

PDBBT379

PROJECT CLOSE-OUT REPORT
for
EVALUATION ASSISTANCE PROJECT
(EA Project)
(Project Number 683-0229)

USAID/NIGER
SEPTEMBER 1989

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PERTINENT INFORMATION

NAME OF PROJECT	:	EVALUATION ASSISTANCE
PROJECT NUMBER	:	683-0229
DATE OF PROJECT PAPER	:	JULY 1, 1981
DATE OF GRANT AGREEMENT	:	SEPTEMBER 1, 1981
PROJECT ASSISTANCE COMPLETION DATE	:	DECEMBER 31, 1987
AD HOC PACD	:	APRIL 30, 1988
TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT	:	\$2,000,000.00
TOTAL DISBURSED	:	\$1,885,334.59

ABBREVIATIONS

AID/ Washington	USAID headquarters in Washington, D.C.
BE	Bureau of Evaluation
EAP	Evaluation Assistance Project
ENA	National School of Administration
DEPE	Direction de l'Evaluation et de la Programmation des Projects (Directorate of Programming and Project Evaluation)
DPEP	Direction de la Programmation et de l'Evaluation des Projects
DPP	Directorate of Programs and Plan
GON	Government of Niger
IDA	Institute for Development Anthropology
MOP	Ministry of Plan
PACD	Project Assistance Completion Date
PID	Project Identification Document
PIL	Project Implementation Letter
PIO/T	Project Implementation Order/Technical Services
PROMOCI	Societe pour la Promotion de la Cooperation Industrielle Internationale
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
SAED	Project Evaluation Support Services
SEEP	Studies and Project Evaluation Service
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USAID/Niger	USAID Mission to Niger

Project Close-Out Report
for the
EVALUATION ASSISTANCE PROJECT
(EA Project)
(Project Number 683-0229)

I. Introduction

A. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to present a close-out report of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Evaluation Assistance (EA) Project which summarizes the project chronology, activities, achievements, and problems. The Project Officer has already conducted the financial review, inventory, and document close-out; and these are not included in this report.

B. Organization of report

This report is divided into five sections. The five sections are: 1) Introduction; 2) Chronological summary; 3) Project problems; 4) Project achievements; and 5) Project finances.

C. Background

The following background information was taken from the EA Project Paper, cables at USAID/Niger, Midterm Evaluation, yearly Work Plans, and various Project Implementation Reports.

C.1 Background on evaluation activities
in Niger

Extensive development activities by various foreign donors in Niger since the Sahelian drought, coupled with efforts by the Government of Niger (GON) to create a national political structure entitled the "development society," placed a tremendous burden on the country's development planning process. While the Ministry of Plan was involved in a continuous planning effort, it often experienced great difficulties in assessing ongoing programs due to: 1) the lack of reliable data; 2) the shortage of trained manpower; and 3) the lack of an organizational component charged with systematic evaluation. Without a capability to evaluate programs and projects the GON had to depend to a large extent on unreliable and inadequate estimates of its activities. Thus the Ministry of Plan operated under conditions which made planning less than optimal.

The state of evaluation activities in Niger was very underdeveloped in the late 1970's. Evaluation done by the Ministry of Plan was almost wholly financial in nature. It

consisted of bookkeeping functions rather than a real program evaluation effort. At the level of the technical ministries (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Rural Development, and the Ministry of Mines) there was a wide variation in the quality of project evaluations. Various ministries created their own project evaluation units. The Ministry of Rural Development, for example, established an evaluation unit in BEPRO (Bureau des Etudes de Programmation). This unit had already undertaken several systematic project evaluations and was engaged in the training of middle level personnel. The Evaluation Unit was, however, almost completely staffed by expatriates. Institutional development and the training of upper level Nigerien personnel for evaluation-specific functions had not yet taken place.

Certain ministries (such as the Ministry of Health) had no evaluation unit and no personnel charged specifically with the task of evaluation. The only project evaluations which took place in these ministries were those required by donors. In these ministries it was necessary to stress the notion that evaluation could be an important tool of management. International Agencies including the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) were attempting to ease this shortcoming by offering courses in evaluation for project managers and middle level personnel.

Another major difficulty was the lack of communication regarding evaluation between the Ministry of Plan and the technical ministries. Even those ministries that had evaluation units and conducted project evaluations rarely if ever supplied these reports to the Ministry of Plan. Thus, even where some information on projects existed, it was rarely used in the larger planning and program evaluation process.

C.2 Background on EA Project

According to the Project Paper (PP) the EA Project was to consist of a three year program to establish within the Republic of Niger's Ministry of Plan an institutional capability to conduct systematic program and sectoral evaluations, the results of which would be incorporated into the national development planning process. The purpose of the project was to establish within the Ministry of Plan a program evaluation capability which would:

- 1) Improve the performance and increase the success of programs in which feedback from ongoing evaluations can affect policy decisions; and

- 2) Improve the linkages and information exchanges between the Ministry of Plan and the technical ministries, thus allowing for improved program evaluation and planning.

The institutional base for the Project was to be the Ministry of Plan's Bureau of Evaluation (BE). The BE at that time was only a small part of one of four services, in one of the five directions in the Ministry of Plan. The Project Paper proposed that the BE be given the status of a directorate so that it would have sufficient credibility and weight to insure that feedback from the evaluation process would actually reach important decision makers (see Appendix A, Proposed Organization of the Ministry of Plan). The Project was to be implemented by that BE in coordination with the various technical ministries and their evaluation units. A series of carefully planned training sessions and closely supervised, practical in-service training activities were to be employed to provide the staff of the BE with the skills and experience necessary to carry out and direct program evaluations in a variety of sectors. The BE was to be in charge of conducting sectoral and program evaluations at both the national and regional levels.

