

PN-AAU-400

43589

**Sustaining Rural
Development:
A Guide for
Project Planners,
Managers,
Evaluators,
and Trainers**

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Prepared under the Organization and Administration
of Integrated Rural Development Project (936-5300)
supported by the Office of Rural and Institutional
Development, Bureau for Science and Technology,
Agency for International Development.

May 1984



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PREFACE

This guide makes available to development professionals key lessons learned through the U.S. Agency for International Development contract on the Organization and Administration of Integrated Rural Development. Those expected to benefit from the guide include:

- Field officers developing scopes of work for technical assistance;
- Project design teams concerned with institutional and sustainability issues;
- Evaluation teams considering project management, and institutional and long-term viability issues;
- Short-term assistance staff addressing implementation issues;
- Trainers conducting courses on program design, implementation, and evaluation; and
- Field workers and project and program managers wishing to maintain a focus on longer-term objectives in the midst of daily pressures to deal with immediate problems.

Host country personnel, donor agency staff, personnel of private voluntary organizations, counterparts, and technical advisers are all considered as potential users. The primary audience, however, is expected to be AID professionals engaged in rural development.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	i
CHAPTER I	
INTRODUCTION	1
UNDERLYING PERSPECTIVE	1
Figure 1: Intervention to Promote Self-Reliance	2
EXPERIENCE BASE AND EMPHASIS.	3
ORGANIZATION AND USE	3
CHAPTER II	
FACTORS THAT AFFECT SELF-SUSTAINING BENEFITS.	5
EXTERNAL SUPPORT	6
FINANCIAL RESOURCES	7
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY	8
CHAPTER III	
KEY QUESTIONS FOR ASSESSING PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY.	11
REFERENCES	13
CHAPTER IV	
INFORMATION STRATEGIES FOR PROJECT DESIGN	15
INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECT DESIGN . .	15
Technical Decisions	16
Understanding the Project Environment	16
Determining an Appropriate Development Strategy	16
Fitting the Project Strategy and Components to Regional, Sectoral, and National Objectives	16
Establishing Objectives for Each Group.	16

Organizational Decisions	17
Determining the Appropriate Project Structure	17
Defining Workable Managements Arrange- ments for the Project	17
Establishing a Commitment from Within the Host Government to Implement the Project as Designed	17
RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY METHODS	17
Examination of Written Records.	17
Informal Delphi	17
Confidential Interviews	18
Key Informants	18
Direct Observation of Behavior.	18
Workshops	19
ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY METHODS.	19
Table 1. Reconnaissance Survey Methods . .	20
REFERENCES	23

CHAPTER V

ADJUSTING TO EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS	25
---	----

ASSESSING EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS	25
Table 2: Questions to Assess Political Support for Continuing Project Benefits .	28
Table 3: Questions to Assess the Effect of Macroeconomic Policies on Project Sustainability	34
RESPONDING TO EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS.	38
Using Conditions Precedent as Leverage. . .	38
Diverting Project Resources	38
Documenting Impact.	39
REFERENCES.	40

CHAPTER VI

ADJUSTING TO FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS . . .	41
--	----

DETERMINING THE COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES	41
Table 4: Questions to Determine the Cost- Effectiveness of Project Activities . . .	44
Determining If A Project Can Cover Recurrent Costs	52
Table 5: Questions to Determine the Ability of The Project to Cover Recurrent Costs .	54
IDENTIFYING ALTERNATIVE REVENUE SOURCES	62
RESPONDING TO RIGID FINANCIAL SYSTEMS	62
REFERENCES	65

CHAPTER VII
DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY. . . 67

ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY 68
 Table 6: Factors to Consider in Assessing
 Organizational Capacity 70
 Table 7: Questions to Assess Institutional
 Capacity. 72
 Table 8: Questions to Assess Institutional
 Incentives. 80
 GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL
 CAPACITY 86
 Project Placement: Guidelines for Selecting
 and Evaluating Organizations to
 Implement Projects 86
 Table 9: Alternative Strategies for
 Project Placement 88
 Table 10: Questions to Evaluate the
 Capability of an Organization to
 Implement a Project 92
 Organizational Linkages: Guidelines for
 Coordinating Project Functions 94
 Table 11: Example of a Responsibility
 Chart 96
 Decentralization: Guidelines for Increasing
 Participation 99
 Table 12: Strengths and Weaknesses of
 Centralization and Decentralization . 102
 Training: Guidelines for Developing
 Project Managers 106
 Modeling Management Practices 106
 Management Training 107
 Improving the Effectiveness of
 Management Training 109
 Alternative Strategies for Training . . 110
 Table 13: Advantages and Disadvantages
 of Various Training Approaches . . . 112
 Technical Assistance: Guidelines for
 Improving Effectiveness 116
 Contracting Mechanisms. 116
 Table 14: Alternative Contracting
 Mechanisms. 118
 Technical Assistance Roles. 120
 Table 15: Four Technical Assistance
 Roles 122
 Improving the Effectiveness of
 Technical Assistance. 124
 REFERENCES 125

ANNEX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF IRD PUBLICATIONS. . . 127

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Organizational issues rank high among implementation problems. Recognizing this fact, Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), with the support of the Office of Rural and Institutional Development in the U.S. Agency for International Development's Bureau for Science and Technology and the assistance of the Research Triangle Institute, has studied issues concerning the organization and administration of integrated rural development projects and sought ways to resolve them.

Results of this research have been published as working papers, field reports, journal articles, and books. (Annex A lists these publications.) This guide synthesizes many of the lessons learned from this research.

UNDERLYING PERSPECTIVE

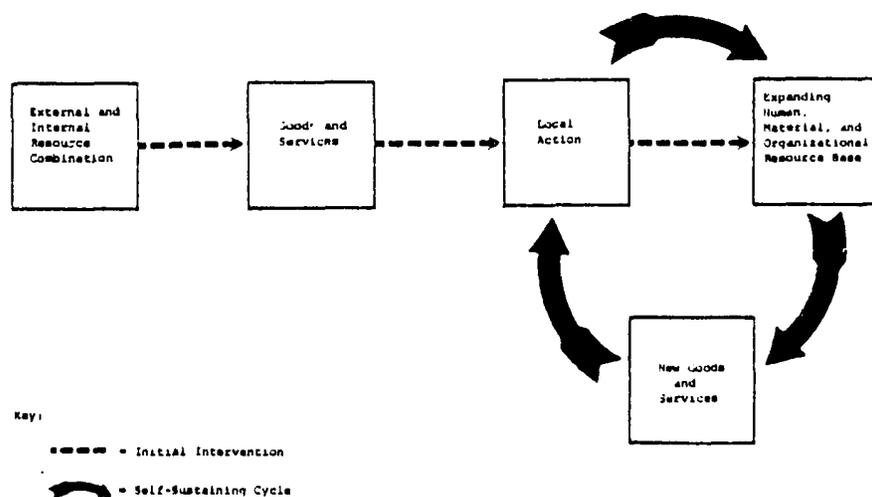
External assistance is usually given to projects for only a few years. The real measure of a project's success, however, is what benefits continue after outside support ends. Unfortunately, many projects focus on relatively short-term results rather than long-term benefits.

Technical assistance, project designs, and implementation actions should be judged by their contribution to sustaining desired benefits. That is, planners and implementers should consider how particular decisions will affect the ability of local organizations and beneficiaries to carry on after outside assistance ends. Hiring an outside manager, for example, may help get a road built on schedule. But if the Ministry of Works does not have the capacity to maintain it, early completion leads only to early decay. Thus, the project strategy as well as the type of technical assistance should emphasize building the capacity necessary to continue benefits.

Capacity building may be needed in multiple settings; village organizations, public bureaucracies, private agencies, and national policy units may all require increased capabilities if project-initiated improvements are to become self-sustaining.

Achieving self-sustaining development, therefore, requires a focus on post-project performance. This focus is depicted in Figure 1. In this diagram, a project is shown as the application of resources to produce a set of goods and services that local populations use. For example, farmer training (a service) is transformed into use of improved cultivation practices (a response). This should lead to increased income and improved well-being among farmers and an expanded organizational capacity to continue to offer relevant technical services. The central focus, however, should not be to deliver project services. Instead, it should be on how these services will be delivered after outside assistance ends.

FIGURE 1: INTERVENTION TO PROMOTE SELF-RELIANCE



The underlying perspective of this guide is the need to focus on post-project dynamics during the project's design, implementation, and evaluation.

EXPERIENCE BASE AND EMPHASIS

This guide is based on field work conducted from 1978 to 1984. During that time, 24 programs in 19 countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Near East received assistance from specialists on the design, management, and evaluation of rural development projects.

The guide emphasizes the capacity of organizations to sustain benefits in rural environments, that is, the ability of organizations to attract funds, personnel, and technologies and convert them to desired results. This emphasis has been chosen for two reasons. First, as problems have been identified, a key element has surfaced -- inadequate organizational capacity to carry on after outside funding ends. Second, AID policy and field experience indicate that capacity building is a legitimate and practical activity for donor-assisted development projects.

Much of the field work on which this guide is based focused on integrated rural development. However, factors affecting long-term benefits apply to most types of projects undertaken in rural areas. For this reason, the guidelines in the following chapters can be applied to virtually all rural development projects.

ORGANIZATION AND USE

This guide is intended to assist planners and managers to assess issues that affect the continuation of project benefits and to develop appropriate strategies to resolve them. It does so by:

- Describing three basic factors that persistently affect the likelihood that project benefits will continue -- external support, financial resources, and organizational capacity (Chapter II);

- Presenting a set of key questions to help planners and evaluators determine if a project is designed and implemented to continue benefits (Chapter III);
- Reviewing alternative methods for collecting data needed to analyze sustainability issues and formulate responses (Chapter IV);
- Providing sets of specific questions to assist field personnel to analyze the potential effects on particular projects of external support (Chapter V), financial resources (Chapter VI), and organizational capacity (Chapter VII); and
- Suggesting approaches for designing and implementing projects to increase the likelihood that benefits will continue (Chapters V-VII).

This guide should serve as a point of departure for design and implementation work rather than as a comprehensive plan for success. Therefore, wide margins are provided in which users may add comments from their own experiences or modify suggested guidelines to reflect particular situations. References are included at the end of the chapters for those who wish to pursue specific subjects.

CHAPTER II

FACTORS THAT AFFECT SELF-SUSTAINING BENEFITS

Donor agencies generally regard projects as a means to initiate benefits among specific target groups. The logic is that once activities are well under way, outside assistance can be withdrawn and benefits will continue and expand with support from local sources. Thus, for example, a project might seek to raise farmer incomes by introducing improved seed and cultivation practices, training extension staff and farmers, and creating or strengthening marketing channels. Once benefits begin to flow, public or private organizations in the country will provide the resources and services required to continue project activities and expand benefits. In this respect, the purpose of donor assistance is to fund some of the investment costs needed to establish a means for realizing long-term benefits.

Unfortunately, projects often generate only temporary infusions of assets, personnel, and services, with the result that benefits diminish or end when outside assistance is withdrawn. For development to take place, however, project benefits must continue and expand. This requires that planners and managers consider project strategies that will increase the likelihood that benefits will be sustained.

Three sets of factors affect the likelihood that benefits will be sustained:

- External support, including the macro-economic policy environment in which a project is set and the degree of political support it receives;
- Financial resources, including the cost-effectiveness of technologies and service delivery systems, and the availability of revenues to cover future financial needs; and
- Organizational capacity, including public and private agency resources and incentives to carry on activities without outside assistance.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Political support, at various levels of government, is essential for a project to succeed. In the absence of this support, project objectives may be changed or essential resources diverted to other activities.

