. As shown in Figure 10, USFS regional program funding typically exceeded staff funding during the FY 2000-2006 window, except in 2004 and 2006. This situation reflects both declines in USFS program funds for field activities that directly supported USAID projects and also staffing changes (i.e., an expansion of staff and the hiring of more senior staff).

[10] Traveler and program data is available from the USFS from 2001-2006. When appropriate, dummy values for 1998-2000 have been estimated using an average of comparable values for FY 2001-2003.

[11] Detailer salaries & benefits for specific activities were calculated for each year from 2001-2006. The number of travelers per year was multiplied by the average number of days per detailer trip, then multiplied again by the loaded daily rate for a GS-13, Step 1 for a particular year.

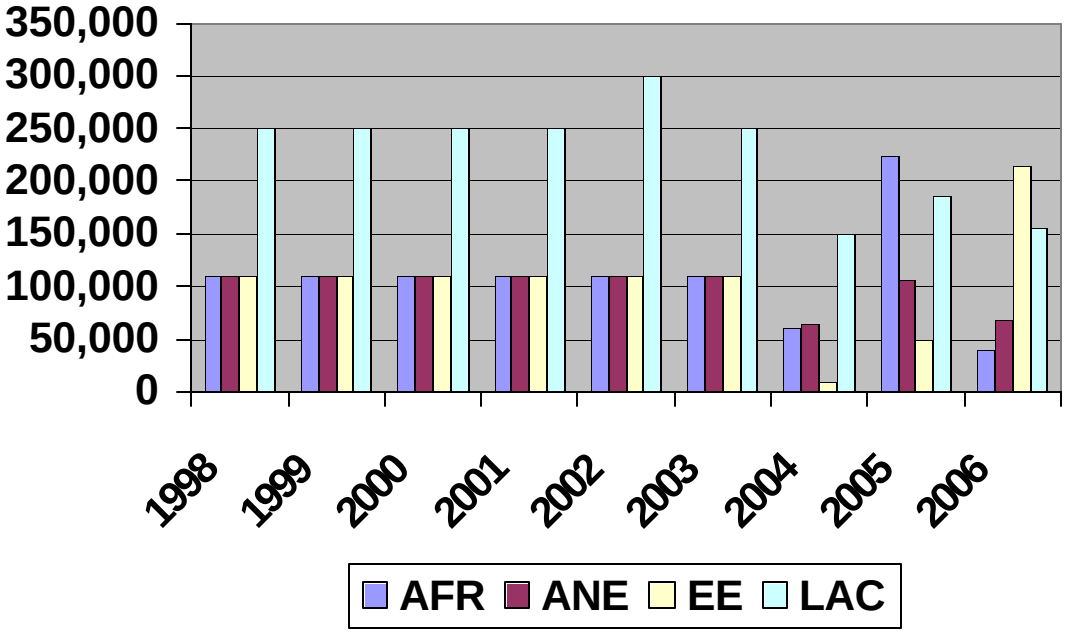
[12] These partnerships, previously domestic only and now extended internationally to Latin America, include work from Mexico to the Andes.

Figure 10: USFS Program & Salary Levels by Year ($)



For USFS regional program funds under the Direct Match, Figure 11 shows the regional distribution by year and the pattern for each region over time.[13] The pattern of relative distribution of USFS funding is fairly similar for years 1998-2003 but drops significantly in 2004 for all regions. LAC funding, targeted to Mexico and Brazil, climbs considerably in 2005, as does funding for AFR. In 2006, USFS EE program funding, focused on Russia, will increase significantly, to re-build this regional program and compensate for low levels of USAID EE funding.

Figure 11: USFS Regional Program Funding Levels by Year ($)



[13] Figures for 1998-89 were unavailable. Estimates were included based on 2000 levels.

III. IAA Expenditures

TC management activities are primarily carried out using USAID/EGAT funds (i.e., Mission Support Funds) and USFS appropriated money. Expenses for USFS detailers are primarily paid for from buy-ins. The two main expenditure categories for USAID/EGAT and USFS funds are Direct Management Expenditures and Indirect Costs/Overhead Expenditures. These categories are elaborated in Table 3:

Table 3. IAA Expenditure Categories

1. Direct Management	
TC Salaries	Loaded rates for 6 FTEs
Detailer Salaries	Occasional loaded salary reimbursement for some detailers
TC Travel	Expenses of TC staff
Detailer Travel	Expenses of USFS detailer traveling for USAID-related activities.
Small Grants	Co-funded with USAID – Third Party Grants to universities or NGOs. Each grant is $20,000-50,000; annual total is $75,000-150,000.
Equipment & Materials	Materials associated with TC or detailer work.
Communications	Telephone and fax charges for international and domestic calls. Translation of reports.
2. Overhead	
Office Space	Franklin Court. Shared cost within International Programs
Administrative Support	Shared cost within International Programs
Outreach/Communication	In-house unit, shared cost within International Programs
Office Supplies	Shared cost within International Program
Postage	Costs associated equipment and materials shipping.

For EGAT IAA Funds (Mission Support Funds), the Direct Management Expenditures include salary, travel, small grants equipment and communications. The USAID Forestry Team and the USFS have agreed to annually co-fund salary and benefits for six specific Full-Time Equivalent positions. This number of positions is divided into three full-time positions and half-salaries for six other staff. In FY 2006, these six loaded salary rates are estimated to account for approximately $625,806 or 63 percent of the $993,630 that EGAT provided in Mission Support Funds in Amendment 16. The balance of Mission Support Funds is spent on other direct costs, including TC staff, grants to non-USFS partners, and some detailer travel.

With regard to the small grants listed under the Direct Management category, the USFS supports either US-based or host country activities and organizations. Some of these initiatives were unsolicited proposals, whereas other activities arise during the course of TC or detailer activities. While the USFS often discusses these ideas with the USAID Forestry Team and may co-fund some of these grants, they can and do act independently. Typically, the grant activity directly contributes to the work of the International Programs Office and USAID.

The USFS charges overhead (also known as Indirect Costs) on all financial transfers from USAID and other government agencies. The Agency-wide overhead rate charged by the USFS is 18 percent for transfers of federal funds. It is applied to EGAT and Mission and Bureau buy-ins. However, this arrangement is modified when EGAT funds are provided for purposes other than the Direct Management costs associated with the

IAA. For example, when EGAT provides funding via the IAA for grants to USAID partners, the effective overhead rate is 5 percent and the remaining 13 percent is made available for support to USAID projects. In these latter situations, the main role of the USFS is to administer the transfer of funds and ensure that grantees submit proper financial reporting.

In general, it appears that the overhead rate has been at the appropriate level for covering USFS management costs. The USFS/IP Operations Group functions smoothly and is responsive to USAID's reporting needs. The TC staff appear to have the right level of support for their work. However, some USAID staff expressed interest in greater transparency regarding overhead expenditures. They are aware that the TC Group and the IP Office are engaged in non-USAID work and they are concerned that USAID gets full value for the overhead that it pays to the USFS.

The IAA was set up with the expectation that all of the staff and travel expenses of the TC staff are met by either EGAT Mission Support Funds or USFS appropriated funds. Regardless of the level of buy-ins and the TC management required, Regional Bureaus and Missions would not be expected to pay for these costs, only the overhead costs.[14] Because TC staff do not track their time for core functions versus activities directly tied to a specific buy-in, there is not enough information available to determine the amount of TC management time needed for buy-ins of different levels. However, Missions generally report satisfaction with their level of service from TC so this finding suggests that the current staffing arrangements are appropriate.

Under this IAA, the USFS has used buy-in funds to experiment with some new staffing arrangements, including full-time resident or part-time intermittent advisors. These country or regional advisors are typically experienced professionals who come from either host countries, the United States or other countries. They are generally hired for one to two year assignments. They must be able to work independently without USAID supervision and must be responsive to USAID needs. Several have been USFS employees whereas others have been hired externally. Technical Cooperation relies upon METI, Inc., a GSA Schedule support firm, to hire the field staff supported by the buy-in.[15] Examples of the these arrangements include:

- From 1998-2004, the LAC Bureau supported a Caribbean Forestry Advisor (CFA). Two individuals from the ranks of the USFS filled this position sequentially. The CFA was posted originally to the USFS Institute of Tropical Forestry in Puerto Rico and later moved to the Caribbean Regional USAID Mission in Jamaica. The position was fully funded by the LAC Bureau from 1998-2000 and then split funded from 2001-2004. The position was then openly competed and filled by a non-USFS employee who was hired under a new LAC PASA administered by the USFS. While these

[14] The only exception to this arrangement exists for some of the Asian disaster mitigation and ASEAN funding that is transferred via the IAA to the USFS from USAID. These buy-ins include loaded salaries for four USFS staff. These staff members report to the Policy Unit of the International Programs Office but one previously reported to TC in the early years of the IAA.

[15] METI also hires some of the Technical Cooperation staff members who are paid from USFS appropriated program funds.

advisors were not formally a part of the TC staff, they were able to work closely with TC staff to identify opportunities for detailers and buy-ins.

- At the present time, there is one USFS employee, who is working on a medium-term contract in Liberia. He has been paid with State Department funding, but manages combined State and USAID funding for Liberia.

- Working through METI, Inc., TC has been able to hire several advisors using buy-in funds. For example, CARPE funds support one half-time, Europe-based staff person who makes periodic visits to Africa. In Madagascar, the USFS made a grant to the international NGO, PACT, in Madagascar so that one of its staff could serve as the USFS representative. Another advisor was hired via METI for the Guinea buy-in. While all of these individuals had excellent technical skills and cultural familiarity, some evaluation informants noted that they did not have any institutional history with the USFS and were more like consultants hired by private contractors.

Typically, the detailer's home units can typically cover salary costs for a short-term international assignment and this advantage is often used by TC staff to market the IAA. However, in some situations, buy-ins and/or Mission Support Funds or Technical Cooperation's Regional Program funds are used to pay for detailer salaries. This situation usually arises for one or more of the following reasons: 1) a particular detailer is in high demand (e.g., roads training); 2) the budget of the detailer's unit is particularly tight, 3) the detail requires numerous trips by a single individual, or 4) an experienced international detailer retires from the USFS and their services cannot be easily replaced by current USFS employees.

CHAPTER 4
IAA MANAGEMENT

I. IAA Staffing and Programming

The Technical Cooperation division is divided into five regional teams (i.e., Africa, Asia, Middle East, Latin America & the Caribbean and Europe & Eurasia). Apart from the division of USAID's ANE region into Asia and the Middle East, this geographic organization by the USFS mirrors the organization of USAID. The split between the two latter programs is a result of prior decentralized management of the Middle East Program and also previous management issues for the TC ANE regional team. The TC Director, who also serves as the Assistant Director for TC in the International Programs Office, and a team leader for each regional team provide oversight. Each team is responsible for liaising with both USAID regional bureau staff, as well as USAID's Forestry Team; marketing the IAA to USAID Mission staff; negotiating buy-in work plans and identifying USFS technical detailers for specific buy-in and pre-buy-in assignments.

With respect to TC leadership, feedback from USAID was quite positive. Because the TC Group is somewhat decentralized, most Mission staff had only interacted with the TC regional team members. Far fewer had had direct contact with the TC Director. Very few had met the IP Director who travels less often. The regional team coordinators, as well as the TC Director were singled out individually by USAID staff and partners for high praise. Some Missions noted that TC and IP leadership have been particularly well-positioned for high-level government-to-government discussions and negotiations.

In general, interactions between the TC and IP leadership are very positive, as are relationships between these leaders and the TC staff. However, there are four areas where TC and IP leadership could have improved their efforts. In terms of personnel management, the leadership was too slow in recognizing and remedying the rift between TC and USAID staff in one region. While decentralization and flexibility are positive dimensions of TC's work, there appear to be few standardized work procedures and systems in place for managing detailers. This absence makes it harder for new TC staff to learn their jobs and results in uneven orientations, backstopping and debriefings for detailers. Detailer and buy-in overview reports to Missions are not always timely and there is no consistent format for either. Similarly, there are no systematic procedures or forms for keeping records on detailers or obtaining their feedback.

In terms of staffing, TC has increased the number of regional staff over time from 10 (2000-2003) to the current level of 15.5. These numbers include the TC Director. As noted above in the discussion of the Direct Match, the USFS uses its appropriated regional program funds to pay for any additional staff above and beyond the six FTEs paid by EGAT Mission Support Funds. Increases in the number of TC staff assigned per region are not necessarily tied to an increase in buy-ins for that region or regional funding trends for environmental activities (e.g., LAC). In some cases, TC has invested in more staff for a specific region so as to increase marketing activities (e.g., EE).

II. Communications & Knowledge Management

USAID Mission staff and partners report that TC staff and leadership have a clear customer orientation. They feel that communication efforts by TC staff have been well-adapted to their preferences and more than adequate for their needs. Communication is frequent before, during and after the development of workplans, scopes of work and technical assistance. There have been a few instances in which TC staff were less responsive than expected but these lapses are the exception rather than the rule.

In general, USAID/Washington staff members have quite positive feelings about the level and type of communication that they have with USFS TC staff. The TC director and the USAID CTO meet on a weekly basis and communicate on an as-needed basis. The USAID CTO usually attends the weekly staff meeting for TC staff. The TC director attends the monthly extended Forestry Team meeting. There is also some regular communication between TC and the leader and other regional members of the Forestry Team. For regional bureau staff at USAID, there is some variation in levels of communication. For example, there has been fairly frequent communication in the past and/or present between USAID staff in the AFR, LAC and EE regions; communication has been much less frequent between TC staff and USAID staff working in the ANE region. Some informants suggested that it may be helpful for the TC staff to more often go to USAID's offices in Washington for face-to-face meetings.

Typically, there has not been much contact between the Forestry Team CTO and the USAID Missions buying into the IAA. This contact has usually been focused on financial arrangements rather than on the technical aspects of the IAA workplans. While things have generally gone very smoothly for buy-in activities to date, it would be helpful for USAID Mission staff to know that help can be obtained from the CTO if they are dissatisfied with TC services. In addition, some Missions would like the Forestry Team to help disseminate their IAA-funded success stories to others at USAID (i.e., Washington and Missions) so that their accomplishments can be recognized and built upon.

The USFS and USAID web-sites provide information about the types of assistance that the IAA can provide. The information on obtaining assistance is quite clear on the USFS web-site. However, under the descriptions of country and regional activities on the USFS web-site, it is not always easy to understand which activities are USAID-funded. Also, detailer reports are not posted to this web-site. Although the majority of its program budget has gone to the USFS IAA, the only places on the USAID web-site that the USFS has been listed is under the linked partner list on the forestry pages and the section on LAC environmental activities lists a new USFS publication. The IAA itself is not described. There is also a section of the USAID web-site for environmental success stories but none of these mention IAA activities.

In terms of reaching out to USFS and other audiences, the IP Office has developed a number of resources. The TC program is described in a brief overview and there are also regional and topical newsletters that are updated periodically. They are sent to ranger districts and shared with Missions and other international partners. They have a

consistent, readily identifiable format. They are successful at conveying basic programmatic information, as well sharing the experiences of the detailers.

While the TC Team has weekly general and regional team meetings, there has not been much attention paid to systematic learning across the regional teams. Some of the Reduced-Impact Logging activities spanned regions. However, there have not been systematic attempts to develop cross-regional themes for TC's work.