Within the BE, a documentation center and data bank was to be established to provide improved communications and information exchange between the Ministry of Plan and the technical ministries. The documentation center was to serve as a repository for studies and evaluations catalogued in the mini-computers provided by the Project. It was anticipated that documentation information would be programmed in such a way that key words such as ("health - measles" or "peanuts - pest control") would provide the researcher with a complete list of publications dealing with the subject as it pertains to Niger.

The National School of Administration (l'Ecole Nationale d'Administration - ENA) was to receive institutional support for the development of courses in evaluation and for the training of a faculty member in this field. Faculty and students at ENA were to participate in workshops organized by the Project team.

USAID/Niger was to fund the following components of the EA Project:

- 1) Technical Assistance
 - a) two long-term technical assistant specialists (6 person years)
 - b) short-term technical assistant in special technical fields (24 person months)

- 2) Training
 - a) U.S. long-term (6 person years)
 - b) Third country long-term (4 person years)
 - c) Short-term, in the U.S. and third countries (20 person months)
 - d) Short-term, in country
- 3) Commodities
 - a) Vehicles (6 all terrain and 4 light passenger vehicles)
 - b) Office equipment
 - c) Mini-computers (6 with printers)
- 4) Other
 - a) Vehicle operation and maintenance
 - b) Publication and training materials
 - c) Translator-bilingual secretary

The Republic of Niger was to contribute office and documentation center space, utilities, and general operating costs of the BE.

The implementation plan as stated in the Project Paper was the following:

Sep 1981	Project Agreement signed
Oct 1981	Arrival of two long-term technical assistants
Dec 1981	Mini-computer ordered
Apr 1982	Work plan
Sep 1982	Long-term training
Oct 1982	Training of BE completed
Feb 1983	1st evaluation
Jan 1984	2nd evaluation
Apr 1984	Document Center fully functional
Sep 1984	Final Report

On September 1, 1981 the Grant Agreement between USAID and GON was signed for \$1,255,000. An amendment to the Grant Agreement was signed on July 21, 1982 for \$745,000 bringing the total grant amount up to \$2 million. The initial Project Assistance Completion Date (PACD) was December 31, 1985, and this was amended twice for a final PACD of December 31, 1987, with an additional ad hoc PACD of April 30, 1988.

At the time of project set-up several external events had major impacts on the project. The Five-year Plan for 1979-1983 contained an ambitious public investment program which was based upon the expectation of a generally favorable economic outlook and anticipated financing from GON's uranium revenue proceeds, sizeable donor contributions, and considerable short-term commercial borrowing at average rates of 15 percent. During the "boom" period in 1979, increasing annual economic growth in real

terms reached a peak of 13 percent. But after a sudden drop in uranium revenues because of the decline in the world uranium market the national financial situation deteriorated, and a sharp fall occurred in investment expenditures. Official recognition of a period of "pause and consolidation" in development followed these events.

An atmosphere of urgency underscored the need to manage and allocate scarce resources more efficiently and effectively, leading to an increased desire on the part of MOP to place greater emphasis on ex-ante evaluation, including economic and financial feasibility and, in particular, cost benefit analysis for new and re-designed projects.

Implementation of the EA Project began with the arrival of Louis Siegel, the Development Administration Specialist/Chief of Party, in November, 1981 and the execution of a three-year contract in February, 1982. Procurement of the necessary office equipment, computers, office furniture and vehicles for the new BE was conducted during 1982. Five students were selected in early 1982 of which three departed for the University of Pittsburgh's School of Public Administration in the fall of 1982, and two went to third countries for two-year diploma programs. Due to difficulties in hiring the second long-term consultant (the Social Impact Specialist), he did not arrive until late 1983.

The second year of the project, 1983, was one of reinforcing institutional structure of the BE. An industrial development study was conducted by Dimpex Associates in mid-1983 to assess various activities undertaken by the GON to stimulate industrial development. PROMOCI, a French firm, was contracted in 1984 to design and install an evaluation cycle. It was designed to track projects from proposal stage through final evaluation, thus ensuring a concise and complete project development monitoring system for the entire Directorate in which the BE was under (the Direction Programs and Plan).

In February 1984 the MOP was reorganized and the BE was absorbed into a new Evaluation Service, Studies and Project Evaluation Service (SEEP), within an expanded directorate, the Direction de la Programmation et de l'Evaluation des Project (DPEP). This gave the project higher visibility and greater significance within the MOP. The reorganization caused some staff disruption, which slowed momentum, but it also gave promise of better coordination, more efficient administration, and closer linkages with the technical ministries and external donors. In December, 1984 the MOP was again reorganized and the BE came under a new directorate, the Direction de l'Evaluation et de la Programmation des Project (DEPP), but the status of the BE stayed the same.

The first and only external evaluation of the EA Project was conducted in November 1984 by Irving H. Lich (a private

consultant) in cooperation with members of the Ministry of Plan. The Midterm Evaluation found that the EA project was making good progress toward the project purpose of establishing in the MOP a functional evaluation unit and effective linkages and information exchanges between the MOP and the technical Ministries. It noted that a small staff of trained, competent technicians had carried out a wide variety of evaluation activities leading in several cases to policy reform, project design and re-design; thus contributing modestly but directly to the Government of Niger's development program management and administration.

