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**Team Planning Workshop
Notebook for Field-Based
Program Assessments**

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**The CDIE Team Planning
Workshop Process
for Field-Based Program
Assessments**

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The CDIE Team Planning Workshop Process for Field-Based Program Assessments

Under the new Evaluation Initiative, CDIE will undertake about 4-5 major assessments annually on strategic issues of performance and impact to help senior management make critical programmatic and policy decisions and report convincingly to the Congress, OMB and the public. While CDIE will be experimenting with a variety of methodological approaches to program assessment, the materials in this notebook generally follow one particular model (adapted from the traditional "Impact Evaluation" series). Typically, each program assessment involves fieldwork in 5 to 6 countries depending on the complexity of the issues involved, the nature of assessment design, and the availability of time and resources. The teams will be led by a CDIE direct hire senior analyst, and will typically include one additional CDIE (or other office) direct hire staff and one contractor with special technical and/or data collection expertise.

The field assessment team planning workshop is organized by CDIE prior to the departure of a team to a country. Responsibility for organizing and facilitating the workshop rests primarily with the CDIE Topic Coordinator/Sector Leader, although the team leader of the field assessment will share this responsibility and will facilitate certain sessions of the workshop. CDIE management should be involved in making opening presentations to the team and in listening to the team's final debriefing at the workshop's end.

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the CDIE team planning workshop (TPW) process, aimed at preparing the assessment team for their evaluation work overseas, and to suggest guidance for conducting various sessions of the workshop. The rest of the papers in the notebook may be used as reference materials for the team's use, either during the workshop or in the field. The material is by its nature "generic", covering guidance for CDIE program assessments in general, and should be complemented by scopes of work and further guidance specific to the particular topic/program area and country being assessed by the team.

The Need for Team Planning Workshops

Teams will likely face serious challenges and obstacles in the fieldwork. There will be a lot to accomplish in a relatively short period of time. They will be operating in unfamiliar surroundings, facing logistical problems, dealing with highly complex issues, data shortages, and

numerous people and organizations with various "stakes" in the assessment outcome. Teams may also have internal problems, such as different perspectives on the objectives of the assessment or on their individual roles, or incompatible working styles. The purpose of the TPW process is (1) to create effective teams that will operate as an integrated whole with common objectives, understandings and plans, rather than as separate individuals, and also (2) to prepare the teams as much as possible for the field work ahead by enabling them to review background project/program documents and have interaction with key informants knowledgeable about the intervention and the country context who are available in the Washington D.C. area.

Workshop Objectives

The workshop has several objectives:

- (a) *To clarify the purpose of the assessment and to identify its primary (and secondary) audiences or clients.* This will include an overview, especially for non-CDIE team members, of the broader context and objectives of the CDIE program assessments, and of expected products of the field assessment efforts (i.e. the report and debriefings).
- (b) *To revisit the over-all design for the program assessment series, including its underlying conceptual framework, study questions and recommended methodologies; To refine and tailor the approach to the specific program setting.* By the time the workshop meets, the design for the overall program assessment series will already have been finalized and approved by CDIE, after careful internal and external reviews. Therefore no major changes can be contemplated at this stage. However, there is always a need for refinements and tailoring of the design/conceptual framework to the specifics of the country program, and some scope for minor revisions to make the specific country study more sharply focussed and methodologically more rigorous. Team members should critically review the assessment design, and explore its implications for the planned field study. Teams should prepare a conceptual framework of how the program they will be assessing is expected to achieve its impacts, developing hypotheses of the anticipated linkages to be "tested" (verified/disproved) in the field based on analysis of existing secondary data or on primary data gathered by the team.
- (c) *To review the available data, project and program documents, studies, and evaluations, and other literature relevant to the field assessment.* In select cases, CDIE will have prepared special background studies or concepts/issues papers to help the assessment team explore more fully critical evaluation questions. The team should relate the available data and information to each of the evaluation issues and hypotheses/questions identified in the assessment design/conceptual framework. It should categorize the quantitative and qualitative data, weigh theoretical and empirical evidence, develop tentative hypotheses and conclusions, and identify areas in which additional information will be needed.

- (d) *To finalize the data collection and analysis approaches to be taken by the team, building on the plans developed in the design of the program assessment series. The team should (1) clarify the methods and indicators to be used in assessing and measuring the program's performance and impacts (enabling comparability of measures across the series of program assessments, if at all possible), and discuss strategies for using existing or secondary data sources; and (2) explore the use of rapid, low cost data collection methods - key informant interviews, group interviews, focus groups, mini surveys, and structured observation. Such methods are specially useful to answer questions of why and how, and can help in analyzing and interpreting secondary data. The team should also construct appropriate research instruments such as interview protocols, questionnaires and direct observation forms, if and when necessary.*
- (e) *To plan how the team will work together effectively and develop a workplan and schedule for the fieldwork. To reach agreement on the substantive roles of the team members and prepare individual scopes of work. To define and agree on the special role and responsibilities of the team leader and of the contractor.*
- (f) *To discuss and finalize logistical arrangements.*

Intended Workshop Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected at the end of the workshop.

The team will have --

- (a) been introduced to the broader purpose and audiences of CDIE program assessments and to the expected products (especially the report).
- (b) reviewed background documents and held discussions with knowledgeable people about the program being assessed and its country context.
- (c) developed a shared understanding of the focus and scope of the country assessment, i.e. a broad consensus about the issues and questions to be explored and the way they should be explored. The team will have as a starting point their preliminary conceptual framework of how the program is expected to achieve its impacts and its related hypotheses. All conceptual and methodological differences among the team members should be resolved to mutual satisfaction.
- (d) classified available data and information on the basis of critical evaluation issues. For example, in the evaluation of a family planning program, data on contraceptive distribution or sales under the program, data on contraceptive prevalence among the target population and special studies on effective use, demographic data on fertility trends, and data on program costs relative to benefits, should all be properly

categorized and organized within the context of the conceptual framework and hypotheses, so that it is readily available to the evaluation team.

- (e) developed plans for searching for and using secondary data sources in the field, and drafted the research instruments to be used for primary data collection and analysis, such as interview guides and questionnaires.
- (f) prepared a comprehensive outline or synopsis of the assessment report. Some of the descriptive sections may even be drafted during the workshop. For example, the drafts of the sections on study objectives, country setting, and description of the intervention can be easily prepared in Washington. Even a preliminary draft of some parts of sections dealing with performance and impact might even be drafted on the basis of secondary sources, if available.
- (g) agreed to preliminary workplans and schedules for the fieldwork, including the dates for key known events. For example, the team can set tentative dates for events such as initial meetings with the USAID, host government and other stakeholders, completion of the data collection process, debriefing to the USAID, and submission of the report. These plans will naturally be revised as the assessment proceeds in the country.
- (h) written scopes of work for each team member. Among other things, a SOW should mention the issues or questions which a team member will individually explore, special data collection/analysis responsibilities, the sections of the report he or she would write, and the annexes that he or she will draft.
- (i) reached understanding and agreement on how the team will work together effectively and on the special roles of the team leader.
- (j) completed logistical and administrative arrangements.

Workshop Facilitation and Participants

The key participants of the workshop are the team leader and members, including the contractor.

The workshop will be organized and facilitated by the CDIE Topic Coordinator/Sector Leader. As facilitator, he/she will be required to:

- Schedule the workshop and notify the participants (i.e. the team) of the workshop purpose, time and place.
- Discuss with the team leader how he/she will be involved and share the facilitation of the workshop.

- Find and invite people to make presentations and share relevant knowledge with the team. This may include, for example, (1) CDIE managers to discuss the broader context, purpose and audience for the assessments and expected products; (2) key clients or stakeholders, such as A.I.D. senior managers, staff of the geographic and technical bureaus, members of Congressional committees, OMB officials, etc. to discuss the issues they consider most important for the assessment to address; (3) individuals based in Washington who are especially knowledgeable about the program being assessed and/or the country context to brief the team and answer questions; (4) technical specialists to help illuminate conceptual problems and issues; and (5) evaluation methodologists to discuss research strategies and appropriate data collection instruments.
- Gather and reproduce documents needed during the workshop.
- Prepare and conduct the workshop sessions.

Workshop Duration

The duration and contents of the team planning workshop are flexible, depending on the composition of the team (i.e. how many are "new" to CDIE assessments), on whether the team members have already been involved in developing the assessment design, or have participated in a related field assessment in another country, or are already familiar with the secondary data and material gathered for the country study. The Topic Coordinator/Sector Leader will have the discretion of setting the duration of the workshop and organizing the sessions as appropriate.

However, to meet the multiple objectives of the workshop and fully prepare the teams for the fieldwork phase, it is suggested that the workshop be scheduled for a full work-week, including some time during the week for review of documents, and for team "working sessions" to prepare the various products listed above under "workshop outcomes". The following sections of this paper suggest possible individual sessions for the workshop, which the Topic Coordinator can include, delete, or reorganize according to the backgrounds and needs of the team.

Suggested Agenda

Introductory Session

The purposes of this introductory session are to:

- Introduce the team members to the objectives and expected outcomes of the workshop.
- Go over the workshop agenda and schedule.
- Get team members who don't know each other acquainted.

The facilitator may wish to use flip charts outlining the workshop's objectives, expected outcomes, agenda and schedule. Team members may briefly introduce themselves, giving relevant background information such as area of expertise, anticipated role on the team, etc.

Orientation Session

The purposes of this session are to:

- Introduce the team (especially the non-CDIE members) to the broader context of the CDIE program assessments, providing a brief overview of their intended purposes, audiences, and general approach. This presentation is generally given by a CDIE manager (See Workshop Notebook section, "Introduction to CDIE's Field-based Program and Policy Assessments").
- Inform the team of the expected products resulting from the assessment teams efforts; that is the assessment report and various debriefings. This will include a review of the report outline and discussion of the key analytical elements of the assessment. In addition, the team will be informed of any oral debriefings of assessment findings that they will be expected to give; for example, debriefings for the mission (and possibly key implementing agency and/or host government officials) prior to team departure, and debriefings for CDIE management, senior management, and other interested parties in Washington upon the team's return. This presentation is also generally given by a CDIE manager (See Workshop Notebook section "Field Assessment Report Outline").
- Inform the team of some of the key findings resulting from previous assessments, if any, within their program area. This could be presented by the Topic Coordinator/Sector Leader, or possibly by the previous team leaders.

Session on Understanding the Client

The purposes of this session are to:

- Have the team hear first hand from key clients or representatives of audience groups, what they consider to be the key issues that the assessment might address. This may involve a panel format or individual presentations from Agency senior managers and key technical staff, and possibly representatives from outside groups such as Congress, OMB, other donors, etc. on what they consider to be the critical issues in the program area being assessed.
- Provide the team with an opportunity to discuss and agree on the primary and secondary audiences for the assessment results; to clarify what these groups are interested in and what "stakes" they may have the assessment results; and to discuss a strategy for working and interacting with them during the assessment process. The facilitator may wish to use flipcharts to list the team's understandings and agreements.

Session on Understanding the Program

The purpose of this session is to:

- *Familiarize the team with the program they will be evaluating, and with the country setting.* The session may involve: (a) Time set aside for program document review by the team members individually; (b) Discussions of readings among team members; and (c) Presentations to the team by persons knowledgeable about the program and its setting (e.g. people involved in the design or implementation if available in Washington D.C.) and time for discussion.

Session on Assessment Design and Conceptual Framework

The purposes of this session are to:

- Review with the team the overall design of the program assessment series, including its underlying conceptual framework, key evaluation issues or questions, and recommended methodologies and performance/impact indicators. Presentation by the Topic Coordinator/Sector Leader, followed by team discussion.
- Enable the team to refine the overall design and tailor it to the specifics of the program and setting that they will be evaluating. This may involve a presentation and discussion, if necessary, by CDIE staff on how to develop a conceptual framework, or logical diagram of the program's anticipated linkages with impacts, and how to develop from this the key evaluation questions or hypotheses. Time should be set aside to allow the team to undertake this exercise for their program. (See Workshop Notebook section, "Steps in the Assessment Planning Process", nos. 1 & 2).

Session on Methodology: Data Collection and Analysis Strategy

The purposes of this session are for the team to:

- Review the data and analysis needs of the assessment design required to address the key evaluation issues/hypotheses. To consider the requirements for comparability of the indicators across the various program assessments within the series.
- Review the relevant data already available to the team from various documents, studies, surveys and databases; and to organize it within the logic of the conceptual framework/key evaluation questions.
- Prepare a listing of data requirement gaps, and develop a strategy for gathering the information once in the field, either from secondary sources or through primary collection efforts. (See Workshop Notebook section, "Steps in the Assessment Planning Process", nos. 3 & 4).
- Prepare preliminary data collection instruments for primary data collection, such as questionnaires, interview guides, etc.
- Provide the team, if necessary, with a briefing by a CDIE evaluation methodologist, on use of secondary data and rapid appraisal techniques, including key informant interviews, community and focus group interviews, observation techniques and mini-surveys. (See Workshop Notebook sections, "Use of Secondary Data to Analyze Program Impact: Case of the Egypt NCDDP Evaluation" and "Rapid Data Collection Methods for Field Assessments").

Session to Prepare a Detailed Report Outline

The purpose of this session is to:

- Enable the team to prepare a detailed outline or synopsis of their assessment report, following the general guidelines discussed in session 2 above (See Workshop Notebook section, "Field Assessment Report Outline"); tailoring the generic outline to fit the specific characteristics and context of their own program assessment. Time permitting, the team may actually get started by drafting some of the more descriptive sections of the report, such as the introduction, country setting, and description of the AID program intervention.

Session on Team Workstyles, Roles and Workplan

The purposes of this session are to:

- Review individual team member preferences for working and living styles, and to discuss and agree upon effective ways of working together to accomplish the assessment task. This includes discussing and agreeing on team processes, such as decision-making styles, feedback, disagreements, working hours and time off. Particularly important is deciding how and when the team will regularly meet to share information and perspectives. To facilitate this, the team may find it useful to individually fill out the "Working and Living Styles Questionnaire" (See Workshop Notebook section) and discuss results as a group.
- Identify, discuss and agree upon how the overall team scope of work should be divided among the team members; i.e. decide the substantive/technical roles of individual team members in the overall assessment effort, taking advantage of special expertise, avoiding duplication of efforts, and dividing up team resources and workloads efficiently.
- Discuss and agree upon the team leader's special roles and responsibilities. The team may wish to take as a starting point, the listing of "typical" roles of CDIE team leaders. (See Workshop Notebook section, "List of CDIE Field Assessment Team Leader and Member Responsibilities").
- Develop a preliminary workplan and schedule for the team tasks (and for individuals on the team) once they arrive in-country. The team can develop a tentative workplan by answering the questions "WHAT, WHEN and WHO", on a three-column flip chart, or create a plan based on a time-line (such as a Gantt chart). Known or planned events can be scheduled, such as initial meetings with the USAID, host government and other stakeholders; regular team meetings; data collection/interview process; site observations and field trips; preparation of the draft report; final in-country debriefings, etc. (See Workshop Notebook section, "Steps in the Assessment Planning Process, no. 5).

Session on Logistics and Styleguide

The purposes of this session are to:

- Brief the team on logistical/administrative information and CDIE support services that the team should know, such as procedures for preparing TAs, TVs, and expense accounts; for getting per diem and money advances; for making plane reservations and obtaining tickets and hotel arrangements; for reserving laptops; and for hiring research assistants, interpreters, interviewers, or other services required by the team in the field. (See Workshop Notebook section, "Logistics and Support").

- Brief the team on the CDIE review, editing and publication process, and to inform them of their responsibilities for preparing the reports according to the Style Guidelines, for revising the report to respond to legitimate issues raised in the review process, and for responding to the editor's queries on the report (See Workshop Notebook section, "Style Guidelines for the Report").