When a government is committed to a project, political pressures may still combine to undermine its long-term success. The need for quick, visible results, for example, may lead to the introduction of expensive technologies or systems for delivering services that cannot be maintained in the long run. Too much political support in the early stages of a project may create expectations that this support will always be forthcoming. This is particularly evident in projects that initially subsidize the costs of labor, equipment, or technology to induce participation. Political pressures may also promote the continuation of a project that is not achieving its stated objectives or providing benefits to its target population.

The political environment influences virtually all aspects of project design and implementation. Political considerations may affect the choice of technology, the amount of time allowed for project implementation, the areas chosen for the project, and the availability of recurrent cost financing (including the willingness to institute user fees or increase local government revenues).

Macroeconomic policies directly affect project performance. Domestic price ceilings, designed to tax exports and maintain low food prices, can lower or eliminate incentives for farmers to increase production or adopt agricultural innovations. Low producer prices also can discourage traders and merchants from providing critical services.

Import tariffs or quotas to foster domestic production of agricultural inputs may result in increased costs to farmers. Foreign exchange controls may restrict the importation of commodities critical to continue project activities.

Restrictive monetary policies can limit the access of beneficiaries to credit; tight budget restrictions may lead to shortages in personnel, equipment, supplies, and administrative support. Inflationary policies can encourage speculation in investments.

Economic policies may make it more difficult to sustain an activity after project support ends. For example, efforts to increase basic food production through the heavy use of chemical fertilizer cannot be sustained when a country must use scarce foreign exchange to import fertilizer or when the rural infrastructure is inadequate to ensure timely distribution.

Furthermore, national policies can favor the public sector over private sector initiatives. Thus, a public credit bank may embark on a complex and difficult venture to deliver inputs to farmers rather than relying on its established credit programs to encourage private suppliers to provide this service. Moreover, public sector organizations frequently are not structured to provide incentives for their employees to ensure the provision of cost-effective services.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Frequently, project benefits end after external assistance is withdrawn because the government cannot finance recurring costs or additional investments. In part, these problems stem from the high levels of donor-subsidized investments that have resulted in excessive maintenance costs. Donors, however, have been reluctant to subsidize recurrent costs (which they view as consumption) to complement their support to development activities (which they view as investment).

The recurrent cost needs of a particular project may not seem excessive. However, the aggregate demand on a country's budget for recurrent funds in a large number of donor-initiated projects can become a severe burden.

One reason countries cannot absorb the recurrent cost burden is that projects often introduce more expensive technologies than necessary. Excessive costs also stem from trying to do too much too soon. As a result, many

projects are launched on a larger scale and aimed at a greater target population than the country can financially support.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Rural development projects depend on many organizations to mobilize and direct resources and provide basic services. A project might, for example, include central or regional research, credit, extension, and training organizations and local private and public agencies in the project area. Usually these organizations will have to be created or strengthened during the implementation phase. When external support ends, they must be able to continue their activities, often with fewer resources or less support.

Many projects, however, are designed and implemented without adequate attention given to how organizations will provide benefits once donor assistance ends. In fact, projects are often designed to bypass established organizations on the grounds that they are too weak to implement planned activities. This strategy results in the creation of temporary agencies that set up parallel services and often attract qualified personnel away from established organizations.

Foreign technicians providing on-the-job training to counterparts frequently have not produced the desired results. One problem is the scarcity of qualified host country staff to serve as counterparts. Equally important, however, is that government and donor agencies can more easily monitor project activities by, for example, kilometers of road built or numbers of persons trained than by changes in organizational behavior. As a result, technical assistance staff often focus more on immediate results than on building long-term capacity.

External support, financial resources, and organizational capacity must be present for development benefits to be sustained. Without organizational capacity, for example, even a project that has strong political support and is well funded will be unable to deliver benefits. Similarly, a strong organization will not be able to maintain project activities if political antagonism exists or if funds are no longer available.

Each of these factors is considered in the following chapters, and guidance is provided for assessing their effects on particular projects. The emphasis of the guide, however, is on organizational capacity because it affects how policies are formulated and evaluated and how resources are allocated and managed. In addition, project designers and managers most frequently work with and through local organizations. Decisions regarding project strategy and activities, therefore, are likely to have most immediate impact on organizational capabilities and performance.

CHAPTER III

KEY QUESTIONS FOR ASSESSING PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The following chapters provide questions to assess the effects of external support, financial resources, and organizational capacity on projects. To provide an overview of the issues affecting sustainability, this chapter comprises a set of basic or key questions that project planners and managers can use to determine if projects are designed and carried out in a way that will lead to a continuation of benefits. These questions may serve as a focus for initiating project design activities and for reviewing the performance of on-going projects:

- What benefits are to be sustained? A careful distinction should be made between temporary, project-related outputs and intended long-term benefits.
- What resources will be required to fund long-term benefit flows? Will project systems be self-supporting (for example, a credit system whose administrative costs are covered by interest income), or will a permanent subsidy be required? It is particularly important to distinguish recurrent costs from capital costs in this analysis.
- What will be the source of needed external resources? If donor funding will eventually be terminated, possible long-term sources for funds and personnel should be identified before the activity begins.
- Are the organizational and personnel capacities sufficient (or are they being developed) to maintain essential systems to continue project benefits? Organizational capacity, management expertise, and appropriate incentives are key issues.

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- Are the permanent aspects of the delivery of services being institutionalized in local public or private organizations? If so, are additional administrative resources required (for example, extension agents or credit staff), or are there already staff members whose productivity can be increased to meet long-term needs?
- How much of the requirement for both financial and administrative inputs can be undertaken locally? Inputs provided by government agencies or private enterprises in or near the project area reduce dependency, increase predictability, and serve the interests of local control.
- Do policies threaten the assumption of project activities by local organizations? If price controls make private activities unprofitable or personnel policies in public organizations make desirable performance improbable, sustainability is threatened.
- Do projected benefits justify the investment of external resources in light of realistic constraints and opportunity costs? Projects often represent funds in search of activities. Continuation, in contrast, represents activities competing for funds. A host government may view certain activities as a poor investment, even if they were once approved for donor funding.
- What constituencies will gain from project success? Local organizations are not monolithic, and a key to success is involving those who believe it is in their interest for a project to work. This involvement is needed for post-investment sustainability, and it should begin during the project development phase. Constituency building is a vital element of implementation.

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CHAPTER IV

INFORMATION STRATEGIES FOR PROJECT DESIGN

The availability of relevant information in a form useful for decision making is a major constraint many project planners face. Efforts to collect and process data for a region or sector can take several years, with the result that much of the data are outdated when they appear. Often, these data are difficult to disaggregate for use at the project level. In addition, data requirements differ among specific projects. As a result of these constraints, most design teams must incorporate data collection and analysis tasks within their scopes of work. Sometimes information needs can be addressed just prior to, or as the initial phase of, design. More often, however, information must be gathered while formulating ideas and developing project plans.

Strategies for collecting data include those that are relatively short term, loosely structured, and follow a reconnaissance survey model, and those that are highly formalistic and follow a statistical survey model. One advantage of reconnaissance survey methods, however, is that they fit into time and resource constraints of many projects while providing a way of rapidly synthesizing data into usable information. They can therefore serve as an effective and efficient means to address many of the information requirements of rural development projects.

This chapter summarizes characteristics of reconnaissance and statistical surveys in the context of basic decisions that need to be made in planning rural development projects. It then discusses reconnaissance survey methods that planners can use to gather and interpret data. In the following chapters, various reconnaissance methods are suggested as ways to assess factors affecting the continuation of project benefits.

INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECT DESIGN

Project designs emerge from combining information about existing conditions within a project area with theories or strategies of rural development. This information is needed for both technical and organizational decisions.

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Technical Decisions

Understanding the Project Environment

Statistical surveys can provide substantial information and often in considerable detail on the magnitude of specific variables, including age, education, employment, and income levels. But important information on the linkages and dynamics of the area is usually less forthcoming from this method.

Reconnaissance surveys, however, can be used to gather and assimilate information on the area's political, social, cultural, and economic dynamics. This type of survey emphasizes reactions of leaders and project participants to proposed interventions.

Determining an Appropriate Development Strategy

An appropriate development strategy can be determined only through the application of development theory to the knowledge of existing conditions in the project area. In this respect, planners will often gain more from a four-week reconnaissance survey in the project area than from a four-volume statistical survey report.

Fitting the Project Strategy and Components to Regional, Sectoral, and National Objectives

A formal survey, if available, is not applicable to this task. Instead, planners need to relate development strategies to policy directives and program priorities.

Establishing Objectives for Each Group

General objectives must be set as project guidelines. Statistical surveys may be useful to generate certain base-line indicators that can be remeasured during implementation. The reliability of these surveys in capturing such important variables as household income, however, is often suspect.

Organizational Decisions

Determining the Appropriate Project Structure

Knowledge of the decision-making processes of a host country government at the district, provincial, and national levels is critical in determining the appropriate project structure. This knowledge can best be gained through observation and discussion rather than by sampling beneficiary groups.

Defining Workable Management Arrangements for the Project

Planners need a great deal of information on the cooperation between and among government agencies, resources to be committed, likely changes in government structure, and ability of the line agencies to supply assistance as promised. Planners need to define management arrangements for the project based on information obtained by assimilating, aggregating, synthesizing, and analyzing the possibilities for alternative project structures.

Establishing a Commitment from Within the Host Government to Implement the Project as Designed

A statistical survey may be used to demonstrate findings to host government officials, but this survey should be supplemented by a reconnaissance survey in which government officials join in testing hypotheses and presenting the findings to higher-level government officials.

RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY METHODS

Examination of Written Records

Virtually all project planners examine written records. Feasibility studies, design documents, evaluations, administrative reports, organizational by-laws, and academic studies all may provide potentially useful data.

Informal Delphi

This is a group discussion approach to consensus building that engages informed persons in a dialogue to expose variations in the interpretation of events, policies, or objectives.

The user develops a logical sequence of questions to focus the attention of participants on contingencies and to refine their perceptions of decision criteria. For example, by pursuing a gradually narrowing series of "what if" questions, planners can obtain an accurate idea of how a proposed project activity will affect actual practices of beneficiaries.

Confidential Interviews

Confidential interviews can be used to collect data on actual behavior, attitudes, past experiences, and stated and unstated policies. Interviews with project staff and beneficiaries as well as government officials, community leaders, local merchants, and donor staff are useful. The information received, however, often will be incomplete and biased. Users, therefore, should interview individuals who represent different perspectives and interests regarding a particular project.

Key Informants

Key informants can be identified among project personnel, expatriate technicians, farmers, and local community leaders who are knowledgeable about the project. They can assist in clarifying issues and assessing the validity of indicators, data collection approaches, and data sources. They can provide information that might be inaccessible to an outside planner and help distinguish between frequent occurrences and exceptions.

Several key informants are usually essential, partly to counteract inevitable biases. Moreover, if the project is complex, no one person will have all the necessary information. Those who are enthusiastic about the project should be counterbalanced by informants who are somewhat critical. Key informants also should be sought from outside the project area.

Direct Observation of Behavior

Observing project operations, settings, and behavior will reveal information that is not discussed in project documentation and that participants may not provide. The nature of the interaction between clients and project personnel, quality of training and other services, and adequacy of facilities are behaviors to be observed.

Workshops

Workshops that use interactive methods can provide project planners with a means of obtaining and organizing data. In addition, workshops are a useful way to tap the knowledge held by beneficiaries and organizational members while testing project priorities and strategies.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF
RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY METHODS

Table 1 notes advantages and disadvantages of each reconnaissance survey method.