The evaluation made the following specific recommendations:

- 1) That the Project Assistance Completion Data (PACD) be extended by one year to December 1986 to ensure the existence of a fully functioning project evaluation system by the end of the project.
- 2) That a detailed workplan be developed for the extra year under the project.
- 3) That a follow-on project be considered, one which takes as its focus the areas of: a) sector assessment; and evaluation and b) project appraisal and design.

The project was extended for another year (Project Implementation Letter (PIL) #17, December 1985) in order to allow completion of activities which were behind schedule, to strengthen certain activities and linkages with other organizations, and to allow sufficient time for the computerized project cycle system to be installed and tested.

In July, 1985 the Grant Agreement was amended to include a detailed workplan for the extended year. The original project outputs were on schedule, but a revised plan was needed to adjust the planned outputs to reflect the changing needs of the Ministry of Plan. The revised project outputs and plan for achievement were:

Output 1: Creation of a pool of evaluation technicians in the MOP

The creation of a pool of evaluation technicians in the MOP was a follow-on activity of the training output that the original budget envisioned. The original training goals had been met by 1985: all of the five long-term participants were working in the appropriate units of the administration and had contributed in various capacities to the installation of a system of project evaluation. Short-term training in information science and management had contributed to upgrading the project support

system within the administration. Development of a pool of skilled evaluation technicians required that those individuals assigned to the evaluation unit, as well as other officials within the Ministry and in collaborating evaluation and monitoring units in the technical ministries, became fully conversant with the purposes and procedures related to the project programming system. This system was considered the centerpiece of the project, and the conduit through which all other project output was to flow. This programming system was to encompass:

- a) a number of additional short-term training activities that would be carried out in computer programming and analysis for a small number of Ministry personnel.
- b) short-term consultancies which would establish the documentation and management of an information and socioeconomic indicator data bank.
- c) additional short-term consultancies were planned to assist an interministerial team of Nigerian officials in project identification and evaluation of ongoing projects requiring redesign.
- d) several more socioeconomic impact evaluations were planned for the project extension.

Output 2: Development of a system of access to project evaluations conducted by other agencies and ministries.

The establishment of a computerized documentation system would facilitate access to and use of evaluation reports, and would streamline information flow in the Ministry. The system would put into place a complete series of protocols for the acquisition, routing, cataloging, analysis, and indexing of all incoming documents.

Output 3: Capability to conduct major project evaluations and sector assessments at the National and regional levels.

To ensure that the ability to conduct major program evaluations and sector assessments at the National and regional level would be in place by the end of the project, several ongoing project activities were designed. Foremost among these activities was to be the completion of the computerized project programming and

evaluation system through:

- 1) improvement of the computer programs to enable sectoral and regional analysis of the distribution, advancement and results of development activities by sector and by region;
- 2) improvements in data input and collection via a series of seminars directed to personnel in MOP and the technical ministries;
- 3) use of the system to produce the 1986 and 1987 national investment budgets; and
- 4) completion of the system with the creation of the "statistical" and "normative" sub-files.

Long-term technical assistance was to contribute to this effort, as well as short-term consultants in the areas of project programming and the design of computer software to complete and perfect the system that was in place.

Output 4: Data bank and document archives on program and project evaluation.

The creation of a bank of socioeconomic data and indicators of project impacts was to provide a permanent, evolving repository for summary indicators of project impacts accessible by region and sector of the economy. The data bank was to be made up of data extracted from available studies and project documents. The project was also to commission an outside consultant to coordinate creation of the Data Bank within MOP.

From January 1982 to June 1985 \$800,000 of project funds had been disbursed. The revised project plan for the remaining \$1.2 million was:

- a) Technical Assistance
 - i) Long-term Development Administration Specialist
 - ii) Short-term Documentation Specialist
 - iii) Short-term for specific intervention with the computer system
 - iv) Long-term Social Impact Specialist
 - v) Short-term to provide on-the-job training
 - vi) Short-term to de-bug and perfect the data system
- b) Training - short-term only
- c) Commodities

d) Operating costs

The project had moved away from emphasis on full-scale field evaluation (ex-ante, ex-post, impact) to stressing use of evaluation techniques to select and monitor implementation of projects in the governments investment portfolio. Computer-based information bases and analyses for pre-project assessment and implementation monitoring were more realistic activities for a Ministry of Plan office to carry out than the full-scale project and impact evaluations which the project originally planned.

A meeting was held between the MOP and USAID/Niger on September 24-25, 1986 to review the progress of the EA Project since the Midterm Evaluation. It concluded that most of the planned outputs were on schedule, but two of them were behind schedule.

The short-term training in computer programming and analysis for Ministry personnel was considered to be on schedule. The DEPP computer programmer received specialized, short-term training in 1985 and the statistician attended a short-term course in micro computers at Stanford University. On-the-job training was continuing with three participants in a 2-week training at the Research Triangle Institute.

The seminars on project programming systems and methods of project analysis were also considered to be on schedule. Three seminars were held on the programming system, one in Namaro for MOP personnel, one in Niamey for technical ministry personnel, and one traveling seminar which held meetings in each department for regional personnel. EA Project seminars were supplemented by two seminars held by CIDA and IBRD/CCCE on financial and economic analysis of projects.

The short-term consultancies (and on-the-job training) to establish the documentation and management information and socioeconomic indicators data bank were behind schedule. Consultancies were underway for both system. A two-person team from the University of Arizona had just started a three month contract to set up an improved documentation system for the entire MOP. Research Triangle Institute (RTI) had made one in-country visit to decide parameters for the socioeconomic data bank, and they were to return in October to install the data bank in DEPP computers. Three cadres were being trained in use of the data bank at RTI. These two contracts were both planned for much earlier in the project. They were delayed for a variety of reasons, including complication in contracting, and problems with the Ministry of Finance on terms and provisions.