Debriefing Session for CDIE Management and Workshop Closure

The purposes of this final session are to:

- Provide the team with an opportunity to debrief CDIE management and other interested parties on the team's workplan and on other key outcomes of the workshop, and to solicit feedback and suggestions. Time should be allocated for preparing for the debriefing and for follow-up.
- Provide an opportunity for the team to reflect on how they have been working together as a team so far and to suggest improvements; to evaluate the team planning workshop process; to tie up any loose ends before the team's departure; and to formally close the workshop.

**Introduction to CDIE's
Field-Based Program
and Policy Assessments**

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Introduction to CDIE's Field-Based Program and Policy Assessments

Background

A key component to CDIE's current efforts in implementing the Administrator's new evaluation initiative, is undertaking approximately five assessments of program performance and impact annually, each of which will be based upon a series of field investigations including about half a dozen country case studies. The program areas to be evaluated by CDIE during FY91-93 have been identified in a rolling three-year plan approved by the Administrator with the participation of senior A.I.D. managers, Missions, Congressional committees, and OMB. The topics include, for example, export promotion, child survival, family planning, democratic initiatives, counter-narcotics, policy reform, environment/natural resource management, and private sector programs.

These program and policy assessments will build upon and improve on an approach pioneered by A.I.D. a decade ago, called the Impact Evaluation Series. These assessments will, as did the Impact Evaluations before them, focus on development results--the impacts of programs and projects on target beneficiary populations and on broader economic and sectoral development trends. The studies also will examine related aspects of program performance, such as effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and continued relevance of development activities, in order to assess which approaches work best. Based on an analysis of a program's performance and factors influencing that performance, the assessments will derive operationally useful lessons about future program and policy strategies.

While the focus of the assessments remains basically the same, there will be significant changes in the approach or methodology of the newer assessments. The aim of the changes is to improve the credibility of the studies, through greater emphasis upon objectivity of the process and more rigorous and empirically-based methods.

Purpose and Audience

Most evaluations undertaken in the Agency are sponsored by the Missions, and are undertaken to support "tactical" operational decisions at the level of individual interventions. The primary audiences of this type of evaluation include A.I.D. project managers and their host country counterparts in implementing agencies, for the purposes of monitoring project

implementation processes and assessing performance in achieving intended project purposes and intermediate results. Such information serves project managers' decision needs for redirecting implementation efforts, correcting problems, and undertaking mid-course redesign efforts that may be necessary to help ensure that intended purposes and results are achieved by the intervention.

However, the purposes and audiences of the CDIE-sponsored assessments are at a different, higher or more "strategic" level. The primary audience is senior management and the primary purpose is to promote the use of evaluation findings and lessons based on experience as a key factor in guiding future program, policy and budget decisions in A.I.D. These assessments aim to:

- Inform and influence major Agency-wide programming and policy decisions. For example, the assessments should help formulate Agency policy and programming guidance statements and project design guidance, by drawing lessons from experience about what intervention and policy approaches work best in what country conditions. Also, the assessments should yield information relevant for making resource allocation decisions, particularly among competing, alternative intervention approaches based on their comparative performance in achieving results cost-effectively. The key audiences include senior management (the Administrator, AAs, DAAs, office directors), Mission Directors, and host country leaders.
- Support Agency senior management's accountability responsibility for explaining the nature, performance, and impacts of the Agency's assistance efforts to external oversight and constituency groups. Key audiences include the U.S. Congress and OMB, but also may include the GAO, State Department, various special interest and constituency groups, the press and the general American public.
- Contribute to the broader knowledge base about the development process and the role of donor interventions. Audiences include other bilateral and multilateral donors, international and regional development organizations, developing country governments, PVOs, NGOs, academic institutions, and others in the development community. While legitimate, this purpose is considered less critical or secondary to the others, and is treated as a "by-product" of the other purposes. That is, the CDIE assessment reports are broadly disseminated to these audiences, but in general are not undertaken to meet their specific needs.

Approach

In order to more effectively guide major Agency programming and policy decisions and more convincingly report to Congress, the CDIE assessments will require methods and approaches that:

- **Examine the longer-term, more ultimate development results and impacts of our interventions, rather than just shorter-term monitoring concerns. This implies developing methodologies that can plausibly link development results to program effects based on empirical evidence.**
- **Go beyond isolated "success stories" to provide more balanced and comprehensive reviews of the Agency's performance within major program areas, including case studies of failures as well as successes.**
- **Are relatively more rigorous, empirically-based and comparative in nature. Especially information needs for resource allocation decisions imply the use of more systematic and defensible methods (including where possible the use of standardized indicators of performance and impact; i.e. economic rates of return, opportunity cost, and cost-effectiveness methods) for comparative evaluations across projects, programs and countries in searching for the development approaches that work best. The assessment approach emphasizes grounding findings in empirical evidence.**
- **Ensure objectivity of assessments and guard against possibilities of bias and vested interests influencing findings. To safeguard independence, the assessment teams will be led by CDIE direct hire evaluators, and team members, whether direct hire or contractors, will be screened to ensure they have no direct involvement with the program being evaluated. Contractors will be responsible for technical and data collection and analysis functions, but will not draft the final main report or recommendations to management.**

A new external review panel process is being instituted that will involve submitting CDIE assessment designs and proposed methods, as well as the final reports, to a review and critique by outside technical/evaluation specialists. This should help promote the objectives of more rigorous and objective assessments. Also, the internal review process by A.I.D. offices and missions is being revised. While continuing to provide mechanisms for participation of "stakeholders" in the evaluation process (this is essential to help ensure utilization of findings), care will be taken to keep a distinction between appropriate review functions, versus an inappropriate "clearance" process.

While seeking to improve the rigor and credibility of CDIE assessment methods, there are nevertheless practical considerations of time and resource constraints. Thus, there are real tradeoffs between data collection/research methods that would optimize validity, reliability, and comparability -- and the approach being taken. Assessment teams will have more time in the field (4-5 weeks) than was allowed under the Impact Evaluation approach (2-3 weeks). In some cases, phased fieldwork or "advance" teams will be sent to engage local researchers and data collectors to undertake primary data collection and small surveys. All teams will be expected to use systematic rapid appraisal techniques and to analyze existing secondary data sources to substantiate the assessment findings with empirical evidence.

Field Assessment Report Outline

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Field Assessment Technical Report

Report Outline

Technical reports prepared for the CDIE field-based assessments generally contain three discrete sections: front matter (preface, acknowledgments, foreword, project data sheet, glossary, summary, and map), the main body of the report, and back matter (appendixes and bibliography). Some variation to this general structure is acceptable. For example, authors may decide not to have a preface, an acknowledgment, or a project data sheet. Appendixes are also not always necessary. (The appendix at the end of Section 10 contains samples of a title page, a table of contents page, a glossary, and a project data sheet.) The total report length should not exceed 100 pages; the main body of the report should not exceed 50.

Front Matter

Title Page

This page includes the report title, the names of members of the evaluation team, and the date.

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Foreword

The foreword is prepared by CDIE management and provides a context for the report, including introductory comments concerning the series of field assessments of which this report is one.

Preface

The preface includes the team's introductory comments, incidental notes and acknowledgments. If the acknowledgments are lengthy, they should be placed in a separate acknowledgments section following the foreword.

Summary

An executive summary informs the reader about the purpose of the field assessment and its intended audience and presents the basic findings and conclusions of the report. It focuses attention on major program accomplishments and shortcomings, lessons learned, and unresolved issues. It should provide enough information to stand on its own and to enable readers to decide whether the whole report will be of interest to them.

Map

Body of the Report

Many of the A.I.D. managers reading the field assessment report may not know the country or program under review and may not be very much interested in the historical background of the country or in the details of program operations or institutional relationships. Rather, they will be interested in the findings and conclusions about program performance and impact, and what the implications are from this experience for their own country setting and programming decisions. Therefore, most of the main body of the report should focus on the analysis of performance and the lessons learned. The introductory and descriptive sections should be kept short, and should include only the basics necessary for understanding the context for the analysis and findings that follow.

Introduction

The introduction discusses the purpose of the field assessment in the context of the series, and identifies the intended audience(s) and potential uses of the findings. The objectives (and hence the scope) of the field assessment should be clearly defined, along with the precise study questions. An overview of the team's methodological approach and data collection strategies may be included.

Setting

This section introduces the country setting and briefly describes the relevant economic, social, political, institutional or policy conditions and problems that produced the need for the A.I.D. development activity or that affected its impact. The description of the setting should be limited to only those key aspects needed to set the context for later analyses of program performance and impacts.

Description of the A.I.D. Activities

This section describes briefly the A.I.D. interventions (projects/programs/nonproject assistance) being assessed, including their goals, purposes, outputs and inputs, and a brief history of their implementation strategy and experience. This should include an outline of how the activity was expected to achieve results, perhaps through presentation of a "logical diagram" of the expected causal flow of events.

When a field assessment focuses on a program composed of a variety of project activities with a common strategic objective, this section compares and contrasts the differing approaches used. It might also briefly describe other significant public and private sector and other donor initiatives in the area, and their relation to the A.I.D. activities.

Development Results

In this section the report analyzes and presents the main findings on the development results of A.I.D.'s interventions. It provides the team's assessment, along with supporting empirical evidence, of the performance and impacts of the A.I.D. activities under review. The teams usually examine various aspects of program performance, including effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The assessment of impacts includes not only an evaluation of the intended impacts outlined in the design documents, but also an assessment of the appropriateness of these planned objectives, in retrospect, and of unintended impacts.

Performance

This sub-section of the report describes the overall performance of the project/program being assessed. As in all other sections, the analysis should be grounded in empirical evidence. The credibility (reliability and validity) of the evidence should also be mentioned.

While the assessment design proposal will outline the specific questions that are to be examined, in most cases they will pertain to the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the intervention.

Effectiveness issues examine whether the intervention's outputs -- services, technical packages, or other products -- are actually being used by the intended target group; whether there is equity or bias in access; and whether the coverage of the target group is as planned in the original design.

Efficiency issues examine whether the intervention was worth the resources, opportunity cost, time and efforts spent on it, by both A.I.D., the host country and any other funding source; whether there are less expensive alternatives to the current intervention strategies, and

whether the resources would have been better utilized in other programs producing better results. Cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit and economic rate of return analyses are examples of techniques for assessing efficiency. (Cost-benefit or rate of return analyses require setting a value on the impact or outcome of the activity. See next section on impact).

Sustainability issues assess the longer term financial, institutional, and contextual or environmental sustainability of the intervention's services and benefits after A.I.D. involvement ends. Concerns include the implementing agency's capacity to become financially self-sufficient, either through revenue-generating activities or through other public, private or donor sources of funding; the implementing agency's organizational capacity to manage its operations independently and effectively and to make strategic decisions and solve problems; and the capacity of the program to survive in the external environment in which it must operate, which may depend on the favorability of the political, policy, or natural resource environment.

Impact

This sub-section of the report presents the main findings on the development impacts of A.I.D.'s interventions. The findings should be precisely stated and provide a discussion of the supporting evidence. Contradictory, or non-supporting evidence should also be presented.

Impacts are commonly differentiated from the outputs of an intervention. They are the longer range development results of the outputs. For example, in a road construction project, the roads built are outputs, whereas the effects of the roads on the economy and the living conditions of the people are impacts. Impacts are often "people" impacts -- changes in the welfare, incomes or behaviors of target populations resulting from interventions -- but may also represent macro-level changes in the economy or sectors, or institutional changes. Efforts should be made to draw on empirical evidence to plausibly link or attribute program efforts to impacts. Reports should discuss unintended as well as intended impacts, and negative as well as positive impacts of the intervention.

Relevance and Future Priorities

In this sub-section, the continued relevance of the intervention's objectives and approach is assessed in light of changing development problems, policies, or priorities. The team may also consider how such changes might influence future programming strategies in response to these challenges.

Factors Influencing Performance and Impact

This section assesses the key factors associated with or influencing the A.I.D. activity's performance and impact. We now ask "why" development results were achieved or not, and examine causal relationships. We want to know which design and implementation approaches

worked well and which did not. What are the specific program-related factors that affected success or failure, and what conditions external to the program affected performance? For example, program-related factors that typically affect performance include the appropriateness of the design and implementation approach, the choice of technology, the capacities of the implementing agency's management and staff, and various A.I.D. procedures, regulations and policies. Examples of external factors that can influence program performance include the appropriateness of the host country policy framework, host government support and commitment for the program, and socio-economic conditions and characteristics of the beneficiaries.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations for Future Program and Policy Directions

In this section the evaluation team will attempt to draw broader lessons, based on the experiences of the projects or programs they reviewed, for future A.I.D. policy and programming decisions and for carrying out similar activities elsewhere. In other words, this section reinterprets the findings of the previous section to give generic programming guidance for similar activities in other countries. We need to know what the lessons imply for future design and implementation of similar efforts. It is important that the lessons learned be as specific as possible to the various types of conditions that programs face. If they are very general (e.g., good management is important, government commitment is important), they will be of little use.

The team should keep in mind the audience and intended uses of the report in drawing lessons learned and detail the specific implications for action. The lessons need to be clearly "grounded" in the evidence contained in the text. Too many lessons should be avoided. Lessons may be keyed to the report's audiences, and ordered in some helpful sequence. To be most useful, the lessons should not simply be listed, but should include information about how the conditions implied by the lessons could be produced in the setting of the activity evaluated. The implications for Agency actions should come very close to operational recommendations, in that they should constitute a call for action by audiences. These implications can be broad --they may directly challenge current thinking or call for a rethinking of major program strategies or policies-- or fairly specific -- for example, inclusion of a new design approach or element in future activities of this type.

This section will be directly useful for the final synthesis effort that will compare program experiences across different country settings and provide guidance on what approaches work best under what conditions to achieve specific objectives. This final synthesis report will form the basis for recommendations to senior management for programming and policy actions aimed at improving program performance and impact.

Outstanding Issues

In this concluding section, the team may wish to raise outstanding issues, that is, critical questions that remain unresolved, that threaten future program success, or that require further research.

Back Matter

Project/Program Data Sheet

This sheet lists pertinent data of the A.I.D. projects or programs under review, such as their titles, numbers, funding amounts, terms, dates, and purpose.

Glossary

The glossary identifies and defines terms or acronyms particular to the activity, location, or culture. Currency equivalents and weights and measures used in the report analysis may also be included.

Appendixes

The team may wish to use appendixes to elaborate on aspects of their assessment that are not fully covered in the main text. The appendixes are primarily meant for specialists, and therefore should provide a more extensive, well-documented treatment of the specific topics. However, they should not be used as a mechanism for enabling individual team members to write separate papers that only marginally support the main report's findings. Suggestions for appropriate appendixes include:

Methodology: An appendix on research methodology is recommended for all assessment reports. This appendix should provide information on (a) the conceptual framework and hypotheses investigated by the team; (b) the nature of data and information used and their sources -- primary and secondary, (c) the teams assessment of the data's reliability and credibility, (d) list of the people interviewed and sites visited and criteria used for their selection, and (d) the research instruments used for primary data collection. The appendix should also describe how the team ensured analytical and methodological rigor and objectivity in the evaluation enterprise.

Recommendations to A.I.D. Mission: Many missions will be interested in the implications of the team's findings for their own specific program planning (e.g. recommendations for project redesign or follow-on projects). Teams are encouraged to respond

to mission requests for specific recommendations, but to remember this is secondary to the main purpose of the assessments, which is to feed back lessons from experience into broader Agency-wide management programming and policy concerns.

A.I.D. Mission Statements: Sometimes missions or other offices may have significant differences of opinion with the team's conclusions and interpretations of findings. Rather than attempt to force the team to change or water down their statements, CDIE may propose that the disagreeing mission or office write a short appendix (not to exceed three pages) enabling them to express their own views. Matters dealing with disagreements over facts, data or data sources can better be dealt with as footnotes to the main text. The team should, of course, make a reasonable effort to resolve differences, especially over facts, and to understand and state the reason(s) for differences, whether over facts or judgements.