III. Marketing of the IAA

To date, marketing efforts have been quite successful at generating buy-ins. Twenty-five of the sixty-one countries visited by TC staff have bought into the IAA (41 percent).[16] Sixteen Missions or regional activities opted for repeat buy-ins (11 of the 25 Mission Buy-ins and 5 out of 5 regional funded buy-ins). Data from Missions not buying in has not been collected by the CTO or TC staff.

Of the buy-in Missions and partners interviewed, most were quite satisfied with the marketing activities of TC. While USAID IAAs can be marketed by their USAID CTO, his/her USAID team and IAA partner organization, most of the marketing for this IAA has been done by TC. However, the initial CTO did take on more marketing responsibilities.

Marketing is the first part of a multi-step process required to provide quality technical assistance to USAID Missions. TC staff must also negotiate buy-ins, develop workplans, help arrange financial transfers, identify and backstop the appropriate detailers and liaise with Mission and Regional Bureau staff, USAID partners and others key stakeholders. The following section describes the strengths and weaknesses of current and past arrangements.

USAID requests for USFS technical assistance generally occur in two ways. For the less common approach, a USAID Mission staff member or Regional Bureau staffer has initiated contact, either by contacting the USFS/IP/TC staff directly or by contacting a member of the USAID/EGAT/NRM Forestry Team, especially the IAA CTO, with their request. They may have used the IAA in a different country, heard about the IAA from USAID or other colleagues, attended one of the USFS' International Seminars in the United States or visited the USFS/IP website. More commonly, the USFS/IP/TC regional staff member has contacted the USAID Mission via an e-mail or phone call and requests a meeting, either in-country or in Washington, DC, depending on the whereabouts of the USAID staff member.[17] One or more members of the TC staff then travel to the country, often in conjunction with other travel to buy-in countries.

After an initial marketing trip to a new USAID country, the TC staff member will usually develop a proposal and may offer to provide up to three trips of technical assistance. These trips usually involved other USFS staff experts and one TC staff member. These trips have been made in order to stimulate demand for the services of the USFS. The

[16] These buy-ins are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

[17] In the case of Liberia, the technical assistance came about via State Department interest and a three-way relationship among the State Department, USAID and the USFS.

USAID Mission did not pay for these trips. Occasionally, regional bureau funds were available to cover the cost of these subsidized trips. However, in most situations, the trip travel costs are covered by the EGAT Mission Support Funds and the USFS covers salaries and benefits for the staff involved. In most cases, TC will not exceed two or three marketing and/or technical assistance trips without a buy-in from the Mission.

There appear to be different and sometimes overlapping reasons why a USAID Mission has decided against an IAA buy-in. There are seven situations that are generally beyond the control of TC staff. These situations include: 1) an unreceptive Mission staff member, 2) lack of Mission funding, 3) the absence or decline in funding for a Mission's Environmental Strategic Objective, 4) prior Mission relationship with, and preference for another U.S. Government provider, 5) Regional Bureau preferences for other central mechanisms such as Indefinite Quantity Contracts[18], 6) regional bureau policies against using U.S. Government providers and 7) preference for using in-country service providers.

However, there are other factors that may be under the control of TC or the EGAT/Forestry Team:

- Mission staff frequently mistrust centrally funded projects from USAID/Washington and feel that they have less control over the implementing partners. TC staff have been successful at convincing Missions that they have considerable control with the IAA arrangement.

- For example, USAID staff and partner informants are somewhat divided as to whether or not they see the USFS as a partner, service provider or both. For those countries in which the USFS has an independent program, brings its own resources to the table and has an on-going on-the-ground presence, it is easier for the USFS to be viewed as a partner by host country partners. For countries where the USFS has no prior independent activities and their only role has been provision of technical assistance under an IAA buy-in, then they have more often been seen by others as a service provider.

- An important distinction was made by several informants with respect to great value of the "inherently governmental functions" that the USFS detailers can provide as government staff to the staff of other host country government agencies working on forestry and/or natural resources management. In this regard, while the USFS is not yet viewed as a partner in some countries (i.e., providing its resources independent of the USAID funds), it is seen as a future partner, particularly for host country government agencies involved in resource management and forestry. However, sometimes, this perception can work against the USFS if a Mission's view of the USFS is limited to its government-to-government capabilities and the host country forest agency or its current leadership are not amenable to change.

[18] The USFS, as a government agency, requires a special waiver to join a single consortia bidding on an IQC. If a Mission buys into the IAA and also uses an IQC mechanism for natural resources activities, the USFS is obligated to offer its services to all consortia and all members of the consortia.

- Missions and partners have not always completely understood the full range of USFS capabilities. While most of the USAID staff members and partner organizations interviewed were aware that the USFS has broader natural resources management capacities, most could not identify more than two to three topics beyond the type of work that the USFS was focusing on in their country. Most did not have a clear enough conception of the comparative NRM strengths of the different US agencies working on NRM. For those familiar with other USG agencies, most preferred the USFS because of both the issues they were working on and their perceptions regarding the administrative efficiency of the USFS IAA. Some of the informants knew about the USFS prior to marketing contacts from TC staff but others had no prior knowledge.

- USAID regional staff have both helped and dampened Mission interest in buying into the IAA. At various times, the Regional Bureaus have bought in to the IAA to help TC build up Mission and host country interest in USFS services. In Africa Bureau, a former IP staff member was effective at promoting the IAA for his region. In LAC region, senior leadership stated a preference for private sector contracts rather than IAAs. For EE, regional bureau staff support was present but regional prioritization and funding shifted dramatically over the life of the IAA. In ANE, regional bureau staff support was mixed, in part due to a lack of rapport between USAID and some USFS staff and prioritization of a USFS agenda involving China for that region. The latter situation lasted for approximately five years and was remedied in the past year.

- There are some unique issues related to marketing for the LAC Region. During the past year, USAID's LAC Bureau moved their PASA from USDA-FAS to the USFS. For a number of years, this PASA has been a mechanism for staffing the environment office of the LAC Regional Bureau, both in Washington, DC and in several Missions. These nine staff count as FTE's for USDA or the USFS and report to a supervisor in TC and are evaluated by both the TC supervisor and their USAID supervisor. However, they sit in USAID offices and for almost all intents and purposes, act as USAID staff. As part of their USAID duties, the Missions expect the LAC PASA staff to pre-screen marketing requests from partners of USAID/Washington's centrally funded projects. This arrangement is a potentially awkward one since the PASA staff are not disinterested parties as USFS employees. Although they report to the TC LAC Regional Team Leader and there have been no conflicts of interest or loyalties so far, it is conceivable that the PASA staff could, at some point, come under pressure from the TC LAC Team to push Missions for buy-ins and the USFS could feel pressured by the PASA staff to address LAC Regional Bureau concerns over Mission needs. The current management arrangement has reduced the amount of time that the TC LAC Regional Manager is able to devote to IAA activities and her presence, management expertise and regional experience have been missed by the LAC Missions during the transition period.

- Another set of issues influencing Mission decisions about buy-ins have been USAID staff perceptions regarding TC staff, including their social skills and reliability, professional credibility and product knowledge (i.e., understanding the resources and capabilities of the USFS technical experts).

- TC staff members generally received very high marks from USAID staff and partners for their social skills, reliability and the quality of their backstopping. As noted by both USAID staff and TC staff, there is often a fine line between assertive and aggressive marketing. It usually takes time for new staff to learn to listen, understand how USAID works and learn to read the verbal and non-verbal cues from particular USAID staff members and build rapport. It is more important to focus on Mission needs rather than selling what the USFS has to offer.

- In general, USAID staff and partners had a very favorable impression of the professional credibility of TC staff, particularly the unit's older and/or more experienced staff members. This finding is not surprising given that rapport tends to be greatest between individuals with similar ages, levels of education and experience. USAID staff tend to be middle-aged or older, educated at the Master's or Ph.D. level and have had many years of field experience. Some informants noted, unfavorably, the imbalance between more-seasoned, older staff and younger, less-seasoned staff at TC. For a few TC staff, their casual dress made them appear even younger and less professionally credible to their colleagues from USAID and other partner organizations, as well as the older individuals on USFS detailer teams.

- Mission staff members without prior exposure to the USFS are dependent upon the TC staff member to be fully informed about USFS capabilities. Some informants had the impression that new TC employees did not always fully understand the capacities and culture of the USFS or understand what was needed for particular field situations. This inexperience sometimes hindered the ability of these TC staff to effectively market the IAA and develop proposals and workplans. In general, the TC unit has been hiring new staff from outside of the USFS on initial term appointments. TC has favored flexible go-getters with the right mix of entrepreneurial and social skills needed for work with USAID Mission. Most of the TC staff had no prior work experience with other USFS units. Some but not all have backgrounds related to natural resource management. Most have only had limited opportunities to interact with and understand the work and workforce of the USFS. Few career USFS staff apply for these positions because they are limited in duration and of less professionally beneficial than positions within the National Forest System.

IV. TC Coordination with Missions

- USAID clients and partners have been satisfied with buy-in work planning efforts to date. The development of proposals, work plans, budgets and Scopes of Work for USFS detailers has tended to be a joint process between USAID Mission staff, USAID partners and the USFS TC staff. In some exceptional cases, USAID has opted to fund activities that were wholly designed and initiated by the USFS (e.g., Brazil atmospheric and fire studies) and local partners.

- Each regional team within TC prepares an annual regional plan for the purposes of internal planning and resource distribution. However, these plans are generally not shared with USAID/Washington or Mission partners. This practice has made it more difficult for Missions and host country partners to know what the USFS is planning in specific countries.

- In terms of the Scopes of Work for detailers, some have been quite specific, whereas others are less well-defined. In general, clients, partners and detailers agreed that a more detailed SOW usually resulted in a better results and better experience for the detailer.

- During the course of the buy-ins, most Missions were generally quite happy with the support provided by their TC contact but there was some room for improvement. At times, some TC staff members misread USAID clients, could not establish rapport or were unavailable when needed. Sometimes, reports were not delivered in a timely fashion or translations was delayed.

V. TC Management of USFS Detailers

- USAID staff and partners have generally been quite pleased with the high caliber of the detailer candidates identified by TC staff.

- Once a Scope of Work has been developed, the USFS TC regional staff members use their professional and personal networks ("the bamboo network"), both within and outside TC, to identify a short list of USFS staff candidates. Some USFS units have points of contact for international assignments. According to USFS staff, the USFS is a networked and village-like organization so personal contacts are very important for locating the right detailers. Under the former Forestry Support Program, a roster of USFS (and non-USFS) experts was developed but it is no longer in existence. Rosters are expensive to maintain and keep up to date. As a federal agency, it was also difficult to include sensitive information about someone's suitability in this database.

- Besides having the appropriate professional credentials and technical expertise, TC looks for candidates who have the right personality, flexibility, cultural sensitivity for work in a particular country or regional assignment. It is usually important to find people who are teachers rather than doers and who are team players. For some assignments, foreign language fluency is also a criteria. Information on a detailer candidate's suitability is gleaned from other TC staff, former detailers, and other USFS staff including the candidate's work supervisor or peers and an interview with the detailer. For those who meet the criteria and are available, TC staff, the Missions and sometimes host country partners make the final decision about the right candidates. TC has not often consulted other USAID/W staff about these decisions, even when the Mission counterpart was not a natural resources person.

- The detailers that have been selected can be characterized in several ways. All but one of the detailers were current USFS employees; the exception was one retired USFS employee who had a unique skill set and prior international detail experience

during his career. Of the Direct Match detailers, sixty percent came out of the National Forest System; the balance was split between Research and Development and State & Private Forestry (22 percent), as well as other Other units, including the Chief's Office, Financial Management and Law Enforcement. Only one out of four short-term detailers were women which may reflect the overall continuing gender imbalance of professional staff within the USFS. Most were middle-aged. For the surveyed detailers, all but one had done recreational travel outside of the United States, typically to Western Europe and Latin America. Professionally, just under half had attended an international professional meeting; one quarter had done short-term international technical assistance and thirty-nine percent had prior long-term experience overseas, either through Peace Corps, military families or experience or international jobs. More detailed information can be found in Annex 5.

- Over the last six years, it was more common for detailers to go on one assignment rather than repeat assignments (60 percent versus 40 percent). In part, this pattern reflects a USFS management decision to expose more USFS staff to international situations and also an interest in building more international capacity for mid-level rather than close-to-retirement senior USFS employees. Some Missions favored repeated visits from the same detailers for continuity whereas others wanted some new detailers over time and also recognized the value of sending mid-career professionals. For the new detailers, the more common practice is to send teams that include new detailers, experienced detailers and/or a TC staff member. While the latter do not always make a technical contribution, they provide considerable assistance in logistical arrangements and client/partner relations. Sometimes, experienced detailers have recommended and invited new detailers to join a field team. In other situations, an experienced individual detailer can be sent alone, depending upon the nature of the assignment.

- For approval, TC staff and the detailer work with a detailer's supervisor to ensure their support for their employee's participation in international assignments. In some cases, the detailer's supervisor recommended the detailer for an assignment. Most of the surveyed detailers had a high level of supervisor support. Longer assignments than two weeks tend to be more problematic.

- Regarding travel arrangements, feedback from the e-survey detailers indicates that most of the international travel arrangements were very satisfactory. International travel and visas are arranged by the USFS' International Travel Coordinator, with support from the TC staff. Local travel arrangements are coordinated between the TC coordinator, host country counterpart and sometimes, the Mission staff. Complaints focused on cumbersome government travel procedures, delayed passports and visas and the rigors and stresses of international travel. From the Mission's and partners' perspective, U.S. Government employees require more security than other travelers and this has made travel to some countries more difficult (e.g., Middle East).

- To ensure better work results, TC typically provides an orientation to detailers before they travel. This orientation was particularly critical for the majority of detailers who

have only limited experience in developing countries and also helped others who had more international experience. However, these services appear to be uneven across the TC Group.

- After increases in security concerns worldwide, TC now provides a detailer with a standardized three-plus page e-mail that discusses safety issues, including Embassy contact info, links to State travel advisories and NIH health advisories.[19] There are plans now to provide all detailers with cell phones during their details.

- The extent of the orientation seemed to depend on time available, TC staff knowledge, detailer experience and detailer interest. Apart from the travel/security e-mail and a verbal review of the Scope of Work, there appear to be no standardized procedures across the TC Group for providing detailers with work, travel, cultural/historical and other relevant information. The AFR TC team now has a checklist for orienting travelers to travel and safety issues but the other TC teams have not yet adopted this checklist.[20]

- While the work orientation was generally satisfactory and most e-survey detailers had high praise for the TC staff, many felt that their cultural orientation from TC could have been improved. For example, half of the e-surveyed detailers mentioned being surprised by cultural, social and political issues; others mentioned gaining a deeper appreciation for the difficult conditions under which their forestry colleagues and natural resources professional are working under (Box 2). Cultural information can help detailers to tailor their assistance and training materials. It would also be helpful if all detailers understood more about USAID, their counterpart partners and the IAA connection to their work.

- In terms of reports, the e-survey detailers submitted documents ranging from 2 to 175 pages. In addition, some of them gave verbal and PowerPoint debriefings to host country and USAID counterparts before heading back to the United States. While most of the surveyed detailers were

Box 3. Some Detailer "Surprises"

"How well that highly motivated people can do with relatively little resources"

"…In the US, we are so used to having things and amenities that we take for granted."

"The depth of impact from colonialism"

"Funding is a major factor…"

"The very advanced level of good participatory planning that is being done by partners."

"The fact that the USFS is not viewed necessarily as the leader in resource conservation surprised me as that is how I view our agency (in most cases, not all)"

"Everything – I was completely unprepared for the cultural experience."