The short-term consultancies to assist interministerial teams of Nigerien officials in project identification and in evaluation of ongoing projects requiring redesign were not carried out as anticipated during this period. Activities were handled by long-

term contractors, mainly subsumed under other activities. Another division of the ministry had contracted with the French firm SEDES to develop methodologies for training regional cadres in project identification. DEPP planned to adapt this model for use without recourse to an expatriate firm.

One new impact evaluation was carried out and a second was planned. A preliminary study tour was made and it was decided not to carry out the full scale impact evaluation. The role of DEPP, defined after a December, 1984 reorganization of the MOP, was different from that envisaged in the Project Paper. Impact evaluations and sector assessments, while of great interest, were not easily integrated into the normal work of DEPP. Therefore, it was decided not to carry out further impact evaluation under this project.

Activities to improve computer programs to enable sectoral and regional analysis of the distribution, advancement and results of development activities by sector and region was on schedule. This element of the project became a major focus of work. Work was continued on testing, training, and adaptation of the systems, which had been used for two annual budgets.

The project was extended another additional year to December 31, 1987 (PIL #19) to allow for testing and perfecting of systems and techniques established under the EA Project.

In early 1987, according to the Project Implementation Report dated March 31, 1987, the development of a system of access to project evaluation conducted by other agencies and ministries was considered fully achieved. A major project and program evaluation for the department of Dosso had been conducted. This was a coordinated effort between two Directorates of the MOP (DEPP and Direction de Developpement Regional et des Micro-Realisation - DDRM) working with outside consultants and the departmental services of Dosso. The purpose was to develop methods for on-going project/program monitoring and evaluation on a regional basis in the context of project identification.

By the end of 1987, according the Project Implementation Report dated October 1, 1987, the project purpose had been achieved. Indications of the achievement were:

- a) Ministry of Plan "evaluation bureau" (DEPP) undertook ex-ante evaluation in all development sectors, participated in interim and ex-post evaluations of donor projects.
- b) EA Project introduced "dossier standard" project data and analysis system for ex-ante evaluation of sectoral activities. The system was used by GON with minimal donor

technical assistance. DEPP led annual reviews with technical ministries.

- c) DEPP assigned leadership role by GON in analysis of donor project proposals.
- d) DEPP ran Ministry's documentation system, including computerized socioeconomic data base for analytical work (macro and sectoral studies), library with computer-based information retrieval system.

II. CHRONOLOGY

The following is a chronological summary of the EA Project. The information was taken from the Midterm Evaluation and cables concerning the project at USAID/Niger, Project Implementation Reports, and Project Implementation Letters (PIL)

- March 1980 Decree, 1/MP/DPP, signed which created the Directorate of Program and Plan. (March 21)
- November 1980 Meeting with Mr. Oumarou, Directeur du Plan et de la Programmation, Myron Golden, Project Officer, and Terry Baker, Assistant Project Officer to reiterate USAID/Niger's interest in participating in a project to strengthen the Planning ministry's capabilities to evaluate rural development projects and programs. (November 18)
- Meeting with M. Gao Imo, Chief de Service des Etudes et de l'Analyse Economique, MOP, and Terry Banker, to discuss possible USAID/Niger support for an Evaluation Assistance Project. (November 22)
- May 1981 PID reviewed and approved. (May 8)

- Two project design team members arrive in Niamey. (May 15)
- September 1981 Grant Agreement signed. (September 1)
- November 1981 Arrival of L. Siegel, Development Administration Specialist/Chief of Party (executed contract in February 1982).
- February 1982 PIL #1, contract for services of a specialist in development administration. (February 9)
- L. Siegel, Chief of Party, executed contract, 1st: February 9, 1982 to February 8, 1985; 2nd: February 9, 1982 to December 31, 1985 and; 3rd: January 1, 1986 to December 31, 1986.
- March 1982 PIL #2, approval for informal solicitation of bids for local purchase of vehicles and household furniture. (March 30)
- PIL #3, general and local budgets. (March 30)
- PIL #4, approval for local purchase of vehicles. (March 31)
- April 1982 PIL #5, purchase of vehicles and household furnishing. (April 26)
- Work plan for newly created Evaluation Bureau completed and approved by Ministry. In addition, individual study/analysis/evaluation plans, involving analyses of activities in the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Rural Development, and the Ministry of Mines, were in development by each of the principal officers in the Bureau.
- July 1982 First Amendment to EA Project Grant

- Agreement, increase grant by \$745,000 to total \$2 million. (July 21)
- Participant trainees selected, nominated, and tested for English language proficiency.
- August 1982 PIL #6, purchase of furniture, equipment and vehicles for the Evaluation Bureau. (August 5)
- PIL #7, earmarking of budget. (August 10)
- January 1983 PIL #8, creation of the post of an accountant/administrative assistant. (January 4)
- April 1983 PIL #9, earmarking of budget. (April 21)
- Industrial Development Study, to assess whether or not the extent to which various activities undertaken by the State contributed to industrial development. Conducted by Dimplex Associates, Inc., contract# 2/PAE/83. (April 11 - August 2)
- May 1983 PIL #10, earmarking of budget. (May 18)
- June 1983 Project helped organize a highly successful recurrent cost workshop.
- August 1983 PIL #11, funding training for Mr. Maliki. (August 3)
- September 1983 PIL #12, funding training for Mr. Aoussouk. (September 30)
- PIL #13, earmarking budget. (September 12)
- Contract signed for Special Impact Analysis, Dr. Eric Arnould, contract# 3/PAE/83, for September 1983 to December 1985, responsible to help organize and provide technical support for the BE and to

design and participate in training (especially in the area of social impact analysis).