Empirical Evidence: Often the constraint on the length of the main report does not allow sufficient space to provide documentation of the data and analysis techniques used, nor to fully discuss data sources and quality. Such reporting and documentation in appendixes of the empirical evidence behind the key findings of the main report is recommended (including statistical tables, analyses, graphs, etc.).

Technical Issues: Teams may wish to use appendixes to expand on topics of importance and relevance to the assessment, but for which there is insufficient space in the main body of the report. Appendixes may be used to provide fuller technical treatment of key aspects of the report's findings.

Bibliography

A bibliography providing the key references and sources of information used by the team is recommended.

Program Assessment Report Checklist

In order to help avoid the most common types of problems with assessment reports that often cause delays in the review and editing processes, we have prepared the following checklist:

- Is the report directed at the right audience; i.e., is it written for a general audience of A.I.D. senior managers, program managers, and technical staff and not just for the mission or implementing agency under review?
- Does the report include the key sections analyzing program performance and impact, assessing the factors influencing results, and providing lessons for future program and policy directions?
- Are the findings on program performance and impact empirically based and credible? Are the data presented and analytical methods/calculations explained (in annex), and thus transparent to the reader?
- Are the indicators and measures used to assess program performance and impact those identified in the series design, and thus comparable across the country case studies?
- Is the analysis of the factors influencing performance based on a systematic, empirical approach? Is the method explained (in annex)?
- Are the lessons clearly based on or derived from the analysis? Are they operationally meaningful with clear implications for guiding future programming and policy decisions?
- Is the report engagingly written and well organized? Is it highly readable and easy to understand?
- Does the report take advantage of visual presentation techniques, such as graphics, charts, photos; to help summarize and analyze findings in a way that's easy for the reader to grasp.
- Does the report follow the style guidelines? Are references complete and tables/charts accurate and complete?

Assessment of DAC Members' WID Policies and Programs

Theme III: WID as a Cross-cutting Issue in Development Aid Evaluation

DAC Members should incorporate the following questions in project evaluations undertaken from April 1992 to March 1993 for all evaluations that are ex post, completion, or interim and that cover direct or indirect effects on beneficiaries.

Design, Appraisal, and Implementation

1. How were the interests and role of women (compared with men) taken into account on each of the design, appraisal, and implementation stages?
2. In what ways did women (compared with men) participate in these processes?

Effects and Impact

1. What were the effects, positive or negative, of the project concerning women's (compared with men) access to income, education, and training and with respect to work load, role in household, and community and health conditions?
2. How were the interests and role of women (compared with men) taken into account in the evaluation stage?
3. Were significant factors concerning women (compared with men) overlooked at the appraisal stage?

Data Availability

Were gender-specific data available for each of the project stages?

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| a. design | d. monitoring |
| b. appraisal/approval | e. evaluation |
| c. implementation | |

Sustainability

Are the results achieved by the projects equally sustainable between men and women beneficiaries?

Steps in the Assessment Planning Process

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Steps in the Assessment Planning Process

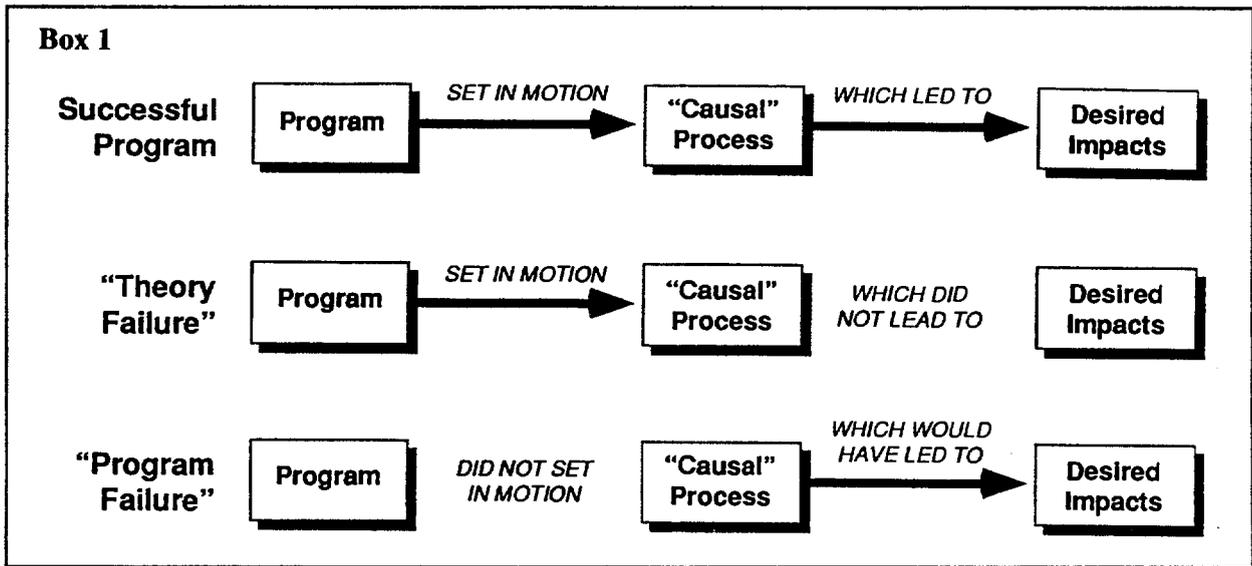
As part of the team planning meeting, the team will begin planning or designing the specific assessment. It should draw on the general or "generic" CDIE design for this series of program assessments, tailoring it to the specifics of the particular program and country being assessed. The point of doing this design exercise before the team leaves is for the team to have a "running start" on the assessment task before they get to the field. The steps in the assessment planning process covered in this paper include: having a good idea of how the A.I.D. program was supposed to work to achieve impacts and diagramming these linkages in a conceptual framework; developing specific working hypotheses and associated questions for the evaluation; considering the data requirements for answering the questions; investigating available data and data requirement gaps; and to prepare an initial workplan and schedule for the team.

Diagramming How the A.I.D. Project/Program was Supposed to Work

Using a blackboard or flip chart, the team creates a "picture" of the activity to be evaluated -- its logical internal sequences and linkages, the types of changes that were expected to result, and the operating assumptions regarding the role of external factors. The team also thinks about possible unexpected impacts, both positive and negative. Consideration may also be given to those factors that would influence the sustainability of benefits.

A simplified summary of some of the "logical" connections you could consider is presented in Box 1.

Consideration of external factors is an important part of the planning exercise. Such factors express critical assumptions bearing on the success of the activity that were either ignored, overestimated or underestimated by the planners. These may include, for example, factor and product prices, the weather, and related actions by other donors as well as host country agencies. Such factors build a picture of the broader context in which the A.I.D. activity is supposed to operate.



When this "picture" is as complete as the team is able to draw it based on information available in AID/W, it presents both the changes (effects, impacts) and the reasons why the changes were expected (causes) -- it summarizes the intended effectiveness of the A.I.D.-supported activity. The picture can become quite complex as the team members sketch in what they consider to be critical linkages, factors and assumptions -- chains of causes and effects that begin to resemble a web created by a drunken spider. Box 2 presents an example of a program model created during a team planning meeting for an impact evaluation of a policy reform grant. Note the area outlined: these are the kinds of changes and linkages of concern in assessing impacts.

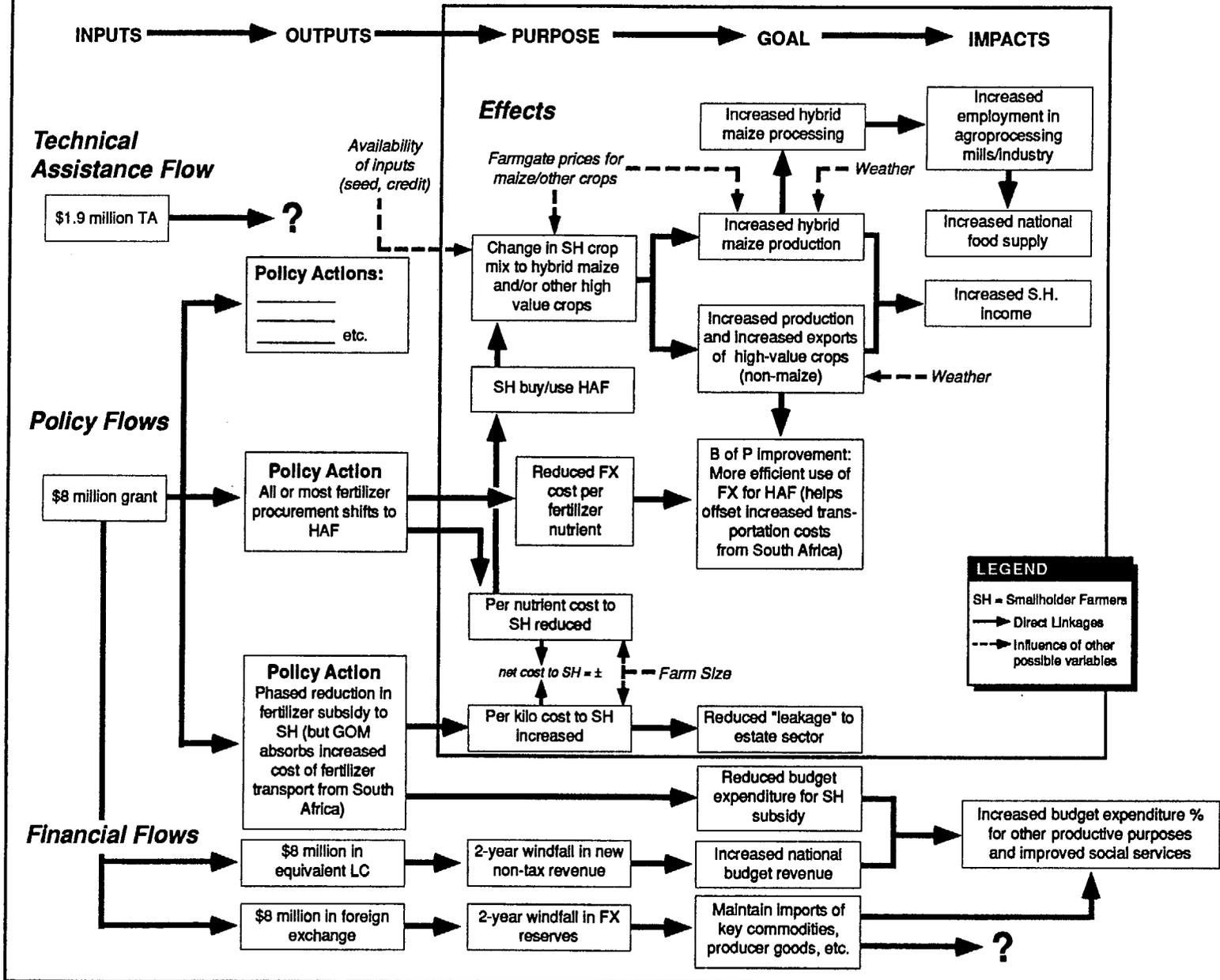
Developing a Few Specific Working Hypotheses and Their Associated Questions

Using this picture, the next step is to develop a few working hypotheses about some crucial cause-effect relationships that you would like to test, and to transform these hypotheses into empirical questions to which the team can seek answers once they are in the field. The team could track forward along hypothesized cause-effect chains. Alternatively, they may already know roughly what happened, and can work backward along an hypothesized causal chain. These are initial hypotheses; once the team gets to the field, they can be refined further.

For example, referring to Box 2, the team already knew from information available in AID/W that maize production declined sharply two years after fertilizer subsidies were reduced; the government then reestablished the subsidies and a couple of years later the country had a record maize harvest. A working hypothesis might be that the subsidy cut led to higher fertilizer

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Box 2



4-3

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costs for small farmers, who then stopped using fertilizer, which in turn led to a drop in maize production; once the subsidy was reestablished, farmers began using fertilizer again, and production subsequently increased to a record level (aided by good weather conditions). A set of questions that might be used to test this working hypothesis could include:

- Did maize producers significantly alter their use of fertilizer during this period -- i.e., had they used fertilizer before the subsidy was reduced, did they stop using it when the subsidy was cut, and start using it when the subsidy was reestablished?
- Were other factors more significant than the subsidy in influencing yearly levels of maize production (e.g., farm size, farmgate prices for maize, weather patterns, farmer access to credit to purchase fertilizer as well as other inputs for hybrid maize production)?
- Did farmers shift to other crops and, if so, why? Did they receive a better price for alternative marketable crops like cowpeas?

Another working hypothesis crucial to the effectiveness of the reform grant in Box 2 was that the reduction in fertilizer subsidies would encourage wider use of high analysis fertilizer (HAF), a fertilizer that is useful mainly for growing hybrid maize for marketing to maize millers. Another set of questions could be developed to test this hypothesis. For example,

- Did maize farmers shift to HAF and did they grow more hybrid maize instead of/in addition to local maize varieties? If not, why not? Did they resell HAF to the estate sector once the subsidies had been reestablished? Did they actually get more bang for their buck from HAF?

Developing these working hypotheses and associated questions helps the team get into the subject of their investigation quickly, and helps them assess the significance of what they will discover once they get to the field. The team can expect to revise these early hypotheses, drop some and formulate new ones based on their field observations and new leads.

At this point, the team can consider leaving some room in its design for specific questions that the Mission may wish the team to look into. As a general rule, however, the team should avoid Mission-imposed tasks -- this is not an evaluation for the Mission even though the Mission is likely to learn from it. Rather, the evaluation is one of several that are being carried out worldwide, following a similar overall scope of work that covers selected issues on which the Agency seeks to be informed. In fact, this worldwide perspective can be advantageous to the team -- interviewees are more likely to respond and share their knowledge if they understand that this evaluation is part of a larger learning effort.

Considering the Data Requirements for Answering the Questions

During this step, the team develops a feel for the kind of data and data analysis that would be involved in answering the team's initial set of questions, where its data collection effort could most effectively be concentrated, and how the data could be gathered and analyzed.

For some questions, the team might best look for areas where variation is already known to exist or might be expected to exist. For example, the experience of very small, poor farmers in the south of the country might be expected to differ from the experience of somewhat larger farmers in the northeast. There are other sources in which the team can search for variation. Historical or time series data covering the country or even small areas of a country can sometimes show variation over time, allowing one to note significant changes that could then examine in greater depth. Variation in the incidence or prevalence of specific diseases or differences in a condition that cannot be accounted for by seasonal, price or other effects provide clues for further investigation or tests of the team's hypothesis. Searching for variation is a quick means of surfacing patterns in what actually happened and why.

For other questions, the team might consider a sampling approach in order to survey, for example, the experience and knowledge of maize millers or fertilizer distributors in several regions. For yet other questions, the team may want to obtain data for purposes of verification on what happened at critical links in the working model of the program. For example, to verify that small farmers actually used fertilizer before the subsidy was reduced and subsequently reestablished, information on fertilizer use gathered from extension agent records might be verified by information from a group of farmers as well as data from the regional distribution records of the national fertilizer board. Such "triangulation" of data points is useful for the more critical or potentially controversial questions.

An important part of determining the data specifications for the field investigation are the "indicators" the team will use to measure both the changes being looked for and the actual operation of key linkages or events that form a causal chain. Data on the most straightforward measure of a change or event in which the team is interested (e.g., an increase or decline in farm household income, actual implementation of a new policy) may not be available or may be too difficult to get. The team can give some thought to indirect or proxy indicators of the changes and events in which they are interested.