"Surprised? I was not surprised."

[19] Increasingly, the TC staff will brief the detailers on security issues, particularly since September 11 and the hotel evacuation of two detailers after a Jordan bombing in 2005.

[20] The Disaster Mitigation Group fields staff who are funded via the IAA. Travelers received an 8-10-page memo specific to each country. It includes information on both travel and cultural issues. When teams of three to four people will be giving a training, they attend a week-long planning meeting and orientation session in the U.S. prior to traveling.

aware that they needed to submit a report after their trips, they would have liked more guidance from TC including background reading, client and TC expectations, format and content and report models from other detailers. While most Missions and partners had seen and were satisfied with the detailer reports, many USAID/Washington staff were unhappy that they had not been included on the distribution lists.

- Detailers and Missions appear to have been satisfied with TC support of detailers while detailers have traveled. Often, the TC staff member will travel with detailers for some or all of their travels, particularly when teams or new detailers are involved. For the most part, the TC staff play a logistical and administrative role and help the detailers work with USAID and counterparts. In a few instances, the detailer or TC had inappropriate expectations of logistical support from USAID that were not met.

- According to the e-surveys and TC staff interviews, TC's post-detail debriefing with the traveler has varied. The main variable seems to be the press of work for the TC staff and whether or not the detailer was scheduled for a follow-up visit. Sometimes, there has been no debriefing other than the detailer submitting their report to the TC contact. When there was a debriefing, it usually consisted of a minimum of a short phone call between one or more TC regional staff and the detailer. The focus was on lessons learned and planning future assistance; sometimes, but not often, the TC staff provided feedback to the detailer on their performance. Typically, several e-mails were exchanged. For those detailers in Washington, DC or passing through on their way home, a presentation or face-to-face debriefing might be scheduled. Recently, TC has been developing a feedback form for detailers but it has not yet been finalized.

- With respect to detailer follow-up with host country partners, 61 percent of the 28 surveyed detailers had some type of contact with host country counterparts or the USAID Mission (Box 3). TC has had no system in place to keep once-off detailers up-to-date about further developments or the implementation of report recommendations in the country visited.

Box 4. Detailer Follow-Up with Host Country Counterparts

"I have made the effort to keep in contact with most of the host country partner staff with whom I have worked, in various countries and projects. Much of this follow-up has resulted in further collaborative work, joint publications, joint conference presentations, and other interactions, mostly from our own initiatives." (E-survey response)

- Mission staff and partners expressed appreciation for the consistency of follow-up by TC staff after assignments. Upon completion of the detailers' return from overseas, TC regional staff communicated with Mission staff or partners by e-mail or telephone call. Typically, this process has been verbal and informal. To date, TC staff have not sent a standardized set of questions to Missions and partners to obtain verbal or written feedback on detailer performance and identify future recommendations. In

some cases, a Mission might prefer to have an alternative feedback channel with the IAA CTO about their buy-in but the IAA CTO has not played this quality control role.

VI. Financial Transfers

Missions

- The USFS receives EGAT/NRM/Forestry Team Mission Support Funds and Mission funds (i.e. OYB transfers from Regional Bureaus and the less common, MAARDs) that it uses to support technical assistance to USAID Missions and occasional joint-funded small grants.

- The IAA is set up as an "advance collection agreement" rather than a cost-reimbursable system. Once USAID notifies the USFS that forward funding has been authorized for an upcoming year, the USFS notifies the U.S. Treasury Department and funds are then electronically transferred to the appropriate USFS account within USDA. Once the USAID funds are transferred to the USFS, the USFS can spend the funds. The USAID CTO is supposed to receive notice about the transfer from the Treasury Department, via EGAT/PAICO, that the transaction has been completed. During the tenure of the most recent USAID CTO, this step has not always happened.

- Activities have been forward funded for single or multiple years. Missions also have the option of paying for buy-in activities in tranches. EGAT/PAICO tracks these tranches but it is understood that the Missions are not obligated to fund future tranches if their funding situation or priorities change.

- Small grants, from Mission Support Funds and/or appropriated USFS funds, have been used by the USFS in two ways: 1) hiring local staff via grants to organizations; 2) grants to international or local Mission partners for USAID-related activities, including equipment and materials. These arrangements have generally been quite satisfactory and some have been managed via METI, Inc.

- For USAID funding that goes directly to TC activities, it appears that the Forestry Team and almost all USAID Missions are very satisfied with the mechanisms used by the USFS to transfer and receive funds (e.g., "this mechanism is the easiest thing in existence"; "seamless"). Missions appreciate how much effort is saved on the front end of activities by not having to go through the cumbersome and time-consuming competitive processes involving Requests for Proposals. However, two Missions mentioned situations in which money was temporarily misplaced, by EGAT in one situation and by the USFS in the second case. Both situations were resolved to the satisfaction of the Missions involved and they had no negative impact on the Mission's interest in future buy-ins. MAARDS appear to be somewhat more problematic than OYB Transfers.

Large Grants to Third Party Organizations

- The USFS passes grant money from EGAT/NRM/Forestry Team to a limited number of NGOs selected by USAID and provides financial oversight. While a capped

amount of the funds can be collected initially in advance of activities being initiated, other funds are provided on a cost-reimbursable basis.

- For large grant funding to third parties, the financial arrangements have generally been satisfactory for the NGOs receiving pass-through USAID grants from the Forestry Team. However, there appear to be some recent problems for more than one organization with the timeliness of payment for vouchers and the overly low caps applied to advance-funded grants, particularly during the grant's start-up phase. For example, one small organization mentioned having problems with its cash flow when the USFS reimbursement for its grant-related expenses repeatedly took longer than 30 days. While the TC staff did their best to help the grantee, their influence was limited because the USFS has centralized these financial functions to Albuquerque during the past year. Delays in reimbursement seriously impede grant work. Small organizations are put at financial risk when they have little or no access to alternative sources of temporary funding.

- A question can and has been raised as to whether the pass-through grants are an appropriate use of the IAA mechanism. The IAA definitely offers a great deal of flexibility to USAID for sole-source grant-making. USAID transfers the management burden for NGO grant reporting to the USFS. However, using the IAA for this purpose may also reflect an over-dependence of USAID's Forestry Team on a single mechanism. The rationale is that the Forestry Team has limited funds and it gets the most for its money with the IAA mechanism because of its low overhead and flexibility. However, if the IAA mechanism were to fall from favor, the Forestry Team would be particularly vulnerable.

Common Issues

- The IAA clients, the USAID Missions and Regional Bureaus, are not always able to transfer all of their funds to projects at this same time of year. Therefore, to limit the burden on the CTO, TC and the financial staff of each agency, an effort is made to "bundle" buy-ins and thus limit the number of amendments to one to three per year. EGAT Mission Support Funds, as well as Large Grants and other bundled buy-ins, are typically transferred at the end of the fourth quarter of the fiscal year, between the end of August and the end of September. In general, the transfers have been made in the second quarter of the fiscal year. For 1998-2005, the average number of amendments was two per year; each average number of buy-ins per amendment was eleven. In three of the last four years, there have been three amendments per year. At times, this bundling arrangement is inconvenient for Missions and they worry that Mission funding and priority shifts will force them into a de-obligation situation for waiting IAA funds.

- Besides the usual USAID coversheets for signatures and financial information, the IAA amendments typically are quite long and cumbersome documents. They include both short and long description of buy-in activities and workplans. Some type of activity summary sheet is usually present but not always easy to find.

VII. Reporting

TC Reporting to the USAID/EGAT CTO

- *Financial reporting from TC to the USAID CTO* is done on a quarterly and annual basis and has been satisfactory. It includes information on the prior balance, quarterly obligations for the entire fiscal year and the year-to-date information. However, it is not easy for the CTO to get a clear sense of progress for particular activities under buy-ins since there has not been a quarterly narrative explanatory document that specifies outcomes, the nature of the expenditures and the pipeline and burn-rate for each buy-in and its tasks.[21]

- In terms of *USAID results reporting to the CTO*, TC also provides information to USAID for USAID's annual report on biodiversity earmark activities (i.e., the 118 report). The Forestry Team is satisfied with reporting on this topic.

- With respect to *reporting on buy-in progress*, the TC staff provide verbal briefings during the weekly meeting and correspondence with the CTO. There is also an annual summary report. However, TC has not provided systematic written reports about when specific buy-ins and tasks have been completed.

TC Reporting to Missions

- In regard to *TC reporting to Missions* about progress on buy-in activities, there has been no systematic procedure or report format for these types of technical and financial debriefing. Missions report that they would like more information about quarterly and annual progress toward buy-in objectives to balance process reporting (e.g., meetings held with X, Y and Z, five workshops completed). The TC LAC Team worked with the Mexico Mission to create a prototype annual report. It summarizes annual progress, of buy-in funded and Indirect Match activities. It was well-received by the Mission. However, because of their workload, some Missions would prefer a shorter format of one-page or less that discusses the progress of a buy-in and its component tasks.

- *Detailer reports* have generally been satisfactory but some Missions would like more information on progress toward the overall objectives of the buy-in rather than the more process- and logically oriented trip report format.

Internal Reporting within TC

- The TC regional teams develop and discuss annual workplans with activities, priorities and budgets. However, these workplans are not shared with USAID staff in EGAT, the Regional Bureaus or Missions.

- On a monthly basis, TC regional teams, leadership and operations review accrual and pipeline funds, including projected and actual obligations. This information is

[21] For the disaster mitigation buy-ins, quarterly pipeline reports are submitted to the relevant Missions.

reconciled with USFS accounts and summarized in the quarterly reports shared with the USAID CTO.

- As a whole, the TC unit has not yet created a database that is aimed at tracking and reporting on technical assistance by detailers. The USFS International Travel Coordinator has developed and maintained a database on travel details for the 2001-2006 period. It is a helpful resource for identifying travel trips and days that can be sorted by regions, countries, individuals, years. This information was invaluable to the analyses in this evaluation. However, it has not included coding for those traveling on IAA-related activities (Direct and Indirect Match) nor are the descriptions of traveler activities complete. Some descriptions of the nature of the detail are quite general and there is no coding system for different topics.

CHAPTER 5
IS THE IAA MEETING USAID OBJECTIVES?

I. Introduction

From a technical perspective, the key questions for USAID are:

- How has the USFS had addressed the specific activity areas mentioned in the IAA?

  - Technical assistance to USAID forestry activities,
  - Sustainable forestry practices,
  - Integrated forest monitoring,
  - Public involvement in forest management,
  - In-kind support to the Environment Centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), including the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) and the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM).

- How has the USFS addressed the projected priority issues from the original IAA?

  - Urban, social and agroforestry in support of sustainable agriculture and biodiversity,
  - Participatory natural forest management,
  - Global climate change issues
  - Remote sensing, including geographic information systems and global positioning systems.
  - Institution-building,
  - Outreach and research,
  - Collaboration with non-governmental organizations,
  - Collaboration "with international institutions to deliver comprehensive programs of modeling, research, training and demonstrations," particularly for global climate change and biodiversity conservation issues.

- How has the USFS contributed to USAID objectives related to slowing the loss of both natural and plantation forests, improving the conservation of biologically significant habitat and preparing national environmental management strategies?

II. USFS Technical Assistance[22]

Detail Numbers and Locations

- From 2001-2006, a total of 362 USFS staff went on international assignments as part of the Direct and Indirect Matches, including 30 staff from TC or closely affiliated, 291 other USFS staff working directly on USAID activities (Direct Match Detailers) and 41 USFS staff members working on Indirect Match assignments (Indirect Match Detailers) in USAID countries. As shown in Figure 12, travel for Direct Match Detailers, dependent on USAID buy-ins was more variable than for TC staff.

Figure 12:
IAA-Related USFS Trips by Year (2001-2006)
(Direct & Indirect Match Detailers & TC Staff)

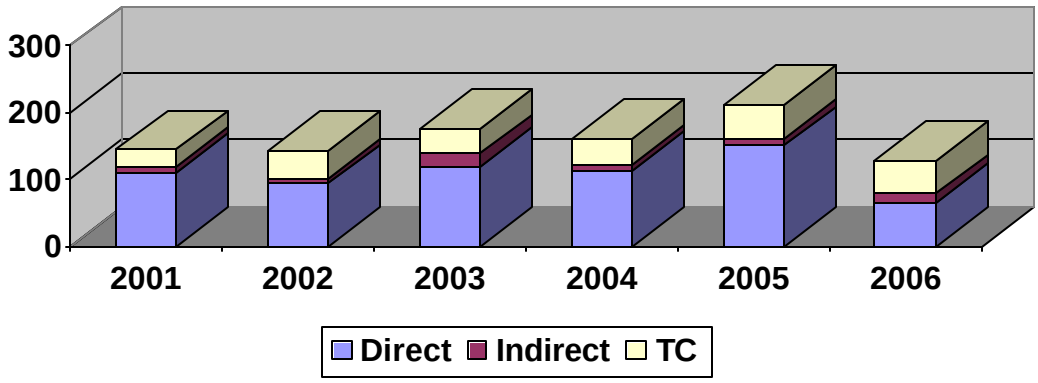


Figure 13:
Detailer Trips by Region
(2001-2006)

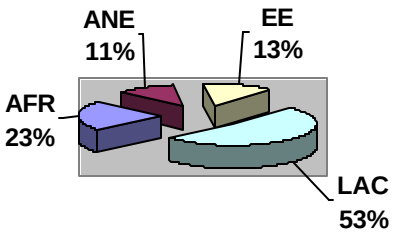
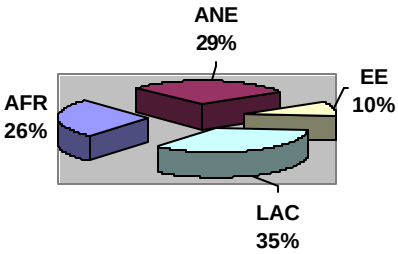


Figure 14:
TC Staff Trips by Region
(2001-2006)



[22] Annex 5 includes additional information regarding the details and detailers.

- The majority (60 percent) of USFS short-term detailers went on just one trip. For those going on multiple trips, the average was two trips. Most trips were about two weeks in length but ranged from 1 to 53 days. The two-week time period is usually acceptable to the detailer's work supervisor at their home unit.

- By the end of April 2006, the Direct Match Detailers will complete 647 trips to 54 countries in USAID's four regions (Figure 13) (see Table 6 in Appendix 5 for a country list). By region, approximately half of the trips were to LAC, with another quarter to Africa and final quarter split between ANE and EE. For the Indirect Match Detailers, all of their 110 trips were in the LAC region, primarily in Mexico (82 percent) and Brazil (12 percent).

- In comparison, the TC staff will have made 262 trips to 61 countries by the end of April 2006. Roughly equal numbers of trips were made to LAC, ANE and AFR regions but only ten percent of the trips were to the EE region, for reasons already discussed above (Figure 14). The country list for the TC staff reflects additional countries where marketing activities took place.

Detail Topics and Approaches

Complete information on each detailer's assignment can only be found in the files and memories of TC current and former staff and gleaned from the buy-in descriptions found in the IAA amendments. However, the database maintained by the USFS International Travel Coordinator since 2001 does have assignment information for some travelers even though it was not designed for this purpose. The total number of Direct and Indirect Match Detailers with sufficient detail information is 658; for 99 other travelers, there was insufficient information in the descriptions of the purpose of their travel.