Arrival of two Apple II computers.

October 1983 PIL #14, earmarking budget. (October 12)

February 1984 Presidential Decree 84-01 PCMS/MP concerning the restructuring of MOP. (February 9)

DPEP replaced DPP, Decree No. 83-36/PCM.

March 1984 Ministerial decision No. 03/MP/DPEP, determining the composition, responsibilities, and attributions of the DPEP. (March 24)

June 1984 EA Project began financing a technical assistant contract with the firm PROMOCI for design and installation of a project evaluation cycle and programming system in the Direction de l'Evaluation et de la Programmation des Projects, FIO/T 3-20394. Training was given to government officials in the application of the system.

Mr. Muller, the designer of the initial computer programs with PROMOCI, recalled on an individual basis to introduce certain modifications and write additional programs for the project data files. This was done to facilitate the DEPP and the Direction de Financement des Investissements (DFI) review of the entire portfolio of both ongoing and proposed projects in order to produce the three year investment program 1986-1988 and the annual investment budget for 1986.

November 1984 Mid-term evaluation conducted by

Mr. Irving Licht, a private consultant, and personnel of the MOP. Found that the project was making good progress toward the project purpose and that the project should be extended to December 1986.

- December 1984 Reorganization at the MOP, DEPP replaced DPEP, decree no. 84-266, service of documentation linked to the General Secretariat.
- February 1985 Meeting held to discuss the Midterm Evaluation and its follow-up.
- July 1985 Revised Implementation Plan of the Grant Agreement to cover July 1, 1985 to December 31, 1986.
- August 1985 PIL #15, de-earmarking funds to procure services of Mr. Muller, micro-computer consultant. (August 6)
- September 1985 Local consultant hired to produce report entitled "Inventory and Analyses of Rural Hydraulic Studies". (September 5)
- November 1985 PIL #16, earmarking budget. (November 12)
- December 1985 PIL #17, changed PACD to December 31, 1986 and earmarking budget. (December 3)

Computers received, from Computer Discount of America, but missing parts. Found that the 10MB hard disks were not delivered with the 2 IBM/AX computers. (December 13)

PIL #18, (note two PILs #18), earmarking \$27,000 for computer programming specialist. (December 1985)

First inter-ministerial seminar on the system was held at the Palais des Congres. Plenary and working group sessions were held on four

topics; 1) the project programming system; 2) the standard dossier for project presentation and annual estimated budget; 3) the annual evaluation report of the investment budget; and 4) sectoral indicators of project performance.

- January 1986 Walter West replaced Dr. Arnould as the Social Impact Specialist, contract from January 1986 to December 1987.
- February 1986 PIL #19, (note two PILs #19), concerning the contract extension for L. Siegel. (February 3)
- April 1986 Two seminars held concerning project program methodology, investment budget preparation, information support tools.
- May 1986 Meeting with MOP and USAID/Niger. (May 6)
- June 1986 Research Triangle Institute Phase One consultancy conducted, Dr. Moreland (one week) and Dr. Goetz (two weeks), designed and installed a micro-computer based system called "Socioeconomic Data Bank/Criteria for Evaluation of Project Impact". PIO/T 10410 was issued in August 1984 but because of complications in contracting RTI did not carry out the contract until June 1986. (June 9) Phase Two consultancy was conducted between October 20 and November 9. Final report produced December 22, 1986.
- July 1986 Moussa Dambo, conducted a semi-annual review of the accounting procedures and records and concluded that the system of accounts was adequate. (July 11)
- September 1986 Review of EA Project held by MOP and USAID/Niger concluded that: 1) the progress of the project since midterm evaluation was good; and 2)

no-cost extension of the project for up to 12 months was warranted. (September 24 - 25)

Contract with RTI for short-term consultant to make corrections ("debug") and further develop applications of computer-based Socioeconomic Data Bank System previously designed and installed by RTI is canceled because of conflict in timing with activities funded by World Bank.

Three MOP agents sent to RTI in North Carolina for a two-week seminar in micro-computers.

Short-term contract with the University of Arizona for a documentation specialist to set up and improved documentation system for the entire MOP.

October 1986

PIL #18, earmarking budget. (October 15)

Data bank software installed on IBM/AX.

Dambo Moussa, Financial Analyst USAID/Niger, conducted a semi-annual review of the accounting procedures and records and concluded that the system of accounts was adequate. (October 20)

November 1986

Waiver of Competition, Host Country Contract, to enable MOP to amend its contract with IDA to continue technical assistance, Walter West, for 12 months. (November 28)

PIL #19, changed PACD to December 31, 1987. (November 12)

December 1986

PIL #20, earmarking budget. (December 12)

PIL #21, to allow project funded

furniture and appliances to be retained by USAID/Niger for use by other project contractors. (December 12)

L. Siegel, project contractor, leaves the project. (December 31)

January 1987

Salaou Istefanas sent for third-country short-term technical training, Societe de Service et de conseils en informatique, at Montpellier, France. (January 15 - March 25)

PIL #22, IDA contract for continuation of services. (January 27)

PIL #23, project work plan proposed by MOP for 1987 and related budget. (January 28)

March 1987

Documentation center computer catalogue system was in place and fully operational. The socioeconomic data bank system was also operational with a five-year (1981-1986) data base being collected and entered. Major project and program evaluation for the department of Dosso conducted. Coordinated effort between two Directions of the MOP (DEPP and DDRM) working with outside consultants and the departmental services of Dosso.