Confirming Available Data and Estimating Field Data Sources

Up to this point in its initial field evaluation planning exercise, the team has gone through a largely conceptual or theoretical exercise, although the process has been informed by knowledge and documentation available in AID/W. During this step, the team gets into the practical matter of reviewing in greater detail the types of data that are already available, what it has in hand and what is probably available in the Mission or other field locations (e.g., government agencies). Generally, the team will be provided relevant copies in hand of the documents.

In reviewing available data, the team can cast a fairly wide net. The team should consider their data priorities given the time allowed in AID/W. Among the sources that are sometimes overlooked are case studies, which may contain both quantitative and qualitative information about specific regions and institutions in a country on which the team could follow up. Such case materials usually appear in monographs, dissertations and journals that could be ordered and copied for team use. Studies prepared by contractors -- feasibility studies, documents and annexes from other projects in the country, etc. -- are potential sources of both current and baseline information.

The team will be carrying out both observation and interviews and can develop an initial list of principal interviews and/or site visits to get the team started, in addition to the usual protocol visits. The team can include in its cable to the Mission a request to schedule initial interviews. The Mission itself will have knowledgeable people, and the team should request that these individuals be available for consultation at an early stage in the evaluation.

Preparing an Initial Workplan and Related Tips for Efficient Use of Time

The calendar on the next page illustrates a helpful tool in maintaining the schedules of individual team members. Some key events can be estimated immediately, such as the team's first meetings in the mission, pre-scheduled meetings with key government officials, known field trips/site observations, time reserved for regular team meetings, time required to draft the report, and the final mission debriefing. For the rest, the workplanning process involves listing all the key tasks required to complete the assessment, estimating the person-time required, and deciding

	ARRIVE	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	DEPART	
NAME OF TEAM MEMBER																								
NAME OF TEAM MEMBER																								
NAME OF TEAM MEMBER																								
NAME OF TEAM MEMBER																								
OTHER INDIVIDUALS (e.g., Translator, Mission Support)																								

bc

who will do what, and when. Since team members split up to accomplish individual tasks and assignments, the calendars can be shared among the team to keep everyone aware of the whereabouts of the others.

The following points, based on our experience so far, have implications for how a team develops a workplan. Some of these involve tradeoffs in how the team allocates its limited time; others suggest ways to "save" time or to use time most effectively.

- ***Plan to Meet Regularly.*** To get the job done well, the team will have to use a process of continuous analysis -- a continuous development, testing, rejection and refinement of their working hypotheses. The team should meet often for this purpose. While it will be necessary for the team to split up from time to time, this has to be balanced by providing occasions to meet together. Some teams have found it useful to meet regularly at breakfast or in the evening to review progress and decide on next steps.
- ***Use the Team's Resources Efficiently.*** A team typically contains valuable multi-disciplinary resources, and its workplan should enable these resources to be exploited as fully as possible. Be imaginative. For example, although an economist on the team should expect to concentrate on economic questions, he or she may also be very helpful in formulating questions for interviews, data collection and analysis to be carried out by other team members. As another example, all or most team members should be present during certain interviews, while for other interviews or site visits only one team member may need to be involved.
- ***Keep Good Field Notes.*** The time taken to keep good notes of interviews and observations pays off in the end by saving the time otherwise spent trying to decipher handwriting. If two team members are present during an interview, one might be the primary speaker and the other the recorder. After each interview or site visit, notes should be reviewed and put in fully legible form. Keep a record of who was present during the interview; this could help explain differences in what was reported (for example, the presence of officials during an interview could influence what a respondent said compared to another interview where officials were absent) and save time later during analysis of conflicting interview data gathered by different team members.
- ***Distinguish between findings and conclusions.*** When preparing the report, the team will have to distinguish between its findings and conclusions (i.e. interpretations and judgements based on the findings), so it is a good idea to make a practice of maintaining these distinctions early on in the team's notes. This would help save time. Some findings are likely to be more unusual or

controversial than others, and these would require more buttressing with additional data or triangulation than findings that already have considerable "face validity." This would take more time.

Ethical Considerations

An evaluation is an intrusive exercise and always raises ethical issues. Some of these -- but not all -- are addressed by designing the evaluation as an exercise in "learning" through which the team seeks to understand rather than cast blame. In its initial design, as well as in subsequent design modifications and its final report, the team should observe the following rules:

- ***Protect your informants.*** For example, do not cite individual informants or attribute statements to them by name, unless they give you permission to do so. Instead, simply describe them -- e.g., an extension official, a small farmer in the province of X, a small furniture manufacturer who has been in business for X years. A variant of this rule is: do not cite or attribute data to restricted World Bank and IMF reports.

- ***Be fair.*** The team's findings and conclusions may influence decisions about the future of the activity evaluated. The team will want to be critical and to call a spade a spade -- otherwise the assessment will not be valuable -- but you must also be fair.

**Use of Secondary Data to
Analyze Program Impact:
Case of the Egypt NCDDP
Evaluation**

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Use of Secondary Data to Analyze Program Impact: Case of the Egypt NCDDP Evaluation

Using Secondary Data To Make a Plausible Case for Program Impact

The purpose of this short paper is to illustrate the use of secondary data to analyze program impact in the case of a child survival project in Egypt.

In October 1989 a CDIE evaluation team went for a three week visit to Egypt to assess the performance and impact of the A.I.D. supported child survival programs, in particular the National Control of Diarrhea Disease Project (NCDDP). The team used a retrospective, rapid appraisal approach that relied heavily on analysis of existing data and studies, and on rapid appraisal techniques including key informant interviews (with AID officials, MOH officials, project implementation agency staff, health practitioners, academic researchers, and beneficiaries/mothers) and selected site visits. This paper describes the approach taken to analyze the secondary data.

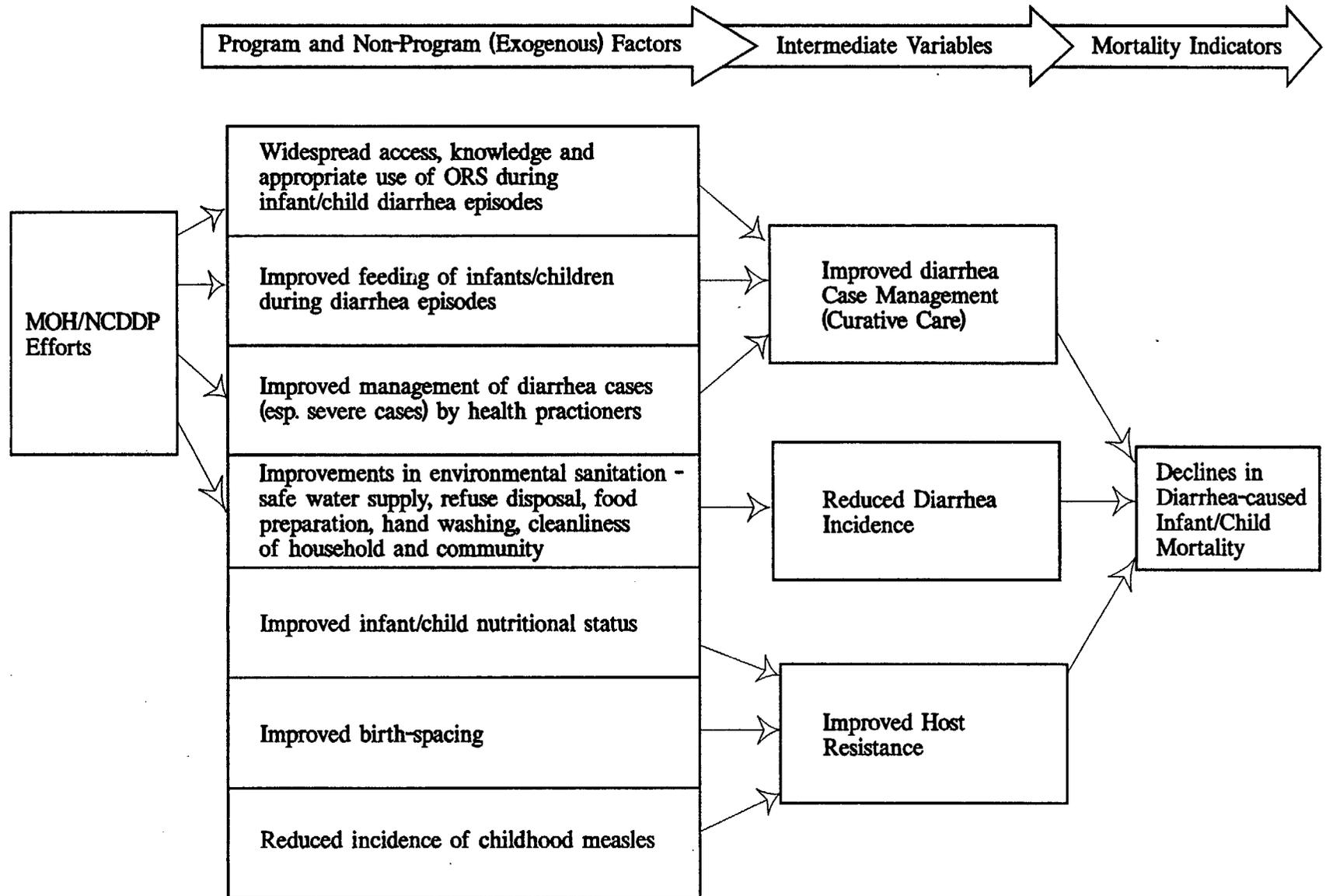
Since this was an ex poste evaluation, the team obviously could not "go back in time" to undertake a quasi-experimental research design to prove impact and attribution to program efforts. No such assessments had been done on a national scale by the NCDDP and thus were not available to the team. Rather, the approach taken by the team was to construct a "logical framework" model of hypotheses linking program efforts to intermediate and ultimate impacts and then search for relevant existing data to support or contradict these hypotheses. The data were of limited quality, but there were multiple sources available that could be cross-checked to improve confidence and validity of the findings. While such an approach cannot prove attribution, it can build a plausible case for linkages between program effects and impacts based on empirical evidence.

The Conceptual Framework

A framework was developed that hypothesized that declines in diarrhea-caused infant and child mortality could be due to any of three intermediate variables (see Figure):

- Improved curative care/case management of diarrhea in infants and children
- A reduced incidence of diarrhea in infants and children
- An improvement in host resistance

Conceptual Framework: Hypotheses Linking NCDDP Efforts to Infant/Child Mortality Declines



5-2

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The next step was to look at NCDDP program efforts and non-program (external) factors that were hypothesized to affect these three intermediate variables. Based on available data, the team began to make a case that the health/mortality changes could be plausibly linked to NCDDP program efforts via improved curative care, but that other possible factors did not appear to be major contributors to mortality/morbidity declines.

Improved Case Management (Curative Care)

The MOH's NCDDP program was the only major actor in Egypt responsible for the national-scale improvements in case management of the treatment of diarrhea in infants and children. Through the program's efforts, ORS became widely known, accepted, and effectively used by mothers; breast feeding practices during diarrhea episodes improved (a widespread cultural practice in Egypt of avoiding breastfeeding during diarrhea episodes in infants had caused further weakening and dehydration); and medical management practices of diarrhea cases improved, especially in severe cases.

Substantial empirical evidence exists that document improvements in curative care procedures in handling diarrhea cases:

- Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) surveys taken during 1984-88 showed significant ORS use by mothers; two-thirds had used ORS at least once; one-half had used it during their child's last diarrhea episode; nearly all had heard of ORS and most knew the correct mixing procedure; four-fifths of mothers continued breastfeeding during diarrhea episodes.
- Hospital data showed fewer admissions for severe dehydration and fewer cases of intravenous fluids - an indicator of more effective ORS use.
- ORS production and importation data showed increases. Although affected by inventory build-ups, ORS production and importation has been demand driven since 1986 and is a good proxy indicator of ORS use.

Nevertheless, some causes for concern remain. For example, KAP surveys indicated that mothers are not clear about of the relationship between ORS use and dehydration - an issue for sustainability if mothers incorrectly think ORS will "stop" the diarrhea rather understand its role in preventing dehydration. Also, while mothers knew how to mix the ORS correctly, they were less certain about appropriate amounts to give and length of time to be given. Similarly, there were uncertainties in health practitioners' procedures in giving ORS, and about the appropriateness of other drugs given.

Reduced Diarrhea Incidence

The second hypothesis postulated that programs aimed at improvements in environmental sanitation, such as safe water supply, refuse disposal, food preparation, hand washing, and cleanliness in the household and community, might have led to a reduced incidence in diarrhea that could have contributed to declines in diarrhea-caused infant and child mortality.

NCDDP efforts in this area were marginal. There were some TV ads encouraging more hand washing, and limited attempts to educate mothers about hygienic practices that could reduce incidence of diarrhea. Nor was the team able to find good indicators or data on other improvements in environmental sanitation. It was clear that great improvements had been made in the provision of potable water; however, such access may not have affected people's behavior in handling water.

Data available on the incidence of diarrhea did not confirm the hypothesis that there was a significant reduction in the incidence of diarrhea that might have helped explain reductions in diarrhea-related infant or child mortality.

The implications of the empirical evidence available was that there was no discernable change in diarrhea incidence; that the minimal NCDDP efforts at preventive care education, and factors external to the NCDDP (e.g. improvements in water supply and sanitation) did not appear to impact on diarrhea incidence or on mortality.

Improved Host Resistance

The third hypothesis argued that stronger, healthier infants and children were becoming more resistant to disease and death. The team examined three possible avenues for hypothesized improved host resistance; improved child and infant nutrition status; improved child spacing; and reduced incidence of measles (associated with diarrhea).

The data available did not provide strong support for this hypothesis:

- Nutrition surveys did not show substantial improvements in child nutrition.
- Surveys did not show great success in increasing spacing between births.
- Child vaccinations against measles did increase significantly during the period and could explain some of the child diarrhea-related mortality decline, but this could not explain infant mortality declines, since babies aren't vaccinated until after nine months.

Evidence of Declines in Infant and Child Mortality

The team also examined available data on the trends in infant and child mortality and analyzed its consistency with the framework's hypotheses on NCDDP program impact. Consistency with the hypotheses was examined in terms of:

- Whether the timeframe for the mortality declines corresponded to the program implementation period.
- Whether the declines for diarrhea-caused deaths were more pronounced than for non-diarrhea-caused deaths.
- Whether the declines were more pronounced in geographic areas with more concentrated program efforts.

Overall Infant and Child Mortality Trends

A variety of sources of data existed on infant and child mortality from all causes, including censuses, surveys, and civil registration. Limitations in the quality of the data were partially mitigated by doing "cross-checks" from various sources to improve credibility. In general the data points to a long-term decline in infant and child mortality, with some evidence of an acceleration in the rate of decline during 1983-85 (the years of NCDDP national program implementation), and then a leveling off.

Cause-of-Death Data

Civil registration data sources provide evidence of more rapid declines in infant and child deaths due to diarrhea than in deaths due to other causes during the NCDDP program expansion years.

Issues of concern include evidence in the data of a "leveling off" in the decline in diarrhea-deaths in recent years, perhaps indicating that a form of "persistent" diarrhea may not be helped by ORS. A similar leveling-off in the decline of non-diarrhea caused deaths indicate possible support for the "replacement" theory... that babies "saved" by ORS may die later of other causes.

Another issue is the possibility of false reporting of cause-of-death data (because of a desire to make the program "look good"). Therefore a cross-check was done by examining the seasonality of death statistics.

Seasonality of Death Data

Data on the seasonality of infant and child deaths is a good proxy indicator for cause-of-death data which is less likely to be misreported. This is because diarrhea deaths in Egypt are very seasonal; half of diarrhea deaths occur during a four month season (May-August). The month of death is more likely to be accurately reported than cause of death and moreover is less likely to be intentionally misreported.

This data provided evidence of a decline in the degree of summer seasonality of mortality, and therefore supports the validity of findings on cause-of-death.

