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CAPACITY BUILDING FOR EFFECTIVE RESPONSIVE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION
DEFINITION OF RCLES IN DDMP

The Rural Employment Generation Program (REGP) of the RTG has evolved into a programmatic effort to build national capacities for effective responsive governmental support for self-reliant local level development. The USAID Decentralized Development Management Project (DDMP) will provide an initial round of program support for this RTG effort. As one of USAID/Thailand's central program priorities it is anticipated that this will be the first of a series of such projects in support of this long term commitment of the RTG. It is appropriate that the management systems and role relationships involved be defined in terms of the requirements of the long term program of the RTG rather than in terms of the DDMP.

The REGP is addressing an existing reality of limited capacity for public development action at local levels both in terms of resources commanded and in ability to make use of those resources already available. It represents a long term effort to develop decentralized development management capacities. Overall, a twenty year time perspective would probably be appropriate for this capacity building effort.

All of the key institutional actors involved in this process will need to develop new institutional capabilities: national government, local government entities, supporting resource institutions including contracting firms, and USAID. An underlying premise of the undertaking is that such institutional capacities are best built through experience based learning. Each actor will engage in the activities called for by its role in undertaking or supporting local development action, assessing and adjusting its own involvement, and gradually moving to more complex and difficult tasks. All participants are learners in a collaborative learning process.

The focus of this learning initially will be in the DDMP project area which will serve as a learning laboratory in which the REGP will develop:

- a) at national levels a better understanding of the local development problem and the appropriate roles of local entities in dealing with it;
- b) effective approaches to development of local governmental capacities; and
- c) the institutional capacities required to support application of such approaches on a national scale.

The overall REGP effort has both vertical and horizontal dimensions.

1. The vertical dimension involves the gradual evolution of capacities for effective responsive local level action, with the learning laboratory working at the leading edge of this process to develop ideas and methods. The general directions of this evolutionary process will, in the early stages, be from:
 - a) individual projects, to programs, to comprehensive development strategies;
 - b) concern primarily for REGP and tambon funded activities to shaping the investments of other governmental entities; and
 - c) decision making primarily by a few key local officials to increasingly broadly based popular participation.

In later stages the process may include movement from:

- a) dependence on central resource transfers to increasing utilization of locally generated resources to meet local needs; and
- b) a concern primarily with development actions taken and controlled by government to stimulating and facilitating of broadly based private development initiatives on the part of the people of the area.

2. The horizontal dimension involves the dissemination from the learning laboratory area of tested ideas, approaches, systems, etc., in support of the national capacity building process as they are generated from the learning laboratory.

Ultimately a variety of actions, of which formal training may be only one relatively minor element, may be required to achieve the desired reorientation of existing approaches to development decision making and a corresponding realignment of roles and responsibilities within the development bureaucracy, including supporting policy actions. Such changes take time. A first step is to form the considerable individual expertise and dedication which exists into an active coalition of development professionals within and without the government with an in-depth understanding of the constraints to more effective responsive development action and a commitment to overcoming them.

Thai Institutional Roles

The purposes of the DDMP are appropriately defined primarily in terms of building the institutional capacities to support continued vertical progress within the learning laboratory and continued dissemination beyond it. There are three primary sets of Thai institutions involved, each with distinctive and crucial roles in the process:

1. Responsible operating agencies of the RTG
2. Collaborating Thai knowledge resource institutions
3. The REGP Secretariate under the Office of the Prime Minister

The participating institutions and their respective roles are elaborated below.

Operating Agencies

There are three line agencies of the Ministry of Interior of the RTG which have particularly central roles in providing support for the REGP at the Tambon level: The Department of Local Administration which is responsible for supervision of the Nai Amphur (District Officer) who coordinates the work of all line personnel at District level and has overall responsibility for the REGP within the District; the Department of Community Development which fields community development workers assigned to each Tambon to assist the Tambon Councils in plan preparation, and in project selection and management; and the Office of Accelerated Rural Development which provides engineering support to the REGP including setting and monitoring engineering standards. The personnel of these agencies assigned in the learning laboratory area will be called upon to assist in generating and testing innovative approaches to building Tambon capacity for effective responsive development action.

The personnel of these agencies, at provincial and district levels, will be managing the learning laboratory activities in their normal capacities, with support of special staff assigned from the REGP Secretariate and the collaborating Thai knowledge resource institutions. They will be assessing performance against broad national policy guidelines, generating ideas for improved approaches, trying them out, assessing results, refining them, and providing a continuous flow of data and ideas to the Secretariate based on the experience they generate. This process has already been initiated through a workshop sponsored by the Secretariate, with enthusiastic response from the officials involved.