Figure 15: Detailer Assignment Topics

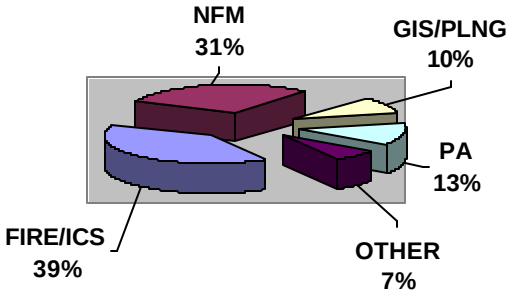


Figure 15 shows the relative distribution of detail topics over five categories. Although some assignments could be categorized under more than one category, each was assigned a primary category. The five groupings are below:

- Fire/ICS (i.e., Fire Management, Fire/Atmospheric Research, Disaster-Related Incident Command Systems)[23];

- Natural Forest Management (i.e., watershed management, silviculture, inventories, wildlife and plant protection, roads, timber cruising, wood processing and community forestry and agroforestry);

- GIS/Planning (i.e., remote sensing, GIS, land use planning); Protected Areas (PA) (i.e., wilderness, recreation and ecotourism);

- Other Topics (i.e. environmental assessment and regulations, multi-topic meetings, range management, Title II, forestry/agriculture interface, project assessment, CIFOR review, USAID RFP development, procurement, human resources, institutional/financial systems, strategic planning, reduced impact logging, law enforcement[24], database development, urban forestry).

The typical international detail focused on a specific set of advising or training or research tasks that directly benefit a host country national government (e.g., their agency for handling forestry and/or environmental issues) or an NGO (either international or national level host country organization) or a private sector implementing partner for USAID or some combination of these three beneficiaries. There were almost no assignments based at USAID Missions or on their direct management activities (i.e., one detailer participated in a Regulation 216 Environmental Review with a USAID/Washington employee. While communities may be involved in some assignments, the detailers do not typically work directly for community-based organizations. Similarly, there appear to be very few cases when the USFS detailer worked with government staff at the sub-national level.

III. Accomplishments

IAA Activity Areas

Although there have been a number of mutually agreed-upon modifications over time, there has been progress on the six activity areas initially identified as IAA priorities:

- Over the past 8.5 years, TC has focused on three Activity Areas: 1) program coordination of technical assistance and other activities, 2) technical assistance to USAID, and 3) the development and promotion of sustainable forestry practices.

- There have been fewer buy-in requests from Missions for support in two other Activity Areas: integrated forest monitoring and public involvement in forest management. It is not clear if this pattern reflects Mission's needs or Mission perceptions of USFS technical capabilities.

[23] Some of this work, particularly in Mexico and Bolivia, has involved community participation in fire fighting activities. In addition, in Mexico, some of the fire-related work involved strategic planning for the first National Fire Plan.
[24] International law enforcement work has generally required a special waiver.

- The sixth Activity Area involves in-kind support from the USFS to the Environment Centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) (i.e., CIFOR, ICRAF/now the World Agroforestry Center, and ICLARM). USAID has significantly reduced its funding for these institutions over the life of the IAA. Consequently, the IAA efforts have been primarily individual professional relationships with the first two institutions.

IAA Priority Issues

- A comparison of the actual detail topics (Figure 15) with the original IAA priority issues suggests that the IAA made significant contributions towards USAID's objectives.

- Four priority issues are environmental topics:

    - Urban, social and agroforestry in support of sustainable agriculture and biodiversity,
    - Participatory natural forest management,
    - Global climate change issues,
    - Remote sensing, including geographic information systems and global positioning systems.

Data from the International Traveler Database indicates that most of the details focused on issues related to participatory natural forest management, remote sensing/GIS and global climate change (i.e., fire and atmospheric activities). Some of these requests have involved social forestry situations; much less common have been requests for agroforestry or urban forestry expertise. However, there were areas of overlap, e.g., the contribution of participatory natural forest management to biodiversity outcomes or the use of remote sensing activities for activities that also monitor global climate change.

- Three of the priority issues are approaches to development assistance:

    - Institution-building,
    - Outreach and research,
    - Collaborations with NGOs.

Although the traveler database has no capacity to identify these approaches, clients described results in these areas. Specific results are described below.

- The last priority issue focuses on collaboration to collaboration "with international institutions to deliver comprehensive programs of modeling, research, training and demonstrations," particularly for global climate change and biodiversity conservation issues. The USFS has worked with international and host country partners to achieve these aims. Specifically, cross-regional work with local and international partners on reduced impact logging in Brazil and Asia helped to develop demonstration activities and tools for dissemination. Atmospheric research by the USFS staff and Brazilian collaborators led to important contributions to national and

global understanding of the impacts of fires. In Central Africa, the USFS detailers have made notable contributions, particularly in the areas of land use planning, to a unique multi-partner, multi-country model, the Central African Regional Program for the Environment.

USAID Environmental Objectives

Although the IAA results generally are attributed to USAID's biodiversity earmark, detailer work has also contributed to global climate change issues. Biodiversity conservation activities appear to account for about one-third of all details, if some management activities are included. The trips for fire management, fire impact and atmospheric research and the environmental disasters work account for nearly 40 percent of the trips and make a contribution to global climate change efforts. Remote sensing work and planning work accounted for ten percent of all trips but the total is higher if some of the fire work in this area is counted. Natural forest management activities, including classic silvicultural, timber harvesting and wood processing activities, as well as more participatory work in social forestry and agroforestry accounted for another 30 percent. Many activities involve training and can be reported by the Forestry Team.

Specific Contributions to USAID Mission & Regional Results

In general, USAID staff and partners could readily ascribe programmatic results for host country partner activities and USAID objectives. Many USAID staff and partners cited examples of how the USFS IAA is helping them to achieve their Strategic Objectives. To date, most of the USFS work is contributing to environmental Strategic Objectives for USAID and the fragile state stabilization objective for Liberia by the State Department. Typically, these objectives involve increasing land area under improved management and partnerships. Under Mission buy-ins, the USFS works with USAID partners, including host country governmental and NGOs, as well as international NGOs and private sector contractors. Mission and partner informants for the evaluation provided numerous examples of capacity building for institutions and organizations that has been achieved through USFS technical advice, training, applied research (including demonstrations, models and tools) and networking/partnership support. Below is a small sample of the examples provided by the evaluation informants:

- Brazil - Through its buy-in to the IAA, USAID/Brazil can offer the services of the USFS to Brazilian consortia working to promote sound forest management. For example, the Tropical Forest Foundation/Fundacao Floresta Tropical (TFF) is a national center of excellence that is focused on capacity building and training. In support of these activities, the USFS manages the USAID grant to TFF and detailers have supported training, research and demonstration activities related to sustainable forest management and forest inventory. The training participants include decision-makers, industrial land owners, the forest industry and foresters and forestry workers. A cost-benefit analysis by a USFS researcher proved the financial viability of forest certification and catalyzed widespread interest in certification by timber companies working in the Amazon. Similarly, hands-on training and technical assistance provided by detailers on reduced impact logging and road construction,

particularly for TFF's cadre of trainers, has helped make forest management more sustainable in Brazil.

- Mexico – USAID/Mexico reports on objectives related to natural resources management planning and capacity building that contribute to increased land under improved management. With a multi-year investment in fire management, more than 100 Direct Match Detailers have participated in providing fire management and planning training for hundreds of Mexican resource professionals. In addition, in collaboration with the Rainforest Alliance and its Global Development alliance partners, USFS technical support for road design training for community members from *ejidos* has increased their capacity to plan and manage their resources more sustainably.

- Bolivia – The USAID/Bolivia Mission has asked the USFS to support their partners under their Strategic Objective related to sustainable natural resource management. The USFS has strengthened the capacity of an NGO partners, the Amazon Center for Sustainable Forest Enterprise (CADEFOR) for the certification of industrial and community forestry. Previously, there had been no serious work done on fire ecology and management in Bolivia. USFS technical support from the IAA enabled the Bolivian Institute for Forest Research to start an applied research program in this area and send a study tour to see fire management and monitoring systems in Brazil. This type of inter-regional support and exchange was greatly appreciated in Latin America.

- Honduras – While most of the USFS work would be categorized as green environmental issues, they have also helped Missions with other types of environmental work. For example, in Honduras, the USFS worked under a very broad Scope of Work for a three year period. This flexibility enabled them to respond quickly to emergencies. They helped to replace Tegucigalpa's air quality monitoring equipment that had broken down during a high pollution period resulting from agricultural fires and also helped to develop an air quality monitoring plan. On another assignment, USFS detailers provided helpful recommendations to reduce the short-term impacts from the Guanaja Island forest fire.

- Russia – The USFS made a direct contribution to USAID/Russia's Strategic Objective on increasing environmental management for economic growth, particularly in the Russian Far East. The Mission developed IAA workplans that supported USFS activities directly with Russian partners and also asked the USFS to cooperate with USAID's $20 million dollar forestry project implemented by Winrock International. Technical assistance focused on the global observation of land cover dynamics include fire management and impacts in the Russian Far East, Lake Baikal support and the Central Siberia Sustainability Project. As in Brazil, the USFS' long-standing and decentralized relationships with different Russian institutions has meant that the USAID activities benefited from prior USFS relationships with environmental organizations.

- Jordan – The USAID/Jordan Mission views the USFS work on nature reserves in Jordan with the NGO, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, as a means

to contribute to their Mission's economic growth Strategic Objective by creating jobs for people. The development of a management plan for the Dibbeen Forest, and training of NGO staff, is meant to help develop planning strategies that consider the socio-economic needs of communities, including economic activities such as non-timber forest products, grazing, eco-tourism and nature-based crafts.

- India – While the USFS has a long-established, 40 year relationship with forestry and national park institutions in India, its work under this IAA contribute to the Mission's objective of decreasing India's vulnerability to disasters. The USFS is increasing India's capacity for managing disasters by sharing lessons learned about the Incident Command System through a graduated set of trainings for government staff via a national public administration institute. Results include a trained cadre of Indian trainers, increased demand for training at different levels of government and increased Mission interest in disaster preparedness.

- Guinea – In the process of transition for their new forestry program and country strategy, USAID/Guinea is focusing on the "inherent government functions" aspect of the USFS. They are working on institutionalizing co-management experience and building capacity within the Guinean Forest Service. In this situation, they have funded a international advisor, via the USFS, who sits within the Ministry and provides day-to-day support.

- CARPE – As a sub-regional activity, CARPE is a multi-partner program working in multiple countries on multiple landscapes. It aims to place more land under improved management, conserve biodiversity and increase capacity of Central African institutions. While the USFS can contribute to CARPE's objectives in a number of ways, detailers mainly provides the landscape-level, multiple-use land use planning expertise that other partners and host-country institutions often lack. For this area, the USFS plays an important bridging role in conveying standards, principles and methods. The USFS has worked closely with three CARPE partners, Wildlife Conservation society, Innovative Resource Management and the African Wildlife Foundation. In turn, detailers have noted that they have learned a tremendous amount about collaborative and participatory planning models.

- Liberia – The Liberian Forest Initiative is jointly funded by the State Department and USAID. It is aimed at stabilizing and strengthening the Liberian Forest Development Authority and related government institutions and developing the enabling conditions for lifting the United Nations forestry sanctions. It is the first relationship of its kind for the USFS and it is "path-breaking" for the State Department. Besides short-term assistance, a USFS staff member is serving as a resident advisor for country and regional activities. He works closely with the Liberian Forestry Development Authority, as well as other multilateral and bilateral donors involved in this initiative. While it is not contributing directly to a USAID Mission Strategic Objective, the LFI has worked closely with USAID to lay the foundation for community forest management, which is a primary USAID objective in Liberia. Additionally, the LFI contributes to the State Department's objectives for stabilizing Liberia under the Governance, Economic Management and Assistance Plan, a multi-donor initiative to promote financial transparency in the Liberian forest sector.

- Madagascar – From the Mission's perspective in Madagascar, the USFS has made a very direct contribution to its biodiversity Strategic Objective via work on two Intermediate Results: biological diversity for ecological conservation and sustainable forest management. The USFS works closely with the major USAID contract for natural resources activities, International Resources Group (IRG). The Mission's strategy for 2003-2007 shifted focus from protected areas to more holistic forestry sector support. The USFS played an important support role while the Mission was getting the IRG contract in place. In another example of the high value placed on government-to-government relationships, the Mission and its partners highly value USFS' role and its unique contributions to the capacity building of Madagascar's Forest Service.

CHAPTER 6
IS THE IAA MEETING USFS OBJECTIVES?

I. Introduction

From the perspective of the USFS, the key evaluation questions were:

- What was the quality of the learning experiences for individual detailers and the impacts on their work?
- What have been the organizational impacts of international assignments?
- What has been the progress of the USFS toward globalization[25], including partnerships and funding, as a result of the IAA?

A wide range of USFS staff provided their perspective on the strengths of the current IAA and areas for improvement. These informants included the leadership of the USFS and the IP Office, regional staff from the Technical Cooperation Unit of the International Programs Office and other staff involved in providing technical assistance during the life of the IAA. Because most of the detailer briefings are verbal, there is limited documentation from TC about detailer experiences. The interviews with 25 staff in Washington, DC and elsewhere in the US were augmented with information from 28 detailer e-surveys (Appendix 3) and analyses of detailer travel from both USFS travel and financial databases. The latter is approximately equal to a ten percent sample of all Direct Match Detailers and the demographics of this sample are similar to the overall data set.

II. Quality of the Learning Experiences for Detailers

- A very high rate of response (76 percent) to the survey by the detailer sample suggests that detailers are eager to discuss their experiences and provide feedback.

- The detail experience offered the opportunity for USFS employees to grow in ways that were beneficial to themselves, as well as to their units and the USFS overall. These benefits ranged from networking opportunities, technical and communication skills development and perspective/ attitude changes.

- The details were able to network with international counterparts, as well as staff in the USFS Washington offices. One broader outcome of networking is that it also helps the TC staff to be more effective at supporting USAID. As more and more staff from the USFS participate, the TC staff has been able to develop closer linkages with other units of the USFS. Networking outcomes also support the partnership objectives of the IAA.

[25] The leadership of IP and the USFS use the term, "globalization" to refer to both a process and desired state that involves staff awareness and attitude changes related to domestic-international resource management linkages, as well as increased overseas activities and partnerships.

- In terms of the work of the USFS, some detailers were able to improve their technical and/or communication skills. Technical topics mentioned by the detailers included silvicultural techniques, ecosystems services and the culturally valuable non-timber forest products. Those involved in planning activities learned more simplified and also more participatory, bottom-up approaches to working with communities. Besides learning to communicate with individuals from other cultures, the detailers learned more about how to communicate with colleagues from other disciplines. For some, the detail provided the opportunity to improve rusty foreign language skills or served as the motivation to seek language training.

Box 5. A Morale Boost

"It provides me the inspiration to find meaning in my work here in the US. I have spent 18 years with the USFS and finding the applicability and relevancy of my experiences on technical assistance missions has provided me with renewed inspirations to find better ways to approach challenges in my field of expertise. I also hope that the details will provide me with some additional experience so that I may pursue further work internationally."

"My enthusiasm for the work has increased considerably. I also gained valuable technical experience that will directly affect the quality of work products. The added perspective and big picture thinking will, I believe, make me a better leader for the organization. I also think some of the perspective rubs off on other workers."