TABLE
1



TABLE 1. RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY METHODS

Advantages	Method	Disadvantages
<p>Language barrier is lessened.</p> <p>Documents can be reviewed at convenience of interviewer; does not disrupt staff activities.</p>	<p>Record Examination</p>	<p>Records are often inaccurate or incomplete.</p> <p>Difficult to estimate sample bias.</p> <p>Limited in its information about actual organizational behavior.</p>
<p>Provides primary data.</p> <p>Can expose data not anticipated by investigator.</p> <p>Relatively low cost.</p>	<p>Direct Observation</p>	<p>May be biased by user's presence.</p> <p>Susceptible to misinterpretation by user.</p> <p>May contain seasonal bias.</p> <p>Lack of representativeness.</p>
<p>Protects informer.</p> <p>Allows access to examples of actual dynamics.</p> <p>Increases extremes and range of perspectives.</p>	<p>Confidential Interview</p>	<p>Usually highly biased</p> <p>Emotionally taxing.</p> <p>Requires leads from other informants.</p> <p>If interpreter is required, protection is lost; interpreter also may filter information.</p> <p>Sample may be limited or confidentiality impossible in some settings.</p>

TABLE 1. (continued)

Method		
Advantages		Disadvantages
	←————→	
Useful in clarifying issues and testing conclusions.	Key Informants	Bias or perspectives of key informants may have undue influence on results.
Acts as filter to avoid culturally objectionable questions or data-gathering techniques.		Excessive time may be required to identify the best informants.
Key informant linked to key decision makers can facilitate implementation of recommendations.		Some informants may alienate potential participants who are key to implementing recommendation.
Involvement in process can build skills of informant.		Rapport between key informants and evaluators is essential.
Facilitates participation and exposes interpersonal dynamics.	Informal Delphi	Minimizes extremes and range of perspectives by inducing consensus.
Increases accuracy of investigator's understanding.		Emotionally taxing.
Increases sample representativeness.		May require interpreter.
Generates data beyond interview design.		Exposes views of informers.
Low cost.		Susceptible to domination by a strong personality.
Can facilitate dialogue among participants.		Disrupts staff activity.

TABLE 1. (continued)

Advantages	Methods	Disadvantages
Builds capacity and elicits necessary information.	Workshop	Costly in terms of staff or beneficiary time and effort.
Promotes investment in and receptiveness of results on the part of participants.		Requires scarce facilitative skills.
Can lead directly to identification of strategies to improve situation.		Status difference among participants may affect attendance and participation.
Communicates information to decision makers as simultaneous part of collection process.		
Can produce formal commitments, recommendations, or analyses based on group effort.		

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ADJUSTING TO EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS

ASSESSING EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS

Any development project is implemented within a political and economic environment that can impose constraints on how the project is designed and who ultimately benefits from it. Chapter II described ways in which external constraints affect project decisions. These include:

- Absence of political support, resulting in changed project objectives or diverted or reallocated resources;
- Too much political support, creating false expectations of continued support or continuing projects that do not meet objectives;
- Pressures for immediate results that lead to the introduction of expensive or overly sophisticated technologies; and
- Macroeconomic policies that conflict with rural development objectives, particularly:
 - Ceilings to keep food prices down, but that also lower or eliminate incentives to increase agricultural production,
 - Import tariffs and quotas to encourage domestic production of agricultural inputs, but that also result in increased costs for agricultural inputs,
 - Foreign exchange controls that restrict the importation of critical agricultural inputs,
 - Restrictive monetary policies that limit access to agricultural production credits, and

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- Tight budget restrictions that lead to shortages in personnel and administrative support.

The following tables present questions to assist planners and managers to assess the potential effects of external constraints on a project. Table 2 includes questions to evaluate the degree of political support; Table 3 lists questions to assess macroeconomic policies. These tables, and the others that include Questions for Assessment, provide users with a focus for further analysis. Additional questions may be added and those included may be modified for particular situations.



TABLES
2 & 3

TABLE 2: QUESTIONS TO ASSESS POLITICAL SUPPORT

Questions	Assumptions
<p>How much attention does the national government give to the project area and sector compared with other areas of the country and other sectors?</p>	<p>Indicates relative importance of the project area or sector to the government. Significantly lower level of investment may signal lack of support to continue or expand project benefits.</p>
<p>How much support have local and national officials given to this or similar projects in the past?</p>	<p>If the level of support was low in the past, it can be expected to remain low in the future.</p>

FOR CONTINUING PROJECT BENEFITS

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
Government expenditures in recent years by sectors from both the recurrent and development budgets for various regions of the country.	National development and operating budgets; census data.
Foreign aid expenditures in recent years by sector for various regions of the country.	Sector and administrative reports of donor agencies.
Amount of funds budgeted and expended on this project or similar projects for personnel, equipment, and supplies.	Project budgets and financial reports; interviews with project staff, national and local-level government officials, donor staff, and project beneficiaries; evaluation reports.
Responsiveness of policy makers to recommendations of previous project evaluations (e.g., was a sincere attempt made to address the problems that were identified or were recommendations ignored).	Interviews with project staff, local government officials, and project beneficiaries.



TABLE 2. (continued)



Questions	Assumptions
How much support do local and national officials and policy makers express for the project?	The higher the level of support voiced and the broader its base, the better are the chances that financial and material support will be forthcoming.

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
Evidence that government officials and policy makers are familiar with project goals, strategy, and past performance.	Interviews with national and local-level officials, project staff, and donor personnel.
Evidence that government officials and policy makers express support for the continuation of the project.	Interviews with officials; written statements.
Evidence that the government has identified or set aside sources for funding future project activities.	Interviews with government officials.
Evidence that government officials have sought donor support for a second phase or to expand the project.	Interviews with donor staff.
Evidence that local officials have pressured national-level officials to continue supporting the project.	Interviews with local and national-level officials.
Evidence that local and district community leaders have been significantly involved in project planning, needs assessment, and solicitation of community resources, and have attended project meetings.	Interviews with intended beneficiaries, local officials, and donor agency staff.



TABLE 2. (continued)

Questions	Assumptions
<p>Will the project adversely affect local leaders of special interest groups?</p>	<p>If the project adversely affects local leaders of special interest groups, the sustainability of long-term benefits will suffer.</p>
<p>Will individuals or groups outside the target group support the project?</p>	<p>If persons outside the target group benefit from a project and support it, the probability increases that benefit-generating activities will continue.</p>

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
<p>Evidence that the interests of certain socioeconomic, ethnic, or political groups will be adversely affected if the project continues.</p>	<p>Interviews with beneficiaries, community leaders, project staff, government officials, and representatives of interest groups outside the target group.</p>
<p>Evidence of effective mechanisms by which these groups can block or hinder the continuation of benefit-generating project activities by, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Withholding needed complementary resources or services from the project or its beneficiaries; ● Affecting decision making directly through political or economic pressure on policy makers controlling project resources; and ● Dissuading (through persuasion or intimidation) beneficiaries from participating. 	<p>Interviews with beneficiaries, community leaders, project staff, government officials, and representatives of interest groups outside the target group.</p>
<p>Evidence that certain socioeconomic, ethnic, or political groups will support and benefit from a project (or be adversely affected by the termination of project activities).</p>	<p>Interviews with beneficiaries, community leaders, project staff, government officials, and representatives of interest groups outside the target group.</p>

TABLE 3: QUESTIONS TO ASSESS THE EFFECT OF

Questions	Assumptions
How do official prices compare with free market prices for project outputs?	When official prices are significantly lower than free market prices, long-term benefits will not be realized and participation will diminish.
	When official prices are significantly higher than free market prices, a subsidy is created that encourages production at levels that would not otherwise be achieved. These policy-based subsidies, however, may be eliminated after outside funding ends.
What percentage of project output leaks into the parallel market?	A large percentage of output sold through illegal channels indicates that the official price structure is inadequate. An active parallel market, however, also indicates that a vigorous demand for project outputs exists.

MACROECONOMIC POLICIES ON PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
Official and free market prices of project outputs.	Government reports; sector studies from donor agencies; independent marketing studies.
Estimated prices that the beneficiaries or the project would receive in the absence of an official pricing structure.	
Price elasticity estimates for project outputs (i.e., what effect do variations in output prices have on production levels).	Interviews with project staff, local merchants and businessmen, government officials, and beneficiaries.
Quantity and price of project output sold through parallel market channels. Identification of points at which production enters the parallel market.	Market studies.
Degree of access by project beneficiaries to parallel market channels.	Market studies.
Quantity and price of project output sold through official channels.	Market studies.
Evidence of factors such as production quotas and export restrictions that affect the aggregate quantity of project output that could be marketed through official channels.	Market studies.

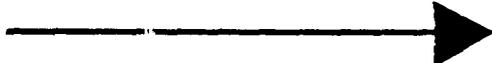




TABLE 3. (continued)



Questions	Assumptions
<p>How do official prices compare with free market prices for project inputs?</p>	<p>When official input prices are higher than those paid in the free market, production objectives might be undercut.</p> <p>When official prices are lower than those the project or beneficiary would pay in the free market, a subsidy is created that may not be continued after outside funding ends.</p>

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
Official prices for inputs needed by the project (e.g., raw materials, equipment, and labor).	Market studies.
Estimated prices that the project or beneficiaries would pay in the absence of an official pricing structure.	Market studies.
Estimates of price elasticity for project inputs (i.e., effects of variations in input prices on purchases and production levels).	Interviews with local merchants and businessmen and beneficiaries.

RESPONDING TO EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS

Project designers and staff can take a number of actions to reduce the effects of external constraints on a particular project. These are discussed below.

Using Conditions Precedent as Leverage

When a decision has been made to proceed with a project, attaching conditions precedent to the release of funds can encourage a government to address, or at least investigate, certain policy constraints.

In a groundnut production project, for example, the donor required that the government study the effects of increased production on farmer incomes, soil fertility, and cultivation of other crops before funds for the last two years of the project could be released. The donor also required that the government grant the project authority to market groundnuts if the results of the study recommended adding a marketing component to the project. In addition, the government was required to agree not to increase grain quotas in the project area so that farmers would have greater incentive to increase production.

The appropriateness of using conditions precedent depends on the kinds of constraints and the ability of the government to act on them. In circumstances in which a government cannot act (even though it may see the problem), demanding conditions precedent will only encourage competition among donors.

Diverting Project Resources

Sometimes it might be necessary to reallocate project resources to address unexpected problems brought on by external factors. This may include reassigning staff to expedite decisions or shifting funds to cover unplanned costs.

High-level political problems in one rural development project, for example, resulted in the government not meeting its funding commitment. As a result, the project manager used money that had been set aside for a revolving credit fund to cover the unexpected shortfall in government

contributions to the project. Initially, this transfer was intended as a loan from one account to another until the project received promised government funds. However, the subsequent failure of the funds to arrive threatened chances for a sustainable credit program.

Documenting Impact

Another possible action is to include in the project's monitoring and evaluation design the means to document the effects of specific constraints on the achievement of project objectives. This action can at least focus attention on the need for project implementers and government officials to be aware of potentially adverse effects that specific constraints might have on a project.

CHAPTER V - REFERENCES

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CHAPTER VI

ADJUSTING TO FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Expensive technologies or service delivery systems, high recurrent costs, and rigid financial systems can prevent projects from securing sufficient or reliable revenues to sustain benefits. This chapter provides questions that planners and managers can use to assess the cost-effectiveness of activities of a project and its ability to cover recurrent costs. The chapter also includes examples of how established financial procedures affect project costs and suggests alternative strategies to strengthen the financial viability of projects.

DETERMINING THE COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The costs of introducing and maintaining technologies and systems for delivering services in a project are often high during donor participation. In many projects, these costs are greater than the government can sustain when foreign assistance is withdrawn. It is important, therefore, to determine if project activities are undertaken in the most cost-effective manner. This will help keep to a minimum additional investment and recurrent costs of technologies and services necessary to continue long-term benefits.