Management of this process will be facilitated by the formation of Tambon Management Improvement Support Teams at Provincial and District levels. The provincial team which will hold a review and planning meeting once each three months, will be chaired by the Deputy Governor. Membership will include the Chief Provincial Engineer, the Provincial CD Supervisor,

advisory support to the REGP. Indeed a major objective in the early stage will be to develop these institutions as the primary sources of sustained technical support for the Tambon management improvement effort. The contracting mechanisms chosen should be designed to facilitate sustained indepth involvement of specific individuals from these institutions in ways which build their special expertise, strengthen their institutions, and at the same time provide sustained long-term support to the REGP. The Cooperative Agreement mechanism of AID is intended to facilitate just such a two way process and may serve as a model for an appropriate contracting mechanism. Whatever the mechanism used, it should be clear that these institutions are expected to be a good deal more than responsive providers of specific services. They are to take on leadership roles within their areas of expertise in the overall Tambon development effort as part of the larger change coalition. The contracting mechanism should thus allow them to initiate as well as to respond.

In selecting the collaborating resource institutions preference will be given to institutions with important existing roles in preparing Thais for service in rural areas. To the extent that their involvement in REPG injects new perspectives into such existing courses, important multiplier effects will be achieved. The types of indepth longer term involvement with a government program envisioned may not be familiar to some of the institutions involved. Thus attention from USAID and the TAT will be needed in helping them develop appropriate collaborative working relationships.

Supporting assistance will be needed by the REGP from these resource institutions in the social, managerial, and technical sciences. The following is intended only to illustrate the types of support such institutions might provide. The Management Improvement Teams discussed above under Operating Agencies, and the Working Groups described below under the role of the Secretariate will generate the actual requirements and priorities in collaboration with the Resource Institutions, based on field experience and policy considerations.

extent to which the REGP is meeting its intended short-term objectives, the extent to which policy guidelines are being followed, and the extent to which those guidelines are appropriate to the setting. It may also reveal differential employment impacts of different types of projects. The results will be used as input to national policy review, possible improvements in planning and monitoring procedures, and training of Tambon officials to help them in using the REGP projects to achieve optimal employment benefits within their communities.

- c. Assessment of Social Impacts. Beyond the immediate labor benefits, the REGP wants to see completed projects provide continuing long term benefits to the Tambon, especially in providing the infrastructure and other facilities to stimulate and sustain new economic activity to the benefit of Tambon residents. This on-going assessment will provide evaluations of samples of completed REGP projects to identify their social and economic consequences and how they are distributed among different segments of the community. It should contrast the outcomes typical of the different types of REGP projects (roads, wells, storage facilities, etc.). The analysis should highlight the social dynamics underlying these outcomes and contribute toward development of diagnostic frameworks useful in anticipating the outcomes of a particular proposed project in a particular setting. The results of this assessment will provide regular inputs to the development of the project site assessment methods discussed below, to review of policies and procedures relating to Tambon planning and project selection, and to training of Tambon, District, and Provincial officials to provide them with improved tools for addressing the social dimensions of development planning within their jurisdictions.

- d. Project Site Assessment Methods. Social factors critical to successful project outcomes are seldom given adequate attention in project selection, siting, and design decisions. Drawing on the results of the evaluation studies described above, one of the resource institutions will be asked to collaborate with operating officials within the learning laboratory area to develop simple methods suitable for use by Tambon officials for rapid assessment of those social and economic characteristics of proposed project sites most critical to determining the viability and special requirements of each type of REGP project. The methods will be field tested and refined until determined suitable for general use. Then training modules will be developed to train Tambon and District officials in their use.
- e. Village and Tambon Mutual Self-Help Mechanisms. As a formal unit of government the official Tambon structure is quite limited both in terms of facilities and the staff required to prepare and implement development plans. Yet Thai villages are known for their traditional ability to organize themselves to construct and maintain a variety of facilities such as wells, fish ponds, canals, roads, irrigation systems, etc. These traditional mechanisms and skills may be among the most important resources available in support of self-reliant Tambon development initiatives. This study will examine these "informal" or "unofficial" mechanisms of the people, how they work, the sources of technical expertise employed, the factors critical to their success including methods of compensating participants, and the extent to which they are still operative. This study will also examine current claims that villagers are becoming less willing to volunteer their labor for community activities as a result of the payments made for similar types of labor by REGP, and that the REGP is increasing opportunities for local corruption and unfavorably influencing the quality of people attracted to

leadership positions. The importance of the policy issues raised here for the RTG and USAID are self-evident. The goal of the REGP management improvement effort is to strengthen Tambon level capacities for self-reliant development action. To do so it must understand the existing capabilities of the Tambons and the impact of existing policies and practices on those capabilities so that improved approaches may be formulated as appropriate and tested in the learning laboratory.

