

**FINAL REPORT**

**MISSION WIDE STRATEGY WORKSHOP  
USAID/EL SALVADOR**

**February 28 - 29, 1996**

**Prepared by:**

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## EL SALVADOR TRIP REPORT

February 22-March 7, 1996

### TDY Team:

Michael Hendricks & Jonathan Hawley

### *I. MISSION-WIDE STRATEGY WORKSHOP*

On February 28-29, 1996 USAID/El Salvador held, in the Mission's training room, a Mission-wide workshop on the current status of its strategic plan. Of approximately 150 Mission staff invited (excluding motor pool, warehouse staff and cleaning crew) 124 attended. Many of the attendees were members of one of the Mission's five Strategic Objective (SO) teams, but others were "not yet" assigned to a team. (The Mission plans for every staff member to participate on at least one team.)

The workshop had three main purposes: (1) to share each SO team's current Results Framework (RF) with other Mission staff not members of that particular team, (2) to allow all Mission staff to digest, discuss, and even debate each of the five RFs, and (3) to gather Mission staff's suggestions for improving each RF.

The workshop was carefully designed in advance - mostly by the Mission's Re-engineering Team and Strategic Development Office (SDO) but also partly by the two MSI facilitators - to accomplish these three purposes. The workshop included the following sessions (see Attachment A for official agenda):

- \* Welcome (Carl Leonard, Mission Director)
- \* Plenary session on the context of the Mission's SOs: USAID foreign policy interests and strategic framework, LAC Bureau strategy, and Mission goals (Carl Leonard, Director, USAID/El Salvador; Erhardt Rupprecht, Deputy Director, Office of Strategy and Portfolio Management; Neil Levine, Deputy Director, Office of Central American Affairs.)
- \* Four separate "modules" of sessions, one module for each of four continuing SOs (Economic Opportunity, Democracy, Health, Environment):

First, the SO team leader made a 15-minute *plenary presentation* of the RF, with special emphasis on the Strategic Objective, the first (top) tier of key Intermediate Results, and any essential performance indicators. Each presenter used overhead projectors and handouts to reinforce his or her message. This presentation was followed by 15 minutes of general discussion and clarification among all participants.

Next, the participants split into nine separate *small discussion groups* of 8-12 persons each. These groups were very carefully constituted by the Mission to include a compatible and effective mix of positions, roles, knowledge, and personalities. Each group was facilitated by a member of the re-engineering team, the PRISM TA team, or a USAID/W representative. These facilitators had met earlier to clarify and standardize how they would work with these groups. The group task was to discuss the RF and to list, on a piece of flip chart paper, "the two or three most important questions or constructive comments that the SO team should hear about their strategy." These groups met for 60 minutes.

Finally, the participants left their small discussion groups and re-convened in a 30-minute *plenary session* to review the feedback from each small group. The nine separate flip charts were taped to a front wall, and an MSI facilitator walked the group through each list, looking for duplicate comments, common themes, etc. The entire group then discussed the overall feedback and what it meant for the future work of the SO team.

- \* Plenary presentation on one "retiring" SO (Which became a Special Strategic Objective Transition from War to Peace)
- \* Plenary discussion on cross-cutting issues (customer definition, geographic focus, gender, NGOs, donor coordination, human capacity development, decentralization, policy dialogue, etc.) (Ken Ellis, Deputy Director)
- \* Next Steps and Closing Ceremony (Carl Leonard)

#### **Evaluation of the Workshop:**

By all accounts, the workshop was considered a complete success. Typical were these comments sent afterwards to USAID/W by an official in the SDO:

"The highlight of the trip, the two-day workshop, exceeded my hopes (and probably the expectations of many people here) for maximizing participation and ownership in the strategy and eliciting constructive and insightful feedback on the frameworks from everyone (secretaries to senior management)."

In addition, we developed a questionnaire to evaluate the workshop, and we administered this questionnaire during the workshop's last session. We analyzed these results on-site and found them to be very positive toward the workshop. We presented these results, which are shown below, to the Mission's top management in our exit discussion.