May 1987

PIL #24, earmarking of budget and for contract with Research Triangle Institute. (May 18)

Dambo Moussa, Financial Analyst USAID/Niger, conducted a semi-annual review of the accounting procedures and records and concluded that the system of accounts was adequate.

June 1987

Maizidio Boubacar sent to

Pittsburgh for training at the 9th Francophone Development Management Seminar at U. of Pittsburgh. (June 15 - March 25)

July 1987

Mr. Maliki Abdoulaye, head of documentation center of MOP, sent to short-term technical training program arranged between the Nigerien MOP and the office of Arid Land Studies at U. of Arizona. (July 15 - August 15)

PIL #25, approval of purchase of 2 all-terrain vehicles and supply of essential spare parts. (July 10)

September 1987

PIL #26, earmarking budget. (September 3)

October 1987

PIL #27, earmarking budget. (October 28)

November 1987

Dombo Moussa, Financial Analyst, conducted a semi-annual review of the accounting procedures and records maintained. Concluded that the system of accounts with respect to project funds was not adequate and accordingly was not certified by USAID/Niger under Section 121(d) of the Foreign Assistance Acct. (November 23)

PIL #28, to allow USAID/Niger to retain project funded household furniture and appliances.

January 1988

PIL #29, to allow an additional 60 days after PACD (to February 29, 1988) to complete purchase and delivery of two project vehicles. (January 28)

March 1988

Action memo. @ approval of use of PM&R for Closeout costs - payment and benefits for Ms. Soumana, bookkeeper, for the period January 1, 1988 to April 30, 1988

April 1988

Action memo. @ approval of further

ad hoc extension of PACD to April 30, 1988 to allow purchase of vehicles to fall within the project's effective life. (April 18)

July 1988

Two FJ62 Toyota Land Cruisers purchased, 13.690.000 FCFA. (July 18)

III. PROJECT PROBLEMS

This section lists the problems encountered by the EA project. The information was taken from the Midterm Evaluation, various Project Implementation Reports, various contractors final reports, and cables at USAID/Niger.

Problem 1: Institutional development

Achievement of institutional development goals was slower than anticipated in the Project Papers, and the authority of evaluation unit took time to establish.

The Direction du Plan et de la Programmation (DPP) was established in March, 1980. The BE was located in the Division de la Coordination et de l' Evaluation of the Ministry of Plan under the Service des Etudes et Analyses Economiques of the DPP. The BE was only a small part of one of four services in one of the five directions in the Ministry of Plan. Initially it was lacking in independence and credibility. From 1982 to the beginning of 1984 the BE was very small and had not clearly established its role either within or outside the MOP. The failure of the United Nations Development Program and World Bank to offer support to the BE resulted in reduced momentum toward centralization of policy evaluation management within MOP. According to the Midterm Evaluation, the BE made good progress and managed to cooperate with some of the other Services of the DPP but it faced difficulties with jealousies, competition, non-cooperation and fear of encroachment on the part of other divisions within the Directorate.

In February, 1984 the MOP was reorganization and the BE was absorbed into the new Studies and Project Evaluation Service (SEEP), under the newly created Direction de la Programmation et de l'Evaluation des Projets (DPEP). The DPEP Director explained in a written statement to USAID/Niger that the changes were made to resolve several problems, i.e. the refusal of the other Services within DPEP to cooperate with the BE, insufficiency of evaluations (mainly ex-ante), with corresponding under-utilization of available funds and faulty administration through lack of coherence, unclear lines of communication and ambiguous or conflicting responsibilities and assignments. The DPEP Director was also the EA Project Director, and was in a position to exert strong leadership and support to the project by orchestrating and coordinating its activities within the DPEP and MOP, and by reaching out to other ministries, GON organizations and donors.

The Ministry of Plan was reorganized again in December, 1984 and the DPEP was replaced by the Direction de l'Evaluation et de la Programmation des Projets (DEPP). The BE was under the new DEPP and still had a visible position.

The institutional development was also slowed by turnover in MOP personnel. For example, by late 1986 the three personnel who had received their MA level training under the project were no longer working in the evaluation and planning office of the MOP. Paradoxically, one of the three was the Secretary General of the Ministry, after working as project counterpart, and briefly as project director. The political advantages of such a placement may have outweighed the loss of personnel.

Problem 2: Delays

Delays were encountered with some of the short-term and long-term consultants.

The arrival of the Social Impact Specialist was delayed due to problems in the selection and contract negotiation process but his arrival coincided with the delivery of the micro-computer, which was considered essential for the analytical phase of the various impact studies his work entailed. Little loss in effectiveness was evidenced especially since the funds saved were used in the extension of the project. Delays were also encountered in 1985/86 with two key short-term contracts, installation of a socioeconomic data bank and improved MOP documentation assessment system. The latter contracts were blocked by the Ministry of Finance, which insisted that two additional clauses be added on payment of income taxes and VAT.

Problem 3: Linkages with ENA

Linkages with the ENA did not progress as foreseen in the Project Paper.

At the time of the Midterm Evaluation there had been negligible progress in forging institutional linkages with the ENA as outlined in the PP. For the first two years A. Souleymane, who was to be the liaison with the ENA, was in the United States for long-term training. Efforts were made to get a Peace Corps Volunteer to replace him during his absence, but Peace Corps did not support this type of assignment.

No courses in evaluation topics were conducted at the ENA. At one point it was felt that Civil Service approval was necessary to introduce such courses. According to the Midterm Evaluation the BE did not follow up or attempt to overcome this perceived problem. In the revised implementation plan no ENA link was incorporated.