Geographic Data

Data available on NCDDP distribution of ORS by Governorate did not appear to be related to mortality. Perhaps this was because it was a weak indicator for effective ORS use. Unfortunately, the KAP surveys did not show consistent regional variability in ORS use that could have been used to analyze relationships with mortality. While such data was soon to be available from a 1989 Demographic and Health Survey, it was not available at the time the evaluation.

Local Studies

A final source of evidence of the ORS-mortality link were a variety of localized studies, several of which used more rigorous experimental designs in the pilot phase of the NCDDP. Although these studies were limited to local areas rather than being national in scope, they nevertheless add supporting evidence that program efforts to encourage effective ORS use contributed to reduced infant and child mortality.

- How do you think decisions should be made? Consensus? Team leader alone?

- If a particular team member is hindering the work of the team, how do you think this should be handled?

- How do you like to spend your free time on short-term assignments?

- **Do you like privacy in your free time or do you like to socialize?**

- **What type of hotel do you like to stay in? Luxury? Inexpensive?**

Rapid Data Collection Methods for Field Assessments

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Rapid Data Collection Methods for Field Assessments

The following five rapid appraisal methods can be used by assessment teams to solicit primary data in the field. Some basic guidance is provided here to help teams use these methods more systematically, and thus improve the quality and validity of the information gathered.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews involve interviewing only a selected group of individuals who are in an opportune position to provide needed information, ideas, insights, and recommendations. The number of informants usually ranges from 11 to 35 depending upon the nature and complexity of the information required, the availability of data and information from other sources, as well as time and resource constraints.

Key informant interviews permit free flow of ideas and information between the interviewer and the respondent. While the questions are based on an "interview guide", they are framed at the spur of the moment. Thus the atmosphere in such interviews is quite informal, resembling conversations among acquaintances. The interviewer subtly probes an informant to elicit more information and takes notes which are elaborated later. If all the relevant items are not covered in a session, the interviewer may go back to the key informant again.

Such interviews are specially useful to understand the underlying motivations, attitudes, and behaviors of project/program planners, managers, host governments, and the targeted beneficiaries. They help determine not only what people did but also why. For example, on the basis of such interviews an evaluation team can find out why farmers did not repay the loans they obtained from the project or why local grocers lacked enthusiasm to sell subsidized contraceptives. Thus the questions of why and how are satisfactorily answered by key informant interviews. Moreover, they are extremely helpful in interpreting existing quantitative data. The evaluation team can also formulate important policy and program recommendations on the basis of such interviews.

Selecting Key Informants

The total number of informants should normally not exceed 35 in most cases. It is preferable to plan with a smaller number, say, 25, as the team is likely to end up interviewing more people than it initially intended. This happens because as an assessment proceeds, team members are likely to confront new issues and topics for which they require more in depth information. Moreover, they may also meet additional informed persons whom they will want to interview.

Key informants should be carefully selected on the basis of their specialized knowledge and the unique perspectives that they can bring to bear on the evaluation. The selection process consists of two steps.

The first step is to identify relevant groups -- USAID offices, project implementing agencies, host government agencies, local experts, contractors, representatives of beneficiary groups, etc. -- from which the key informants should be drawn. Although each team will exercise its own judgment, it is better to include the major stakeholders of a project/program so that divergent interests, perceptions and assessments about its performance and intended and unintended impact may be articulated.

The second step is to select a few persons from each category for interviews. This is done after consulting several persons most familiar with the concerned groups and organizations.

In addition, each informant may be asked to suggest the names of other persons who may also be interviewed.

Preparing an Interview Guide

Short interview guide(s) listing major topics and issues to be covered in interviews should be prepared by the evaluation team. However, an elaborate written questionnaire inhibits free flow of discussion in key informant interviews, and should not be used.

Because the purpose is to explore a few issues in depth, the number of items listed in a guide is usually kept limited, usually to 10 or 12. Having fewer items leaves more time to pursue unanticipated leads before moving to another item.

A single interview guide is usually not appropriate for all categories of informants because informants with different areas of expertise or from different organizations or groups tend to illuminate different aspects of a problem. For example, senior government officials or experts can explain macro-economic policies of the host government, while the project/program beneficiaries can shed light on the problems faced by them in utilizing the services offered by the intervention. Therefore we need separate guides to interview key informants from disparate groups, institutions, and backgrounds.

Conducting Interviews

One should start an interview with factual questions. Questions requiring opinions and judgments should follow. For example, in the evaluation of a credit program, questions can be asked of the government officials about credit policies, availability of the credit from informal and formal sources, or the nature of the existing credit delivery system. The questions about the suitability of existing policies or the effectiveness of the delivery systems may be asked later when some rapport between the informant and the interviewer has been established.

In general, we begin with the present and move to questions about the past or future. Questions should be phrased in such a way as to elicit detailed information. One should avoid questions that can be answered by a simple "yes" or "no". For example, the team members should prefer questions such as "Please tell me about the vaccination campaign in this area" over "Do you know about the vaccination campaign in this area?" The advantage of the first question is that informants tell all they think is important about the campaign, and team members can seek additional details about the points they made.

One should encourage key informants to move from generalities to specifics and obtain the basis for their conclusions and recommendations. For example, an informant's general comment such as "The water program has really changed things around here" can be followed with probes for more details such as "What are the changes you have noticed? Who seems to have benefitted the most from the program? Can you give me some specific examples of changes?"

Maintaining a Neutral Attitude

An interviewer should be a sympathetic listener and should avoid giving the impression of having strong views on the subject under discussion. The attitude of neutrality is essential because some key informants, trying to be polite and courteous, say what they think the interviewer wants to hear.

Several strategies can be pursued for dealing with controversial issues. The first is for the interviewer to stress that no definitive conclusion has yet been reached and that an informed judgement can only be reached after conducting more interviews. Such a posture can reassure the respondent to openly express views on the subject.

A second strategy is to state both sides of the issue without taking a position to demonstrate that the interviewer is familiar with the divergent views on the subject.

The third strategy is to candidly express one's views and engage in an honest dialogue. For example, a team member can admit to a senior official of the host country that while he/she believes that the private sector should be given a primary role in the distribution of agricultural

inputs, he/she has come to discuss the subject with the informant. This strategy is most appropriate in interviewing senior government officials, experts and well educated individuals who do not feel inhibited in expressing their views in the presence of outside evaluators. But it should be avoided unless the interviewer is confident that the informant enjoys frank discussions and is likely to be more forthcoming if intellectually challenged.

Duration of the Interview

The duration of an interview largely depends on interest of the informant, information needs of the investigator and the flow of conversations. However, as a general rule, an interview should not exceed an hour and a half.

Developing Notes

The interviewer should take detailed notes to be immediately developed at the end of an interview. When developing notes, one should use a set of common subheadings for all interview texts. These subheadings can be selected keeping in view the major issues being explored in an evaluation. For instance, it can select subheadings such as economic impacts, social impacts, project/program sustainability, project/program recommendations, and lessons learned.

The main advantage of a set of common subheadings is that it facilitates the data analysis process. At the time of preparation of the report, interview texts under the same subheading can be pulled together to examine relevant issues and themes which emerged in the interviews.

Preparing Interview Summary Sheets

It is also useful to prepare an interview summary sheet of not more than one or two pages in length for each interview. The main advantage of summary sheets is that they enable evaluators to reduce the vast amount of information obtained through interviews into manageable themes, issues and recommendations. They also enable team members to review each other's notes in an expeditious manner.

Each summary sheet should provide information about the position of a key informant, the reason for his/her inclusion in the list of key informants, the main points made by him/her, the implications of these observations, and finally any insights or ideas which occurred to the evaluator as a result of the interview.

Two general limitations of key informant interviews should be recognized. First, the findings could be biased if key informant interviews are not carefully elected. This can be easily avoided if a conscious effort is made by assessment teams to recruit informants from a wider pool of knowledgeable individuals. Second, the findings are susceptible to the biases of the interviewer. For example, the interviewer picks up information and ideas that confirm his/her

preconceived ideas and notion or gives salience to the views of the elites than to those of the informants from lower socio-economic groups.

Focus Group Discussions

Whereas in key informant interviews, the interaction is on a one-on-one basis, in focus groups a team member moderates a discussion among a small group of carefully selected individuals to generate ideas, insights, explanations and understandings. The moderator guides the discussions towards the issues identified in a discussion guide and uses various probing techniques to elicit further information. A typical session of focus groups lasts 1 to 2 hours, depending on the interest of the participants and the subject under investigation. Focus groups have 6 to 11 participants.

Several advantages in using focus groups for field assessments are obvious. They are highly economical as well as time saving. A team member can conduct a focus group with 6 to 11 individuals within an hour or two. Consider what time it would take to interview them individually. Moreover, focus groups often reduce individual inhibitions and enable people to express themselves more freely. That other persons have the same apprehensions about a project activity can lead a cautious individual to share his/her opinion as well. As a result, the evaluation team can get information in focus groups that might not otherwise be shared by individual respondents.

Although focus groups can be organized for any category of project/program stakeholders, the assessment team may find them particularly useful for soliciting the views, insights and recommendations of project/program staff, technical experts and the targeted beneficiaries.

Preparing a Discussion Guide

Like key informant interviews, a discussion guide listing issues to be discussed in a focus group should be carefully prepared in advance. The list of items should be kept small because the discussions in a focus group usually go beyond the items initially identified in the guide. Participants propose new ideas and suggestions in the course of discussions that need to be further examined by the group.

Selecting Participants

The optimal number of participants in a focus group is between 6 to 11 persons. A group of this size is neither too large nor too small to permit the smooth flow of conversation.

To the extent possible, a focus group should be homogenous in composition, with members sharing similar background and experience. For example, the team should not include experts and illiterate farmers in the same group. In such cases, the differences in their

socio-economic status and technical expertise will impinge on interpersonal communication. For example, the farmers are likely to be awed by the presence of highly educated experts, and may therefore not be forthcoming in their own responses. Efforts should be made to select people who do not know each other. Anonymity among participants minimizes the inhibiting effects of status differences and prevents the formation of small cliques, in which a few members talk with one another and not the whole group. However, it is not always feasible to ensure total anonymity, especially in rural areas.

As is the case with key informant interviews, participants can be selected in two steps. In the first step, the groups and institutions that need to be represented should be identified, while in the second step, the actual participants from each category should be selected. For example, an evaluation team may decide to concentrate on three groups - technical experts, project/program managers, and the targeted beneficiaries. Once it has decided about these groups, the team will identify persons who would be most suitable to participate. The team may hold one or more focus groups for each category.

Moderating Discussions

Often the individuals recruited for focus groups do not know what is expected of them. It is therefore important that at the beginning of the session the moderator stress the following characteristics of focus groups. First, the focus group is not a question and answer session. Rather it is an informal discussion; if one participant is making a point, another can comment on it. Second, the group is convened to hear the views and experiences of all the participants. Everyone is therefore expected to take part in the ensuing discussions. Third, the moderator is interested in the full range of ideas and explanations. Anyone with a divergent view on an items should express it freely. Finally, the participants should be as brief as possible in view of the limited time.

It is usually better to talk about general, noncontroversial subjects first before venturing into a discussion of more sensitive subjects. This opening discussion will enable the moderator to identify the participants who are reticent as well as those who love to talk. The moderator should take note of these differences and encourage the less talkative to express themselves during the discussions.

The team member moderating the discussions should adopt a posture of "sophisticated naive". His/her expertise should not be revealed as it may intimidate many participants. The moderator should rather convey the impression that while he/she understands the subject, he/she is not intimately familiar with the local situation. Such an approach usually works because people are willing to help. Thus the moderator can ask specific details, saying, for example, "I wish I knew more about the government rules and regulations concerning the marketing of fertilizers! Will you kindly tell me more about them so that I can follow your discussions". Such probing induces participants to think more deeply on the subject and to verbalize their feelings and thoughts.

For eliciting details, the queries of what, when, where, which, and how can be as helpful in focus groups as they are in key informant interviews. The purpose is to seek as many specifics as possible, to elicit not only impressions but also information about particular events, activities or effects. Often if the moderator asks questions, others follow that example. Participants begin to ask specific questions, and their remarks tend to become more specific, making the moderator's task a little easier.

A common problem faced in focus groups is that a few articulate persons dominate the discussion. Obviously, there are no hard or fast rules to solve this problem, however, the following strategies can be used by the person moderating the discussions.

First, the moderator can give nonverbal cues to the participant(s) to stop talking. Second, the moderator politely intervenes, saying, "I have somehow missed the point and would like to summarize what the participant has been saying to ensure so that I am not misunderstanding or misinterpreting what has been said." After summing up the moderator can refocus the discussion. Third, the moderator can take advantage of a pause during the speaker's comments and say something like the following: "Thank you very much. What you said is very important and we can discuss this subject later in this session or after the discussion. Meanwhile, with your permission, I would like to cover a few other items on which I need your thoughts and suggestions." This leaves the speaker with no option but to stop.

In focus groups, the moderator has to minimize group pressure that inhibits dissenting participants from expressing their views or forces them to agree to positions to which they do not subscribe. Seeing that an idea is being generally adopted without sufficient examination of alternative positions, the moderator tries to probe for alternative ideas, explanations, or recommendations. He/she can say, "We had an interesting discussion, but let us also explore some other alternatives." Such remarks force the group to discuss alternative positions. In some instances, the moderator can suggest another perspective from which a particular issue can be examined, and ask for comments.

Participants who appear skeptical of the group's position should be encouraged to express their views. When conducting a discussion, a moderator may have an intuitive feeling that some participants are not convinced of a particular position and yet remain silent. Often what they need is encouragement from the moderator. In such situations, the moderator can look towards one of them and say: "What about you? You might have a different view." Such remarks might open the way for this participant or others to present their views on the subject.

Taking Notes

Detailed notes should be taken because the significance of many statements might not become apparent until additional focus groups have been conducted.

It is always advisable to have a rapporteur for recording discussions. This eases the burden on moderators, enabling them to focus more fully on group discussions. The notes should be immediately developed after the meeting.

Focus groups are susceptible to the same kinds of biases of the moderator as are the key informant interviews of the interviewer. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the discussions in focus groups can be dominated by a few articulate participants who share a distinctive perspective. Under such conditions, the moderator can get a misleading impression, mistaking the views of a few for those of the group. Assessment teams should recognize these limitations while analyzing and interpreting the findings of focus groups.

Community/Group Meetings

Although community or group meetings (hereafter called community meetings) look very similar to focus groups, several differences between the two should be noted.

First, while in focus groups participants discuss a subject among themselves under the guidance of a moderator, in community meetings the team members ask direct questions from respondents in the meetings. That is, the interaction is primarily between participants and the interview team, and not among the participants themselves.

Second, the number of participants in such meetings is usually large ranging from 15 to 45. Third, a semi-structured questionnaire is used.

Finally, while the participants in a focus group are highly homogenous, community meetings are attended by people with differing socio-economic background, expertise, and authority within a village or community. For example, both the village chief and an old woman sharecropper may share the same platform.

Community meetings could be extremely useful for evaluations, particularly when the views, perceptions or recommendations of project/program beneficiaries located in close physical proximity are being sought. One of their major advantages is that they permit a direct interaction between a relatively large number of people and the evaluation team. Visits by an evaluation team to different communities or villages can also provide its members a first hand understanding of the immediate environment in which project/program activities were carried out and the results they produced.

Preparing a Semi-Structured Questionnaire

In contrast to the key informant interviews and focus groups, a set of written questions is used in community meetings. Although they have discretion with regard to follow-up questions, team members should stick to the original list of questions as far as possible. The main

reason for using a questionnaire is that the questions have to be so phrased that they can be easily understood by the least knowledgeable person present in the meeting. This often requires considerable thinking and planning. When questions are framed at the spur of the moment, team members may not be always successful in keeping them simple and straightforward.

