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PROSPECTUS FOR AN EVALUATION PROCESS

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A.I.D. FIELD MANAGEMENT REVIEW PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

1. Scope of Agency's Evaluation Process

The broad frame of reference within which this prospectus has been developed was established by the Summary Presentation of an Act for International Development:

"It is essential that the Administrator have the capability to assess periodically the substantive quality of progress made and results achieved under the various programs of the Agency. Several parts of the organization will participate in the evaluation process. The Assistant Administrators will be responsible for continuously reviewing, evaluating, and reporting upon the operations in their respective regions. The Office of Development Research and Assistance will be responsible for evaluating the degree to which the Agency is accomplishing its long run objectives, particularly with respect to facilitating the growth of strong national institutions in recipient countries."

As an integral part of its responsibilities, the Office of the Controller will conduct a program of internal audit intended to insure that the financial management system prescribed by the Agency is being properly implemented.

"An important part of the assessment process involves measurement of managerial performance at all levels, down to and including country and project levels. This activity will be carried out by specially selected evaluation teams, appointed for the Administrator by the Director of the Office of Personnel on an ad hoc basis, and assigned to review the results

obtained under specific projects, under specific country plans, and occasionally along specific and cross-cutting functional lines of activity. Whenever possible, the evaluation teams will apply objective tests and measurements to program achievements and deficiencies. They will advise the Administrator through reports, on opportunities for and methods of strengthening managerial performance and improving management systems and relationships".

The subsequent discussion will relate primarily to this last phase of the Agency's multiple evaluation process.

## II. Definition of "Evaluation"

The work "evaluation" has been used in many different contexts, tending to confuse and obscure the objectives of the process. To some, the term has suggested an assessment of a program or project; in terms of progress toward a predetermined goal; to others it has conveyed the impression of an inspection. A third group suggests that in addition to an assessment of progress, "evaluation" must also include a judgment on the validity of the pre-determined goal. In light of the varying emphasis that has been placed on the term, valid criticisms have been made in the past that many "evaluation" attempts have failed because clear and concise definitions of objectives were not developed prior to initiation of the process.

Within the total framework of the Agency's evaluation process, the phase emphasized in this prospectus should be directed toward the following objectives:

- a) an examination of the progress of a program or project toward a pre-determined target;

- b) an evaluation of the principal personnel involved in the implementation of the program;
- c) an analysis of the effectiveness of a Mission's operations;
- d) the indoctrination of headquarters and field personnel in the new program and management concepts;
- e) appropriate assistance to responsible operating officials, including the Ambassador, to insure strict adherence to the Agency's program and management concepts;
- f) the development of Agency personnel, by assignment to this phase of the evaluation process, to staff responsible positions both at headquarters and in the field.

Although any evaluation process must by its very nature contain certain negative factors, these must be minimized if the Agency's system is to prove successful. The assessment of field operations can be a beneficial management tool if it concentrates on detecting deficiencies and recommends feasible solutions. Furthermore, it must emphasize only major management problems, leaving relatively minor matters for local resolution.

✓ It is recommended that the Agency undertake an "evaluation by exception" process, reporting to the headquarters office only the key problems.

Primary stress must be placed on assistance to operating officials at all levels that an evaluation process can provide. The system will not be successful unless the operating official feels that it will be of primary benefit to him. The negative aspects, best exemplified perhaps by the word "inspection", should be treated as a by-product and minimized to the fullest extent possible.

The goals stated above suggest that the nature of the process requires it to be closely intertwined with the operations of the Agency.

It is contemplated that this phase of the Agency's evaluation process be considered as a necessary management tool and therefore be under the general control of the Administrator responsible for the Agency's overall operations. In this connection, it should be again noted that the principal objective of this evaluation is to be of assistance to the operating official. To be effective, therefore the function must rest within the Agency. Other types of evaluations, such as those which emphasize the inter-relationships of all the programs conducted within one country, could well be mounted outside the Agency without fear of duplication with the function discussed here. Within the Agency itself, although various alternatives are possible, the logical assignment of this phase of evaluation would appear to be to the Director of the Office of Personnel Administration. Several factors support this view:

at mission level

- a) the delegation to this Office of the Agency's broad management planning and review function.
- b) the impossibility of divorcing a judgement on an operation's effectiveness from an assessment of the operators.
- c) the natural training ground for personnel that an evaluation process can provide.