In examining the cost-effectiveness of project activities, designers and implementers should:

- Determine whether the economic analysis originally used to justify the project is still valid, or if subsequent information requires that some costs be revised or others added;
- Determine the lowest possible costs for an effective technology or service delivery system, including estimates of operating and maintenance costs over the anticipated life of alternative technologies;

- Identify the subsidies that are provided to introduce and maintain technologies and services, and evaluate the likelihood that these subsidies will continue after donor assistance is withdrawn;
- Determine the unit cost of goods or services offered in relation to the users' ability to pay;
- Estimate the degree of dependence on foreign assistance to keep the technology or service delivery system operational;
- Determine the extent to which components of the technology can be produced locally;
- Determine the ability of beneficiaries or local enterprises to maintain and repair the technology; and
- Identify any new behavioral practices that beneficiaries will require in order to use project technologies.

Table 4 provides questions and suggested sources of data to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of project technologies and service delivery systems.



TABLE
4

TABLE 4: QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE THE COST-EFFECTIVENESS

Questions	Assumptions
<p>Is the original analysis of project costs and benefits still valid?</p>	<p>Changes in the original analysis of project costs and benefits during implementation will affect (positively or negatively) the likelihood that benefits will become self-sustaining.</p>
<p>Is the unit cost of technology or service delivery higher or lower than in similar projects?</p>	<p>If the unit cost of a technology (e.g., an irrigation system) or the per beneficiary cost of service delivery (e.g., primary health care) is higher than elsewhere, it may indicate potential problems with benefit sustainability.</p>

OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
Original analysis to determine validity of assumptions, either explicit or implicit.	Economic analysis in original project design; secondary documentation regarding current input costs and output prices.
Expected prices of inputs and outputs, cost of goods produced, and service delivery compared with actual costs.	Discussions with project staff, donors, and beneficiaries about implementation experience, prices, performance, and cost of technologies.
Performance of technology used (e.g., yield of new seed varieties and numbers of beneficiaries reached) compared with original predictions.	Observation; direct measurement.
Comparison of this and other projects with respect to scale, scope, complexity, and setting (e.g., level of investment, number of beneficiaries, types of interventions chosen, and resources available).	Project administrative reports; interviews with project staff; reports similar projects.
Installation, operation, and maintenance costs per beneficiary or per unit of output for alternative approaches or technologies.	Discussions with experts on technology or type of service delivery.



TABLE 4. (continued)



Questions	Assumptions
<p>What is the unit cost of the goods or services offered by the project in relation to the users' ability to pay?</p>	<p>If the technology or delivery system provides goods and services to project beneficiaries at a cost that exceeds their ability to pay, it will be impossible to continue delivering those benefits without a continuous infusion of outside resources.</p>
<p>To what extent does the technology or delivery system depend on outside resources to operate?</p>	<p>When outside funding ends, the maintenance experts will leave and the availability of outside resources will be less certain, thus limiting the future performance of the technology or delivery system.</p>

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
Cost per beneficiary per unit of the output generated by the project.	Review of project administrative reports; interviews with project staff.
Amount of funds and resources accruing to households as a result of their using the goods and services provided by the project.	Interviews with beneficiaries; information from household consumption surveys.
Amount of funds and resources available to the average beneficiary household that could be set aside to purchase the goods and services offered by the project.	Financial analysis of the technology.
<p>Estimated degree of dependence, based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of local staff trained and able to maintain the technology; and ● Percentage of resources and parts that are locally procured (taking into account that some parts are more critical than others). 	Observation; direct and indirect measurement; interviews with project staff and experts.
Expected life of the machinery without outside assistance.	
Percentage of the cost of the technology to be covered by foreign exchange.	



TABLE 4. (continued)



Questions	Assumptions
<p>Is the technology or any of its components produced locally?</p>	<p>Exploiting this potential can lower recurrent costs and ensure greater reliability of the technology and delivery system used.</p>
<p>Can local project personnel or beneficiaries maintain and repair the technology during implementation?</p>	<p>If the technology cannot be maintained during implementation, it will probably not be maintained after outside funding ends.</p>
<p>To what extent do the new technologies require different behavioral practices from those required by existing technologies?</p>	<p>The greater the magnitude of the behavioral changes required to adopt a new technology (i.e., its complexity with respect to beneficiary and project staff experience), the more sensitive the technology is to breakdown. For example, an intervention based on changes in existing cultivation practices (e.g., the use of a new hoe) would be easier to sustain than one requiring the adoption of new cultivation practices (e.g., the application of fertilizer).</p>

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
Evidence of opportunities for local production of project inputs that have not been exploited.	Interviews with project staff, local community leaders, and local businessmen and merchants.
Evidence that facilities for local manufacturing exist and that local production is feasible.	
Percentage of vehicles and equipment inoperable due to repair problems at any given time during implementation.	Project administrative reports; vehicle maintenance and procurement logs.
Average length of time equipment awaits repair (e.g., number of work-days lost).	Observation; direct and indirect measurement techniques.
Description of new skills that project staff and beneficiaries must learn to use the technology.	Interviews with project staff and beneficiaries; observation; direct and indirect measurement.

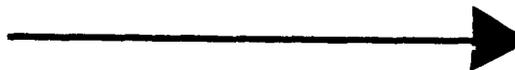
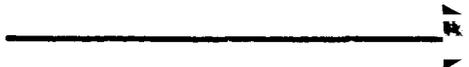




TABLE 4. (continued)



Questions	Assumptions
To what extent are para-professionals used in implementing the project?	Exploiting this potential can lower recurrent costs and ensure greater reliability of the technology and delivery system.

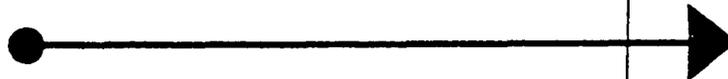
Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
Evidence that opportunities not exploited exist for paraprofessionals.	Interviews with project staff, local community leaders, and beneficiaries.
Cost of paraprofessionals compared with that of professionals.	
Evidence that paraprofessionals have been integrated into other projects in the country or have undertaken similar activities in the past.	

DETERMINING IF A PROJECT CAN COVER RECURRENT COSTS

To increase the likelihood that project benefits will continue after donor assistance ends, planners and managers should determine the level of revenues required to cover recurrent costs and identify reliable sources for these funds. This analysis should consider:

- The extent to which total project revenues will equal or exceed recurrent expenses necessary to continue benefit-generating activities;
- The probability that some project activities can and will be shifted to the private sector; and
- The likelihood that any subsidies will be phased out during the life of the project.

Table 5 provides questions to determine the probability that a project will meet recurrent cost requirements.



TABLE

5

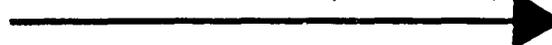
TABLE 5: QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE THE ABILITY OF THE

Questions	Assumptions
<p>Will the project generate sufficient revenues to cover the recurrent expenditures required to continue benefit-generating activities?</p>	<p>If revenues do not equal recurrent costs, project activities cannot be sustained without continued subsidy.</p>

PROJECT TO COVER RECURRENT COSTS

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
Estimates of the cost of continuing project activities.	Financial reports.
Estimates of revenues available to meet recurrent costs, including:	
● Percentage of recurrent expenditures to be covered through project receipts (sale of project outputs, user charges, fees, and beneficiary contributions);	Interviews with project staff; financial reports.
● Probability that revenues will be generated through receipts, user charges, etc., based on evidence of the use of these approaches during implementation;	Review of project documentation, especially administrative and financial reports.
● Percentage of recurrent expenditures to be covered from local government revenues (taxes and fees);	Interviews with local government officials and project staff.
● Probability that local government revenues will be allocated to the project, based on willingness of local governments to apply revenues to the project's needs;	Interviews with local government officials; government and project financial reports.
● Percentage of recurrent expenditures to be covered through additional donor contributions;	Interviews with project staff, national-level officials, and staff of donor agencies.
● Probability that donor funds will be available to cover recurrent costs; and	Interviews with donor agency officials.
● Percentage of recurrent expenditures to be covered by the government agency implementing the project.	Interviews with project staff and national-level agency officials.

(continued)



● TABLE 5. (continued)



Questions	Assumptions

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Probability that implementing government agency will have adequate funds to continue implementation, based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Relative growth of the institution's budget over the project's life, -- Size of the institution's budget relative to the project's future needs, and -- Timely delivery of funds and resources by the institution during project implementation; 	<p>Interviews with institution officials; review of institutions' budgets and budget allocations.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of recurrent expenditures to be covered by other government agencies; and 	<p>Interviews with project staff and officials of government institutions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Probability that revenues will be forthcoming from these institutions, based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Awareness by policy makers that their institution is expected to pick up recurrent costs after outside funding ends, -- Viable plans for transferring project activities to an institution or government agency, and -- Progressive transfer of the recurrent cost burden to the host government during project implementation. 	

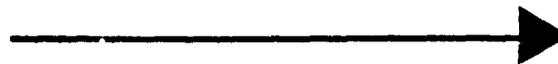


TABLE 5. (continued)

Questions	Assumptions
<p>Will private enterprises take over some activities necessary to sustain benefits?</p>	<p>If private enterprises assume some of the activities critical to generating benefits, the burden of financing the recurrent costs of these activities will not have to be totally dependent on public funds.</p>
<p>Will essential subsidies be continued?</p>	<p>After outside aid terminates, subsidies (use of free facilities, seconded personnel, low-cost acquisition of inputs, and high staff salaries) often cannot be continued. Thus, real project operating costs will increase. The greater the proportion of these subsidies relative to total project costs, the greater is potential threat to benefit sustainability.</p>

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
Evidence of private enterprises already performing related activities.	Interviews with project staff, local community leaders, and local merchants and businessmen.
Evidence that financial incentives exist to encourage private firms to take over these activities.	Interviews with government officials and businessmen.
Identification of subsidies. (Each subsidy within a project should be examined separately since some will be more amenable to adjustment than others, depending on the type and amount of the subsidy and who benefits from it.)	Review of project documentation, especially administrative and financial reports.
Value of each subsidy identified, based on the true cost of the services or resources (e.g., how much it would cost to rent office space if public facilities were no longer available).	Interviews with project staff.
Probability that these subsidies would continue after the project ends.	Interviews with project staff, government officials, and administrators of institutions that provide subsidized services and resources.

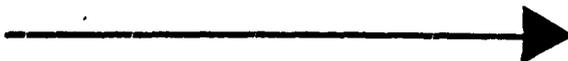


TABLE 5. (continued)



Questions	Assumptions
What evidence is there that subsidies are being phased out over life of the project?	If subsidies are phased out during project implementation, the threat they pose to the sustainability of benefits will be reduced.

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
<p>Evidence that measures have been initiated to reduce or eliminate subsidies (e.g., user charges, increases in output fees, or payment of real costs for project inputs).</p>	<p>Interviews with project staff, community leaders, and beneficiaries; review of project documentation, especially administrative and financial reports.</p>
<p>Willingness of beneficiaries to shoulder the increased cost of the services they receive, measured by level of participation and use of services offered without the subsidy as opposed to the level of participation when the subsidy was included.</p>	<p>Observation; use of key informants.</p>

IDENTIFYING ALTERNATIVE REVENUE SOURCES

If a project does not generate sufficient revenues to cover its recurrent costs, implementers may have to restructure some project activities or seek supplemental sources of funding. Sources for additional funding include:

- User fees or beneficiary contributions that are structured according to the benefits received and the users' ability to pay;
- Revenues from other government agencies, particularly local government agencies in the project area with a mandate to collect discretionary funds;
- Grants or loans from other donor organizations, particularly if the project was begun on a pilot basis. (Some donors are more willing to invest in projects that have established their effectiveness in a pilot phase than to undertake new ventures.); and
- Private enterprises that can provide services or technologies at a lower cost per unit than can a public agency. (These costs would be passed to the beneficiaries, but perhaps at more affordable rates than those levied by government organizations.)