Selecting Communities/Villages

It is almost impossible to select sites in a random fashion for evaluations. However, every step has to be taken to ensure that significant variations in the performance and impacts of the project/program are reflected in the selection process. For example, an evaluation team examining the impacts of a family planning project may select three sites; one in which the project was highly successful, another in which it was least successful, and one which falls between these two extremes.

Conducting Meetings

Community meetings should be conducted by a team consisting of two or more evaluators. This is necessary because it is extremely difficult for a single person to preside over the meeting, ask questions and also take notes. A team approach also improves the reliability of field notes. Moreover, team members complement each other in probing respondents. Different members may take the responsibility for various sections of the questionnaire.

The team leader should make every effort to prevent a few local elites from answering questions on behalf of the participants. One strategy for preventing this from happening is to meet with a few prominent individuals prior to the meeting, and seek their views on some of the topics to be covered in the meeting. This strategy has two advantages. First, these individuals may not like to repeat in public what they have already reported in private conversations. In fact, they may feel proud that the evaluation team sought their views in advance. Second, this strategy gives the team leader an excuse to announce at the outset of a meeting that the team has already discussed this subject with several local leaders, and now it wants to hear the views of other members of the community.

The interview team should pay special attention to those participants who seem reluctant to speak. Team members may direct specific questions to them in rather inconspicuous way. However, if in a meeting a section of people simply refuses to participate, this may be indicative of flawed interviewing or some problem with the intervention itself. For example, it is quite possible that some members have reservations about the project under review, and are expressing their unhappiness by remaining silent. Key informant interviews held afterwards can be helpful for identifying the reasons for their lack of response.

Generating Quantitative Data

Community meetings can also provide quantitative data or information that can later be quantified. Often, statistical data about the effects of an intervention on a village or community can be directly obtained from participants. Rural participants, for example, can provide information on the types of new crops grown, average farm size, number of tractors in the village, the average yields in local units for major crops or the number of houses which now have water in their compounds. Although such data have obvious limitations, they can still be of value for examining the environment in which a project/program operated and the type of results it produced or did not produce.

When some participants provide quantitative data during a community meeting, the interview team should encourage the other participants to verify the information. For example, suppose a respondent says that 25 villagers have started microenterprises during the past two years. The team leader can point to some of the participants and ask, "Do you agree with this estimate?". In many instances, the respondents may be in a position to even give the names of persons who started microenterprises. The interviewing team should also try to understand the basis on which respondents made their estimates.

The team can also take polls on selected questions, asking the participants to agree or disagree with a given statement. In such cases, questions are framed in a way that they can be answered in a "yes" or "no" response. A team member asks the participants to answer them by raising their hands. For example, in the impact evaluation of an agricultural marketing project, one can ask: "How many of you think that farmers have benefitted by the sale of fertilizers by village grocers? Those who believe that they have benefitted, please raise their hands."

Post-Meeting Conversations

Individual conversations with the participants at the end of meetings are an integral part of the interview process. Despite their best efforts, team members may find that some participants who might have made useful contributions, remained silent during the meeting. Some are shy and reluctant to speak in public. Others are afraid to contradict a view or statement made earlier by a prominent person. Still others might have information or opinions which they feel can not be shared publicly. Team members may induce such people to share their information, views, or recommendations in informal discussions after the meeting.

Before terminating a meeting, the team leader should indicate that the team members have ample time and would be willing to discuss any relevant issues after the meeting.

Several limitations of community meetings should be considered by an assessment team. Community interviews can be easily manipulated. Often the elites or leaders try to use them as a forum for articulating their own perspectives. Moreover, like focus groups, a few articulate

persons can monopolize discussions thereby defeating the very purpose of the meetings. And finally, many issues, that can be discussed in individual interviews cannot be examined in community meetings because of individual, social, cultural and political inhibitions. For example, most people do not like to make critical remarks in public that may be construed as a reflection on the capabilities and character of the concerned individuals.

Direct Observation

Yet another rapid appraisal method that has a great potential for field assessments is direct observation of the project site or activity. Data gathering through direct observation is systematic, not casual or informal, and involves the use of well-designed observation record forms. In most cases, direct observation also involves individual and/or group interviews.

Direct observation should not be confused with the ethnographic method of participant observation. Three major differences between the two may be noted. First, participant observation is a long-term process; a researcher usually observes a phenomenon or process for months, even years. In contrast, studies based on direct observation can be completed within days or weeks. Second, while participant observation focusses primarily on social and cultural phenomena, direct observation can also deal with physical objects, such as roads, dams, or agricultural production. Finally, in participant observation, the observer tries to empathize with the people being studied in order to gain an insider's perspective. This is not always the case with direct observation.

The main advantage of direct observation as a rapid appraisal method for field assessments is that one can study a phenomenon, institution, facility or process in its natural setting, thereby obtaining a richer understanding of the subject. For example, an assessment team is likely to have a better understanding of the nature, problems and achievements of microenterprises after visiting a few enterprises and observing their products, technologies, labor force and location than by relying on documents or key informant interviews only. Another advantage is that direct observation may reveal conditions, problems or patterns of which many informants may be unaware of or unable to adequately describe. On the negative side, direct observation is susceptible to observer's bias, and the very act of observation can affect the behavior of the people and organization being studied.

Determining the Focus

The first step in direct observation is delineating its scope. Because of the constraints of time and resources, direct observation in field assessments has to be highly selective, focussing on a few activities, events or phenomena that are most central to the evaluation questions. Suppose, an assessment team intends to study a few health clinics providing immunization services for children. Obviously, the team can focus on a variety of areas - physical facilities and surroundings, immunization activities of health workers, record keeping and managerial services, and community interactions. Instead of trying to cover all of them, the team should

focus on one or two areas which are likely to generate the most useful information and insights for the assessment.

The selected activities, events or phenomena are broken into sub-components for observation purposes. For example, if the team decides to primarily focus on the immunization activities of health workers, it will prepare a list of the tasks to be observed such as the preparation of vaccine, counselling mothers, and the administration of vaccine. Each of these tasks will then be further disaggregated into its component sub-tasks, for example, the task of administering vaccine is likely to include preparing the recommended doses, using the correct administration technique, use of sterile syringes, and protecting vaccine from heat and light during use. If in addition to immunization activities, the team also wants to focus on physical facilities and surroundings, it will prepare an inventory of specific items that need to be observed.

Developing Direct Observation Forms

The next step is to develop observation record forms that list the items to be observed and provide space to record observations. These forms are similar to survey questionnaires except that investigators use them to record their own observations and not the answers given by respondents.

Observation record forms help to standardize the observation process and ensure that all important items are covered by the investigator. They also facilitate better aggregation of data gathered from various sites or by various investigators. For example, a brief excerpt from a direct observation form used in a study of primary health care in the Philippines is presented in Figure 1 on the next page.

Figure 1: OBSERVATION OF GROWTH MONITORING SESSION

Name of the Observer _____

Date: Time: Place:

Was the scale turned to 0 at the beginning of the growth session?

Yes _____ No _____

How was age determined?

By asking _____ From growth chart _____ Other _____

When the child was weighed, was it stripped to practical limit?

Yes _____ No _____

Was the weight read correctly?

Yes _____ No _____

Process by which weight and age transferred to record

HW wrote it _____ Someone else wrote it _____ Other _____

Did HW interpret results for the mother?

Yes _____ No _____

Three suggestions about the preparation of direct observation forms can be mentioned here. First, the response categories for most of the items in a form should be identified in advance so that the investigator can answer them by a simple yes or no, or by checking the appropriate answer. Closed response categories minimize inter-observer variation and therefore improve the quality of data. Second, the number of items in a form should be kept limited. While there are no strict norms about it, they should normally not exceed 40 - 50 items. It is invariably better to use two or more smaller forms than a single large one that runs into several pages. Finally, the forms should provide adequate space to record additional observations for which response categories were not determined.

Selecting Site(s)

Once the forms are ready, the next step is to decide where the observation will be carried out and whether it will be based on one or more sites.

A single site observation may serve a useful purpose in those instances where a site can be treated as a typical case. Consider a situation in which all the five agricultural extension centers established by a project have not been performing well. Here a single site observation may be justified. A single site observation may also be justified when the case is unique. For example, while four extension centers have been doing well, one has been faced with major problems since its inception. As a rule, however, a single site observation should be avoided because the so-called typical or unique case may not be typical or unique as assumed by the team. Generally several sites are necessary to obtain a reasonable level of understanding of the situation.

In most cases, sites are selected on the basis of experts' advice. The investigator develops a set of criteria for selecting sites and then relies on the judgment of knowledgeable persons. For example, if a team evaluating a family planning project decides to observe three clinics -- one highly successful, one moderately successful, and one struggling clinic -- it may request USAID staff, local experts, or other informants to suggest the names of a few clinics for each category. The team will then choose three after carefully examining their recommendations. The use of more than one expert reduces the element of individual bias in the selection process.

Timing

Special attention should also be given to the timing of the observation. Timing is critical in direct observation, especially when events are to be observed as they occur. Wrong timing can easily distort findings. For example, rural credit organizations receive most loan applications before the planting season, when farmers wish to purchase agricultural inputs. Therefore if an investigator observes the operations of the credit institutions during the post-harvest season, he may not get a realistic picture of the loan processing process.

People and organizations follow daily routines that are associated with set times. For example, credit institutions may accept loan applications during morning hours; farmers in tropical climates may go to their fields early in the morning and return home by noon. Observation periods should be selected to reflect such rhythms in work.

Observing in the Field

Before embarking on direct observation, a certain level of rapport should be established with the people, community, or organization to be studied. The presence of outside observers,

especially from the funding agencies of donor countries, invariably generates anxiety among concerned people. Often informal, friendly conversations can reduce their anxiety levels and help to reassure them.

Sufficient time should be provided for direct observation. Very brief visits can be deceptive partly because people tend to behave differently in the presence of investigators. It is not uncommon, for example, that medical workers become more caring and extension workers more persuasive when being watched by an outside team. However, experience shows that if observers stay for relatively longer periods, people become less self-conscious and gradually start behaving naturally. For example, after a couple of hours, health workers tend to become less concerned with the presence of the observers and revert to their old ways of doing things. Therefore it is essential that an assessment team plans to stay at least two or three days on a site if it wants to gather valid and reliable data.

If possible, two observers should observe a phenomenon or process. A team approach provides a more comprehensive picture of reality and improves the quality of data.

Taking Notes

Note taking should be as inconspicuous as possible. The best time for recording is during the process of observation itself, which is not always feasible because it may make some people very self-conscious or disturb the naturalness of the situation. In such situations, recording should take place as soon as possible after observation.

Conducting Mini Surveys

The popular conception of surveys is that of large investigations involving hundred and even thousands of respondents generating data on a multitude of variables. Such surveys are undoubtedly costly, time consuming and certainly cannot be undertaken by the assessment team visiting a country for 4 - 5 weeks. However, surveys can be done on a smaller scale by focusing on a few variables and using a small sample. These surveys are often called mini surveys.

Three features of mini surveys should be kept in mind. First, the number of questions is deliberately kept small, ranging between 15 to 30 in most cases. Their questionnaires are designed such that they can be completed between 15 to 30 minutes. Second, only a small sample is used that usually ranges between 25 to 70 respondents. This is indeed the most important characteristic of mini surveys that distinguishes them from traditional surveys. Third, although the use of probability sampling is preferred, nonprobability procedures are also acceptable, when the former is not feasible because of the constraints of time and resources, as is often the case in field assessments.

Well-designed and carefully implemented mini surveys can be extremely useful in generating quantitative data for field assessments. Thus, on the basis of the findings of a mini survey, the evaluators can say that 50 percent of the women farmers surveyed indicated that the technical assistance provided by the project was valuable or that 40 percent reported that their incomes increased as a result of their participation in the project. Such a statement is not possible with most of the rapid, low cost data collection methods described earlier. The other two advantages of mini surveys are that they can be completed within 3 to 4 weeks and do not require significant investment of resources. Their obvious shortcoming is the limited generalizability of their findings and conclusions.

Preparing Questions

Questions should be kept short and succinct. Lengthy questions can confuse respondents and can cause them to miss the essential point of the question. Because the questions are read by the enumerator, norms of spoken rather than written language are appropriate.

Although both open-ended and closed questions can be used, the majority of the questions should conform to a closed-question format. In open-ended questions interviewer tries to record answers verbatim. However, closed questions list major response categories; respondents simply identify one or more categories that they consider appropriate. While closed questions do not permit the respondents to use their own language, concepts and analytical categories, they are easy to ask and still easier to record. Moreover, they also do not require highly skilled.

If probability sampling is not possible, the assessment team may consider one of the following nonprobability sampling methods. One is quota sampling in which the population is divided into various strata on the basis of a set of criteria, and then a predetermined number of units is selected from each stratum. For example, suppose an assessment is evaluating the impact of a microenterprise project providing technical assistance to local entrepreneurs. The team may consider three criteria geographical areas, and the nature of the business -- for which quotas may be assigned. Thus a simple matrix may be developed as shown below.

Enterprise	District A		District B	
Garment	M...	F...	M...	F...
Handicraft	M...	F...	M...	F...
Food	M...	F...	M...	F...

The team will try to establish quotas for each category to make a representative sample. For example, if half of the entrepreneurs under study are involved in garments, efforts will be made to select half of the respondents from this category. On the other hand, if only 25 percent of the businesses are located in district B, only a quarter of respondents will be selected from the district B. Once the quotas have been established, interviewers are free to include anyone who meets the requirement.

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Another method is snowball sampling which is conducted in several stages. During the first stage, a few persons who meet the requirements for inclusion in the sample are identified, interviewed and are also asked to suggest the names of additional persons who meet the sampling requirements and should be interviewed. The second stage consists in interviewing the people (or some of them) identified by the first respondents. The process is repeated until a suitable sample size is constructed. snowball sampling is most appropriate in situations where we want to reach a small specialized population that is not easily visible. A good example is to reach out the past participant trainees supported by USAID, whose addresses are not available.

Finally, convenience sampling may be used in some situations. In convenience sampling, population units are selected on the basis of their easy accessibility. For example, the assessment team may interview farmers who are available in a village, or interview only those women who are visiting a family planning clinic. The problem with convenience sampling is that it is highly prone to sampling bias. For example, if the team visits villages during daytime, it may miss farmers working in their fields. Therefore before planning a convenience sampling, the team should identify the categories of population units that are likely to be missed, under-represented or over-represented, and then design the sample in a way that such biases are minimized.

Selecting Respondents

When time and resources permit, probability sampling is the best course because it minimizes, though not exclusively, prevents the risk of biased selection. However, probability sampling is a complex, difficult exercise and therefore if the evaluation team is not fully conversant with statistical sampling procedures, it must seek the services of an expert.

Simple random sampling is easy to design and quite adequate when the population is relatively small and relatively accurate lists of all the population units are readily available. A simple random sampling can be drawn by lottery. Tags bearing names and identification numbers of all units of the population are put in an urn and thoroughly mixed; then the predetermined number of tags are randomly drawn. Another method is to number all the units, and use random numbers to select the sample.

Evaluation team can also use systematic sampling which involves selecting units from a list on the basis of a fixed interval. The list from which systematic selection is made may be a written list, for example, a list of farmers receiving extension advice, or even a proxy list, for example, rows of houses on a street or individual medical records in a file. Systematic sampling is undoubtedly more convenient than simple random sampling, however, it can be biased if the interval hits a cycle.

In most instances, the populations which the evaluation team will want to focus are unlisted and widely dispersed. For example, we may rarely find a list of farmers who received technical assistance or women who purchased contraceptives at the village store. In such instances, cluster sampling - single stage or two or multiple stages - can be more suitable. Cluster sample is based

on the fact that most population units are clustered. for example farmers served by extension services live in villages, public health professionals work in organizations and teachers teach in schools. And while it may be difficult to prepare a list of all farmers, health workers or teachers, lists can certainly be prepared of the concerned villages, organizations or schools for sampling purposes.