Problem 4: De-certification

The project was de-certificated in November 1987.

After a semi-annual review of the accounting procedures and records maintained for the EA project on November 23, 1987 by Moussa Dambo, USAID/Niger Financial Analyst, the project was de-certificated. Mr. Dambo found that there were problems with the donor account, a budget gap of 40 million FCFA, missing books, and vouchers not accounted for since May, 1987. Mr. Dambo stated that the project was re-certified a month later.

Problem 5: No counterpart

No counterpart was obtained for the long-term Social Impact Specialist.

In Dr. Arnould's Final Report it was stated that the project was unable to obtain a full-time counterpart for him.

Problem 6: Socioeconomic data base

Because there was a paucity of quality raw data on Niger, the socioeconomic data bank had gaps of missing data from 1985 to 1988.

Mr. Gouba Kaka, who worked on the EA Project and is now the

Directorate of DPP (1), stated that the socioeconomic data bank was not operational from 1985 to 1988 because there were gaps in the data base. Only aggregate data was being received and not specific data on each region.

In the Final Report of Research Triangle Institute, the consultancy responsible for the setting up of the socioeconomic data bank, it was also stated that there was a lack of reliable raw data on Niger, especially demographic data. Without quality data on demographics (e.g. population data) indicator factors would be handicapped.

Problem 7: Management Committee

The management committee set up for the socioeconomic data bank was not active.

In the Research Triangle Institute's (RTI) Final Report it was stated that a management committee had been set up in the MOP but they never met during the RTI consultancy. RTI stressed that the committee should have regular meetings in order to direct the data bank.

Problem 8: Ad hoc extension of Project

Two informal extensions of the PACD were needed to permit purchase of two project vehicles.

The EA Project Agreement stated that three all-terrain and two light passenger vehicles would be purchased at the end of the Project, and they would serve as replacements to be used to continue the evaluation program following completion of the Project. In 1987 the project requested purchase of the three remaining 4x4 vehicles, but could not identify funding for them. In 1988 the budget was modified to provide sufficient funding for two vehicles. A waiver was approved on June 23, 1987, and PIL issued on July 10, 1987 authorizing the project to begin procurement procedures in accordance with GON completion regulations.

Whether from the fault of the project, or inherent complications of the GON system, the Government did not manage to obtain all the signatures needed on a host country contract before PACD of December 31, 1987. A 60-day extension of PACD to February 29, 1988 was obtained to permit completion of the GON contract. The

1 The MOP was reorganized again in 1989 and the DPP replaced the DEPP.

contract was then cancelled and another slightly higher cost contract signed.

The fact that the original contract was nullified and a new one signed a month after the new PACD had lapsed was caused by the Ministry. Neither the project officer nor the USAID/Niger procurement specialist were informed of this change until after the fact. The new contract was delivered to USAID/Niger at the end of March.

An additional ad hoc extension of PACD to April 30, 1988 was obtained through an internal memorandum, and without notifying the MOP. This was politically expedient since it avoided conflicts with the Ministry, which appeared to believe that it had acted properly despite the lapsed PACD. The vehicles were bought in July, 1988.

IV. PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

The following is a description of the achievements that took place during the EA project. The information was obtained from the Midterm Evaluation, various Project Implementation Reports, and various cables at USAID/Niger concerning the project.

Achievement 1: Evaluation technicians

The project created a pool of evaluation technicians in the MOP.

According to Project Implementation Report dated October 1, 1987, the DEPP was fully staffed at the end of the project. All professional personnel at the DEPP had received at least in-service training in evaluation methodologies.

Achievement 2: Project evaluations

The project had developed a system of access to project evaluations conducted by other agencies and ministries.

According to Project Implementation Report dated October 1, 1987 this was achieved with the completion of expanded documentation center staffed by trained documentation specialists.

Achievement 3: Evaluation Capability

By the end of the project MOP had the capability to conduct major program evaluations and sector assessments at the nation and regional levels.

According to Project Implementation Report dated October 1, 1987 at the end of the project, DEPP showed capability to conduct evaluations and assessments with assistance. The technical assistance was largely supplied by Nigerien specialists from other institutions (private and public). A major evaluation of potential program activities for the Dosso Department that was completed in late 1987 resulted in the development of nine project proposals for MOP.

Achievement 4: Data Bank

Data bank and document archives on program and project evaluation were achieved by the end of the project.

According to Project Implementation Report dated October 1, 1987 the data bank and document archives were in place by the end of the project. A computer system existed to enable sectoral and regional analysis of the distribution, advancement and results of development activities by sector and region. (Note: controversy exists over this, see page 22). Efficacy of the computerized socioeconomic data base will only be demonstrated after withdrawal of technical assistance, when the system will be the responsibility of Nigerien personnel. Documentation specialists received specialized short-term training on computer application for documentation systems during the latter part of the project. The planned short-term assistance for documentation system and data bank was cancelled. It was anticipated that other donors would follow up (World Bank for data system, and UNDP for documentation).

Achievement 5: Training

Over \$200,000 was spent on training - long and short-term for 23 participants.