RESPONDING TO RIGID FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

Public bureaucracies function according to strictly defined rules and procedures, often with little flexibility to adapt to the needs of a specific project. This rigidity is particularly evident in financial (as well as personnel) rules and regulations. The effect of these broadly applied procedures on rural development is compounded by the tendency of financial systems to emphasize control over current resources rather than management of future benefits.

The nature of development projects implies changes from the status quo. Therefore, established financial procedures can impede project effectiveness even when adequate levels of funding are theoretically available. Rigid financial systems can affect project performance in several ways. These include:

- Established procedures that result in added project costs.
An agroforestry project, for example, had to revise plans to use less-expensive local materials to construct a facility because of the government's requirement that only licensed suppliers be used;
- Procedures that prevent implementing certain project activities.
In the agroforestry project, plans to hire local farmers as extension agents (which had proved effective during the pilot phase) had to be abandoned because the civil service system did not have a category for farmers. The project, therefore, could not pay farmers from government funds; and
- Procedures that affect implementation schedules.
Failure to consider annual funding cycles during project design, for example, has often resulted in the loss of counterpart funding for the first year -- a situation that might be avoided by applying for funds during the design process.

Several responses can be made to rigid systems; however, few are without implications for a project's long-term benefits:

- Donors sometimes can obtain waivers of existing procedures for a particular project;
- Delays may be accepted and implementation schedules adjusted accordingly, or additional staff hired to expedite decisions through the bureaucracy;

- Inventiveness may be encouraged among project managers to find and use informal decision-making channels that often have greater flexibility; and
- Projects that have a high degree of government support may be used to bring about modifications in established procedures that adversely affect many projects.

There is a strong temptation to seek ways to circumvent existing procedures when they tend to be slow and inflexible. Although these efforts might offer quick relief in a particular situation, they seldom become institutionalized. This underscores the importance of project designers and managers knowing and understanding government operating rules and procedures.

CHAPTER VI - REFERENCES

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Few projects will result in long-term benefits unless organizations have the capacity to continue to provide services and support after outside assistance is withdrawn. Although most rural development projects include capacity building as an objective, many fail to establish sufficient capacity among local organizations to sustain benefits.

Often project designers intentionally choose implementation strategies that bypass established organizations or give too much control over project activities to outside advisers. Designers justify these strategies on the grounds that existing organizations are too weak or rigid to meet expected targets. In other situations, planners and managers do not clearly specify the capabilities that are required for a particular project or assess adequately the capacities of participating organizations. In the absence of clearly defined capacity-building strategies, project activities tend to focus on short-term results rather than long-term benefits.

This chapter discusses guidelines to use in assessing organizational capacity and selecting strategies that increase the likelihood that organizations will sustain project benefits. The first section, *Assessing Organizational Capacity*, describes several dimensions of organizational assessment (Table 6). It then presents specific questions for evaluating organizational capacity (Table 7) and organizational incentives (Table 8).

The second section, *Guidelines for Developing Organizational Capacity*, includes suggestions for selecting and implementing capacity-building strategies. Guidelines are presented for deciding:

- Where to locate project responsibilities (Organizational Placement);
- How to coordinate project activities within and among project organizations (Organizational Linkages);

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- How to involve beneficiaries in decision making (Participation and Decentralization);
- How to organize and carry out management development and training programs (Management Development); and
- How to select and use technical assistance to further capacity-building goals (Technical Assistance).

ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

To function effectively, an organization must be able to anticipate and influence change, make informed decisions, and attract and efficiently manage resources. The extent to which an organization possesses these capabilities, however, is difficult to assess. Examining only its structure or resources does not reveal how it will actually perform. Similarly, talented and dynamic leadership, alone, cannot make up for inadequate budgets or unproductive staff. Therefore, designers should examine several dimensions to obtain an indication of an organization's capacity to implement a particular project.

The first dimension is organizational stock, that is, what resources does the organization actually control? For example, agricultural extension units with a well-trained staff, vehicles, effective publications, and communications equipment are more likely to perform well than those without these assets.

The second dimension is organizational behavior, or what management and staff actually do. High levels of stock do not automatically result in high performance levels. Other factors may deter capable people with adequate resources from acting in ways that support a particular project.

The third dimension, and the link between stock and behavior, is organizational incentives. For example, efforts to encourage staff to spend more time in the field working directly with beneficiaries will be stifled if per diem rates are not adequate to cover actual expenses. Similarly, beneficiaries will soon lose interest in a project if the staff consistently fails to consider their views and suggestions.

Within each of these three dimensions, certain factors can be identified to help planners and managers assess an organization's capacity. Table 6 discusses some of these factors.

Two tables follow Table 6. Table 7 comprises questions and data to assess stock and behavior dimensions of organizational capacity. Table 8 poses questions and suggests types of data needed to assess organizational incentives.



TABLE 6: FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN ASSESSING

Organizational Stock

Staffing

- Number and qualifications of staff members
- Clarity and understanding of roles and tasks
- Training resources and programs

Administrative support

- Operational documents and procedures
- Management and planning procedures
- Information systems
- Record keeping
- Adequacy of physical facilities such as vehicles and office equipment
- Adequacy of financial resources

Organizational capacity

- Service delivery systems
- Staff understanding of goals and procedures
- Appropriateness of organizational structure for project

Organizational linkages

- Formal and informal communications networks
- Mechanism for collaboration and information sharing
- Resource sharing
- Service coordination
- Clarity of organizational boundaries
- Linkages to nonformal leaders in rural communities

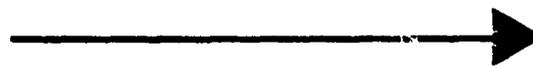
Organizational Behavior

Consistency with project objectives

- Inter-sectoral cooperation
- Hidden agendas
- Commitment to capacity-building objectives
- Resources allocated to support capacity building

Support for involvement of beneficiaries

- Staff-beneficiary communication
- Evidence of joint planning with beneficiaries
- Beneficiary perceptions of project organization
- Staff attitudes toward local decision making
- Criteria for identifying beneficiaries



ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Organizational Incentives

Resources

- Distribution among project levels
- Distribution among project activities
- Means for obtaining additional resources

Staff

- Incentives and rewards for desired performance
- Disincentives affecting staff performance
- Accountability of staff for expected performance
- Opportunities for on-the-job learning
- Opportunities for advancement within organization
- Means of evaluating staff performance
- Means and resources for attracting quality staff

Organizations

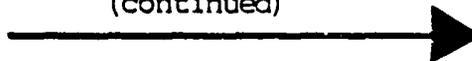
- Accountability of those using organizational resources
- Procedures to motivate participation
- Nature of organizational cooperation
- Rewards for inter-organizational cooperation
- Costs of inter-organizational cooperation

TABLE 7: QUESTIONS TO ASSESS INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Questions	Assumptions
Does the organization have a sufficient number of permanently assigned, trained staff to continue project benefits?	If the staff available once outside funding ends is not sufficient to carry out essential tasks, benefit-generating activities will not continue.

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
<p>Number of staff members necessary to perform critical functions (both technical and administrative) after the project ends.</p>	<p>Review of project documentation, including administrative and financial reports.</p>
<p>Number of staff members currently available and qualified to perform the critical tasks identified. Quality of the staff can be determined by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of years' experience among the staff; ● Level of academic training in key fields; and ● Performance of host country personnel in taking over jobs formerly performed by expatriates. 	<p>Interviews with project staff and government officials, and with beneficiaries to assess the quality of the staff.</p>
<p>Probability that the project will fail if one or more key individuals leave.</p>	<p>Interviews with project staff.</p>
<p>Probability that project personnel will be available after outside funding ends, based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Salary levels of project staff compared with those of alternative employment opportunities; ● Number of unfilled staff positions; ● Turnover of personnel; and ● Average length of time staff members have been with the project. 	<p>Interviews with project staff and government officials; direct observation.</p>
<p>Probability that needed additional staff will be trained prior to the cutoff of outside aid, based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of future manpower needs that will be met based on number of staff to be trained under project; 	<p>Review of project implementation schedules and reports; interviews with project advisers, counterparts, and staff supervisors.</p>

(continued)



● TABLE 7. (continued)



Questions	Assumptions
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Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
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- Presence of counterparts for expatriate advisers;
- Evidence of on-the-job training; and
- Quality of training program, e.g., length, relevance to project needs, and timeliness (i.e., do the trainees return before the expatriate team leaves).

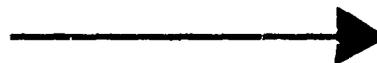


TABLE 7. (continued)

Questions	Assumptions
<p>Does the organization have adequate facilities and resources (vehicles, equipment, and supplies) to support project activities?</p>	<p>If resources available once outside funding ends are not sufficient to carry out the tasks assigned, benefit-generating activities will not continue.</p>
<p>Will available financial resources be adequate to meet post-project needs?</p>	<p>If funds available once outside funding ends are not sufficient to carry out the tasks assigned, benefit-generating activities will not continue.</p>
<p>Have project managers obtained additional resources?</p>	<p>If project managers have successfully obtained additional resources during implementation, it is likely that they will attract resources to fill the void created by the termination of outside funds.</p>

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
Amount and appropriateness of physical resources necessary to carry out critical benefit-generating activities.	Review of project documentation, including administrative and financial reports.
Probability that these resources will be available after outside funding ends.	Interviews with project staff and government officials.
Estimated funds needed to carry out critical benefit-generating activities once outside funding ends.	Review of project documentation, including administrative and financial reports.
Funds currently available to finance project activities.	Interviews with project staff, and government officials; review of project budget and financial reports.
Probability that those budgetary resources will continue to be available once outside funding ends.	
Evidence of successful efforts by project managers to seek out and exploit additional sources of funds.	Review of project documentation; interviews with project managers and staff.

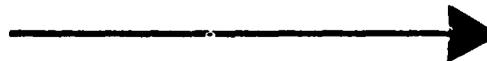


TABLE 7. (continued)

Questions	Assumptions
<p>Is the institution efficiently managing the resources at its disposal?</p>	<p>A level of resources normally adequate to carry out a task will not be sufficient if it is not deployed efficiently. When this occurs, the recurrent costs of an activity increase.</p>
<p>Can the staff plan, monitor, and adjust project strategies and activities?</p>	<p>The greater the ability of project managers and staff to set objectives, develop work schedules, monitor performance, and adjust project activities to resolve problems, the greater are the chances that benefits will continue.</p>

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources and Methods to Obtain Data
<p>Effectiveness of technologies or delivery system used as measured by cost per unit delivered over time.</p>	<p>Review of project administrative and financial reports; interviews with project staff.</p>
<p>Evidence of inefficiencies in management of resources (e.g., high degree of slack time and lack of coordination).</p>	
<p>Availability of project staff to plan and manage project activities, as indicated by:</p>	<p>Review of project plans, implementation schedule, and information systems; interviews with project staff and beneficiaries.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning schedules, procedures, and guidelines; ● Management information systems for project monitoring, problem solving, and forward planning that includes contributions from beneficiaries; and ● Defined process for decision making. 	