(Comments from two e-survey informants)

- The details have resulted in attitude and perspective changes that serve to reinvigorate the USFS workforce, improve cross-cultural communication and broaden the domestic constituency for U.S. foreign assistance. For example, the challenges associated with the detail experience appear to boost the confidence and morale of detailers, particularly for mid-career and senior staff (Boxes 3 and 4). By working with other cultures, at other scales and with other types of professionals, detailers reported that the detail experience reminded them to stay open-minded to other ways of doing things. Some but not all of the detailers recognized that they were learners in other cultural and political settings and learned to "...not assume that the U.S. way was best - rather trying to work with the local professional to develop recommendations that were suitable to local conditions."

- Some detailers mentioned becoming more social and cultural sensitive and compassionate about towards social issues. A number of informants mentioned how the trips increased their appreciation for the resources available to the USFS and life and governance in the United States. However, it is important to note that for a few of the detailers, the detail experience only served to reinforce their prior convictions about the superiority of the U.S., the U.S. Government and USFS to other countries. They were unable to see the positive values of other management systems or cultures.

- For most detailers, the experience offered them a larger global perspective and helped them to understand how their local or national work in the U.S. linked to the concerns and conditions of other countries and forest agencies (Box 5). The

detailers often shared their experiences and new perspectives with co-workers and sometimes, with others in their community.

- Given the declining federal budgets for environmental activities, the detailers gained some important lessons about making do with less and focusing on basics. Others were reminded of how significant savings can accrue by paying attention to small details in equipment or procedures. One detailer was reminded of the KISS principle (Keep it Sweet and Simple) while overseas; another saw the applicability of "keeping the vision simple, distinguishing what was essential from what was just important and focusing on results every day." Similarly, another individual involved in training on U.S. regulations said that the detail experience helped to clarify his understanding of the essence and intent of regulations.

III. Organizational Impacts of International Assignments

Box 6. Internal and External Benefits

"These assignments are of great benefit. The FS has a huge reservoir of professionals who are not only deeply committed to the resource stewardship, but are also among the very best at what they do. My employees are able to make a unique contribution in representing the FS and the US in a very positive way thru international assignments. These employees benefit for years to come in understanding the challenges faced by other societies and by balancing the needs of people and landscapes that are far more challenging than what we face in the US. When we know more about international issues, we provide a stronger context for our management here at home."

"It will make us a more well-rounded agency. We see how other governments and NGOs work and can benefit from learning from others outside the USFS. We get new perspectives. We also see how fortunate we are – we have so much in terms of software and hardware and workplace that these groups don't have. It gives us more job satisfaction to be able to offer support to people who are very grateful to receive it. It enriches my job experience and makes me proud to be part of the USFS, an agency that supports these projects."

(Comments from two e-survey informants)

- At the unit level, the returning detailers have had both external and internal impacts. The international experience made some units appear more credible to other units in the USFS because they now had a broadened perspective and an expanded client and partner base. Sometimes, contacts from the detail expand into an on-going relationship between the detailer's unit and overseas colleagues that may include visits and study tours. In the case of the USFS' Sister Forests Program, these exchange visits have been two-way, and sometimes included community members. Within the detailers' work units, the benefits have included improved communication, "out of the box" thinking and an expanded ability to focus and concentrate the unit's work. Even when just one unit member participates in a detail, other unit members sometimes benefit by providing remote backstopping and becoming motivated to become more involved in international activities. In terms of efficiency gains, one detailer noted, "I have used the lessons I learned in Congo to help my unit

concentrate on the basics and not diffuse our energies on issues of secondary importance. Not easy in the technology field but now I know it can be done."

- The IAA has given the USFS the opportunity to strengthen and broaden its workforce. As an agency, the USFS has gained more creative and motivated employees that have had the opportunity to observe and develop alternatives to standard operating procedures. Learning how other government agencies approach land management and work with the public has helped USFS employees to be more sensitive to multi-cultural issues. Detailers may be become better able to operate under budget cuts (see Box 6). Because USFS work in the United States has become increasingly community- and partnership oriented, the detail experiences are valuable because they expand USFS workforce capacity in customer-focused, culturally sensitive, effects-based and partnership-delivered methods of operation. One detailer suggested that cooperative forestry and TC should expand their joint work since they have similar approaches and objectives.

- The e-survey detailers provide the full range of perspectives within the international affairs community about the appropriate role of the USFS in the world (see Annex 5). As learned through hard experience by USAID staff, these attitudes affect the sustainability of foreign assistance, as well as the effectiveness and safety of those who are engaged in U.S. international development. At one end of the spectrum are those who see the USFS and the US as an international partner that is able to share its lessons learned in a two-way exchange with others countries and agencies. This perspective is held by the top leadership of the USFS, International Programs, TC and many of the detailers. Individuals with this viewpoint are open to understanding other ways to organize forest agencies and forest management activities, particularly when there have been different historical, political and social conditions. At the other end of the spectrum are those who feel that it is important for the US and the USFS to be recognized as world leaders and that Americans have a responsibility to transfer and teach the U.S. model to others. This view was much less common among the e-survey detailers and other USFS staff.

IV. USFS Progress toward Globalization during the IAA[26]

From a low point in the mid-1990s, the International Programs Office has built back its staffing and budget to earlier levels (i.e., 65 staff; $7 million dollars in USFS appropriated budget and $8-9 million dollars from USAID in FY2006). However, it is now a very different office because of the work done under this phase of the IAA. In previous phases of the IAA, USAID funding helped the USFS to centralize international technical expertise within IP (and its predecessor office, International Forestry). In part, these USFS staff helped fill some USAID staff gaps for environmental professionals until USAID could create its own environmental "backstop" category for Foreign Service Officers in the 1980s. A variety of other international activities were undertaken by various USFS units from its different branches. However, many of these activities had no connection to USAID activities.

[26] The leadership of IP and the USFS use the term, "globalization" to refer to both a process and desired state that involves staff awareness and attitude changes related to domestic-international resource management linkages, as well as increased overseas activities and partnerships.

By the early 1990s, some environmental USAID staff felt that the IP Office was too pre-occupied with a USFS agenda, overly focused on USAID/Washington activities and partnerships with host country governments and not responsive enough to USAID Mission needs. During this time, the USFS staff involved with international forest policy had few opportunities to gain experience with on-the-ground conditions in other countries. Therefore, the new IP Director, who arrived in 1995, made a point to reorient IP toward customer-friendly service provision for USAID, broaden exposure of USFS staff to international experiences, expand outreach to the senior leadership and rank-and-file "greenshirts" of the USFS, strengthen international policy and disaster-related work and maintain ties with other international activities being pursued by other USFS units.

Increased globalization is an IAA goal for the USFS and a focus for the IP Office. Apart from the numerous impacts discussed above, there are several other indicators of the increasing globalization within the USFS over the life of the IAA.

- For the past few years, there has been solid high-level support for international activities from the top-most levels of the USFS.

- Between 2001-2006, 362 USFS staff will have completed 647 trips related to the IAA for Direct and Indirect Match travel. They will have worked in more than 60 countries in USAID's four regions. Approximately 60 percent of the 332 detailers from outside of TC were first-timers. The total number of international professional travelers from the USFS includes non-IAA travelers and is considerably higher. Informants observed that there has been an increasing amount of international professional travel by USFS staff during the IAA period, for meetings, research and other collaborative work with international partners.

- In addition to deepening and broadening existing international partnerships, the IAA has resulted in a number of new partnerships for the USFS. These partners include universities, NGOs, research institutions and host country government agencies for resources management. In the case of migratory bird habitat work in LAC, the USFS had broadened been able to expand existing domestic partnerships with Ducks Unlimited and TNC. Work with international NGOs has helped the USFS to build an external constituency for the work of the IP Office.

- For the past three years, the Senior Executive Service staff of the USFS have met in Oaxaca, Mexico to be training on environmental services topics and exposed to IP's work in Mexico and elsewhere. These staff include the Chief's Office, as well as regional-level staff from throughout the United States. Approximately 50 percent of senior field staff have now had some exposure to IP's work and international issues and increased internal constituency for IP budget.

- Topically, the USFS has brought some of the international lessons home. They have initiated a six-forest pilot activity related to certified forests and are working with two international standards systems. There is pilot work with Environmental Management Systems, specifically ISO 14001, on some National Forests. The USFS has partnered with Mexico and Costa Rica governments on payment for

environmental services activities. In Washington, an Ecosystems Services Coordinator position has been created in the Chief's Office. Lessons from mapping work for fire and invasive species in LAC have benefited similar efforts in the United States. Internationally grounded criteria and indicators are being applied for forest planning work. There has also been increased dialogue regarding forest corruption, governance, community economic development and stewardship.

- With regard to budget indicators, there are two issues. The level of the USFS appropriated funds for the IP Office has increased during the IAA and USFS leadership expect to maintain current levels despite budget cuts. Within IP, the number of USFS-funded TC staff now surpasses USAID-funded TC staff.

- From the perspective of bilateral and multilateral institutions, the USFS has become a more credible, grounded player for international forest policy dialogue.

CHAPTER 7
SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Evaluation Objectives

The Scope of Work for this evaluation poses three questions:

- Has the USAID/USFS partnership been successful in advancing the objectives of both USAID and the USFS?
- What have been the lessons learned regarding what has worked, what has not and what changes could be made to make the partnership more efficient?
- Should the relationship between USAID and the USFS continue and if so, under what arrangements?

The discussion below offers conclusions and recommendations related to these three questions.

II. Successes and Strengths of USAID/USFS Partnership

Feedback from informants indicates that the USAID-USFS IAA has been a highly successful endeavor. It has furthered the separate and joint agendas of both USAID and the USFS. The IAA has made significant contributions to the objectives of USAID's Forestry Team, USAID Missions, the Regional Bureaus, the agency as a whole and the State Department. It has also helped the USFS to globalize and energize its workforce, ground-truth its international policy efforts and mainstream international issues into the work of the National Forest System. An important benefit for both agencies is the development and deepening of their international partnerships.

The IAA has leveraged significant resources for both agencies compared to what they invest. With low overhead and a significant matching contribution of detailer salaries, some TC staff salaries and other resources, the IAA effectively leverages more than one dollar's worth of assistance for every two dollars of USAID funding.

From feedback provided by informants for this evaluation, it is clear that the USFS offers predominant capability for specific NRM technical services. Technically, many informants perceived the USFS as a global leader in multiple use approaches to the management of natural resources. As the number of USAID environmental staff declines in Missions, it has become particularly important for

Box 7. In Their Own Words: How Clients View the IAA Option

"The USFS IAA has been one of the best U.S. Government mechanisms to accomplish USAID objectives that I have seen in my entire career at USAID."
(USAID informant)

"Anytime that federal agencies can cooperate, it adds value to their work and is great for the U.S. taxpayer."
(NGO informant)

"If NRM is going to be done by USAID, then the USG organizations have the best experience and capability of any organizations worldwide and it would be foolish to not involve them."

USAID to find ways to combine its development expertise with the technical expertise available from other U.S. Government agencies.

Apart from some constructive criticism, feedback from the interviewed "clients" (i.e., USAID Missions, State Department and other partners) was uniformly very positive with regard to the quality of technical and other support provided by the TC Group and detailers. The USFS had usually delivered high quality and timely services. The USFS staff have been able to work well with other international partners, singly or in combination, in multiple countries and under a variety of funding arrangements. USAID, the State Department and the USFS feel that they have achieved greater results by leveraging their resources for the same activities and partners. They have helped to build the capacity of USAID partner and other organizations. NGO collaboration is a frequent aspect of their work but they also have a unique capability to partner with host country resource management agencies. Their joint research efforts have yielded dividends for both the USFS and host country institutions. Their efforts to help host country and international partners find funds have been greatly appreciated.

USAID and other partners particularly value the governmental credibility, neutrality and experience that the USFS brings to joint work. Informants recognized that the USFS has some predominant capabilities that derive from its inherently governmental functions. As representatives of a government agency, USFS staff share some similar perspectives and experiences with government NRM professionals in other countries. For example, in countries where it has opted not to have a direct MOU with environmental institutions (e.g., Brazil), USAID has benefited from the direct MOU that exists between the USFS and Brazilian government resource management agencies. Some informants noted that the USFS, as a government technical agency, has had a comparative advantage over USAID as a neutral convener, facilitator and bridging agent in some situations. The USFS has played this role at the country level and also supported sub-regional dialogue and exchange. Some clients perceive their advice as more trustworthy than what has been offered by profit-motivated service providers.

In comparison to other USG providers, informants felt that the USFS offered more to partners because of its matching contributions to joint projects and its more self-starting, client-responsive, flexible approach. The cooperation between USFS and USAID and the State Department has also had tangible pay-offs in terms of contributing to a more united USG front on international policy, creating a USG brand in regions of the world where other countries have historically dominated international assistance (e.g., West Africa) and helping the State Department to achieve outcomes related to the stabilization of fragile states.

There is generally widespread satisfaction with most of the arrangements related to the current IAA. Clients have usually been quite happy with the performance of the TC leadership and Group. They have appreciated the relatively low level of bureaucracy involved in using this mechanism. They have been generally been satisfied with the support received from the Forestry Team CTO for financial transfers. Although both are government agencies, the IP Office of the USFS was generally perceived as more nimble than USAID, with respect to IAA financial and administrative matters related to buy-ins and grants.

During this phase of the IAA, there has been much more recognition by IP that the USFS technical experts are in other units, including the National Forest System, State & Private Forestry, the Research Stations, specialized units and the Washington Office. Accordingly, there has been much greater emphasis placed on TC's role in administering and coordinating technical assistance rather than providing it themselves. Informants noticed a greater emphasis on partnerships, managing people and relationships and providing good service to USAID and partners. Because they have more budget available for travel, the TC staff have expanded the reach of the USAID/EGAT Forestry Team to the Missions.

The detailers generally received high marks on the quality of their work from USAID and the State Department and other partners. Clients noted that the detailers seemed particularly well-suited to highly technical and well-defined assignments. They were praised for being hard-working, practical, knowledgeable and rooted in the practice of the National Forest System. This practical orientation made the "rubber hit the road" for technical assistance and training with clients. Most of the USFS detailers went above and beyond the minimum requirements set forth in their Scopes of Work. For work entailing rough travel and accommodations, most of the USFS detailers seemed to thrive on difficult conditions and performed exceedingly well. In most cases, USFS detailers, as government staff, seemed readily able to establish rapport with counterpart staff from the forest agencies of host countries. Often, each side appeared to receive a morale boost from the experience. Teaming arrangements generally worked well when the Missions could afford it and were especially beneficial when experienced staff outnumbered new detailers and mentoring could be provided. In general, detailer reports were well-written and timely; they met the needs of USAID clients and partners.

III. The Future of the USAID-USFS Relationship

Given the highly positive feedback from evaluation informants and their satisfaction with IAA services and management, it is not surprising that there was universal support for continuation of the USAID-USFS IAA. Most informants used the same word, "absolutely" when asked whether the relationship between USAID and the USFS continue and if there should be a follow-on IAA. They felt that a follow-on IAA would be beneficial to all parties and further solidify programmatic progress and partnerships.

What are the alternatives for the USAID/EGAT Forestry Team? It has limited staff available for management and both program and travel funds have suffered cutbacks. In this context, there are a number of advantages to using one primary mechanism but disadvantages related to "mission creep" for the IAA and issues related to being overly dependent on one provider. With respect to IAAs, it appears that the USFS brings much more to the table, in terms of matching resources, than other USG providers. While the private sector may be able to provide consultants with greater language skills, international experience, greater schedule flexibility and a wider range of environmental specialties than the USFS staff, these firms charge full salaries and much higher overhead rates for their services. The IAA arrangement with the USFS allows the

Forestry Team to maximize its program funds and minimize management costs, while leveraging additional resources for USAID work.