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Since the Agency's general management and personnel evaluation and training functions are assigned to the Office of Personnel Administration, the responsibility for the review of field operations should also be assigned to that Office.

It is not sufficient for the reports to be well developed and written, nor can an evaluation process be considered successful, if it has been of assistance to only one or two levels of management. The effectiveness of an evaluation system can only be measured in terms of its

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impact on an agency's operations. This factor would suggest the necessity of establishing an adequate follow-up procedure which would insure that the accepted recommendations are implemented and that the Administrator and Congress can feel assured that maximum utilization of the funds devoted to this purpose has been made.

In light of the principal objectives of this phase of the Agency's evaluation process, it would appear that full utilization of this management tool can be made in the implementation of the Agency's "turn-around" process. It must however be understood that such effort would only be a first stage in the development of a long range effort and that certain of the functions that might be conducted in this first phase would necessarily be of a continuing nature.

PHASE IIII. Introduction

The Agency has committed itself publicly to achieve a new direction both in its program and in its management within a period of three years. Prudence would suggest that as much of this goal as possible be consummated by the beginning of the next Congressional session. However since the evaluation effort must be mounted in support of operations, it cannot precede certain basic actions, such as the development of the Agency's organization and the selection of key Agency staff. It is within these time limitations that the following recommendations are made.

IV. Objective and Purpose

There appear to be at least four principal areas which "turn-around" should emphasize:

- a) new program objectives
- b) new organization pattern
- c) new personnel
- d) new relationship between Ambassador and AID mission including administrative support arrangements.

Evaluation teams can be one useful tool available to the Administrator in effecting changes in these four areas.

Admittedly, the implementation of the new program objectives will be a time-consuming process. This must be done in a systematic and orderly fashion and cannot be accomplished overnight. The concepts must first of all be thoroughly understood by all headquarters operating

and the Office of Personnel Administration, and certain known factors, could be obtained on key field personnel in time to satisfy the President's commitments and the realities of the domestic political scene, particularly as it concerns the new Agency's relationship to the Congress. Such a judgment, if based, as suggested, on assessments by several different sources, would be equitable from the employee's point of view and could not bear the stigma of arbitrariness and ruthlessness.

The fourth objective of this Phase I evaluation process is to develop a new relationship between the Ambassador and the AID mission including administrative support arrangements. This very broad goal covers many factors, from the very subtle one of the personal relationship of the Ambassador and the AID director to the more pragmatic determination of appropriate administrative support efforts. It can be assumed that no more than a start can be expected on the relationship phase of this goal since these must be developed over a period of time depending on the circumstances and on the individuals involved. Nevertheless, evaluation teams can assist field personnel in this matter by outlining in general terms the relationship concepts agreed upon by the Washington headquarter groups. In regard to the question of administrative support, it has been recognized that the existence of two separate administrative organizations at each post (i.e. State and ICA) is wasteful and ineffective. The Agency has suggested that one of the two organizations be made responsible for the provision of administrative services at each post. The assessment of each organization's capabilities, post by post, should be assigned to the evaluation teams.

All four of these objectives (i.e. program goals, organization, staffing, relationships) are part of the "turn-around" phase. Evaluation

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teams should be utilized to effect the necessary changes and since their efforts can be mounted in a relatively short period of time, this can assist to accelerate the process.

V. Organization and Staffing

Immediate action should be taken to establish the Field Management and Operations Review Division. A senior officer, preferably one with some experience in this function, should be selected and provided with the broad guidelines discussed in this prospectus. The unstated assumption throughout this paper has been that although other mechanisms might exist to accomplish the purposes of this phase of the Agency's evaluation process, the preferable one is the technique of assessment by on-the-spot surveys by carefully selected teams. Therefore, the Division Chief's first priority must be the selection of the members of the teams and of a staff for the development of the field operations review process on a continuing basis.

The Division Chief should be guided by the following principles in selection of personnel:

- a) Since the implementation of the teams' recommendations will rest primarily with the Regional Assistant Administrator, the personnel chosen must have the approval of these operating officials.
- b) To insure adequate implementation, at least one member of the team should be an operating official of the geographical area to which the team is assigned.
- c) Since part of the assigned responsibility (i.e. development of appropriate relationships between the Ambassador and the AID mission) is one in which the Department of State has equal interest,

the Department should be requested to nominate at the earliest possible moment one of its employees to each team.