- f. Household Livelihood Strategies. It is recognized that increasingly the emphasis of the REGP is moving beyond short-term public works employment. Furthermore the emphasis should not be on government creating new jobs for the people, but rather on helping people create new livelihood opportunities for themselves. Planning for such efforts must necessarily be based on an understanding of the livelihood strategies of village households. This study will examine data from selected Tambons to develop a set of categories useful in classifying households by the amount and nature of the resources they control and the general livelihood strategies they have evolved given their resource control situation. The study will highlight the dynamics of those strategies as they relate to seasonality, asset control, and village structure, and will examine typical patterns of diversification, i.e., the extent to which household members specialize in different seasonally determined activities. The results of the study will be used as an input to thinking on how REGP might increasingly focus on generating sustained livelihood benefits. The general analytical frameworks developed by the study for analysis of household livelihood strategies will be used in training local officials to guide their thinking about the definition of local development needs, and in refining project targeting toward those groups in greatest need. In subsequent

stages of the Tambon management improvement effort the results of the study will provide the basis for developing simple people centered planning methodologies for Tambon development planning.

2. Management

Inputs will center on improvements in management systems and training. The critical perspective here is to begin from careful observation and analysis of the setting and actual task requirements so that resulting management systems and training are seen as helpful by operating personnel and are proven under field conditions to be supportive of the actual types of behavior required from operational personnel to achieve effective results. Standardized management systems and training packages based on textbook prototypes will seldom meet the need without substantial adaptation. Each involvement in system development should include attention to development of training modules supportive of the system's effective installation and use by operating personnel. All systems development work must be done in close collaboration with operating and Secretariate personnel, should evolve out of field experience, and should be field tested and refined before more general application is considered.

- a. Project Monitoring Systems.^{*} Assessment and improvement where appropriate of project monitoring systems, with an emphasis on simplicity. The first concern should be to provide the Tambon officials the minimum system they need to perform their management role. The second concern should be with the needs of the District officials and so on up the system, with each higher level placing the absolute minimum necessary reporting requirements on lower levels consistent with monitoring responsibility and their own decision making needs.

*The term "project" is used here to refer to individual REGP supported Tambon level projects. Where reference is being made to the USAID Decentralized Development Management Project it is specifically identified as the DDMP. The discussion here is focused on needs of REGP, not USAID.

- b. Project Self-Evaluation System. Development of a simple system by which each Tambon carries out a simple evaluation of each completed REGP project. This might be done in collaboration with appropriate District officials and would include questions such as: Does it meet minimum technical standards? Is it being used as intended? Did it provide cash income for those who most needed it during a period when they did not have other employment opportunities? Were there any evident undesired social or economic consequences? Answers should be used by Tambon and District officials to carry out continuing assessment of their planning, project selection, siting, design, and implementation procedures. Results should be transmitted in summarized form to Provincial and National levels to aid in continuing assessment of management systems, policy frameworks, and support facilities. There should be provision for periodic sample audits of the self-evaluation system by national and provincial officials to insure it is working as intended.
- c. Management Systems Diagnostic. As understanding is developed of the types of support required from line agency personnel such as CD workers and engineers, a diagnostic study should be made of the systems by which these and other key personnel are managed to determine the extent to which there is an adequate fit between what they are expected to do and the systems by which they are trained, supervised, and evaluated. Similar studies might be made of REGP budgeting and funds release procedures to determine their fit with requirements for effective use by the Tambon.
- d. Tambon Financial Management. Analysis of existing financial management practices at Tambon level as a basis for developing and testing improved methods and systems.

- e. Training Modules. Development of experience based management training packages for use with Tambon, District, and Provincial officials. The materials should be based on program experience and procedures, emphasize development of analytical and problem solving skills using real problem situations, and use participatory training methods which utilize participants' experience.
- f. Planning Methods. Assessment and improvement where appropriate of planning methods for use at Tambon level. Initially the focus should be on project selection and planning, then program planning, and finally comprehensive area planning.
- g. Personnel Rotation Practices. A study of the rates and patterns of reassignment of Provincial, District, and Tambon level personnel with key responsibilities in REGP, highlighting implications for learning laboratory management, and for training and expansion strategies under REGP.

Technical Sciences

Inputs from the technical, primarily engineering and biological sciences, will stress the adaptation required in project designs and technologies to local conditions. The orienting perspective here is to acknowledge and utilize the technical knowledge which village people possess and their ability to make important contributions in the choice of technologies appropriate to their needs. One concern in adaptation must be with the ability of the Tambon to manage and maintain new facilities once in place. Minimizing such requirements will be one approach, while developing approaches to strengthening the required capacities will be another.

Several of the studies suggested below would benefit from collaborative work with social scientists.