Therefore, the findings and conclusions of this evaluation support the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1 (IAA Renewal):
USAID should continue its IAA relationship with the USFS to provide "clients" with the services that they need, build upon partnerships and maximize capacity building that contributes to better management of natural resources.

Recommendation 2 (Future IAA Duration):
The duration of the next IAA should be for at least five years or the maximum period possible.

Recommendation 3 (Future IAA Ceiling):
The initial ceiling should be at least equal to the current ceiling of 50 million dollars.

With respect to Activity Areas and Priority Issues, the new IAA should reflect the strategy for the USAID/EGAT Natural Resources Management Office and current USAID emphases. The Natural Resources Management Office recently adopted a new Strategic Objective: Increased social, economic and environmental benefits through healthy ecosystems and sustainable resource management. Four Intermediate Results (IRs) are associated with this SO are as follows:

- IR1: Improving management and conservation across diverse landscapes through science, interdisciplinary approaches and the adoption of best practices;
- IR2: Promoting equitable natural resources governance and management of natural resource conflicts;
- IR3: Increasing economic opportunities through sustainable production, marketing and trade of natural resource-based products and services;
- IR4: Strengthening USAID operating units and partners through field support, technical leadership and knowledge management.

Recommendation 4 (Linkages to Current USAID SOs & IRs):
The future IAA should continue to be a field support mechanism (IR4) for Missions and their partners. Its Activity Areas and Priority Issues should be derived from Intermediate Results 1-3. It should continue to emphasize approaches (or issues) related to: institution-building, outreach and research and collaborations with NGOs. An increased emphasis on knowledge management, particularly cross-regional thematic learning, could allow the Forestry Team to make an expanded contribution to technical leadership for forestry and other NRM topics. For IR2 in particular, the USFS will need to identify how USFS staff skills sets can be applied to this area.

Recommendation 5 (Suggested Priority Topics):
Based on the new IRs, a number of emphasis areas and cross-sectoral linkages were suggested by evaluation informants as being relevant to current Mission and partner priorities:

- *Landscapes: multiple use mapping and planning; watershed management and water resources, range management, habitat management; restoration ecology and management of degraded lands; recreation; protected areas; plant/forest inventories and mapping; climate change.*
- *Governance/Conflicts: Improved institutions in fragile states; environmental security/border area issues; planning processes and conflict management; co-management, sub-national resource management and governance and interagency coordination; forest concession transparency and anti-corruption efforts*
- *Economic Opportunities: Community economic development; support for the enabling policy and management skills needed for community-based resource management; tourism/eco-tourism, public-private partnerships for management; certification; global markets, trade, regional trade agreements and forest commodities; wood products processing; markets for environmental/ecosystem services; infrastructure linkages; Millenium Development Goals.*

Recommendation 6 (Shifting from Forestry to NRM Emphasis):
While language for the Activity Areas of the current IAA focus on forestry (e.g., sustainable forestry practices, integrated forest monitoring, public involvement in forest management), the new IAA may have greater appeal to other NRM Office Teams and Missions if the diverse natural resource management capacities of the USFS are emphasized.

Recommendation 7 (Emphasize Cross-Regional or Sub-Regional Thematic Learning):
Given USAID interest in thematic learning within and across regions (e.g., CARPE, Amazon Basin Conservation Initiative, etc.), the new IAA should be designed so as to encourage this type of learning within TC and to have TC serve as a catalyst and convener for these types of activities.

Recommendation 8 (Re-Branding and Marketing the New IAA):
In order to help existing and new partners understand the reorientation of the new IAA, both the TC staff and the USAID CTO should engage in a significant marketing effort at the initiation of the new IAA.

IV. Improving the Current IAA Model – Programmatic & Partnership Recommendations

To some extent, a technology transfer paradigm guides the premise of the IAA. While relevant in some highly technical situations, this model has some serious limitations for international work. It often assumes that approaches learned in one setting can be universally applied to others and that the role of experts is to teach others rather than to listen. However, many development and research efforts have failed when experts did not listen and did not have the proper grounding in context, including a recognition of organizational, political and cultural differences. These problems can be exacerbated

for those providing short-term technical assistance. While the USFS detailers usually shined with respect to their technical skills, they often lacked this deeper understanding, unless they had previously spent time in the country or region visited.

Some of the concerns that were raised by the evaluation informants are inherent to the fundamental characteristics of the USFS. It is a domestic-oriented agency with the vast majority its funding appropriated for U.S.-based work. It is a technical agency with highly skilled technical staff who have applied the technology transfer model as they move to jobs in different parts of the country. While community involvement, community development, partnerships and socio-economic issues have gained a higher profile in the last few years, most USFS staff are working on the technical dimensions of natural resources management. While there are USFS staff with experience in State and Private Forestry, the majority of USFS detailers have not had much experience with the types of decentralized models of forest management being implemented overseas, including co-management, community or municipal management of natural resources. The social scientists working for the USFS have not been tapped for IAA details. There are few staff within the USFS with training and/or experience in tropical ecology and silviculture, apart from researchers in Puerto Rico, Hawaii and elsewhere.

The success of the IAA rests on the ability of TC staff to identify the right detailer. However, it has not always been easy or possible for TC staff to identify individuals with the appropriate combination of technical, language and regional skills, as well as the right personality. Clients have generally accepted lack of language or lack of regional experience but are less happy when both of these credentials are absent. This issue has been particularly true for policy work which requires a big-picture understanding, a deep grounding in a particular country, language fluency to deal with political sensitivities and a longer time commitment than is possible for most USFS detailers.

TC staff generally do a very good job of pre-screening the detailers and problems with detailer performance seemed to be the exception rather than the rule. In a very few cases, the performance of detailers fell below the expectations of USAID staff, partners and the TC regional staff because of inadequate language skills, poor team collaboration skills, patronizing and overly directive work styles, socially inappropriate behavior and health or stress-related conditions. Some of the generalist staff, even at senior levels, were less helpful to clients. In some cases, the tone of reports was overly prescriptive. These detailers tended to be technology transfer oriented. They recommended transferring US practices lock-stock-and-barrel rather than tailoring recommendations to the institutional capabilities and social/political realities of the host country partner. Similarly, some of the trainers and trainings did not meet client expectations because materials were not always adapted to local conditions. In many situations, there was a need for further training or technical assistance to reinforce the initial training. For some types of assignments, the short-term assistance ended up being less appropriate and the work required a longer-term resident advisor. While repeat visits by the right detailers are sometimes preferred by Missions, they can result in fewer new ideas and leave a Mission with fewer options if an older detailer retires. This arrangement also minimizes opportunities for others.

With respect to partnerships, clients expressed several concerns. They wanted to better understand the medium-term (i.e., three to five-year) TC/USFS strategy for their country, apart from the objectives of a particular buy-in. This lack of transparency on the part of TC influenced partner perceptions about the USFS as a partner. They also were less inclined to think of the USFS as a partner without a continuous presence on the ground. For those countries with increasingly sophisticated NGO and research organizations, clients wanted more strengthening activities for host country service providers, including regional exchanges. It also appears that some host country counterparts remain confused about the costs involved in using USFS detailers and do not understand the USFS salary contribution.

These issues suggest several recommendations:

Recommendation 9 (Tapping a Broader Range of USFS Expertise):
Under a future IAA, USAID should continue to tap the core technical strengths of USFS staff but greater efforts should be made by the TC Team to market and include USFS staff with community, social and economic expertise on multi-disciplinary teams for IAA assignments. USAID activities will benefit from expanded detailer participation by women resource management professionals from the United States. To ensure continuity of support to USAID, a mix of senior and mid-level detailers should be tapped. While maintaining the participation of a cadre of experienced detailers, TC staff should look for new opportunities to identify and encourage participation by a broader pool of USFS experts.

Recommendation 10 (Avoiding Technology Transfer Models):
The USFS and IP leadership, as well as the TC staff could develop detailer guidance that encourages prospective and experienced detailers to take a partnership/joint learning approach to technical assistance. Several alternatives can help to get this message across to detailers, including a standardized orientation letter from the Chief of the USFS regarding the official USFS view of the aims of international technical assistance, orientation materials provided by TC that help detailers understand more about the specific cultures that they are visiting and be more sensitive to issues related to cross-cultural communication, verbal advice about the professional and personal risks associated with verbalizing paternalistic or nationalistic attitudes. Orientation materials might also identify issues of national pride and significant accomplishments for specific countries and cultures. In addition, TC regional staff may want to adopt some screening questions about attitudes toward the role of the US and the USFS overseas to filter out staff with less open-minded attitudes.

Recommendation 11 (Strengthening Detailer Capacities and Orientations):
Language skills, cross-cultural communication skills, listening skills and cultural sensitivity/understanding need to be strengthened for some detailers. Language skills could be considered part of professional development training for interested USFS professionals and the TC Group could maintain a lending library of basic conversational tapes for at least French and Spanish. For the other areas, on-going communications, diversity and leadership trainings could be broadened to include cross-cultural issues. In addition, TC could provide a more consistent cultural orientation, including print materials and web-based resources (i.e., an intra-net web-site for detailers that would

have country and cultural information, cross-cultural communication articles and a chat room for detailer-to-detailer dialogue).

Recommendation 12 (Expanding the Types of Assistance Offered):
For future buy-ins and the future IAA, TC should discuss a broader range of assistance with USAID Missions and Partners. There was significant interest in training/technical assistance follow-up or sequential training models. In addition, countries with an emergent local service provider sector, either NGOs or the private sector, were interested in more capacity building activities for this group. In some sub-regions, partners wanted more partner-to-partner exchange opportunities rather than technical assistance visits from experts. In some situations, the senior and mid-level leadership of other forestry agencies either one-on-one or small group mentoring or coaching, particularly from current or recently retired senior level staff of the USFS. For some options, the USFS arrangement with METI, Inc. or other similar provider could provide the necessary flexibility.

Recommendation 13 (Hiring or Detailing Resident Advisors):
While TC has the capacity via METI, Inc. to hire or detail resident advisors for medium-term and long-term assistance, TC leadership should make a decision as to whether or not it is in the best interests of the USFS to use representatives who have not worked for the USFS in the past. Other possible options for these positions could include volunteer retired USFS employees or USFS staff on sabbaticals.

V. Improving the Current IAA Model – Management Recommendations

There are about eighteen remaining months on the current IAA. On balance, the relationships between TC, USAID/Washington, Missions and partners have been quite strong and have met the needs of clients. However, a few changes would improve operations and service to clients. Some of these changes can be made in the near future, whereas others should be required and implemented during next IAA.

Recommendation 14 (Balancing Staff and Building Capacities):
While the number of TC staff seem appropriate for the current level of work, the work and relationships of the TC group may benefit from a more balanced mix of senior, mid- and junior international professionals with both natural resources background and strong interpersonal skills. TC staff familiarity with the USFS could be enhanced through shadowing arrangements on the National Forests or with State & Private Forestry units.

Recommendation 15 (Revisiting TC Regional Team Division):
To maximize coordination with USAID and the ANE region, TC should consider realigning its regional team structure with USAID's regions and merge the now-separate Asia and Middle East teams.

Recommendation 16 (Charging TC Management Time to Buy-Ins):
For the new IAA, USAID and TC may want to consider the conditions under which it would be possible for TC to charge some backstopping time to the buy-ins. This

arrangement could be based on a specified annual funding level or a certain number of buy-ins or the scale of an individual buy-in.

Recommendation 17 (Strengthening Communications):
Regional TC staff should balance face-to-face meetings with other types of communication for dialogue with Regional Bureau and other USAID/Washington staff.

Recommendation 18 (Improving Branding):
With USAID's increasing interest in branding for activities that it supports, IP should more clearly identify USAID-funded activities on the TC portion of its web-site and include the USAID logo on all detailer and other reports. Similarly, USAID may want to consider raising the visual profile of the USFS and IAA activities on its web-site, including both the environmental pages and the Success Stories section.

Recommendation 19 (Improving Knowledge Management):
TC staff should list detailer reports, or at least a sample of the more substantial ones, on the USFS/IP web-site and a detailer intra-net.

Recommendation 20 (Conducting Marketing Analysis):
To improve the success of marketing activities, TC staff and the USAID CTO should systematically collect and analyze information from Missions that have chosen not to buy into the IAA after TC visits and/or subsidized technical assistance. This type of analysis is especially needed for the ANE and EE regions.

Recommendation 21 (Exploring Options for USFS Participation in IQCs):
Given increasing Mission reliance on large USAID/Washington IQCs for environmental work, TC should explore options and the waivers needed for greater USFS participation in IQC work.

Recommendation 22 (Improving IAA-LAC/PASA Arrangements):
To fully tap TC regional staff capacity and minimize potentially awkward arrangements, IP should move the management of PASA staff from the LAC Regional Team to the IP Director's Office or the TC Director. However, in doing so, it will be important to provide PASA staff with an IP or TC staff person who can provide dedicated administrative backstopping

Recommendation 23 (Sharing TC Plans with USAID and Partners)
TC should consider sharing its draft annual regional plans with USAID partners in Washington and others. While TC does not currently develop regional or country plans beyond an annual basis, it may want to consider using a participatory planning approach to develop three to five-year country plans with partners.

Recommendation 24 (Improving TC Standardized Systems for Managing Detailers):
To enable new TC staff to more quickly master their jobs, improve TC management and help detailers to be as effective as possible, TC needs to establish standardized, cross-team procedures for detailer orientation, data collection on detailer travel, as well as written feedback forms for detailers). The existing International Traveler Database

should be modified or a separate database should be created to allow monitoring of detailer information.

Recommendation 25 (Improving Mission Options for Providing Feedback):
Written feedback on detailer and TC staff performance, using a standardized form, should be routinely solicited and analyzed by the USAID CTO and the TC Regional Coordinators. The CTO should check in with Missions at least twice a year.

Recommendation 26 (Improving Annual and Quarterly Reporting by TC):
TC should improve its quarterly and annual reporting to the CTO and to Missions so that it is easier to understand, for each buy-in, the initiation, progress and completion of each activity, in both financial and narrative terms. Progress include both pipeline and burn-rate information. The new IAA should specify at least a minimum of two reports with this information per year.

Recommendation 27 (Financial Transfers – Improving Amendment Procedures):
Besides the end of the fiscal year amendment, TC and the CTO should establish and publicize a standard mid-year deadline for buy-ins to ensure no more than two amendments per year. TC should develop a simpler one-page summary form for buy-in activities and this form should appear immediately after the USAID cover pages.

Recommendation 28 (Avoiding Mission Creep):
To avoid diluting the core functions of the IAA, both IP and USAID should reconsider using this IAA for large grants to third party organizations and Disaster Mitigation buy-ins. Given the recent centralization of the USFS financial functions, USAID should investigate the services offered by DHHS' Division of Payment Management or others. IP should identify other financial transfer options and organizational arrangements for the Disaster Mitigation work.

Recommendation 29 (Expanding the USFS Constituency for International Activities):
There is still a great need to improve the awareness of USFS rank-and-file staff about international resource management issues, as well as the work of IP staff and USAID. IP and the Senior Leadership of the USFS should identify ways to help build a critical mass of internationally aware USFS staff via detailer networking and regular events, as well as other opportunities that get the message out to other USFS employees. While balancing its main domestic agenda, the USFS may want to consider making its international objectives more explicit in its next strategic plan.