TABLE 8: QUESTIONS TO ASSESS INSTITUTIONAL

Questions	Assumptions
<p>Have organizations met their commitments to provide personnel, facilities, or funds?</p>	<p>Delays in the delivery of promised resources could indicate a lack of commitment on the part of cooperating institutions that will probably become more serious once outside funding ends.</p>
<p>Are inter-organizational conflicts impeding project implementation?</p>	<p>A high level of inter-organizational conflict implies that the incentives to cooperate may not exist. After outside funding ends, these conflicts will probably intensify and even more seriously impede benefit sustainability unless conflict is lower because no one cares, i.e., the project no longer provides any benefits to the institution or its clients.</p>
<p>Are project salaries higher or lower than those paid by other agencies or the private sector?</p>	<p>A large difference between project salaries and those paid for similar types of work in other agencies or in the private sector may be a problem for benefit sustainability. If project salaries are too low, it will be difficult to retain quality personnel; if project salaries are considerably higher, it might be difficult to maintain them at current levels.</p>

INCENTIVES

Type of Data Needed

Suggested Sources And
Methods to Obtain Data

Number of personnel actually assigned, amount of funds allocated, and amount of supplies and equipment delivered compared with that committed.

Length of delays in delivering the above resources.

Percentage of project staff who criticize other agencies' lack of cooperation as an impediment to project success.

Percentage of staff from cooperating agencies criticizing core project staff, or the project's strategy, implementation arrangements, or objectives.

Percentage of personnel from cooperating agencies voicing enthusiasm for the project (both staff members and administrators).

Salary levels for categories of project staff (e.g., extension agents, researchers, and administrators).

Salary levels for similar job categories in government agencies or private firms.

Project administrative and financial reports. Interviews with project staff, host government officials, and staff of cooperating agencies.

Interviews with project staff, government officials, and staff of cooperating agencies.

Project financial and personnel records; administrative reports.

Interviews with project staff, administrators of other government agencies, and private sector managers.

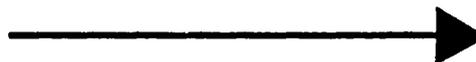


TABLE 8. (continued)



Questions	Assumptions
How much demand is there for project services or technologies?	If beneficiary demand decreases during implementation, this trend will probably continue or worsen once outside funding ends.

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources And Methods to Obtain Data
<p>Number of beneficiaries using the technology or services at various points over the life of the project.</p>	<p>Project administrative reports; design documentation.</p>
<p>Percentage of beneficiary use of the technology or services compared with that predicted in the design. (Design predictions are often optimistic; the realism of the original predictions must also be examined.)</p>	<p>Observation; use of key informants.</p>
<p>Evidence of repeat usage of the technology (e.g., the use of health facilities over a period of time, farmers' use of agricultural technology in subsequent years) when this repeat usage was expected in the project design.</p>	<p>Administrative and financial reports.</p>
<p>Measurement of amount and type of repeat usage by, for example:</p>	<p>Interviews with project staff and beneficiaries.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of beneficiaries using the service or technology more than once; or ● Average number of times a service or technology is used by a given beneficiary unit (individual, family, etc.) over a specified period. 	<p>Project-sponsored statistical surveys.</p>

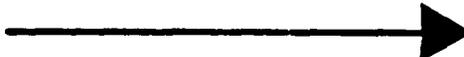


TABLE 8. (continued)



Questions	Assumptions
Are beneficiaries committing their own resources to carry out project activities?	Can serve as an indication of the value that the beneficiaries place on the benefits they receive and the quality of those benefits.
How many staff will remain with the project once outside funding ends?	A high probability that key staff will remain in the project will increase the chances of benefit sustainability.

Type of Data Needed	Suggested Sources And Methods to Obtain Data
<p>Percentage of person-hours, materials, and funds provided by beneficiaries to implement project activities.</p>	<p>Administrative and financial reports; interviews with project staff and beneficiaries.</p>
<p>Level of staff turnover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of staff who have been with the project since its initiation. 	<p>Project administrative reports and personnel records; interviews with project staff.</p>
<p>Staff ties to the project area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of staff who originally came from the project area; and ● Percentage of staff who were seconded from local or district as opposed to national agencies. 	<p>Review of ministry personnel records; interviews with project staff.</p>
<p>Staff transfers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Average tenure of agency staff; and ● Common career paths for professional staff. 	<p>Review of personnel policies and records of staff transfers; interviews with project staff.</p>

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Project Placement: Guidelines for Selecting and Evaluating Organizations to Implement Projects

The organizational placement of a project has important implications for sustaining benefits. In addition to determining who the principal decision makers will be, the placement of a project defines the budgetary resources and channels available to the project, location and degree of management control, and access to personnel.

There is no easy formula for selecting the best organizational location for a particular project. Each strategy will involve, to some degree, inter-organizational conflicts, differing agendas, and coordination problems. Furthermore, organizational requirements may change at different phases during the project. For example, temporary organizations with concentrated authority may be most appropriate at the beginning of a project to build rural extension centers. Later, however, when new technologies for crop production are introduced, permanent organizations with decentralized authority are preferred.

Table 9 compares five alternatives that are commonly used to implement rural development projects. These are:

- Using a lead line agency with cooperative arrangements between it and other sectoral agencies;
- Working at a program level through a sub-national government unit such as a regional or provincial office of one or more central ministries;
- Operating through an integrated development agency that is a permanent organization deriving its authority from, for example, the president's office;
- Establishing an autonomous but temporary project management unit to deliver integrated services within a specified geographic area; and

- Working with one or more private voluntary organizations that have established linkages with the beneficiary group.

The advantages and disadvantages of each strategy should be considered in the context of a particular country and the objectives of a specific project. Table 9 lists some of the tradeoffs of each alternative placement strategy.



TABLE

9

TABLE 9: ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES FOR PROJECT PLACEMENT

Alternative	Tradeoffs	
Implementer	Major Advantages	Major Disadvantages
<u>National Line Agency</u> (permanent) such as Ministry of Agriculture	Provides a base in a permanent institution Provides for high-level support and direction Appropriate for sector or infrastructure pro- jects Simplifies initial pre- paration process and resource flows	Imposes sectoral focus on project strategy Preoccupied with national problems rather than local variations Reluctance to delegate significant operational authority Likely to have conflicts with other line agencies
<u>Subnational Government Entity</u> (permanent) such as a region, province, or district	Provides focus on local issues Sometimes helps to concen- trate authority in project activities Can build planning and imple- mentation capability in perm- anent entity	Often has low institutional ar human resource capability Often has little leverage over line ministries whose activities affect the project
<u>Integrated Development Agency</u> (permanent) such as a national authority	Provides comprehensive project overview Combines local focus with access to higher level authority Can avoid overly centralized audit and control procedures	Line agency competition can adversely affect performance Complex communication needs

TABLE 9. (continued)

Alternative	Tradeoffs	
Implementer	Major Advantages	Major Disadvantages
<p><u>Project Management Unit</u> (autonomous and temporary) such as that often created as part of the design of an integrated rural development project</p>	<p>Can be used to concentrate authority in project area</p> <p>Familiar to engineers who staff infrastructure projects</p> <p>Can avoid centralized audit and control procedures</p> <p>Can avoid inappropriate sector boundaries</p>	<p>Difficult to institutionalize</p> <p>Temporary nature creates personnel management problems</p>
<p><u>Private Voluntary Organization</u> (autonomous and often with permanent status in country)</p>	<p>Authority usually delegated to project site</p> <p>Tradition of active beneficiary and other local group participation in decision making</p> <p>Can avoid centralized audit and control procedures</p> <p>Can work with both private and public sector agencies</p>	<p>Frequently not linked to resources from established government agencies</p> <p>Budget sources are often limited and uncertain</p>

Once project planners have decided which strategy is to be used, they should consider the existing level of capacity among potential implementing organizations. This analysis should include issues raised in Tables 7 and 8 regarding organizational resources, behavior, and incentives. In addition, project planners should consider the leadership and authority within the organization, planning and coordination capabilities, administrative support, and financial management. Table 10 includes questions that project planners can use to evaluate these factors to determine whether a particular organization has the capability to implement a project and subsequently provide long-term support.

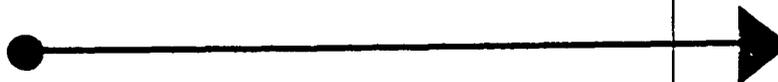


TABLE
10

TABLE 10: QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE THE CAPABILITY OF AN ORGANIZATION TO IMPLEMENT A PROJECT

Issue	Question
Support	Is there political support for the organization? Support means stated commitment to project and objectives; assistance with budget, staff, facilities, and information; and protection from political interference.
Leadership	Are there qualified individuals in the organization who can act as project managers and key people?
Authority	Is the organizational unit assigned the functions, authority, and commensurate responsibility to execute the project?
Coordination	Are there adequate mechanisms (or incentives) for coordination with other government organizations in other sectors or regions, or with private enterprises?
Planning	Is the implementing agency capable of developing a detailed operating plan, that is, specifying the major tasks to be undertaken, scheduling and sequencing these tasks in a realistic time frame, assigning responsibility for their execution, estimating the resource requirements, and planning for the transfer of responsibilities to a receiving organization to sustain the activities?
Staff Support	Does the organization provide adequate salary, allowances, promotions, and recognition as well as subsequent assignment of project personnel?
Administrative Infrastructure	Will sufficient work space, equipment, communications facilities, transport, and supplies be available? Will support personnel be sufficient to ensure that the quality, quantity, and timeliness of these resources will be adequate?
Financial Management	Is financial management adequate to provide realistic estimates of financial need, realistic allocation of spending authority, timely distribution of funds, reasonable but not excessive controls, and accounting to meet program needs?

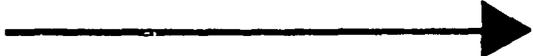


TABLE 10. (continued)

Issue	Question
Procurement	Are there responsive procurement procedures to avoid bureaucratic delays and meet the deadlines required by the project?
Reporting	Can the organization report on project progress and resource utilization? Are reports linked to a network of management control and evaluation to ensure that project operations conform with targets and standards?
Information	Is there an adequate flow of data (including statistics, information, and intelligence) to the project's team members concerning the activities they are expected to undertake and to the beneficiaries so they can participate in decision making?
Management	Does the agency foster teamwork and provide an environment that motivates the staff? Are there any factors that may serve as barriers to coordination and management -- for example, personality, cultural, religious, ideological, or regional? Can these barriers be surmounted?

Organizational Linkages: Guidelines for Coordinating Project Functions

A rural development project will usually involve a variety of activities, such as construction of demonstration plots, establishment or expansion of agricultural research facilities, introduction of new credit programs, and development of training programs for extension workers and farmers. Thus, regardless of the organization selected to have lead responsibility for the project, several departments within the organization as well as other organizations will be responsible for various project activities. Coordination within and among many organizations, therefore, is important for effective implementation.

Often coordination requirements are reviewed during project design, but inadequate attention is given to defining the specific responsibilities that each organization or agency unit will have. In other situations, too many organizational actors become involved, either to gain political support or to co-opt potentially competing interests. As a result, organizational arrangements become cumbersome to manage effectively or overly complex, and redundant administrative requirements are imposed on project staff.

These problems can be kept to a minimum by careful analysis of a project's functions and tasks during the design phase. In addition, this analysis can monitor the effectiveness of coordination efforts during implementation. A responsibility chart is one method that project designers and managers can use to analyze and monitor the coordination of project functions.

This type of analysis helps to identify which organizations must participate in a project and what functions and tasks each organization will carry out. In addition to defining coordination responsibilities, a responsibility chart can provide a way to monitor and adjust various activities during implementation.

The purposes of a responsibility chart are to assist project staff to:

- Identify what functions should be performed in a project;

- Determine which organizations or sub-units are to be responsible for specific functions and tasks; and
- Specify what kind of responsibility will be assigned to each organization.

In addition to helping planners and managers analyze and define coordination requirements of a project, a responsibility chart requires them to think about and anticipate future problems. This encourages those involved in designing and implementing a project to visualize functions and inter-relationships holistically -- something not always accomplished in projects involving different technical areas or seeking to give equal priority to technical as well as capacity-building objectives.

Table 11 depicts a responsibility chart. The functions and tasks, as well as the various organizations that might be involved, may differ among projects. Thus, users may substitute or expand on the categories presented in the example. In addition, users may want to modify the types of responsibilities listed at the bottom of the chart.