- a. Retrospective. This study should be initiated at the earliest possible time to provide baseline planning data for efforts to improve technical performance on REGP projects. It would involve follow-up study of a sample of REGP projects completed over the past three years to determine such things as: What percentage are still functioning and in use after 1, 2, and 3 year intervals? Has necessary maintenance been performed? Are there typical recurring technical deficiencies which might be corrected in planning, project design, or construction stages? The study would make separate assessments for each type of REGP project and would look for patterns distinguishing the performance of different Tambons and Districts. Where such differences are observed an effort would be made to determine the underlying reasons as a basis for understanding what practices of the more successful units might be recommended for application by others. The findings of the study will be used by the National Working Group and by ARD to further analyze the nature of technical difficulties being experienced by the projects and identify reasonably focused corrective actions.

- b. Village Technical Knowledge and Practice. Even with the assignment of ARD engineers to District level to provide technical support to the Tambon Councils on REGP projects, they can only supplement, they cannot replace the needs for technical expertise within the Tambon itself. Thai villages reputedly have a long history of carrying out public works projects using local expertise and resources. A greater understanding of these technical capabilities and practices will be useful to the REGP in supporting the more effective use of local technical and material resources. There will be three components to this study. Each will need to distinguish between the different types of project activities of concern to REGP, such as road technology, well technology, fish pond technology, and grain storage technology.

- 1) Design and construction technologies. What are the more successful of traditional practices, particularly those which require only locally available instruments, equipment, and materials and might be utilized to the benefit of REGP projects. At the same time are there typical traditional practices which are clearly unsound given modern technical knowledge but which are still in use and will need to be discouraged?
- 2) Facilities management practices. What are the practices followed by more successful villages with regard to management of fish ponds, tanks, canals, roads, bridges, and grain storage with regard to maintenance practices, use rights, user fees, use efficiencies, etc.? How are responsibilities assigned for management and maintenance functions? This portion might be carried out in collaboration with the related social science study proposed.
- 3) Chang Pracham Tambon (Tambon Technician). What are the sources and quality of the technical expertise available within the typical Thai rural community for carrying out the above activities? Quality is not to be assessed on the basis of formal educational qualifications but rather on the basis of proven ability to do the job. How are these skills typically acquired? To what degree are the individuals involved fairly specialized as to the types of technical capacities they possess and if so which types are most commonly available? This study will also look specifically at the development and use of the Chang Pracham Tambon by the REGP and other government programs, the basis for and methods of their selections, their skills relative to REGP project requirements, methods of compensation, the technologies with which they are familiar (both modern and local), and the validity of those technologies.

This outputs of this study or series of studies will be used to improve the relevance and utility of technical manuals, in training engineers to recognize and encourage the effective use of local technical capabilities, and in formulating strategies for REGP and ARD action to build on and further strengthen existing village level technical capabilities. It should also allow for more refined judgements regarding the level of responsibility that may be appropriately assumed at Tambon levels for local infrastructure projects.

c. Alternative Technologies. The above studies would serve as inputs to an applied research effort intended to generate and test under field conditions in the learning laboratory alternative technologies for REGP projects which would provide improvements against one or another of the following criteria:

- Make increased use of proven village technologies and take maximum advantage of existing Tambon and village level technical capabilities.
- Reduce use of materials and equipment not locally available.
- Increase durability and utility under village conditions
- Reduce construction cost and/or maintenance requirements.

These would become the basis for revised technical manuals and standards.

d. Training Modules for Engineers. All of the above would be drawn on as input to the development of updated training modules for engineers working in rural areas to familiarize them with indigenous technical methods and capabilities, and to prepare them to work in a collaborative and supportive mode with Tambon and

village personnel. These would be incorporated into in-service training for ARD engineers as well as into appropriate courses in the degree programs of leading Thai engineering schools.

- e. Maintenance Arrangements. A continuing critical concern of the REGP is with improving the maintenance of completed projects. Based on the analysis of existing maintenance capabilities and practices described above, proposals will be developed regarding how best to provide for effective maintenance utilizing Tambon resources. This would include provisions for financing, management, and the contracting of specific required maintenance services. Various schemes would be field tested to arrive at one or more proven approaches that can be recommended generally. Attention would also be given to development of appropriate supporting capabilities within the relevant government agencies.

REGP Secretariate

The REGP Secretariate in the Office of the Prime Minister will serve as resource mobilizer, facilitator, policy coordinator, and learning process manager for the Tambon management improvement effort. As the effort will ultimately involve numerous Ministries and require sustained policy support from the highest levels of government, the location of management responsibility within the Prime Minister's Office seems particularly appropriate. An immediate concern will be with building and staffing a new unit within the Secretariat which will give the Tambon management improvement effort its own identity and provide the necessary staff support.