APPENDICES

1. ***Evaluation Informants by Category***
2. ***Interview Guides***
3. ***Documents & Web-Sites Reviewed***
4. ***Electronic Survey for USFS Detailers***
5. ***Analyses from Detailer E-Survey & IP Traveler Database***
6. ***Evaluation Statement of Work***

Appendix 1. Evaluation Informants by Category

I. US-BASED INFORMANTS

USFS Staff

Chief's Office: Sarah (Sally) Collins, Associate Chief
International Programs: Director's Office: o Dr. Val Mezainis, Director o Mike Benge, Senior Forestry Advisor (USAID) o Jonathan Midura, Technical Advisor IP Operations Group: Ron Ingram, Budget Analyst; Patricia Suchodolski (Admin. Officer) IP Policy Group and Disaster Mitigation Program: Deanne Shulman, Chris Farley IP Outreach and Partnerships Group: Karin Theophile IP Technical Cooperation Group: ▪ Dr. Alex Moad, Assistant Director ▪ IP/TC Africa Team: Oliver Pierson (Coordinator), Blessing Asuquo, Lauren Chitty ▪ IP/TC LAC Team: Liz Mayhew (Coordinator), Margee Haines, Dana Roth, Michelle Zweede ▪ IP/TC ANE Team: Kelli Young ▪ IP/TC EE Team: Tony Brunello (Coordinator), Lara Peterson ▪ IP/TC Middle East Team: Jennifer Peterson (Coordinator), Chris Soriano
▪ S&PF/National Partnerships Coordinator: Jan Engert (former IP/TC) ▪ NFS/Wayne National Forest (Ohio): Carleen Yocum (former Caribbean Regional Advisor)

USAID/Washington Staff

EGAT/PAICO: Donna Brazier, Gwen Outterbridge, Cheryl Frederick
EGAT/NRM Office Director: Dr. David Hess Extended Forestry Team: ▪ C.J. Elron (Team Leader); Erik Streed (IAA CTO), Dr. E. Jean Brennan, Alicia Grimes ▪ Dr. Julie Kunen (LAC); Scott Bode (EGAT/ESP); Scott Lampman (Acting Director, EAI/TFCA Secretariat)
Regional Bureaus: Tim Resch (AFR/SD)(former IP/TC staff); Dr. Mary Melnyk (ANE) (former IP/TC staff); Dr. Laura Cornwall, Dr. Julie Kunen, Christy Johnson (LAC - USAID-USFS PASA)

US-Based Partners

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS): Dr. John Robinson, Senior Vice-President
World Wildlife Fund (WWF): Kerry Cesareo, North America Regional Coordinator, Global Forest and Trade Network; Mark Hurley, WWF-US Global Forest Programme
METAFORE: David Ford, President and CEO

II. INFORMANTS FOR SPECIFIC OVERSEAS ACTIVITIES

Country	Mission Staff	Host Country Partners	International Partners	State Dept.
Brazil	Eric Stoner	Dr. Johan Zweede, TFF Project Director Gordon Armstrong, IIEB Tech. Director		
Bolivia	Ricardo Roca Steverlynck	Dr. Marielos Pena-Claros IBIF Director		
Honduras	Sheila Young (now at USAID/ Sri Lanka)		David Shoch, Winrock International	
Mexico	Dr. Dan Evans, Dr. H. Huppe	Juan Manuel Frausto Mexican Nature Conservation Fund, Coordinator of Forest Fire Prevention and Restoration Projects	Dr. Rebecca Butterfield, Rainforest Alliance	
CARPE	Dr. John Flynn		Dr. Lee White, WCS/Gabon Lynn Foden, AWF/CARPE Michael Brown, IRM/DRC	
Guinea	Dr. Steve Morin		Dr. Mario Gauthier, ICRAF	Matt Cassetta/ State/W. Africa Regl. Env. Advisor
Liberia	[Scott Bode, USAID/W]			Peter O'Donohue, State/OES
Madagascar	Lisa Gaylord	Hoby Ramarson, PACT, former USFS representative)	Andy Keck, IRG	
India	Nina Minka Balaji Singh			
Jordan	Maha Mousa			
Russia	Carol Pierstorff (former staff)			

Appendix 2. Interview Guides for Partners and Missions

USFS PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

NAME: ORGANIZATION: DATE:

1. Over the past 8.5 years, what type of exposure or involvement have you had to the work of the USFS under the IAA? DC? Countries? Tell me about how the USFS TA was arranged – who initiated contact, who made decisions about the SOW, who approved the USFS detailers, what was the SOW, how long was the TA, what follow-up happened after the TA.
2. If you have been aware of the USFS-USAID work for some time, including the former FSP and FRM2 Projects: ▪ What are your impressions about how the relationship has changed and evolved over time between the NRM Office and the USFS? ▪ Strengths and weaknesses of the IAA compared to past agreements with USAID?
3. For the IAA activities that you are most familiar with: ▪ Based on your opinion and what you hear from others (e.g., Missions, partners), rate the overall quality and relevance of the TA provided by USFS staff on USAID assignments (1=highly unsatisfactory;10=highly satisfactory)? ▪ Discuss strengths, weaknesses/areas for improvement? Is USAID getting good value for the money? ▪ If you arranged for IAA services in the past, would you do so again in the future? Why or why not? Would you use the same detailers?
4. For the IAA activities that you are most familiar with: Rate the quality and relevance (1-10), as appropriate of: ▪ Analysis ▪ Training ▪ Reports/publications ▪ Dissemination of reports/publications by USFS/IP/TC (WDC USFS)
5. How much do you hear about the activities and products produced under the IAA? Is information dissemination adequate?
6. With regard to the USFS staff involved in the IAA, how would you rate (1-10) the effectiveness of: ▪ IP Management (Alex and Val) ▪ IP Regional Teams (Adequate backstopping and field team support?) ▪ USFS Detailers/TDY'ers ▪ USFS longer-term staff living overseas
7. For the USFS detailers without prior international professional experience, how would you rate their effectiveness on IAA assignments(1-10)? Discuss why.

8. Your perceptions about the USFS:

- Do you view the USFS as a USAID partner or service provider or both?
- Do you mainly see the USFS as a provider of forestry services or are you aware of other types of NRM expertise that they offer? If so, what types?
- On what types of activities would it be preferable to use the USFS to assist Missions? What types of activities would be better arranged via DOI or a private sector contractor?
- What do you hear from other partners about working collaboratively with the USFS?

9. From the perspective of USAID, what are the main advantages and disadvantages of working through the USFS IAA?

Prompts:, low overhead, salary costs mostly paid, field partnerships of the USFS

10. Where there any barriers to working with the USFS compared to other USAID contractors? How well does the IAA work in terms of operational efficiency?

11. In your opinion, should this IAA be followed by another one?

If no, what alternative mechanisms would make sense for the Forestry Team and USAID's needs? How should the Forestry Team be spending its money to provide forestry/NRM TA to Missions?

If yes, what types of changes are needed in terms of:

- Management & staffing (numbers, type),
- technical assistance provision,
- TDY reporting
- Annual reporting to USAID, 118 report and other types? What alternatives would you suggest?
- New topics or new aspects of existing topics, partners, countries
- Other Issues

USAID Mission Staff/Buy-In CTOs

NAME: **ORGANIZATION:** **DATE:**

1. Over the past 8.5 years, what type of exposure or involvement have you had to the work of the USFS under the IAA? DC? Countries?
2. If you have been aware of the USFS-USAID work for some time, including the former FSP and FRM2 Projects: ▪ What are your impressions about how the relationship has changed and evolved over time between the NRM Office and the USFS? ▪ Strengths and weaknesses of the IAA compared to past agreements with USAID?
3. For the IAA activities that you are most familiar with: ▪ Based on your opinion and what you hear from others (e.g., partners), rate the overall quality and relevance of the TA provided by USFS staff on USAID assignments (1=highly unsatisfactory;10=highly satisfactory)? ▪ Discuss strengths, weaknesses/areas for improvement? Is USAID getting good value for the money? ▪ If you arranged for IAA services in the past, would you do so again in the future? Why or why not? Would you use the same detailers?
4. For the IAA activities that you are most familiar with: Rate the quality and relevance (1-10), as appropriate of: ▪ Analysis ▪ Training ▪ Reports/publications ▪ Dissemination of reports/publications by USFS/IP/TC (WDC USFS)
5. How much do you hear about the activities and products produced under the IAA? Is information dissemination adequate?
6. With regard to the USFS staff involved in the IAA, how would you rate (1-10) the effectiveness of: ▪ IP Management (Alex and Val) ▪ IP Regional Teams (adequate backstopping and field support?) ▪ USFS Detailers/TDY'ers ▪ USFS longer-term staff living overseas
7. Do you think IP/TC staff numbers are adequate, too few or too many for the IAA work?
8. For the USFS detailers without prior international professional experience, how would you rate their effectiveness on IAA assignments(1-10)? Discuss why.
9. Your perceptions about the USFS:

▪ Do you view the USFS as a USAID partner or service provider or both? ▪ Do you mainly see the USFS as a provider of forestry services or are you aware of other types of NRM expertise that they offer? If so, what types? ▪ On what types of activities would it be preferable to use the USFS to assist Missions? What types of activities would be better arranged via DOI or a private sector contractor? ▪ What do you hear from other partners about working collaboratively with the USFS?
10. From the perspective of USAID, what are the main advantages and disadvantages of working through the USFS IAA? Prompts:, low overhead, salary costs mostly paid, field partnerships of the USFS
11. Are there any particular barriers in your regional bureau to working via an IAA versus other mechanisms?
12. How well does the IAA work in terms of operational efficiency?
13. How has USFS IAA work contributed to your Mission's SO's? How can the USFS IAA better contribute to USAID's future needs?
14. In your opinion, should this IAA be followed by another one? If no, what alternative mechanisms would make sense for the Forestry Team and USAID's needs? How should the Forestry Team be spending its money to provide forestry/NRM TA to Missions? If yes, what types of changes are needed in terms of: ▪ Management & staffing (numbers, type), ▪ technical assistance provision, ▪ TDY reporting ▪ Annual reporting to USAID, 118 report and other types? What alternatives would you suggest? ▪ New topics or new aspects of existing topics, partners, countries ▪ Other

Appendix 3. Documents & Web-Sites Reviewed

Documents

Asuquo, B., Burke, J. and O. Pierson. 2005. USDA-FS Technical Assistance Trip Identification of Priority Forest Management Activities for USAID AG/NRM Interim Strategy, 2005-06. USFS, Washington, DC.

Asuquo, B. and O. Pierson. 2005. Proposal for Funding an Institutional Strengthening Program for the Guinean National Department of Water and Forests. USFS, Washington, DC.

Baumback, R. 2005. Contracting and competitive bidding, Mission Report, May 8-18, 2005. USFS, Washington.

Bedwell, J.S. and F. Valenzuela. 2005. Dibeen Forest Reserve, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Jarash Governorate: Recommendations for management of vegetation and recreation. USFS, Washington, DC.

Bevenger, G., Evett, S. and S. Fritz Savolaine. 2003. Jordan Watershed Management Project: Trip Report and Concept Paper for Technical Assistance from the USFS. USFS, Washington, DC.

Brennan, E.J. 2005. Evolving USAID forestry programs in Africa. Unpublished draft.

Byers, B. 2000. Rethinking USAID's Global Bureau Forestry Program. BIOFOR IQC. Chemonics International, Inc., Washington, DC.

Campbell, A. and J. Krueger. 2005. USDA-FS Technical Assistance Trip, Assistance in Development of Policies and Procedures for Environmental Impact Assessments. USAID, Washington, DC

Clausen, R. and A. Hube. 2002. USAID's enduring legacy in natural forests: landscapes, livelihoods, and governance. Volume One: Study Summary. Chemonics International, Inc., Washington, DC.

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Duran, F., Roemer, C. and J. Peterson. 2004. Dibbeen Forest Inventory. USFS, Washington, DC.

ENRIC. 1994. Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use: USAID Project Profiles. ENRIC, Datex, Inc., Arlington.

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Keller, G. and J. Sherar. 2003. Low-volume roads engineering: best management practices field guide. USAID & USFS, Washington, DC.

Methot, P. and R.S. Baumback. 2005. Forest Reform Planning. Mission Report: January 12-30, 2005. USFS, Washington, DC.

Owston, P.W. 2004. USDA Forest Service Cooperative Program in the Russian Far East, 1993-2002). Sustainable Ecosystems Institute, Portland, OR.

Parker, J.K. and J. Dickinson. 1992. Twenty-month evaluation of AID's Forest Resources Management II (FRM II) Project. TRD, Inc., Gainesville, FL.

Roland, J. 2005. Initiating Land-Use Planning in Liberia. USFS, Washington, DC.

Russell, D. and S. Sieber. 2005. Preliminary biodiversity and tropical forest conservation assessment for USAID/Liberia. USAID, Washington.

USAID. 2006. Policy framework for bilateral foreign aid: Implementing transformational diplomacy through development. USAID, Washington, DC.

USAID. 2005. Foreign Assistance Act Section 118 Report: Tropical Forests. BIOFOR IQC, NRIC/Chemonics International, Inc. USAID, Washington, DC.

USAID. 2004. Foreign Assistance Act Section 118 Report: Tropical Forests. BIOFOR IQC, NRIC/Chemonics International, Inc. USAID, Washington, DC.

USAID. 2004. U.S. foreign aid: Meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, USAID, Washington, DC.

USFS. Miscellaneous internal documents, reports and correspondence.

U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development. 2004. Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 2004-2009. USDS, USAID, Washington, DC.

Web-Sites
www.usaid.gov
www.fs.fed.gov
www.fs.fed.gov/international

- Buy-In instructions
- Country Program documents
- Technical topic documents

Appendix 4. Electronic Survey for USFS Detailers

Name				
Job Title				
Region # or Natl. Office				
Name of Division	National Forest:	State & Private Forestry:	Forest Experiment Station:	Other (specify):
Retired?				
Sex (mark with X)	Male:		Female:	
Age (Optional)				
Languages				

1. Prior to going on your work detail (s), what had been your experience with travel outside of the United States? Put an X in the appropriate boxes. Leave other boxes blank if you had no experience in these regions or countries.

	US & Canada	**Western Europe**	**Mexico, Central & So. America**	**Africa**	**Asia**	**Middle East**	**Former Soviet Union**
Recreational Travel							
Professional Meeting							
Short-term professional work (8 weeks or less)							
Medium-term professional work (9 to 24 weeks)							
Long-term professional work (more than 25 weeks) (specify)							
Other (specify)							

2. Please provide information on your International Detail(s):

Trip #	Year	Number of weeks	Country	Host Country Partner Organizations	Type of work done during your detail
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Instructions for questions #3-#7 below: Rate each question on a scale from 1 to 10. If you went on more than one assignment, please use an average score for each question below. The ratings are described after each question. Please feel free to use the comments column to describe what went well and what could have been improved.

	Score	**Comments (Strengths, Areas for Improvement)**
3. Rate your *supervisor's level of support* for you going on an international detail (s). (10 = highly supportive; 1=highly unsupportive)		
4. Rate your satisfaction level with the *pre-trip cultural orientation* that you received from Int. Programs staff. (10 = highly satisfied; 1 = highly dissatisfied)		
5. Rate your satisfaction level with the *pre-trip work orientation* that you received from the International Programs staff. (10 = highly satisfied; 1 = highly dissatisfied)		
6. Rate your satisfaction level with your *travel arrangements*. (10 = highly satisfied; 1=highly dissatisfied)		
7. Rate your satisfaction level with the info that you were provided about *how to report on your assignment*. (10 = highly satisfied; 1=highly dissatisfied)		

8. For the first international detail that you participated in, were you contacted by USFS/International Programs or did you initiate contact with International Programs or was there some other form of contact (Mark with an X or explain)?