The following is a breakdown of the type of training, number of participants, and amount of project funds spent:

TYPE	NUMBER	AMOUNT
Long-term U.S.	3	\$144,779.90
Long-term 3rd countries	2	\$ 12,570.27
Short-term U.S.	8	\$ 37,133.82
Short-term 3rd countries	8	\$ 20,690.61
Short-term in country	2	\$ 424.00
TOTAL	23	\$215,588.60

The original project budget specified three long-term participants in Master's Degrees (M.S.) training in the United States. In accordance with this plan, three were selected early in 1982, and departed for the University of Pittsburgh's School of Public Administration in the fall of 1982. They completed their degrees in the spring of 1984 and returned to Niger in August, 1984. They were not afforded the opportunity to work at the BE during the summer of 1983 as was foreseen in the PP, but were able instead to attend a special summer course in Development Management at the University of Pittsburgh. The long-term training in the United States consisted of the following participants:

NAME	PROGRAM	AMOUNT
Saibou Aboubacar	U. of Pittsburgh, Grad. School, M.S. awarded	\$47,390.30
Souleymane, Saidou	U. of Pittsburgh, Grad. School M.S. awarded	\$48,288.53
Aboubacar, Souleymane	U. of Pittsburgh, Grad. School M.S. awarded	\$49,091.07

The long-term training in third countries consisted of the following participants:

NAME	PROGRAM	AMOUNT
Abdou, Moussa	Ecole de la Statistique, Tunis, Dip. (2 years)	\$7,426.06
Maliki, Chaibou	University of Dakar, Information science, Dip. (2 years)	\$5,144.21

The short-term training in the United States consisted of the following participants:

NAME	PROGRAM	AMOUNT
Locual, Chafani	U. of Pittsburgh Francophone Dev. Management Sem.	\$11,279.55
Salaou, Istefanas	Stanford U. Food Research Inst. Micro-computer Sem.	\$5,845.86
Abdou, Moussa Maldaji, Abdou Salaou, Istefanas	Res. Triangle Inst. Raleigh/Durham Computer programming	\$7,717.45
Abdou, Moussa	Stanford U. Food Research Inst. Micro-computer Sem.	\$6,281.53
Maliki, Chaitou	Technical Training U. of Arizona	\$3,002.68
Maizidio, Baoubacar	U. of Pittsburgh Francophone Dev. Management Sem.	\$3,006.75

The short-term training in the third countries consisted of the following participants:

NAME	PROGRAM	AMOUNT
Agbo, Frank Garba, Abdou Sakko, Chekou	Seminar on indicators for planning Bamako, Mali	\$3,818.39
Halidou, Boukari Mounkaila, Ibrahim Nseka, Vita	Inst. Africain d'Informatique Libreville, Gabon	\$2,351.00
Salaou, Istefanas	Societe de service et de conseils en informatique, Montpellier France	\$1,296.30
Salaou, Istefanas	Short-term computer course Montpellier, France	\$13,224.92

The following is a summary of the in-country training that was funded by the project:

Name	Description	Amount
Maliki	Niger Basin Authority Documentation Center, Niamey	\$177.00
Aoussouk, Salifou	Niger Basin Authority Documentation Center, Niamey	\$247.00

Achievement 6: Bureau of Evaluation Equipped

Over \$250,000 was spent to equip the BE.

USAID/Niger through the EA Project funded \$270,939.84 worth of equipment to help set up the Evaluation unit. The following is a breakdown of commodities procured:

Vehicles	89,873.00
Office equipment	143,891.28
Micro-computers	37,175.56
Publication, and training material	30,863.12
Household furniture	16,975.58
	<hr/>
	\$318,778.54

Six vehicles were bought to carry out the applied evaluation training exercises. The six vehicles were:

- 1 Starlite
- 1 Corona
- 4 Land Cruisers

A large quantity of office equipment (office furniture, typewriters, etc.) was also procured. Four micro-computers (2 Apple II and 2 IBM/AT) and other computer equipment was also procured for the project for the purpose of : 1) archival information storage and retrieval; 2) data processing; and 3) training.

\$16,975.58 of the Projects funds was also used to procure household furniture and appliances for the long-term technical assistance. According to PIL #21 and #28 USAID/Niger was allowed to retain these items at the end of the project for use in other USAID-funded projects.

Achievement 7: Sectoral Impact Evaluations

At least four major sectoral impact evaluations had been conducted under the project.

The four major sectoral impact evaluations were: 1) the labor-time capacity of peasants on the irrigated agricultural perimeters; 2) the social impact of three of the regional agricultural productivity projects; 3) rural hydrology sector; and 4) rural analysis of investment and programming in Dosso. The evaluation work enabled the Ministry to further several project goals: on-the-job training of evaluation staff, establishment of institutional links to other ministries and research institutes, and provided experience in the management and organization of impact evaluation.

Achievement 8: Publications

Six publications were developed by the BE as tools for data gathering on project and for monitoring and evaluation for the DEPP and

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other ministries.

The six publications were:

- 1) **Etat D'Execution Budget D'Investissement**
a monthly publication dealing with the financial status of development activities.
- 2) **Bilan Etat D'execution du Programme**
a yearly publication dealing with the status of development activities, e.g. problems encountered.
- 3) **Program de Investment de l'Etat**
a yearly publication dealing with financial data on development activities.
- 4) **Table - Development Activities**
a bi-yearly publication reviewing development activities.
- 5) **Dossier Standard**
a yearly standardized form sent out to collect financial information on development activities.
- 6) **Information Forms**
a yearly form that is sent out to collect information for the Bilan.

V. PROJECT FINANCES

According to USAID/Niger's Financial Data Monthly Project Report dated July 31, 1989 the total disbursement of the EA Project was \$1,885,334.59. Funds of \$114,665.41 were not disbursed at the end of the project. According to the Moussa Dambo USAID/Niger Financial Analysis as of September 1989 these funds were not de-earmarked or de-obligated.

For a summary of the Project Implementation Letters and project budget see Appendix C, Project Finances.

APPENDICES