- d) In order to insure adequate coverage of the new program concepts, one member of each team should have participated to some extent in the development of those concepts. It is not necessary for this member to have been assigned full time to the Foreign Assistance Task Force, but he should have sufficient knowledge of the background to be able to provide full information on the various background factors that were considered in the establishment of the concepts.

One of the main objectives of the Phase I evaluation activities is an analysis of the present senior staff. Based on the sound theory that personnel should only be evaluated by their peers or superiors, it is mandatory that at least the team leader be of sufficient stature and rank to evaluate Mission Directors.

It is estimated that the Agency will have approximately four months (September through December) in which to conduct this Phase I evaluation. The magnitude of the task and the requirements of the times strongly suggest the necessity of conducting this program in a vigorous and energetic fashion, concentrating the efforts on the key objectives which can be achieved within the limited time available. It is recommended that each team be composed of at least three members, each specializing in one area of activity (e.g. (1) Program and staffing, (2) Management and Staffing, and (3) State representative). Since the evaluation of senior mission personnel is of such great importance, and since such function depends primarily on subjective intuitions, it is recommended that this area

of activity be assigned to two members of the team, in order to obtain a multiple judgment and so that not only one officer is burdened with this sometime unpalatable and awesome responsibility. On the assumption that each team would average approximately two weeks at each post, it is suggested that at least ten teams be assembled which, including time for travel and occasional respites, will permit full coverage of all missions within the four months' time span. In those geographic areas which have a high number of large and difficult programs, it may be necessary to increase the number of required teams since the two week average for such area may be unrealistic. In the scheduling of team visits, first priority must be given to the major AID programs in an attempt to amalgamate this evaluation process with the programming cycle for at least these missions.

#### VI. Procedure

The systematic implementation of Phase I evaluation would dictate that at least the following steps be taken as quickly as possible:

- a) the designation of a Chief of the Division of Field Management and Operations Review;
- b) the selection of team members;
- c) the development and completion of the required briefing books;
- d) the assembly of team members at some central location. (Since some of these officers may be currently assigned to overseas duties, it is suggested that these locations be off-shore, preferably one in each geographic area).
- e) the thorough indoctrination of team members in the objectives of Phase I evaluation;

- f) the convening of Mission Directors and Senior Mission personnel in one central location (perhaps same as d, above);
- g) a week's seminar for these officers, chaired by the Assistant Administrator for the region. The objectives of this meeting would be two-fold: (1) provide the Assistant Administrator to become personally acquainted with his senior field staff and (2) permit a concentrated training session for these officers in the Agency's new program and management concepts.
- h) team visits to each mission;
- i) submission of team reports to the Assistant Administrators and the Director of the Office of Personnel Administration;
- j) implementation of those recommendations accepted by the operating officials (It should be understood that in certain areas of responsibility (e.g. relationships of Ambassador with AID mission, program and project directions) the team's comments will probably have to be preliminary and subject to further refinements by subsequent analyses. Teams should stress, and subsequent implementations must emphasize, those recommendations that fall into the areas of personnel evaluation, organizational changes and the provision of administrative support).

PHASE IIVII. Introduction

The nature of the Phase II evaluation process is different from that of Phase I. Although the same subjects might be covered, the focus and approach will differ. In the first place, Phase II can be conducted in a long-range atmosphere. This factor not only applies to the time available for the team to conduct such evaluation, but also to the context in which a team approaches its analysis. Furthermore, Phase II assessments must be made against familiar and generally agreed-upon standards and criteria. Team compositions may be different in that personnel from outside the Agency should be included. Also, some attention needs to be devoted to the requirements of the Departments of State, Defense and USIA and consideration needs to be given to the parallel efforts of these organizations.

VIII. Objective and Purpose

Phase II evaluations will assess the effectiveness of a program's management. Basically, of course, the final responsibility for such a judgment must rest with the operating official, principally the regional Assistant Administrator. Basic management principles, however, dictate that such operating officials have available for their use a tool which is divorced from the day-to-day operations. Three principal factors support the validity of this concept: (1) the inability of the operator because of time limitations to make an unhurried and deliberate judgment, (2) the difficulty any operator may have in seeing the broad spectrum when continually immersed in the day-to-day details, and (3) the desirability of subjecting an operation to the objective scrutiny of an outsider.