TABLE

11

TABLE 11. EXAMPLE OF A RESPONSIBILITY CHART

FUNCTIONS AND TASKS	National-Level Agencies						
	Deputy-Minister National Planning Agency	Regional Development Council	Development Planning Committee	Director, Regional Planning Office	Head, Sectoral Planning Section	Monitoring & Evaluation Div.	Budget Agency
Policy Planning and Diagnosis							
Problem Identification							
Financing/Budgeting							
Technical Assistance							
Provision of Inputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment ● Procurement 							
Construction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Roads ● Project Facilities 							
Service Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extension ● Health 							
Monitoring and Evaluation							

Source: Adapted from R. Diaz, "Organizational Responsibility Charting Technique and Network Analysis as Applied to Regional Planning Organizations," Nagoya, Japan: United Nations Center for Regional Development, April

The first step in using a responsibility chart is to identify the functions, and tasks for each, that should be completed during implementation. The next step is to determine what organizations and sub-units must be involved to complete each task. Finally, the type of responsibility each organization has should be noted in the matrix.

Obviously, the preparation of a responsibility chart should involve representatives from each organization that will participate in the project; it is not an exercise just for design or implementation teams. In this respect, the activity becomes part of the process of negotiating how the project will be carried out.

There are a number of limitations on the use of responsibility charts:

- Actions and decisions may not be as clear as are indicated in the matrix;
- When, or in what sequence, certain actions are required is not included; and
- Formal relationships among organizations are emphasized rather than equally important informal relationships.

A further limitation is that this tool fixes an expected set of relationships at one point in time. To avoid this constraint, users may want to develop a simple chart at an early stage in the project and elaborate it as the project progresses, to include additional functions or organizations.

Decentralization: Guidelines for Increasing Participation

Considerable evidence exists that projects planned at the local level, with the active participation of intended beneficiaries, have a greater chance of long-term success than those developed entirely by central-level decision makers. Although the merits of decentralized planning and management are widely acknowledged -- and often incorporated in policy guidelines -- many projects are formulated with little involvement by those who will ultimately be responsible for sustaining benefits. Participation continues to be limited for several reasons, including:

- Reluctance of central agencies to devolve authority to lower levels of government because staff resources are believed to be insufficient or national and regional priorities will not be adequately represented;
- Unwillingness of project staff to include beneficiaries in project activities because of time constraints or overriding pressures from donors or central agencies to achieve specific output targets;
- Reluctance or refusal of potential beneficiaries to participate because of firmly established patterns of central control or strong perceptions about the benefits that are likely to result from a project; and
- Manipulation of project resources and activities by economically more powerful interests for their own ends.

In addition, economic policies can affect the degree of participation, particularly those dealing with pricing, marketing, and taxation. In the project area, ecological, historical, and cultural factors can have important influence. Project strategies can also limit participation if, for example, risks to small farmers are not adequately considered or beneficiaries' needs or perceptions are not taken seriously.

There are tradeoffs to be made in deciding the extent to which project responsibilities are decentralized. Table 12 identifies a number of them.

Decentralization should be viewed as broadening participation rather than shifting all responsibilities to lower levels. In this respect, planners and managers should consider at which levels particular types of decisions should be made to achieve a project's objectives.

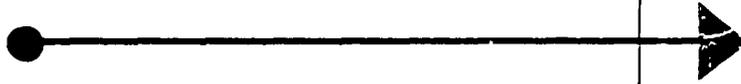


TABLE
12

TABLE 12: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CENTRALIZATION

Centralization	
STRENGTHS	<p>Increases speed with which routine decisions are made and certain services and technologies introduced</p> <p>Increases probability that a controversial policy will be implemented</p> <p>Can direct scarce resources to national-level priorities</p> <p>Improves morale and encourages initiative</p>
WEAKNESSES	<p>Overloads communication systems and increases numbers of decision makers involved in specific actions</p> <p>Changes cannot be readily introduced into a bureaucratically centralized organization</p> <p>Limits development of new leadership</p> <p>Limits support to projects where national-level officials are not sympathetic to client group</p>

AND DECENTRALIZATION

Decentralization

Increases speed with which non-routine decisions are made and uncertain technologies introduced

Participative, decentralized, and autonomous organizations can be more productive and efficient

Decentralized decision making and multiple communication channels facilitate interorganizational cooperation

Although the direct power of national leaders is reduced, decentralization increases their ability to guide society by creating more communication links within it

Facilitates the pursuit of a wide range of goals

Raises low-level morale and initiative

Promotes new leadership

Facilitates client participation

Requires highly developed informal communications channels

Without financial discretion at lower levels, strategies for long-term effectiveness are limited

Difficult when inefficient disbursement systems exist

Often requires a project element to be designed specifically to improve low-level planning capability among those charged with implementation

Adversely affected in situations where local-level elite are not sympathetic to client group

Participation frequently entails an entirely new way of thinking by policy makers, planners and managers, and beneficiaries. For example, local government officials, who have traditionally been expected to advocate development projects planned by their national ministries, have to adopt new skills and practices to engage villagers in setting local priorities and formulating appropriate responses.

There is no simple formula for expanding participation in project planning or implementation. And efforts made in a particular project will be influenced by established patterns of central control. Planners and managers may consider several activities, however, that can increase the degree and quality of participation:

- Establish a process approach to project implementation. Acknowledge at the outset that project designs should be flexible, and establish a process whereby implementers have the discretion to adjust activities based on project experience.
- Establish a two-way information flow. Agree on criteria for evaluation performance among implementers and beneficiaries at the outset. Opportunities for frequent project review between implementers and beneficiaries can produce suggestions that will make projects more responsive to local needs.
- Start with a few quick successes. Early, tangible benefits -- as perceived by beneficiaries -- can stimulate increased participation and support;
- Require a resource commitment from project beneficiaries. This can strengthen their interest in the project and help to develop a commitment to its success. Furthermore, it can save scarce government resources;
- Work with existing organizations (formal or informal). These organizations can help marshal local and outside resources, and sustain project benefits after the donor-funded advisers leave;

- Work with conflicting local factions. It is important to work with all parties to avoid any political backlash that could lead to withdrawal of support for the project;
- Build local leadership. Local leaders should be trained in techniques of anticipating and influencing change, making informed decisions, attracting and absorbing resources, and managing resources to achieve objectives; and
- Phase in local organizational responsibilities. Organizations should not be expected to assume multiple functions until they establish their capability to perform initial responsibilities well. Doing too much too fast is likely to overload an organization. Thus, learning to be effective should precede learning to be efficient, and developing efficiency in operations should precede any attempt to expand into new areas or functions.

Training: Guidelines for Developing Project Managers

Rural development projects are management-intensive. Most require skillful coordination and direction of resources drawn from numerous sources. They also require the ability to adjust project activities continuously, without losing sight of long-term objectives.

In addition, efforts by many governments to increase the number of development projects as well as to decentralize responsibility to regional, district, and community levels have created a need for more trained project managers.

This need is widely recognized. As a result, most rural development projects include activities intended to further management capacity. These activities are carried out in several ways. One way is to introduce management approaches that further rural development objectives through the practices of project design and implementation teams. In effect, this approach models desired practices while testing and refining their applicability to specific environments. A second way is to include training (on the job, in-country, or out of country) as a major component of projects. A third way, which directly supports those previously mentioned, is to structure technical assistance so that local managers can assume responsibility for continuing project benefits when outside assistance is withdrawn.

This section deals with the first two approaches -- modeling management practices that further rural development objectives and improving the effectiveness of management training. The third approach is discussed in the section on technical assistance.

Modeling Management Practices

Expectations of project activities are often firmly established among organizations and beneficiary groups during the design phase. That is, how a project is designed often influences outcomes as much as what the project design proposes to carry out. For example, if design teams rely only on secondary sources in capital cities for information about beneficiary priorities, the project is unlikely to gain the long-term support of local organizations or beneficiary groups. Similarly, projects designed

to strengthen local government capabilities will encounter resistance if the proposed activities are perceived to represent the interests of only central authorities.

Proposals to design projects in a way that consistently reinforces proposed strategies and objectives, however, have encountered resistance from donors because these proposals place additional demands on already tight staff and funding schedules. The proposals have included a learning-systems approach, based on constituent building over a relatively long period during the project's formulation and design. They have also included a process approach, based on an initial formulation of project objectives and parameters with considerable flexibility given to managers to modify or add activities based on implementation experience.

Other approaches, however, can contribute to improved management while imposing fewer demands on established design processes. These approaches involve:

- Including potential managers of a project on the design team;
- Involving representatives of beneficiary groups, intermediary groups (extension services, for example), and implementing organizations in problem identification, analysis, or planning exercises when determining the project design; and
- Utilizing management practices in the design process, itself, that are needed to implement the project. These include decentralizing decision making, intergroup problem solving, and interdisciplinary team work.

Management Training

Management training must continue to be a key response to limited organizational capacity. Experience suggests, however, that many training activities do not result in improved organizational capacity. There are a number of reasons why these efforts often do not achieve expected results:

- Place orientation. The existence of a training facility creates pressure to use it to justify its expense. As a result, success is often measured in terms of participant-days rather than improved project performance.
- Dictation orientation. Often management training assumes a one-way transfer of skills from trainer to trainee, emphasizing dictation and absorption. Training often ignores the technical and managerial abilities that exist in developing countries. Furthermore, trainers assume that the skills they possess are the best ones for trainees to learn.
- Inference orientation. Trainees are often selected from multiple organizational settings. As a result, trainees may lack a common experience base from which the trainer can draw examples for the application of techniques. Learning is expected to take place by inference rather than by demonstration.
- Single-level focus. Many workshops are designed exclusively for supervisors, middle-level managers, senior managers, or executives. Organizational problems, however, do not necessarily occur at only one level; many issues relate to interactions between levels. Improved organizational performance requires dealing with the organization as a unit, and therefore including representatives of multiple levels in trainee groups. In addition, including clients such as farmers in training activities can help break down barriers between staff and beneficiaries.
- Overemphasis on organizational stock. A common assumption in management training is that improved knowledge is a sufficient condition for improved performance. However, raising the stock of organizational resources by providing vehicles (material resources) or training (human resources) is not sufficient to influence performance unless, for example, incentive systems are changed.

- Training as a discrete activity. The combination of the weaknesses noted above produces a situation in which each course or workshop develops an independent identity and becomes a discrete, time-bound occurrence rather than only one activity in a continuing process of developing managers.

Improving the Effectiveness of Management Training

Management training should have two objectives: to improve the performance of an organization and to enhance its ability to function effectively within a changing environment. To achieve these aims, training should be directed toward the needs of the organization as a whole, use real problems as the basis of learning activities, and enhance the knowledge and skills of organizational members.

To improve the effectiveness of management training, trainers should consider a number of actions:

- The training staff should become involved in the implementation process;
- Training should focus outward on the organization, its setting, and its policy objectives rather than exclusively on curriculum development and training methods;
- The substance of training should make maximum use of knowledge and skills already in the environment;
- The organization rather than the individual should be the training target;
- Training should be interspersed, viewed as a long-term process to develop managers, and focused on improving organizational performance;
- Persons who normally work together should be trained as a team;
- Workshops should focus on real problems;

- Workshops should demonstrate the application of methods to actual problem situations;
- Staff from multiple organizational levels should be included, with particular emphasis given to the participation of critical decision makers;
- Activities should be conducted at or near the project site to lower costs and focus on constraints to performance at the local level;
- Workshops should be treated as activities that blend into daily planning, consultation, coordination, and evaluation functions;
- Decisions, commitments, and actions should be emphasized;
- An examination of the organization's incentives for targeted behavior changes should be incorporated into group discussions, exercises, and decisions; and
- The focus should be to enhance the knowledge and skills of participants rather than to transfer the knowledge and skills of the trainer to the trainees.