Approval will be sought to create within the Secretariate a post of Deputy Director of REGP Operations for Tambon Management Improvement. This post would be filled on a full-time basis by a respected senior level official of the RTG who would also serve as Deputy Director of the DDMP. (The Director of Operations serves as DDMP Project Director.) The unit would be staffed by senior level staff persons on part-time (30%) loan from

the Department of Local Administration, the Department of Community Development, and the Office of Accelerated Rural Development. These individuals would simultaneously assume the lead role within their respective Departments for support of the REGP management improvement initiative. The persons so assigned would form, along with the Deputy Director, a special Tambon Management Improvement Task Force within the Secretariat. Approval will be requested for appropriate incentive payments. Technical support will be provided to the Task Force on a full time but temporary basis by the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) contracted under DDMP. Longer term technical support will come from the Thai Resource Institutions, the development and involvement of which will be one of the early priorities of the Task Force and the TAT

The TAT will provide a Coordinator for Learning Laboratory Operations and five District Development Advisors who will each work out of the Office of the Deputy Governor of a collaborating province. The Coordinator will also be the point of contact with the RTG and USAID regarding administration of the TAT contract. A Management/Organization Advisor and an Engineering Advisor will also be provided under the TAT contract. These two advisors will be responsible, through the Coordinator, to the Deputy Director for identifying potential collaborators within selected Thai resource institutions and for helping them develop into effective support roles in the management improvement effort. Specifically the advisors will work closely with Thai colleagues in the candidate institutions to identify those with requisite interests and capabilities, stimulate their interest, and find ways to engage them consistent with their interests and capabilities, their long term professional development, the interests of their institutions, and the needs of the REGP. These advisors will help to build teams of such persons in several Thai institutions with a long term commitment to supporting the Tambon development learning process as members of a larger Tambon management improvement coalition. The Management/Organization Advisor will concentrate his attention on development of resource groups in management and the social sciences. The Engineering Advisor will concentrate on the development of resource groups

in the technical sciences. Both will need to work boardly with the institutions involved to help them understand the nature of the roles their people might development within the REGP, the types of institutional support required, and the potential benefits that may accrue to their own institutions in return.

The Secretariate will form a national level Tambon Management Improvement Working Group to manage the learning process. This group will hold a regularly scheduled meeting once each month, with sub-group meetings called as required to work on special problems. Except for the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary, membership will not be formalized and participation may be expanded or contracted as appropriate to the needs of the process. Initially the working group will be formed around the following persons:

- Chairman : Director of Operations REGP Secretariate
- Vice Chairman : Deputy Director for Tambon Management Improvement
- Secretary : Coordinator of Learning Laboratory Operations
- Participants : Departmental Personnel Assigned to the Management Improvement Task Force
 - Key Members of Resource Institution Teams
 - USAID Project Manager
 - Management/Organization Advisor
 - Engineering Supervisor
 - Process Documentation Supervisor

The Working Group will carry out a continuing process of reassessment and reprogramming of the management improvement effort. It will commission special studies, systems development exercises, policy analyses, workshops, and training programs. It will review study reports, reports from

Provincial and District Tambon Management Improvement Support Teams, process documentation, and other informational inputs to identify and act on implications for program policies and procedures. It will link national policy as it evolves with the development and implementation of operational systems in the learning laboratory. At the same time it will insure scope for flexible experimentation within the learning laboratory. It will formulate and implement a strategy for gradually expanded application of approaches and methods successfully tested in the learning laboratory to other parts of the country. It will give particular attention to development of the Thai institutional resources required to support such expansion. Finally it will facilitate coordination between the Departments which are engaged in strengthening their own capacities to support the REGP Tambon management improvement effort.

Coordination of activities within the learning laboratory area, during the period of the TAT contract, will be the responsibility of the Learning Laboratory Coordinator who will hold periodic meetings of the District Development Advisors for this purpose. Participation in these meetings may be expanded as appropriate to include other persons with key roles in the learning laboratory operations. For example the process documentation supervisor might normally be included, along with selected participants from other Thai resource institutions and possibly the Provincial CD Supervisors. These meetings would focus on working out field problems, providing an exchange of experience between provinces, and insuring a continuous flow of communication between learning laboratory operations and the National Working Group.

Process Documentation

The DDMP will support the development and use of a process documentation methodology by the REGP, based on the prototype methods developed and used by the National Irrigation Administration in the

Philippines. The primary purpose is to provide national level policy makers with a "window" on operational realities in selected field sites so they can experience vicariously the realities facing field personnel on a day to day basis in the implementation of specific national programs and policies. It can provide an invaluable tool for making required adjustments in supporting policies and procedures, and as an input to training. It is a major tool by which program personnel can advance their own learning.