A word of caution is in order in this last factor. Although the principle is sound, its implementation at times has been the principal weakness of an evaluation system. Proper analysis of an operation not only requires the judgement of a disinterested party, but at the same time must take into consideration the native circumstances of a situation. An evaluator who does not attempt to take into consideration the obstacles and difficulties confronting the operator tends to make his analysis useless. The satisfactory determination of the proper balance between these two potentially conflicting points of view will depend primarily on the selection of capable personnel for the teams. If the Agency is not willing to make its very best officers available for this function, it may be better not to mount the evaluation effort in the first place. Capable officers must be assigned to the Division of Field Management and Operations Review even at the risk of denuding some other important Agency function. Too much is at stake, as ICA's experience will bear out, to assign anything less than the best to this activity.

In addition to evaluating the effectiveness of a program or project, the evaluation process can also provide another important ingredient -- uniformity of operations. It is recognized that the nature and circumstances of each program may require different operational approaches, but in time such divergence will result in administrative chaos. Evaluation teams can bring uniformity of operations to this international development effort by insuring the universal adoption of the basic concepts. These teams will also be able to report to headquarters those deviations necessitated by local requirements. Furthermore, since these teams will in a relatively brief period of time examine many different operations, they can serve as a cross-fertilization device bringing

innovations and practices of one mission to the attention of many others. It is probably in this context that evaluation teams can serve their most useful role by assisting operating officials to improve the effectiveness of their program. Experience gained in one mission is often applicable to the situations in others.

In connection with the desirability of cross-fertilization, each team should be instructed to devote specific attention to mission activities that appear to be particularly successful or dismal failures. These activities should be brought to the attention of the Office of Development Research and Assistance for further study. By the same token, evaluation teams should be prepared to undertake special assignments for this Office, should it have an interest in a specific mission program or project.

Operating effectiveness cannot be divorced from the capabilities of the operators. Sound procedures can be rendered void by inept personnel. An assessment of program efficiency must, by its very nature, include an evaluation of the personnel assigned to that program. As one of its principal functions, evaluations teams must be required to provide an objective and disinterested analysis of senior mission staff. This cannot, of course, be the sole standard of judgement but can add a dimension to the employee's composite picture.

It is not the intention of this prospectus to imply that evaluation is a one-time proposition. On the contrary, effective evaluation can only be accomplished by a daily review of all operations. Teams can be beneficial in providing operating officials with an objective view. They can be even more useful if they can assist in the development of a permanent mission evaluation process. This is especially important when one considers the vast role that an Ambassador must play. As the principal

U. S. official in a country, the Ambassador must be provided adequate tools to insure that his role can be effectively discharged. To date, the consensus of interested officials would seem to indicate that insufficient attention has been devoted to this matter. Evaluation teams, as part of their continuing responsibilities, should be required to assist the Ambassador and the Mission Director in establishing a continuing evaluation process at the country level that will provide adequate coordination, strict enforcement of the Ambassador's policies, and a means of detecting in advance potential trouble areas.

The evaluation system should provide a sound training ground for employees who have the potential to assume the responsibilities of the highest positions in the Agency. Although evaluation teams should be headed by senior officials of the Agency, other members should be selected for their potentials in terms of future assignments. The opportunity for an officer to examine the operations of several missions should be invaluable if his subsequent assignments include designation as Deputy Mission Director or Mission Director. Although it has been mentioned previously, it is worth repeating that the key to a successful evaluation system lies in the caliber of personnel assigned to it. If the operating officials cannot rely on the judgement of the evaluation team members, then considerable cost and time will have been expended needlessly.

Finally, it is incumbent on the Director of the Field Management and Operations Review Division to view his functions partly in terms of the total U. S. efforts. Other agencies with overseas programs have established comparable evaluation or inspection practices. The multiplicity of these efforts may tend to have a negative effect on field

operations and may overly-burden and confuse field staffs. Close coordination with the Inspection Corps of State and USIA would seem essential, including exchange of information, clear delineation of responsibilities, possible exchange of personnel, and whenever possible a joint endeavor to permit the Ambassador to view his entire operation as one entity rather than fragmented segments imposed on him by the arbitrary Washington Executive Branch organization.