Alternative Strategies for Training

Several types of training activities often are included as part of rural development projects. These are degree and non-degree overseas training, academic or short-term in-country training, and on-the-job training.

Overseas training is often used to prepare middle-level staff to replace technical advisers or to provide training in specialized areas not offered within the country. However, overseas training is expensive. In addition, overseas institutions may not be able to relate their established curricula to the development needs of a particular country. Because of high mobility within most civil services, few trainees remain with a project for a long time after their return (although the country as a whole may benefit).

In-country training (including degree, short-term, and on-the-job) is most cost-effective for large groups and for relating training directly to project needs. Many of the weaknesses noted above, however, are commonly found in in-country programs. Much of the training, particularly short term, is offered only at institutions far from the project area. Often these institutions are not able to attract senior-level personnel to their staff, and much of the training must be given by recent graduates who have little experience in rural development. In addition, training staff seldom become directly involved in projects so that they can maintain an experience base to adjust curricula and teaching methods. These constraints point to the need to address the capacity-building requirements of in-country training centers as part of rural development activities.

The appropriateness of particular training approaches should be weighed against several factors. Table 13 summarizes many of the advantages or disadvantages of various approaches.



TABLE
13

TABLE 13: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF VARIOUS TRAINING 

Type of Approach	Advantages
Overseas Training	<p>Benefits sponsoring country institutions by establishing ties among institution, country, and future decision makers. May also lead to benefits from faculty exchanges.</p>
<p>In-country Short Courses or Workshops</p>	<p>Are inexpensive, especially when indigenous instructors are used.</p> <p>When certificates are given, can enhance promotion opportunities.</p> <p>Language problem is eased, assuming that the instructors are fluent in the local language.</p>

APPROACHES

Disadvantages

Costly in terms of time and money; only a small number of individuals can benefit.

Candidates are away from their posts for a considerable time and must be replaced. They must be reabsorbed into the organization when they return.

Training is limited to those who speak the language of the sponsoring country.

Training in donor countries is often geared to problems and solutions appropriate to that country, and not to those of importance to the developing countries.

Relevance of the training to the immediate needs of the project may often be low.

Scheduling the return of long-term trainees with departure of the expatriate technicians to ensure project continuity is difficult.

Persons with advanced overseas degrees are often promoted rapidly into administrative positions and thus no longer use the disciplinary expertise they have acquired.

Limited to standardized topics and approaches that will be of interest to a relatively wide range of staff; cannot be easily tailored to individual needs.

Requires the absence of trainees from their posts at times that, although convenient for the instructor and the class as a whole, may be inconvenient for the individual and the program to which he is attached. Difficult to identify individuals who have the technical and training skills as well as language ability to conduct the training sessions.

TABLE 13. (continued)



Type of Approach	Advantages
On-the-Job Training	<p>Is very specific to the needs of the project.</p> <p>No interruption of the work schedule; trainee continues performing routine tasks.</p> <p>Low cost, assuming that an expert is available to assist in project implementation.</p>

Disadvantages

Requires the development of good interpersonal relationships and incentives on the part of both parties to serve as teacher or student; these are difficult to mandate or structure into a project.

No academic credentials or certificates given so that the training may not lead to promotions or increased responsibilities.

Effectiveness may be very limited if expatriate does not speak local language.

Technical Assistance: Guidelines for Improving Effectiveness

Technical assistance is an important part of most rural development projects. The assumption is that advisers are needed to introduce new technologies or to help implement activities while permanent employees receive training. Often, however, technical advisers move beyond advising and assisting to assuming responsibility for the project. When this takes place, it is unlikely that project benefits will continue after the technical advisers depart.

Several factors influence the effectiveness of technical advisers. Some factors, such as the failure of counterparts to be assigned, are often beyond the control of project planners or managers. Other factors, such as the choice of contracting mechanisms and the roles assigned to technical advisers, can be considered when determining project strategies.

Contracting Mechanisms

The choice of a contracting mechanism is important because it can affect the roles and contributions of technical advisers. For example, advisers hired as personal service contractors may reduce costs, but must function independent of home university or office support and supervision. This approach also requires that the donor agency provide all administrative and procurement support -- a significant requirement when large teams are involved. Private firms that do not maintain a permanent professional staff, but in effect serve as contract administrators, may view performance as little more than contract continuation.

There are several alternatives for contracting technical assistance. Table 14 compares four options and summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of each.

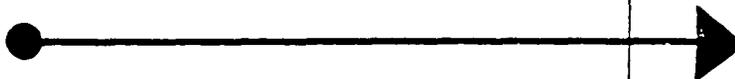


TABLE
14

TABLE 14: ALTERNATIVE CONTRACTING MECHANISMS

	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Personal services contract: "The Individual Strategy"</p>	<p>Low cost.</p> <p>Low profile.</p> <p>Allows specification of known individuals.</p>	<p>Limited recruiting pool for individual specialists.</p> <p>Isolation from new approaches to development.</p> <p>Reliance on donor or host governments for procurement.</p> <p>No mechanism for short-term technical assistance.</p> <p>Limited support services (insurance, retirement, household storage) for expatriates.</p> <p>Lack of any tax advantage may affect quality of staff assigned to project.</p>
<p>University contract: "The Academic Strategy"</p>	<p>Link to research networks.</p> <p>Can improve quality of development studies program.</p> <p>Field team has permanent base.</p>	<p>Can be opportunity to assign low performing faculty.</p> <p>Reward system may support research but not action.</p> <p>Usually inexperienced in procurement.</p> <p>Not easy to deliver short-term technical assistance.</p>

TABLE 14. (continued)

	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Private firm contract with temporary staff: "The Bodyshop Strategy"</p>	<p>Allows specification of known individuals.</p> <p>Builds talent search capability in domestic organization.</p> <p>Does not require strong capability in home office.</p> <p>Can deliver short-term technical assistance.</p>	<p>Temporary staff limits field management.</p> <p>Lack of previous experience with home office.</p> <p>Home office aim is to keep costs low; therefore support may be minimal.</p> <p>Reliance on donor for procurement.</p> <p>Relatively high cost.</p>
<p>Private firm contract with resident team leader permanently employed in home office: "The Management Team Strategy"</p>	<p>Link to project information networks.</p> <p>Facilitates field management.</p> <p>Facilitates procurement.</p> <p>Facilitates short-term technical assistance.</p> <p>Home office accountability for contract provides strong incentive among field staff for quality work.</p> <p>Can support capacity-building role models.</p>	<p>High cost.</p> <p>Long communication and supply lines.</p> <p>Requires experienced home office with knowledge and competence in development.</p> <p>Adds another actor into the development assistance project.</p>

Technical Assistance Roles

Often, projects encounter problems because the roles of the technical advisers have not been clearly defined or because there is not mutual agreement among the donor, contractor, and government organizations. Technical assistance roles frequently are defined only in terms of time and specialization (long-term agronomist, for example). Less attention is given to defining how the advisers are to provide assistance or how their roles may change over the course of the project.

The last point bears particular attention. Not only does a project take place within a changing environment, but the strategy itself may evolve through several phases, with each phase calling for different technical assistance roles. For example, to get a project under way, technical advisers may have to perform many implementation tasks themselves. Later, the emphasis may shift to training local staff and eventually to serving in a purely advisory role.

At least four different types of technical assistance roles apply to rural development projects. These are discussed below.

The Performer

One form of technical assistance is simply to bring someone in to do a job. A temporary team or individual performs a specific set of technical activities and then leaves. The job may require a long-term presence or a visit of only a few weeks or months. In either case, the focus is on a product that will result from the activity.

This focus depends on technical competence. For an analytic task, emphasis is on correct diagnosis and technically sound recommendations.

The Substitute

A second role, the substitute, is similar to the performer, but stresses maintenance rather than product. The substitute role is to fill specific job positions while local personnel are trained, most frequently in overseas degree programs. Substitutes are placed in line

positions in an operating agency where they are expected to provide routine services rather than produce specific products.

The Teacher

In this role, the technician serves as an adviser rather than directly as a decision maker. This approach depends on a counterpart who will benefit from the advice given, and the interaction between the counterpart and the adviser is the central relationship. Success is defined as the transfer of skills to the counterpart. Thus, a person focus replaces much of the product or maintenance focus of the performer and substitute roles.

The Mobilizer

A mobilizer combines advisory with advocacy functions. The purpose of a mobilizer is to help a community or organization increase its capacity to influence others. Thus, coalition building, promotion, and leadership are key activities.

This role uses technical assistance personnel to motivate others to act. Priority is given to introducing and institutionalizing processes for enhancing local skills.

A mobilizer must be able to interact smoothly with staff from multiple organizational levels and to analyze and articulate the operational processes of organizational activities. Academic credentials, seniority, personal commitment, and ability to relate to and communicate with villagers are required. The ability to communicate well and to use informal decision networks is important.

Table 15 summarizes the characteristics of each of the above roles.

These four roles are ideal types. They do, however, provide an analytical framework for defining the roles required of project technicians.

TABLE

15

TABLE 15: FOUR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE 

Long Term	
Performer Role	Product or service focus: temporary technical team or individual performs specified set of technically oriented activities; emphasis on results; high priority on technical competence.
Substitute Role	Job focus: operational expert from outside does job while local staff member receives overseas training; accountable for work; high priority on work experience.
Teacher Role	Person focus: outsider seen in advisory, not decision-making role; accountable for transferring skills and knowledge to counterparts; priority given to appropriateness of process for transferring skills; high priority on academic training.
Mobilizer Role	Organizational focus: outsider seen in advisory and advocacy role; accountable for getting others to act; priority given to process for enhancing local skills, identifying new skill needs, developing them, and implanting process to carry this on; coalition building is critical activity; partner relationship to short-term technical assistants is very important; high priority on personal commitment, compatibility, and credentials that enable outsiders to deal with multiple organizational levels.

ROLES

Short Term

Product or service focus: temporary team or individual performs specified set of discrete technical activities: e.g., management audit, agronomic analysis; emphasis on correct diagnosis and technically sound recommendations; low emphasis on work process; high priority on technical competence.

Same as performer role but may have job focus if technician makes multiple trips or several technicians perform different dimensions of the job; high priority on work experience.

Mixed focus — person and product; counterparts appointed for short-term consultants; report seen both as substantive contribution and as teaching device to impart analytical skill; high priority on both writing skills and process skills; high priority on academic training.

Mixed focus — product and organization; same as long-term focus but higher reliance on mobilizing actions and decisions in specific time frame; high priority on process skills for conflict management; writing skills and process analysis are also important; may not require report on each visit, however; good working relationship with both long-term technical assistants and local groups critical for success.

Improving the Effectiveness of Technical Assistance

Several guidelines to improve the effectiveness of technical assistance so that it contributes directly to long-term project benefits are discussed below.

- Before a strategy of technical assistance is chosen, capacity-building objectives and activities should be specified. Existing levels of organizational and technical capacity should be assessed;
- Different technical assistance roles will be needed for specific activities and at specific times during the project. Initially, mobilizers may be required, but as project activities get under way, other roles may be needed;
- Bypass strategies, such as that represented by a performer role, should be carefully considered since their use will often be at the expense of building capacity. When possible, reliance on this approach should be limited to short-term technical assistance;
- Long-term technical assistance should focus on capacity building. Thus, mobilizer and teacher roles should be emphasized. The effectiveness of a mobilizer, however, may depend on periodic support from, for example, a performer; and
- Technical assistance should be based on a common approach or philosophy so that techniques, methods, and objectives are consistent throughout the project's life. When possible, a management team strategy should be considered in both long- and short-term assistance.

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