The process documentors will be Tambon based. Their job is to observe and record key events in the REGP project planning and implementation process as they occur. Who made what decisions? On what basis? What interactions took place between Tambon and District officials? Between Tambon officials and villagers? What issues arose? How were they resolved? Who prepared plans and cost estimates? What approval procedures were employed? What changes were introduced in plans and priorities over time? At what levels and by whom? How was labor mobilized and compensated? How many were employed, from where? What problems were encountered in preparation of technical designs, in choosing between different types of projects and sites, in budgeting and disbursement of funds, in the mobilization and compensation of labor, and in adherence to construction schedules? How were they resolved and by whom? What mechanisms were used at Tambon and District levels to monitor progress and to assess project outcomes? What was the visible response of the affected community during planning, construction, and after project completion?

Process documentation reports are intended to be objective descriptions. They should not include evaluative commentary by the process documentor and they should not serve as the basis for evaluating individual performance. The effectiveness of the process documentors depends on their continued acceptance by the various persons whose activities they are documenting. An objective, non-evaluative posture is essential to this. Equally crucial is that higher level officials use the reports only as a basis for improving the quality of the support they provide to the field, not as a basis for criticism or disciplinary action.

Process documentors must be keen inquisitive observers, be willing to take an unobtrusive role, be clear effective writers, and be willing to adhere to disciplined reporting schedules. Their selection and training should stress these qualities. Prior training in anthropology and/or journalism is likely to be useful.

A monthly report should be completed by each process documentor, edited, approved, and reproduced for distribution to interested officials and resource institution personnel no later than the 15th of the month following the reporting period. Semi-annual summaries should be completed at least the first year, though annual summaries may be adequate thereafter. Copies of each report should be made available to the involved officials at Tambon, District, Provincial, and National levels. Supervising, editing, producing, and distributing monthly process documentation on a timely basis for five provinces will be a substantial undertaking and will require at least one full-time supervisor backed by adequate editorial and secretarial personnel. The utility of the reports depends not only on the professional attention that goes into refining the content and formats of the reports to best reflect program needs, but also on the attention given to their utilization by decision making personnel.

Process documentation support will be provided under the TAT. The Supervisor of Process Documentation will report to the Deputy Director for Tambon Management Improvement. Provision will also be made for a consultancy visit to Thailand by the head of the Philippine process documentation group located in the Development Academy of the Philippines, and/or a visit to the Philippines by the process documentation supervisor of the contract firm.

All officials whose activities are being documented and/or who will receive copies of process documentation reports will need to be oriented by the Management Improvement staff of the Secretariate as to their purpose and appropriate use. The process documentation supervisor will attend all Working Group meetings, which will provide a continuing forum for

discussions of how the process documentation may be made more useful and of how it may be more effectively utilized by program managers and resource institution personnel. Given the quantity of the reports which will be generated by the process documentation unit, it cannot be expected that all members of the working group will personally review all reports. Each province being documented should have one or two members of the Working Group assigned to review all reports from that province to flag major observations and issues for attention of the larger group. Again the appropriate procedures will need to be worked out over time based on the experience of the Working Group.

Self-Evaluation Plan

Continuous and intensive self-evaluation and redesign is the key feature which distinguishes the learning process approach to development programming from the more conventional blueprint approach. The latter deals with evaluation as a sometime activity separately funded and distinct from ongoing management. Nearly the entire expenditure planned under the management improvement component of the DDMP is committed to support of the self-evaluation process as basic to the project's institutional development strategy. By most any standard this will probably be one of the most exhaustively evaluated projects ever funded by AID. The systems proposed should more than meet AID's requirements for evaluation documentation.

The DDMP features six (6) interlocking evaluation systems. The details remain to be worked out by the participants and will evolve over time as they determine the most effective ways to meet their needs for management data.

System 1: REGP Project Monitoring System

This will be the basic system for ongoing monitoring of Tambon projects funded by the REGP. One of the resource institutions, with the assistance of the TAT, will assess present project monitoring procedures and practices and work with operating personnel to develop and field test improvements. The ultimate test of these systems is their effectiveness in detecting problems and stimulating corrective action at the lowest feasible level when the need arises. The resource institutions will report periodically to the Working Group on its progress. The system itself will routinely generate summary reports for national monitoring purposes which will be available to the Secretariate, the Working Group, and USAID

System 2: Tambon Management Improvement Support Teams

Each of the five Provinces and ten Districts involved in the Learning Laboratory will have its own Tambon Management Improvement Support Team. Provincial teams will meet quarterly and District Teams monthly to assess progress with their management improvement efforts as reflected in Tambon REGP project performance. The review will cover training, diagnostic, and system improvement activities. Key problems and opportunities will be identified and plans for the next period formulated. Inputs to their meetings will include verbal report of their members, data from the project monitoring system, process documentation reports generated within their jurisdictions, and any relevant special studies generated by the resource institutions. Each Team will generate a report of each meeting which will be submitted to the Secretariate for use by the Working Group.