IX. Organization and Staffing

The administrative leadership for this evaluation effort should stem from the Office of Personnel Administration. It must, however, have the full support of all the operating units of the Agency. Selection of personnel must be a joint endeavor, negotiated between the Regional Assistant Administrator and the Director of the Office of Personnel Administration. Once again it must be emphasized that only the most capable personnel should be assigned to this function. The job requirements must be drafted in such terms to insure this important goal. For example, should the current ICA personnel evaluation system continue, no person who ranks below the upper 10% of his evaluation panel should be selected for the teams. Other adequate safeguards of this nature should be developed.

The Division of Field Management and Operations Review should be staffed by a Senior Agency official and a permanent staff to provide the necessary support. Initially, it may be necessary to augment the permanent staff with personnel on detail to assist in the development of the procedures, guidelines and other standards for the evaluation program. Of primary importance in this first stage is the development of clear criteria against which evaluations would be conducted. It is

not sufficient to assess a project against an "efficiency" goal for the term is too vague to be meaningful either to the evaluator or the operating official. Consideration must be given to the establishment of a concise and broadly understood body of principles which would serve as goals for the mission staffs and provide a measurement against which progress can be assessed. This is indeed a difficult assignment, but must be accomplished even at expense of delaying the initiation of Phase II evaluation for several months. Without it, evaluation can be a meaningless exercise, subject to bitter controversy and perhaps scorn or neglect.

The staffing of the teams should follow approximately the same pattern developed for the Phase I teams. In the first place, the members must be selected from the Agency's most capable personnel. Secondly, strong consideration must be given to mission directors who would profit from an opportunity to review operations of other missions prior to their next assignment. Teams should also be staffed with Agency personnel who may not have yet reached the executive levels, but who appear to have the potential of becoming deputy or mission directors on their next assignment. A tour of duty on the staff of the Division of Field Management and Operations Review should not be overlooked as a fertile training ground for personnel who appear to have the potential of becoming the future leaders of the Agency.

Until the system is fully developed, it is recommended that evaluations be undertaken on an ad hoc basis, being responsive to the requests of any operating officials of the Agency. These requests may come from an Assistant Administrator or the chief of any of the staff offices or a Mission Director. It is incumbent on the Office of Personnel Admin-

istration to respond to these requests in an expeditious and positive manner for the future of the whole system may well depend on the benefits the operating officials derive from these requests. The Division of Field Management and Operations Review is a service organization and must adhere to this principle if it is to have an impact on the Agency's operations and if it is to achieve that status in the organization it deserves.

Although the Division is an integral part of the Office of Personnel Administration, the conduct of its operations will be a joint responsibility with the appropriate Regional Bureau. The teams' reports will be submitted to the Assistant Administrator, who will accept and implement those recommendations approved by him. The Division of Field Management and Operations Review in establishing its procedures, needs to assure that an adequate follow-up system is developed, including a reporting system to the Administrator so that he may be kept advised of the endeavors of the teams and their impact on the Agency's operations. Reports must be kept confidential if they are to be at all useful. Should outside pressures force the public disclosures of these reports, it is recommended that their formats be so devised to insure that all confidential matter be withheld from the main part of the report under the theory of Executive Privilege.

X. Procedure

Briefly, it is suggested that the following steps be undertaken before any formal evaluation system is adopted:

- a. Development of necessary procedures, including format and substance of briefing books.
- b. Adoption of criteria and standards.

- c. Drafting of objectives and goals for the Division of Field Management and Operations Review.
- d. Undertaking of several evaluations on a test basis to develop the necessary experience and to test the validity of criteria and assumptions.
- e. Undertaking of evaluations on an ad hoc basis as requested by operating officials.
- f. Establishment of a register of Agency personnel qualified to serve on evaluation teams.

All the above steps should, of course, be taken within the frame of reference established by this prospectus. Since no urgency seems to be apparent for the initiation of Phase II of the process, it is urged that all care be taken in developing a sound system which would be responsive to the needs of the Agency. Test studies should be conducted until an end product is developed which can be of positive assistance to the operating officials. Evaluation is not and can never be an end in itself; it should and can be a beneficial tool of management if properly used and adequately staffed. It will be most beneficial when it aids the operating official in the accomplishment of his goals and objectives.