The International Programs Office contacted me:	I contacted the International Programs Office:	Other (specify):

9. Please describe the type of report that you completed at the end of your assignment for your host country partners (e.g., page length, format, etc.)?

10. What type of follow-up contact have you had with the host country partner staff that you worked with while you were overseas?

11. Please describe the type of debriefing that you had with the staff from International Programs?

12. What did you learn on your assignment(s) that surprised you?

13. What did you learn from your detail (s) that you have applied to your U.S. work?

14. How else did the detail contribute to your professional development?

15. How has your international detail experience changed or improved the work of your Forest Service unit?

16. How do you think that the USFS, as an agency, benefits from having its staff go on USAID-related international assignments?

Appendix 5. Analyses from Detailer E-Survey & IP Traveler Database

I. Detailer Demographics (Source: Traveler Database)

- Total Detailer Numbers for Direct and Indirect Match. Over the life of the IAA, a total of 362 USFS staff went on international assignments related to the IAA. Of the 321 staff sent on directly related IAA assignments, 30 worked for, or are closely associated with TC over the life of the IAA; 291 were short-term detailers that work for other USFS units. Another 41 USFS staff members went on international assignments in USAID countries that counted toward the USFS Indirect Match contribution to the IAA.

- Employee Status. Except for one individual, all detailers were current employees of the USFS. The exception was one retired USFS employee who had a unique skill set and prior international detail experience during his career.

- Distribution of the Direct Match Detailers across FS Divisions. For direct match travel by non-TC detailers, the breakdown of staff across USFS Units was as follows: National Forest System (60 percent); State & Private Forestry (14 percent); Research and Development (22 percent) and Other (4 percent). The latter category included staff from the Chief's Office and other Washington/DC units including Financial Management and law enforcement.

- Male to Female Ratio. The ratio of males to females for detailers differed between TC and the rest of the USFS for the three subgroups. Of the 291 directly-related IAA travelers and the 41 travelers on indirect match activities, the male to female ratio was approximately 3:1. For the 30 TC staff, the male to female ratio was closer at 1.5: 1.

- Age. For the sample of e-survey detailers, the average age was 49 years of age.

- Prior Travel & International Experience. Of the e-survey detailers, all had recreational travel experience but only one had not been outside of the United States and Canada. The most common areas of travel experience were Western Europe and Latin America. Just under half had been to an international professional meeting. One quarter had prior experiences providing short-term international technical assistance. Thirty-nine percent had prior long-term experience overseas, either through Peace Corps, military families or experience or international jobs.

II. Destination of IAA-Related Travel: Detailers and TC Staff (Source: Traveler Database)

Table 4. Direct Match Detailer Travel - Number of Trips by Country & Region

AFR (147 Trips)	ANE (73 Trips)	EE (87 Trips)	LAC (340 Trips)
Cameroon (2)	Brunei (3)	Albania (13)	Barbados (4)
Rep. of Congo (11)	Cambodia (1)	Bulgaria (9)	Belize (8)
Dem.Rep. Congo (12)	E. Timor (1)	Georgia (2)	Bolivia (28)
Eq. Guinea (3)	India (32)	Russia (60)	Brazil (50)
Ethiopia (3)	Indonesia (6)	Spain (1)	Costa Rica (2)
Gabon (15)	Jordan (12)	Ukraine (2)	Dominican Rep. (17)
Ghana (3)	Lebanon (3)		Ecuador (7)
Guinea (2)	Malaysia (3)		El Salvador (4)
Kenya (17)	Sri Lanka (5)		Guatemala (16)
Liberia (11)	Thailand (3)		Guyana (3)
Madagascar (29)	Viet Nam (4)		Honduras (17)
Mozambique (2)			Jamaica (42)
Namibia (2)			Mexico (122)
Rwanda (2)			Nicaragua (3)
Sao Tome & Prin. (1)			Panama (4)
Senegal (8)			Peru (7)
Sierra Leone (2)			Trinidad & Tobago (6)
Rep. of So. Africa (4)			
Tanzania (16)			
Zambia (2)			

- By the end of April 2006, TC staff will have traveled to all countries in Table 4 apart from Equatorial Guinea, Cambodia, Cyprus, Spain, Barbados, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, they will have traveled to thirteen more countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Netherlands, Botswana, Israel, Croatia, Uganda, Haiti, Cyprus, Ivory Coast, Singapore and the Philippines

IV. Topical Analysis of Direct and Indirect Match Details from 2001-2006 (Source: Traveler Database)

- Topics with at least 50 trips included:
  - Fire management trips (161) and fire and atmospheric research trips (52 trips) account for 32 percent of all trips)
  - Protected area management (40), recreation (6) and tourism/ecotourism (38) trips equal 13 percent of the total trips.
  - The 50 trips related to the Incident Command System and disaster preparedness, response and management constituted 7.5 percent of all trips.
  - Watershed management activities, including water resources work were the focus of 53 trips or 8 percent of all trips.

- Topics with 10 or more trips included:
  - Remote sensing and GIS trips (41 trips or 6 percent)
  - Silviculture activities, including natural forest management, plantations and reforestation (36 trips or 5.5 percent)
  - Road design and training (32 trips or 5 percent)

- Wildlife habitat protection and restoration (31 trips or 5 percent)
- Land use planning (24 trips or 4 percent)
- Wood processing (16 trips or 2.5 percent)
- Community forestry and agroforestry (10 trips or 1.5 percent)

- Topics with less than 10 trips included:
  - Environmental assessment or US Government Regulation 216 (6 trips or 1 percent)
  - Timber cruising, sales and forest concessions (6 trips or 1 percent)
  - Insects, pathology and invasive species (7 trips or 1 percent)
  - Inventory – vegetation, ecological, biodiversity (7 trips or 1 percent)
  - Topics with five or less trips (i.e., multi-topic meetings, range management, Title II, forestry/agriculture interface, project assessment, CIFOR review, USAID RFP development, procurement, human resources, institutional/financial systems, strategic planning, reduced impact logging, law enforcement, database development, urban forestry) (31 trips or 5 percent)
  - Multi-topic trips by USFS leadership and accompanying senior management staff (11 trips or 2 percent)

V. Detailers' Attitudes and Views (Source: E-survey)

The surveyed detailers offered a continuum of perspectives on the role of the USFS and the U.S. Government in international affairs, from partner to leader. From the joint learning and partnership side of the continuum, detailers noted:

Box 7. Keeping an Eye on the Big Picture

"Undoubtedly, we all need to broaden our perspectives on resource management outside of our borders. We forget (that) what we have and how we manage our resources has an effect on the global stage."

- "...It's heartening to know that our USFS experience can be shared with others in terms of lessons learned."
- "We have developed a forestry management system that has functioned successfully for over 100 years and (we) should be willing to share the wisdom we have gained through years of struggles with sustainable forest techniques."
- "I think the USFS benefits by being able to help other agencies in need and exp. How other agencies in other countries are structured and possibly bringing feedback into the way the FS operates."

As an agency, the USFS has gained new collaborators for joint activities on natural resources issues relevant to the land management of the National Forest System. Some of those surveyed recognize that an important benefit of detailers is that "...a positive light is cast on the US as a whole, that (sic) is being a nation that contributes to the well-being and improvement of other countries."

However, from the other side of the continuum (USFS as international leader), detailers observe that:

- "I also fundamentally believe that some approaches and skills that the USFS exemplifies provide an excellent development model for ensuring social, economic and ecological sustainability." The more our models are represented around the world, the better. It reflects on our agency. The fundamental principles guiding land use decisions on public lands in the US, including robust public involvement, are important experiences to share."
- The assistance provided by the detailers, "...demonstrates that the FS is a highly professional and experienced international leader in natural resources conservation – most importantly in a multiple use context. Most nations are not interested in more protected areas – but rather how to integrate active multiple use management into conservation – a skill uniquely offered by the FS."
- "The agency is able to be a world leader in IF. The agency demonstrates the depth of its skills by sending its people overseas to assist. The agency gains credibility. The US lives up to its role and responsibility to lead with its knowledge. Other countries turn to the USFS with questions/issues/problem solving needs and we, in turn, hone our skills on their needs to become better and better at NRM."
- "...The Forest Service is a leader in resource management programs with over 100 years of experience in constantly changing political climates. I believe significant progress can be made in this arena with many countries in the world that would benefit their governments and their peoples."

A number of people mentioned potential benefits related to improving the public image of the USFS, at home and abroad. One informant believes that USFS employees "redeem their responsibility to the American People" to lead because they are better at their work.

Appendix 6. Evaluation Statement of Work

Evaluation of the Interagency Agreement between USAID/EGAT, Office of Natural Resources Management and the U.S. Forest Service/International Programs

The USDA Forest Service requests that METI secure the services of a qualified consultant to serve as a consultant for an evaluation of the Interagency Agreement between USAID/EGAT, Office of Natural Resources Management and the U.S. Forest Service/International Programs

BACKGROUND:

An Interagency Agreement between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) provides a partnership and financing mechanism through which the USFS and USAID missions and bureaus can fund and implement forest related activities.

Forests worldwide are being put under increasing pressure to provide goods and services for local income generation and national economic development. This pressure, combined with changing technologies that increase both the extent and intensity of forest utilization, has resulted in patterns of forest use that are unsustainable, and which contribute to the rapid rate of deforestation currently observed in developing countries around the world. Although most deforestation is the immediate result of conversion to often-unsustainable forms of agriculture, poor forest management helps to set the stage for deforestation by degrading the resource base and reducing economic incentives for forest protection.

The USDA Forest Service is the principle domestic technical agency for forestry and natural resources management in the United States. Their 30,000-person workforce provides expertise in forest policy, natural forest management, logging systems, forestry research, information management and technology, training, education, and forestry support to state and local governments. The Office of International Programs of the USDA Forest Service complements USAID forestry program efforts and provides an opportunity for both agencies to leverage resources in promoting sustainable natural resource management worldwide.

USAID support for forest-related activities comprises an integrated program that collectively stresses: (1) the dissemination of new technologies and innovative approaches to natural resources management that promote sustainable forest management; (2) the establishment of field demonstration projects on forest management practices, such as reduced-impact management, that conserve biodiversity and the carbon sequestration potential of forests; (3) research synthesis and application through the CGIAR system as a means of influencing international research agendas; (4) regional networking among agencies, organizations, scientists, field research sites, forest managers and indigenous peoples; and (5) community forest management.

This IAA enlists the USFS expertise to provide technical assistance, training and analysis in such areas as forest management, protected areas management, fire control, and forest policy and timber extraction to support USAID in the implementation of its forestry programs. Furthermore, the IAA allows the USFS a mechanism from which to fund their own activities in support of USAID programs. Specifically, the USFS assists the EGAT/NRM forestry program to increase the sustainable use of forests in support of USAID's goals of enhanced economic and social development, and to promote environmental protection through protected area management and resource conservation.

Specific objectives of the Interagency Agreement between USAID/EGAT and USFS/IP include:

(1) Provide technical assistance, analysis and training to USAID and USFS partners in developing and newly-independent countries. Partners include but are not limited to USAID Missions, host-country government forestry agencies, non-governmental environmental organizations, multilateral organizations, forest-dependent communities and private sector companies working to improve forest management and conservation.

(2) Develop and/or disseminate innovative approaches, management systems and information to assist partners, particularly USAID Missions, in their efforts to improve forest management and conservation.

(3) Provide an efficient, cost-effective means for USAID/EGAT, Regional Bureaus and Missions to obtain assistance from the USFS and associated partners, including effective coordination, financial administration and oversight of joint projects and activities.

(4) Provide accurate and compelling results reporting to USAID/EGAT, Bureaus and Missions, Congress and other funders of joint activities.

(5) Facilitate the internationalization the USFS by providing opportunities for USFS personnel to work and learn from overseas assignments, and bring lessons learned from such assignments back to the U.S.

(6) Develop and maintain effective partnerships with external organizations and individuals to accomplish the above objectives.

(7) Consider the degree in which this IAA has encouraged the role of women in professional forestry activities, and how programs implemented under this IAA have increased the degree in which women living in forests can have input in forest management decisions.

PURPOSE:

The Agreement described above is now its eighth year of existence, and both USAID and USFS wish to evaluate its effectiveness in achieving program objectives, its institutional sustainability, and its efficiency and cost-effectiveness in carrying out programs, in order to better assess the future of the Agreement – or a new Agreement that could replace the existing Agreement in the near future. Because this is the first evaluation of the agreement since its initiation in 1997, both USAID and the USFS are interested in a careful analysis of the viability of this institutional arrangement and discussion of any lessons learned.

The overarching objective of this evaluation is to: (1) determine if the USAID/USFS partnership has been successful in advancing the objectives of both USAID and the USFS; (2) identify lessons learned regarding what has worked, what has not, and what changes could be made to make the partnership more efficient; and (3) determine if the relationship between USAID and USFS should continue, and if so under what arrangements.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

The consultant or contractor will work with both the USFS and USAID to conduct the evaluation. Tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:

1) Review of the relevant documents, including the original Agreement and the 14 Amendments to answer basic questions about the IAA, including:

- The breakdown of work done, including USAID Missions served, subject areas (e.g., protected area management, fire management, silviculture, forest monitoring, etc.) addressed, and allocation of resources by country, region and subject area.
- Is there a more efficient institutional arrangement between USAID and USDA that could access the expertise of the US Forest Service?

2) Review reports, books, manuals, tutorials, and other documents provided by the USFS to USAID as part of the Interagency Agreement, and assess the general characteristics of this portfolio, including areas of duplication, successes in increasing efficiencies by using products in more than on project/country, consistency in quality, range/methods of distribution, etc.

3) Conduct interviews with a broad cross-section of people involved with the administration of the program, and a representative sample of grantees, beneficiaries and recipients of USAID and USFS assistance. Questions should include those addressed during a typical program evaluation, in addition to questions specific to IAA objectives of both USAID and USFS. The consultant should work with USAID/EGAT and USFS/IP to develop a set of specific questions and/or subject areas. List of potential key people will be provided.

4) Conduct interviews with key USAID Missions to examine how selected programs followed the SOW, and what the results of these efforts were with respect to administrative efficiency, structure and performance. The consultant should attempt to interview relevant USAID project officers in Mexico, Honduras, Brazil, Bolivia, Central Africa (CARPE), Liberia, Madagascar, and Russia and India.

5) Conduct analysis of all the data and drafting of a preliminary report, including findings, conclusions and recommendations.

6) Present the results of evaluation findings and recommendations in a meeting organized by USAID and USFS in Washington, D.C.

7) Complete a final written report incorporating the comments from USAID and USFS reviewers.

DELIVERABLES:

The consultant will produce the following documents and deliverables:

1) A summary of methodology and questions used for the evaluation;
2) A list of people and organizations interviewed;
3) A preliminary report for review by USAID and USFS, including findings, data analysis, conclusions and recommendations;
4) An oral presentation of evaluation findings and recommendations; and
5) A final report in English, incorporating comments from stakeholders, available in electronic (PDF or MS Word) format and in hardcopy. The main body of the report (excluding country, subject area, and interview lists, etc.) is not to exceed 25 typed-pages, including a one or two-page executive summary of key findings and recommendations. All reports and data produced by the assessment shall become the property of USAID and the USFS.