System 3: Process Documentation

One person will be assigned full-time to each Province for the sole purpose of observing and documenting the performance of the REGP management system in the Learning Laboratory area. While their observations will necessarily be selective, their monthly reports will provide a detailed and

timely record of problems and progress and serve as a key input to the Tambon Management Improvement Teams, to the TAT, and to the national Tambon Management Improvement Working Group. The monthly process documentation reports will also provide a rich data base for researchers interested in local government development, and the annual summaries will make highlights widely accessible to Thai officials and other interested parties.

System 4: Special Studies

The resource institutions will be carrying out a continuing series of special indepth studies of existing capabilities, project impact, systems performance, and priority problems. They will serve as inputs to program strategy and policy formulation, while also contributing directly to training and management system design. It is not anticipated that these studies will be confined to the Learning Laboratory area. Indeed for certain of the studies it may be particularly desirable to include selected areas from different parts of the country to determine the extent to which relevant conditions differ and to facilitate learning from one region to another. These special studies will be carried out under the auspices of the National Tambon Management Improvement Working Group but will be generally available to all interested parties.

System 5: National Working Group

The National Tambon Management Improvement Working Group will serve as a link between the various evaluation systems, as well as between the Learning Laboratory and the remainder of the national program. Its monthly meetings will provide a forum for overall review of progress, problem identification, and the formulation of strategies for continuing incremental advancement in the Learning Laboratory, as well as the broader dissemination of proven practices. It will also be the body which will assess and initiate action on the implications of individual special studies, and which will assess progress with individual systems improvement and training activities. The minutes of its monthly meetings will provide a running record of progress.

In addition, with the assistance of the TAT, the Working Group will carry out an annual summary review of progress, resulting in an updated action plan for the following year. This report will be submitted to USAID in fulfillment of its annual documentation requirements.

System 6: External Audit

Three years after initiation of DDMP and at end of Project, a joint Thai-U.S. systems audit team will be formed with the assistance of the Asia Bureau and the AID Office of Evaluation. This team will carry out an overall assessment of the performance of the self-assessment systems introduced under the project, and of the suitability of the learning process concepts and systems employed for application in other Thai programs as well as AID assisted programs in other countries. The team will also assess the ability of Thai government and AID management systems to adapt to the requirements of the learning process approach.

Getting these six systems in place and functioning is likely to take up to two years. In the meantime AID reporting requirements must be met and the Secretariate must be in a position to assess progress with innovations introduced since DDMP initiation. A first annual evaluation under DDMP will be needed to meet USAID needs by August 1982, just about the time the TAT will be getting settled into place. Consequently provision will be needed for an interim evaluation. To meet this need a contract will be let to the group from Khon Kaen University which carried out a study on the Tambon planning process in late 1981 to do an update. Special attention will be given in this evaluation to three innovations introduced in the REGP on a pilot basis within the Learning Laboratory.

1. Assignment of ARD engineers to District level to assist Tambons with project design. Are they in place? On what types of activities were their energies focused with what result? Does this innovation seem to have the intended potential to improve the technical quality of Tambon projects under REGP? What improvements should be considered by the Secretariate?

2. Injection of additional funds to the pilot Tambons under the DDMP. What difference did these additional funds make in the nature and quality of projects undertaken? Did the availability of additional funds strain the system or did it aid in responding to local priorities? Were there any improvements in the planning process itself over the previous year?
3. Simplified procedures for per diem. Did the simplified procedures work from a field perspective? Was necessary accountability maintained?

By the time an annual evaluation is required for 1983 the systems should be adequately in place as to generate the required USAID report through the normal processes being introduced under the program.

Critical Issues

The focal point of this effort is the Tambon and the development of its capacity to provide self-reliant leadership in local development. The intent is not only that the Tambon should make planning inputs to units of the central government, but that over time it should develop the capacity to plan, finance, and implement its own development projects and programs. Work under DDMP at Province and District levels is centered on helping them provide the requisite support to the Tambons in their respective jurisdictions. It is assumed that this can be accomplished with no net additions to permanent staff now assigned to Province and District. Several critical issues have been identified.

1. Institutionalizing Technical and Managerial Expertise at Tambon Level

Tambon councils are primarily decision-making bodies which work without permanent staff support except for the Community Development worker assigned to them by the Department of Community Development. Members of the

Tambon Council cannot themselves be expected to carry out feasibility studies, produce technical designs, or supervise construction and maintenance. Training them for such functions will have little result if not accepted as a part of their role. Relying on the CD worker or on the ARD engineers to perform administrative and technical functions should be viewed only as temporary measures as these individuals are from outside the community, and are appointed by and ultimately accountable to the central government. They are also subject to rotation at 3 to 4 year intervals.