In the single-stage cluster sampling, clusters are randomly selected, and every unit in the selected cluster is included in the sample. For example, a family planning project has 50 clinics and each clinic has 5 family planning professionals, the assessment team may select 10 clinics through random sampling and interview all the professionals in them. In two stage cluster sampling, sampling is done in two stages. For example, in the above case, the team will first select 10 clinics through random sampling, and then select three out of five professionals in each cluster to interview. If it appears that most of the questions in the mini survey cannot be answered using a closed format, it will be advisable to use other data collection methods described earlier in this annex.

Response categories for closed questions should be exhaustive and include full range of answers. If, for example, a question is asked about the sources of prenatal care, all important sources private prenatal clinic, public prenatal clinic, doctor, traditional mid-wife, and so on - that are available to the local populace should be listed. In listing response categories, a space should also be provided for responses not mentioned in the question.

Questions should be as specific as possible for two obvious reasons. First, respondents understand and respond better when the questions are specific. Second, specificity aids recall.

Often expressions such as "Don't you agree" or "Wouldn't you say" push respondents to give affirmative answers. Because of the outright suggestion, people may feel obliged to agree even if they have reservations about the statement. In societies where it is considered impolite to disagree, especially with outsiders, such questions can undermine the validity of the findings and should therefore be avoided.

Designing the Questionnaire

Careful attention should be given to the ordering of the questions. The first question should be simple, but important and nonthreatening, stimulating the respondent's interest in the survey. Demographic questions which pertain to age, employment, marital status, or even religion should be avoided because demographic variables are generally not used in mini surveys. If there is a need for demographic data, such questions should be put at the end of the questionnaire. In obtaining historical information, investigators should pose questions that address events in a chronological or reverse chronological order.

A questionnaire should provide plenty of space to record answers. Often questionnaires leave only two or three lines for recording responses to open-ended questions, which forces the interviewer to condense responses thereby causing errors and even misrepresentations.

The evaluation team should carefully pretest the questionnaire by conducting 5 to 7 interviews. When a survey is likely to cover many categories of respondents, at least one respondent from each category should be included in pretesting. Pretesting should focus on the clarity of questions, the ease with which they can be answered, the appropriateness of the response categories and the acceptable level of variation in the responses. It should also examine the flow of the questionnaire, the time required to administer it, and the sustainability of the respondents' interview.

Asking Questions

The interviewer should read each question slowly to the respondent. The ideal pace is two words per second. When interviewers hurry through questions, respondents tend to follow their example contributing to superficial, even inaccurate responses.

If a respondent gives incomplete or irrelevant answer, the interviewer can use some simple techniques to stimulate fuller, clearer answers. One is to pause for the respondent's answer and convey, though a nod or an expectant look that you are looking for a fuller answer. Another is to repeat the respondent's reply. Hearing the ideas repeated often stimulates people to expand on their responses. Still another technique is to use neutral comments or questions such as "Anything else?" "Any other reason?" "Could you tell me something more on this subject?" Finally, gently probe the respondent to clarify inconsistent, contradictory, or ambiguous answers.

Coding and Analyzing the Interview Data

Precoding of the questionnaire saves time and reduces coding errors. However, only closed questions can be precoded. For open-ended question", the best course is to copy all the answers to a question on a single sheet to provide a total picture. Once this is done, suitable coding categories can be developed to code the data.

The analysis is simple in mini surveys largely confined to frequency distributions, percentages, and measures of central tendency and can be easily performed with a hand calculator.

Using Translators

As far as possible, the use of translators should be avoided in the above mentioned rapid appraisal methods. Involvement of translators changes the dynamics of an interview or meeting. However, when it is necessary to use them, they should be carefully selected. When local translators are being used, it is preferable to select those who are not known to participants because it minimizes the problems arising out of status inconsistencies between the translator and the participants.

The evaluation team should thoroughly brief the translator on the issues to be explored in interviews and/or meetings. If possible, background material on the program/project should be shared. A knowledge of the assessment objectives and program/project details improves the quality of communication and reduce the possibility of misunderstandings.

The translator should translate respondents' comments as they are made and as close as possible to the actual phrases used. He/she should never summarize or only translate what he/she thinks is important. When translators are expected to write the interview texts, they should be asked to be as comprehensive as possible.

Displays of Qualitative Data

Some of the qualitative data generated by the above methods can be also presented in the form of tables and figures. Three types of tables which can aid analysis and communication of the findings are briefly described below.

The first type is a table presenting actual quotes from respondents on a specific topic. The main advantage of carefully selected quotes is that they are quite credible. They also provide the reader with an idea of the variations in peoples' perceptions, judgments and suggestions. Table 1 gives an example of this type of table.

Table 1

Effects of a Micro-Enterprise Project on Income

"There is no doubt in my mind that incomes of project participants have increased as a result of our efforts." - **Project Economist**

"If people were not making profits, why should we be swamped with applications for credit and technical assistance." - **Project Officer**

"...Most of us are making more money than we would have made without the project." - **A Participant**

"Women have not done as well as men. At least, many friends of mine did not."
- **A Woman Participant**

"I lost money because I did not receive timely assistance from the project staff."
- **A Participant**

"A student of mine did a survey of the project participants last year and found that a majority felt that their living conditions have improved." - **A University Professor**

"The reason why several women owned businesses failed are twofold. First, they did not have business experience. In their eagerness to achieve their targets, project managers recruited women who did not possess technical or business skills. Second, they focussed on handicrafts for which there is limited local demand. How many baskets can you sell locally?" - **A Business Consultant**

This table indicates that the project contributed to the increased incomes of participants but women did not benefit as much as men because of factors such as a lack of experience, limited demand for handicraft products, and poor judgement of the project staff.

Second, tables can present comparative qualitative data on a topic. For example, Table 2 lists problems which male and female respondents faced in obtaining credit from a project.

Table 2

Problems Encountered in Obtaining Institutional Credit

Male Farmers	Female Farmers
1. Collateral Requirements	1. Collateral Requirements
2. Considerable paper work	2. Considerable paper work
3. Long delays in getting credit	3. Long delays in getting credit
4. Repayment installments not with agricultural seasons	4. Repayment installments not synchronized with agricultural seasons
	5. Land is registered in the name of male members
	6. Difficulties in going to the bank's main office in the city
	7. Apathy of the bank staff towards women

Thus by presenting comparative data gathered from interviews or meetings in a simple table, the evaluator can highlight several additional problems faced by women in obtaining credit. Similar tables can be used for comparing different sites, beneficiary groups, implementation designs, impacts or even recommendations.

Finally, tables can be constructed to give frequencies. Table 3 presents the findings of a mid-term evaluation of an integrated rural development project for which 6 community meetings were organized. These meetings were attended by 149 adult members, who were asked to answer "yes" or "no" to a set of questions.

Table 3

Perceived Impacts of the Project

Item	# of respondents answering "yes"
Used water pumps installed by the project	65
Received short-term credit	110
Attended meetings organized by extension staff	85
Used the improved variety of maize seed	115
Family incomes increased during the past 3 years	65
Living conditions improved during the past 3 years	79
Project benefitted local people	135

In constructing the above table, the evaluation team aggregated the responses of all participants in the six community meetings. On the basis of this data and other evidence, the evaluation team concluded that the project was making a significant headway.

In the above table, the evaluation team simply listed the frequencies; however, it could have also computed percentages to give an indication of the perceived coverage or impact of the project.

Working and Living Styles Questionnaire

• Do you like privacy in your free time or do you like to socialize?

• What type of hotel do you like to stay in? Luxury? Inexpensive?

Field Assessment Team Responsibilities

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Field Assessment Team Responsibilities

Team Leaders

- Direct assessment effort in the field; coordinate activities with Topic Coordinator/Leader.
- Direct and facilitate team assessment design activities, establish SOW, workplan and schedule, clarify roles of each member, and help facilitate team planning meetings.
- Make necessary contacts with Mission and Host Government officials.
- Manage evaluation activities in the field. Decide on data collection sources and approaches.
- Arrange for necessary administrative, logistical and research support service to the team, using Team Leader fund.
- Prepare a first draft of main report prior to return to the United States.
- Conduct debriefing sessions with Mission and host government before return to U.S.
- Submit draft report to CDIE management within two weeks of return to the United States, in accordance with guidance on report outline and styleguide.
- Revise the draft responding to the suggestions and criticism's of A.I.D. staff and external reviewers.
- Submit the final report within 1 month after comments on first draft are received.
- Follow through on editorial queries promptly.
- Take lead role in oral debriefings on evaluation findings to senior management and workshops.

All Team Members

- **Review briefing book and background documents.**
- **Participate in team planning workshop.**
- **Prepare individual scopes of work and participate in setting evaluation work plan during workshop.**
- **Ensure that travel authorization is prepared; ensure that passport is in order; get shots and visas; and make all personal arrangements for timely departure.**
- **Conduct field evaluation as member of the team. Participate in data collection activities and analysis.**
- **Write sections of report and appendixes, as requested by team leader, in accordance with report outline and style guide presented in this briefing book.**
- **Participate with team leader in debriefing Mission and Host Government on findings.**
- **Rewrite sections of report as requested by, and in consultation with, team leader.**
- **Brief AID/Washington offices and senior management, as arranged by topic coordinator or team leader.**
- **At request, attend subsequent briefing workshops for new teams.**

Logistics and Support

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Special Team Leader Fund	9-2
Travel Vouchers	9-2

Logistics and Support

Funding and Travel Authorizations

CDIE will arrange for most aspects of the assessment team's travel arrangements. CDIE team leaders are responsible for obtaining required mission and other clearances and will supervise preparation of travel authorizations for all individuals on impact teams originating from Washington, D.C. In cases of team members who are coming from other posts, CDIE will transfer funds to the mission to cover their travel and per diem costs.

Travel Arrangements/Flight Reservations and Tickets

CDIE will arrange for travel reservations and obtain tickets for team members located in AID/W. Individuals should contact CDIE, Pat Brown-Wood (875-4997), to discuss preferred flight arrangements.

Travel Advances

CDIE can arrange for individuals' travel fund advances upon request. Some advance notice is required to obtain a travel advance. Contact Pat Brown-Wood to request advances or to find out what the per diem is for a specific country/city.

Hotel Reservations

CDIE will make hotel reservations for the team members. Most teams have found it convenient to stay at the same hotel. Individual team members should coordinate among themselves and with Pat Brown-Wood concerning their arrival and departure dates and hotel room preferences.

Local In-Country Travel

Allowances will be made for in-country flights when necessary. However, all travel authorizations allow for taxi fares and the team leaders generally have additional authorization for hiring cars and drivers for the teams to use for local ground travel.

Passports, Visas, and Vaccinations

Individual team members are responsible for having current official passports, required visas, and appropriate vaccinations.

Special Team Leader Fund

In most instances, team leaders will be given an extra amount of money under their travel authorizations to fund services needed to support the team's efforts. All receipts for such services must be kept. The TA spells out the types of expenditures that are allowable as follows:

"Traveller is authorized to procure local transportation by rental car (including driver compensation and per diem) or other commercially available means of transportation as necessary; services of local translator/interpreter, secretarial and research assistance; gasoline and photographic supplies and other supplies/services as may be required to complete this mission in a manner advantageous to the U.S. Government in the country to be visited not to exceed _____. Receipts for all of the above are required."

In other cases, CDIE has allowed for extra funds for this sort of logistics and administrative support services to the team via a contract. This is usually the case where a contractor will accompany and advise the A.I.D. team.

Travel Vouchers

CDIE will assist in the preparation and typing of travel vouchers of direct hire team members stationed in AID/W, but it is the responsibility of the traveller to submit all appropriate information and required receipts to CDIE to process. Travel vouchers will be approved by CDIE management before being submitted to PFM/FM for payment.

An example of an international travel voucher is enclosed. Travelers are reminded that vouchers should state departure and arrival dates and times at the localities involved. A copy of your airline ticket stub should be attached. Receipts must be provided for all miscellaneous expenses in excess of \$25.00 including taxicab fares, hired cars, airport taxes, official calls, PC or other equipment rentals, secretarial, researcher and other services or purchases in connection with official business. Team leaders should keep receipts for expenses from their "special" fund.

Style Guidelines for the Report

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Style Guidelines for the Report

Report Preparation

The responsibility for preparing a CDIE assessment report rests with the evaluation team leader and team members. Their responsibility includes ensuring that a hard copy of the report and a diskette containing all sections of the report (e.g., summary, body of the report, appendixes, references) are included in the package and that tables, graphs, and charts are on diskette. The evaluation team must resolve all factual or logical inconsistencies and ensure the accuracy and completeness of all statistical data. It is advisable for the team leader to have the Mission review the first draft before submitting the report to CDIE for publication. Authors are also responsible for the accuracy of quotations and citations of the reports they submit for editing, including the accuracy of page numbers, proper names, and bibliographical data. Waiting to resolve such problems until after reports have been submitted seriously impedes the publication process and adds to the cost and time required for publication. Reports will undergo an internal and external review process. Teams are responsible for making all necessary revisions prior to submitting the report for editing.

In general this style guide reflects the standards outlined in the U.S. Government Printing Office *Style Manual*. For additional information on style, particularly on handling references, see *The Chicago Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press, 1982, 13th ed.).

Composition

If written information is to be clearly communicated, the essential task is not so much "having it all in your head or in your notes" as "getting it down on paper" in a way that is as intelligible to the reader as it is to the writer. The quality of your writing represents the quality of your work. No matter how significant the conclusions of a paper might be, if the paper cannot be understood or the arguments followed, it is as if the conclusions had never been reached and the work had never been done. The guidelines presented here raise only a few of the essential points that are important to logical, precise, and effective writing.

Organization

The outline describing the major sections of the team's report appears in Section 3. However, some program assessments may require a slightly different outline from the one presented in this Notebook. In such a case, the Topic Coordinator will provide guidance on the preparation of a revised report outline for that particular assessment.



Teams should use the table of contents as a check on the organization of their report.

- Do similar heading levels contain information at a parallel level of organization?
- Are headings phrased in parallel grammatical form?
- Does the discussion in each section correspond to its heading? For example, does the section marked "Lessons Learned" actually discuss the lessons or does it discuss recommendations?
- Are themes and arguments for the findings fully developed and logically structured and connected? Do not assume that readers will be able to intuit missing or implied information or connections. Describe at the beginning of the report what the project/program was trying to achieve and anything else about the project that is important for understanding the findings.
- Finally, are tables, figures, and appendixes clearly referenced in the report, logically ordered, and in correct consecutive order? Do tables and figures accurately reflect the discussion in the text? Do the data in text correspond exactly with the data in the table? Sometimes authors revise the data in a table and forget to make the same change in the text, thus inadvertently inserting a discrepancy between the table and text.

Tone

Assess carefully your approach to your audience; remember that A.I.D. publications are read not only by A.I.D. staff but also by a broader domestic and international audience concerned with development. Therefore, temper your style accordingly. In particular:

- Avoid extreme informality. Although a paper can benefit by elements of a personalized style, remember that some of your readers may not be familiar with American English expressions and colloquialisms. Furthermore, informality often sets a casual tone, which, aside from being inappropriate for a scientific study, can jeopardize the credibility of the report.
- Avoid jargon, but do not confuse jargon with technical expressions that are essential to the precise communication of meaning.
- Avoid the use of discriminatory language. Use plural nouns and pronouns or "he or she" to avoid gender bias. The slight awkwardness attendant on using the "his or her" construction is preferable to slighting many of your readers. For example: *If a writer wants to know whether a reader would have trouble understanding the report, he might talk to him and ask him*

to point out any difficulties. (This sentence not only suffers from gender bias, but also from unclear pronoun reference: Is the "he" referring to the writer or the reader?) The sentence can be rewritten as follows: *A writer who wants to know whether readers are having trouble understanding the report might talk to some of them and ask them to point out any difficulties.*

Elements of Style

Many writers unintentionally weigh down their sentences with weak constructions that slow comprehension. The suggestions listed below address briefly only a few of these practices.