Attention is needed to mechanisms by which more permanent technical capabilities can be developed in the Tambon and made accessible to the Council. An interesting innovation in this regard is the institution of the Chang Pracham Tambon or Tambon technician. This is an unofficial position not involving compensation, but conferring recognition on one or more members of the community for their technical experience and expertise and making available to them special training opportunities. The possibility of strengthening the roles and capabilities of such persons needs careful consideration. Approaches to this end should be examined in the learning laboratory area.

2. Building from What the People Do and Know

As formal units the Tambons present limited evidence of capacity for local development action. But such appearances can be deceiving. We are learning that in many parts of the world the existing capacity of the people for self-reliant development action has been too easily overlooked by university trained planners and technicians who implicitly assume that the people ultimately must depend on the government to meet their needs. Of course the reality is that government cannot meet all of the people's needs and the people can scarcely afford to wait for government action when their very survival is likely at stake. Government and the people must work in partnership with the government helping the people take an increasingly more dynamic role. REGP seeks to strengthen the people's capacity for self-reliant development. To do so we must begin from a knowledge of how

villagers have traditionally organized themselves to meet the needs addressed by the REGP and about the technologies they have brought to bear. We must know which of the capabilities currently exist and how to tap them to the best advantage of the people of the Tambon.

3. Attention to Support Systems

There are many reasons why locally initiated development projects do not produce the results intended that cannot be corrected simply through training. Perhaps certain materials required for the project were not available locally. Perhaps program procedures call for specific approvals of an official who resides in a town 100 kilometers from the project site and who is seldom in his office. Perhaps certain audit procedures prevent the timely release of funds. Perhaps the work load of the district engineer is too great to allow assisting all Tambons with their project designs during the period allotted. Perhaps villagers feel in a particular instance that REGP funds are being misused by a local official and refuse to participate. Perhaps budgeting procedures allocate too little money to reasonably carry out a particular type of project. Perhaps regulations permit only the hiring of unskilled labor, but the project requires use of some skilled workers who are not available at the wages offered. The list could go on. These examples are only hypothetical in so far as REGP is concerned, but are drawn from real experience in similar types of programs in a variety of countries. The point is that in assessing needs at the Tambon level, care will be needed to identifying and addressing the full range of barriers to effective development action.

4. Learning Process in a High Rotation Personnel System

The cases from which the learning process concepts are derived are all from situations in which there was considerable stability in leadership and personnel posting. The REGP will be the first recorded effort to apply those concepts within a system characterized by high rotation rates. The difficulties should not be under estimated. High rotation breaks the needed

continuity of leadership and makes it difficult to begin building groups within the organization committed to new values and skilled in new ways of working supportive of the change. High rotation rates limit the role of line staff in initiating innovations in the learning laboratory as it is difficult for them to develop much interest in pioneering innovations when they cannot be expected to see the results, or to invest in learning about the people and their capabilities when they will not be around long enough to use that knowledge. It is difficult for them to be concerned about long term investments in capacity building when they will be evaluated only on the visible accomplishments of a one or two year assignment.

The temporary nature of the TAT provided under DDMP presents a similar problem. Much of the learning accumulated by the Secretariate in the first 3 to 4 years will accrue to these individuals whose positions are only temporary.

To the extent possible the change strategy must attempt to compensate for these realities. Several approaches are suggested:

- a. Attempt to capitalize on existing points of relative personnel stability. This is the rationale for the strong emphasis on the resource institutions. It is also the reason for seeking ways to develop individuals permanently residing in the Tambon who will provide continuing technical support to the Tambon Councils. In the operating agencies we will be looking to develop the roles of individuals at levels and in positions which involve relatively lower rates of rotation.
- b. Attempt to develop additional points of stability. A key concern here is the Secretariate. Ways must be found to stabilize certain key assignments within the Secretariate to the extent possible.
 - 1) The person selected as the Deputy Director for Management Improvement should be chosen on the basis of a substantial

commitment to the Tambon development process and interested in having an opportunity to work in a key role in support of that objective over a period of several years. A person likely to be acceptable to subsequent administrations would be particularly desirable.

- 2) The persons assigned to the Task Force on deputation from other Departments should be selected more on the basis of commitment than formal position in the expectation that they will remain in their Secretariate assignments even as they are rotated within their own Departments.
- c. Seek out ways to retain the services of committed personnel who have developed useful experience under the program. Specifically ways should be sought to extend contracts of the more effective TAT personnel over an indefinite period beyond the original contract.
 - d. The phasing of the expansion strategy should take into account rotation patterns of government personnel. For example, if ARD engineers normally rotate assignments within a Province, new training and engineering approaches should be introduced on a province wide basis before moving to a second province. This would contrast with the strategy in a stable assignment situation where the normal recommendation would be to begin first with one or two Districts in a Province to build experience with the new methods and then build outward from that base.