- Use the active voice whenever possible. *Lack of funds constrained the extent to which the strategy could be implemented.* (Weak passive construction). *Lack of funds prevented full implementation of the strategy.* (better)

- Watch for unclear reference to "it," "this," "these," "that," "which," and "who." If there is any potential for confusion, repeat the noun rather than use the pronoun. For example: *A.I.D. helped the World Bank to implement a broad range of industrial sector reforms. Its objective was to strengthen the private sector.* Whose objective? the World Bank's or A.I.D.'s? In this case, it is better to restate the noun. *A.I.D. helped the World Bank to implement a broad range of industrial sector reforms. A.I.D.'s objective was to strengthen the private sector.*

- Use abbreviations only when they aid the reader, not as a short-cut for writing; in particular, avoid creating ad hoc abbreviations. As a reader which of the following would you rather read? *The MOA's AD Program included both MADs and FADs at all levels of the extension system.*

or

The agricultural demonstrator program of the Ministry of Agriculture included both male and female agricultural demonstrators at all levels of the extension system. Use abbreviations for names of agencies, organizations, and institutions only when this is the common way of referring to the organization (e.g., A.I.D., IMF) or when the acronym will be used repeatedly throughout the paper. Remember to always define an acronym or abbreviation on first use. The accepted practice is to write out the full name of the acronym on first use, followed by the acronym in parenthesis--for example, private voluntary organizations (PVOs). Editors lose much time querying authors or researching for definitions of acronyms.

Formatting

Word Processing Formats

CDIE uses Ventura Publisher for page composition, the final stage of report preparation. Before this stage, all drafts are edited and corrected on WordPerfect 5.1. To help make the transition from word processing to desktop as efficiently and accurately as possible, CDIE asks authors (or their support staff) to

- Prepare reports on WordPerfect 5.1.
- Create separate files for tables, unless a table is very short (less than 5 rows). If possible, use Lotus to create long tables. Save Lotus files with the .PNR extension.
- Provide diskettes of any graphics used (e.g., graphs, charts, boxes). If a diskette is not available, provide the data required for creating the graph.

Headings

When reports are still in the draft stage, the system for identifying and ranking levels of headings is numerically based.

Try to limit section heads to three levels, although occasionally a fourth-, and in rare cases, a fifth-level heading may become necessary. The following are examples of headings to the fourth level.

1. INTRODUCTION (centered)

1.1. Project Setting (flush left)

1.1.1. Intended Beneficiaries (flush left)

Farm Production. (Heading is indented; text follows.)



In case of a fifth-level heading, the following format should be used:

1. INTRODUCTION (centered)

1.1. Project Setting (flush left)

1.1.1. Intended Beneficiaries (flush left)

Farm Production. (Flush left, no numbering.)

Livestock Production. (Indented; text follows.) (Notice that the fourth-level heading moves up flush with the left margin, and the fifth-level heading takes the format described for the fourth-level heading).

The style for section headings in appendixes remains the same as in the body of the report.

Tables and Figures

General Information

Tables present information in columns and rows; figures are graphic representation of data, such as graphs, pie charts, line drawings, or photographs. Tables and figures are useful for presenting complicated data that would be difficult to explain clearly in text. Thus, tables and figures should not simply reiterate material that is already fully covered in the text. Each table should be developed as a discrete, self-contained entity that is fully comprehensible to the reader even when examined out of the context of the report. A table, therefore, should have a title that explains the essence of what is being presented, including dates; headings for columns and rows, each clearly defined, including the units of measure; and sources listed at the bottom of the table (see sample table, Exhibit 5).

Table Format

- As stated earlier, prepare tables in separate computer files, preferably in Lotus, to facilitate converting word processing and other computer files into Ventura.
- Before finalizing a manuscript, double check table calculations. Cross-check data in tables and figures with the data in text to ensure accuracy and consistency between them.
- Reference each table and figure in the text and number consequently.

- Provide a heading for every table column, including the stub (the first column). Some columns also require spanner heads, heads that span two or more subheads (see the sample table, Exhibit 6).
- Indicate table footnotes by superscript lowercase letters, not by numbers. Footnote sequencing is from left to right, not by column.
- Place the source for the data at the bottom of the table, below the horizontal rule.
- Place long explanatory material, for example, definitions of abbreviations, in a note at the bottom of the table, below the source.

Footnotes, Bibliography, and References

Footnotes

Any explanatory notes or clarifying details helpful to an understanding of the text but nonetheless digressive in nature should be placed in a footnote at the bottom of the page that contains the text to which it refers. Explanatory notes should be numbered consecutively throughout each major part of the report (front matter, main body, and each appendix). References for citations should not be given in footnotes, but rather placed in the appropriate reference section.

References and Bibliography

Querying authors about missing references and incomplete bibliographic data and correcting the format in reference sections are among the most time-consuming tasks of editors working on CDIE assessment reports. When references are incomplete, interested readers can neither find nor verify them. Therefore, authors should either provide full information for each bibliographic entry or, if this is impossible, consider deleting the reference altogether.

Reports should follow the author-date system for citations. Citations are placed in text in parentheses following the passage to which they relate. The citation includes the author's last name and the date of publication of the work, with no intervening punctuation. If a page number is required (e.g., for a quotation), the page number follows the date, preceded by a comma only, for example: (Rostow 1983, 17).

If more than one work by the same author and published in the same year is cited, the works should be distinguished by a letter following the date, for example: (Rostow 1983a), (Rostow 1983b).

The following show the format for the reference or bibliography section and provide examples of the information required for the most common types of references. For other types of references not shown here, refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style*.



A book by a single author:

World Bank. 1984. *Toward Sustained Development in sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Book with two or more authors:

Johnston, Bruce, and Peter Kilby. 1975. *Agricultural and Structural Transformation: Economic Strategies in Late-Developing Countries*. New York: Oxford University Press. Note that when authors are identified for government reports, the authors' names should be used and the government agency listed as publisher, not as author:

Love, Ray, Peter A. Theil, and Philip W. Ruppert. 1986. *The Private Development Corporation of the Philippines*. A.I.D. Evaluation Special Study No. 46. Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development.

Chapter in a book:

Bhagwati, J. 1970. "The Tying of Aid." In *Foreign Aid*, edited by J. Bhagwati and R.S. Eckhaus, 112-179. Baltimore: Penguin Books.

Book compiled by an editor:

Bhagwati, J., and R.S. Eckhaus, Eds. 1970. *Foreign Aid*. Baltimore: Penguin Books. When no date of publication is available, "N.d." is used in place of a date:

Barak, Eli. N.d. "Report on Experiments Carried Out Under Irrigation in Winter 1983." Kasinthula, Malawi: Kasinthula Research Station.

Unpublished duplicated material:

Berg, Elliot, Walter Hecox, and Jim Mudge. 1985. "Evaluation of the A.I.D. 1983-1984 Structural Adjustment Program in Kenya." USAID/Kenya. Photocopy.

An article in a journal:

Landau, Marlin. 1969. "Redundancy, Rationality, and the Problem of Duplication and Overlap." *Public Administration Review* 29:346-358.

References to journals that are paginated by issue rather than by volume must identify the issue by providing the issue number or the month(s):

Public Administration Review 29 (4):346-358. or *Public Administration Review* 29 (July-August):346-358.

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Appendix A
Sample Report Pages

Exhibit 1. Sample Title Page

ETHIOPIA: ALEMAYA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE [line 17]
[use 1 1/2 space if more than one line]
[4 blank lines]

A.I.D. PROJECT IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT NO. 71

[space varies]

by
[1 blank line]
Edwin Price, Team Leader/Agricultural Economist
(Oregon State University)

Conrad Evans, Plant Scientist
(Oklahoma State University)

[space varies]

U.S. Agency for International Development
[1 blank line]
June 1989

[4 blank lines]

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Agency for International Development. [line 59]

Exhibit 2. Sample Table of Contents

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Exhibit 3. Sample Project Data Sheet

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PROJECT DATA SHEET

1. Country: Ecuador
2. Project Title: Development of Agricultural Cooperatives
3. Project Number: 6080146
4. Project Implementation:
 - a. Project authorization, 1969-1976
 - b. Final obligation, 1977
 - c. Final input delivery, 1977
5. Project Completion-Final Disbursement: 1977
6. Project Funding: -
 - a. A.I.D. Total \$2,146,000
 - b. Other Donor 0
 - c. Host Country 1,149,000
 - Total \$3,295,000
7. Mode of Implementation:
 - a. Project Agreement between USAID/Ecuador and Government of Ecuador, Ministry of Agriculture
 - b. Implemented by Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, in Guayaquil and Quito
8. Evaluations:
 - a. Annual evaluations in 1969, 1970, 1971, 1976, and 1977
 - b. Special evaluations: Strategies for Small Farmer Development (Development Alternatives Inc. 1975); "Evaluation of Small Farmer Organizations" (J. Tendler 1976)
9. Responsible Mission Officials During Life of Project:
 - a. Mission Directors: Robert J. Minges, Peter Cody, and Harry Ackerman
 - b. Project Officers: Edward Hirabayashi, B.E. Dupuis, and Alan Hankins
10. Host Country Exchange Rates:
 - a. Name of currency: sucre (S)
 - b. Exchange rate: 1970-1981, \$1.00 = S25; 1984, \$1.00 = S90

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Exhibit 4. Sample Glossary

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GLOSSARY

- A.I.D. - Agency for International Development
- CCC - Commodity Credit Corporation
- CDSS - Country Development Strategy Statement, the current USAID Mission planning document
- CILSS - Permanent Committee for Drought Prevention in the Sahel (Comite Inter-Etats pour la Lutte contre la Secheresse dans le Sahel)
- CNRA - National Center for Agricultural Research, Senegal (Centre National de Recherches Agronomique)
- Development Assistance - One of the categories of funding A.I.D. receives from Congress. Development Assistance is further broken down by functional account (see below).
- DAC - Development Assistance Committee
- Danida - Danish Aid Organization
- DAP - Development Assistance Plan, the USAID Mission planning document that preceded the Country Development Strategy Statement
- EEC - European Economic Community
- EPRP - Economic Policy Reform Program. Now referred to as the Africa Economic Policy Reform Program (AEPRP).
- functional accounts - The functional accounts are the subaccounts of Development Assistance. Examples of functional accounts include Health and Population, Agriculture, Rural Development and Nutrition, and Child Survival. Congress sets the levels of the various functional accounts to direct the A.I.D. program to certain areas.
- FAA - Foreign Assistance Act. This legislation guides A.I.D., but not food aid, which is guided by PL 480.

Exhibit 5. Sample Table

Table 15. Location and Characteristics of Producer Markets in North and Northeast Brazil, 1984

Market Location (state/town)	Land Area (square meters)	Con- structed Area (square meters)	Amount Invested (millions of 1978 Cr\$)	Amount Sold in 1984 (1,000 MT)
Maranhao				
Medio Mearim	na.	na	na	0.6
Ceara				
Baturite	12,000	1,756	65	8.8
Ibiapaba	49,500	2,330	71	15.1
Uruburetama	33,823	1,967	45	5.3
Paraiba				
Campina Grande	13,442	1,711	na	24.7
Pernambuco				
Bezerras	17,500	1,577	41	a
Santa Maria de Boa Vista	na	na	na	9.6
Belem do Sao Francisco	48,000	2,307	77	18.6
Sergipe				
Boquim	8,200	1,965	na	49.0
Umbauba	na	na	na	2.9
Bahia				
Jaguaquara	na	na	na	39.2

Note: na = not available.

^aClosed in 1984.

Source: COBAL (Brazilian Food Company).

Exhibit 6. Sample Table With Spanner Heads

Table 10. Selected Socioeconomic Indicators for the Northeast Region and the Rest of Brazil, Selected Years

Indicator	Northeast			Rest of Brazil		
	Regional	Urban	Rural	National Average	Urban	Rural
Per Capita Gross Domestic Product (1979 US\$)	793	na	na	2,002 ^a	na	na
Poverty Families (percentage of total families) 1979 ^b	74	na	na	42	na	na
Infant Mortality, 1978-1984 ^c	122	na	na	89 ^a	na	na
Adequate Diet (percentage of total population) 1974-1975 ^d	21	9	30	38	28	58
Access to Sanitation (percentage of total population) 1980 ^e	48	78	17	87	95	64
Literacy (percentage of population >5 years old) 1980	48	64	31	77	82	61
Primary School Participation (percentage of population 5-14 yrs. old) 1979	70	89	55	82	89	65

Note: na = not available.

^aData refer to national average.

^bFamilies earning the equivalent of two or less minimum wages per month including income in kind.

^cDeaths of infants aged 0-12 months per 1,000 live births.

^dDiet satisfying Food and Agriculture Organization/World Health Organization low-calorie requirements.

^ePopulation of homes with any sanitary device (e.g., latrine, septic tank)

Sources: World Bank (1979); Superintendency for the Department of the Northeast (SUDENE) (1980, 1981); Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (1981); and Tabulacoes Avancadas do Censo Demografico, 1980, in World Bank (1983).

Table 3. Sectoral Breakdown of U.S. Assistance to the Six Study Countries, 1963-1984
(in thousands of constant 1983 dollars)

Sector and Subsector	Total	Percentage ^a	Cameroon	Kenya	Nigeria	Malawi	Senegal	Tanzania
A.I.D. Project and Program Assistance	2,407,690	100.0	213,839	550,093	943,020	152,221	174,311	374,205
Agriculture	905,271	37.6	85,218	269,296	284,233	25,517	114,716	126,292
Crop Production	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Storage & Processing	21,901	0.9	0	8,070	3,981	0	9,850	0
Input Supply	161,589	6.7	13,488	89,603	79	0	15,255	43,164
Credit	11,875	0.5	1,645	5,504	3,249	0	1,477	0
Research	55,954	2.3	6,199	5,801	14,341	10,050	4,697	14,866
Extension	77,375	3.2	5,528	2,604	35,972	0	26,420	6,852
Education & Training	311,882	13.0	35,999	80,531	135,971	15,467	11,762	32,153
Planning & Management	80,627	3.3	6,030	27,533	26,811	0	15,070	5,183
Irrigation	39,965	1.7	7,228	0	23,227	0	9,510	0
Marketing	3,217	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	3,217
Livestock	127,349	5.3	8,281	43,743	38,499	0	15,969	20,857
Forestry	9,613	0.4	0	5,294	0	0	4,319	0
Fisheries	3,924	0.2	820	613	2,104	0	387	0
Rural Development	517,758	21.5	90,681	135,855	36,087	84,114	13,385	157,636
Infrastructure	308,735	12.8	78,419	48,420	28,344	69,128	6,602	77,823
Health & Population	84,845	3.5	4,487	27,736	7,743	0	6,681	38,197
Education	6,547	0.3	6,485	0	0	0	62	0
Water Supply	6,988	0.3	802	0	0	6,186	0	0
Community Development	41,748	1.7	488	29,024	0	3,312	40	8,885
Other	985,641	40.9	37,940	144,942	623,680	42,590	46,210	90,278
Food Aid	835,984		19,655	181,184	182,541	12,168	192,713	247,723
Other Economic Assistance	411,753		44,163	135,071	82,878	31,984	61,545	56,112
Total	3,585,533		277,657	835,674	1,208,439	190,884	428,569	645,309

Exhibit 7. Sample Broadside Table

Note: Figures do not include military assistance.

^aCalculated for project and program assistance only.

Source: A.I.D., "Project Assistance and Activities by Country and Technical Field: A.I.D. Dollar-Financed Costs" (various years).