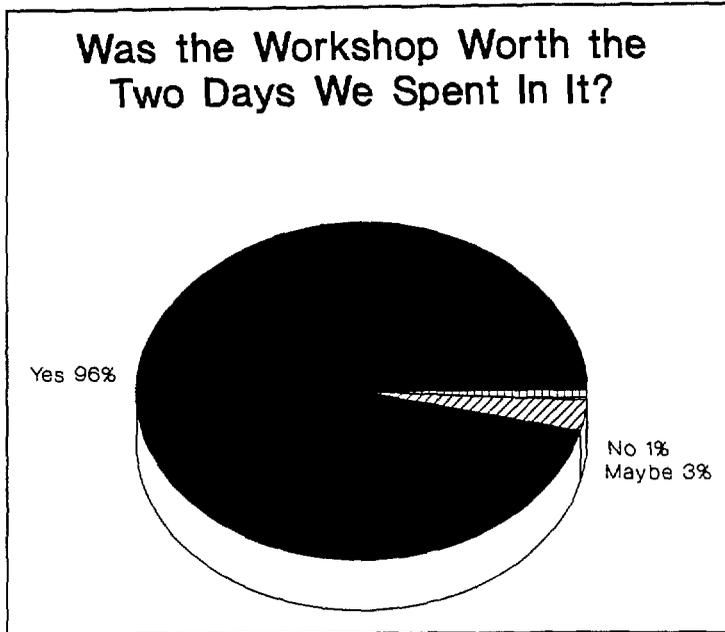


Figure 1

As Figure 1 shows, almost every respondent (96%) reported that the workshop was worth the two days spent in it. In fact, one respondent wrote that "these two days weren't *spent*, they were *invested*, and that investment will pay us good dividends in the future."

Figure 2 shows that the main reason respondents judged the workshop to be worthwhile was because they were able to *learn* about the various RF for each Strategic Objective. To a much lesser degree, they also appreciated the fact that they were able to improve the various RFs and that everyone could participate.

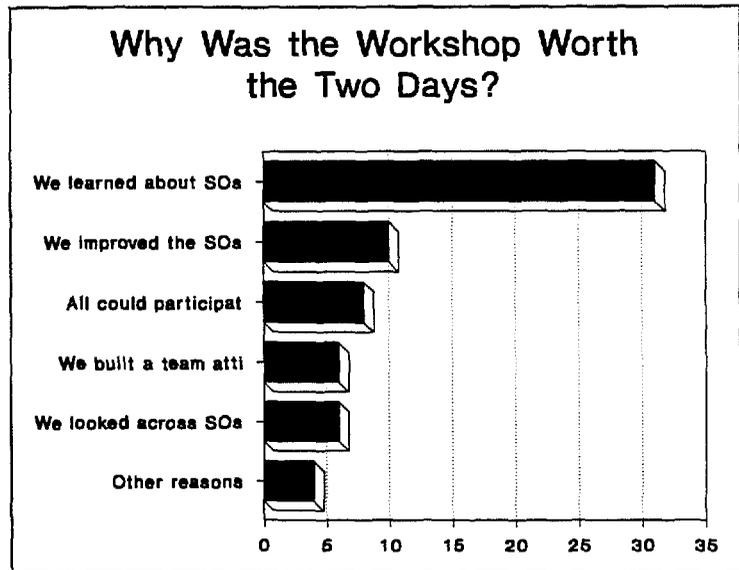


Figure 2

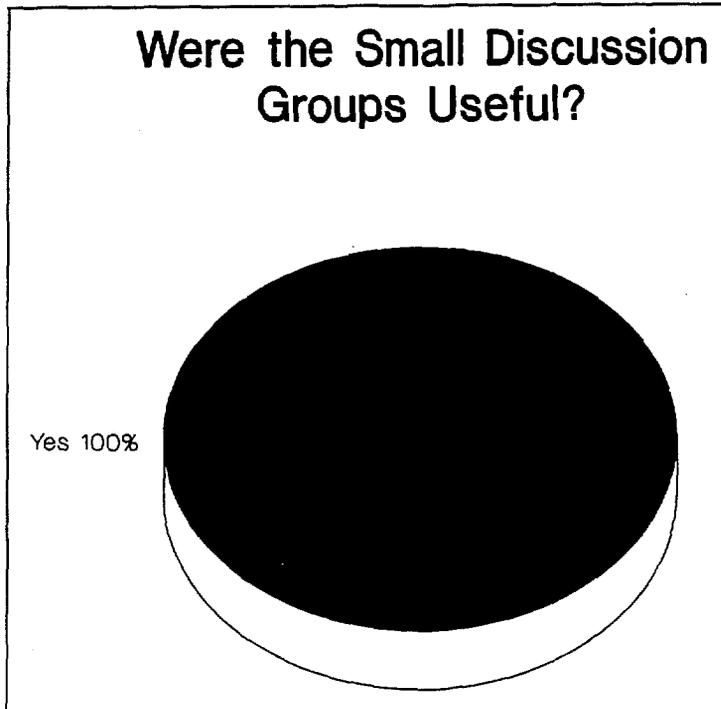


Figure 3

Even though the overall workshop was clearly very successful, Figure 3 shows that the small discussion groups were *even more* successful. A full 100% of the respondents reported that these groups had been useful.

Figure 4 shows that these groups were so popular largely because everyone could speak. This was exactly the Mission's purpose for these sessions, so their planning was obviously very effective.

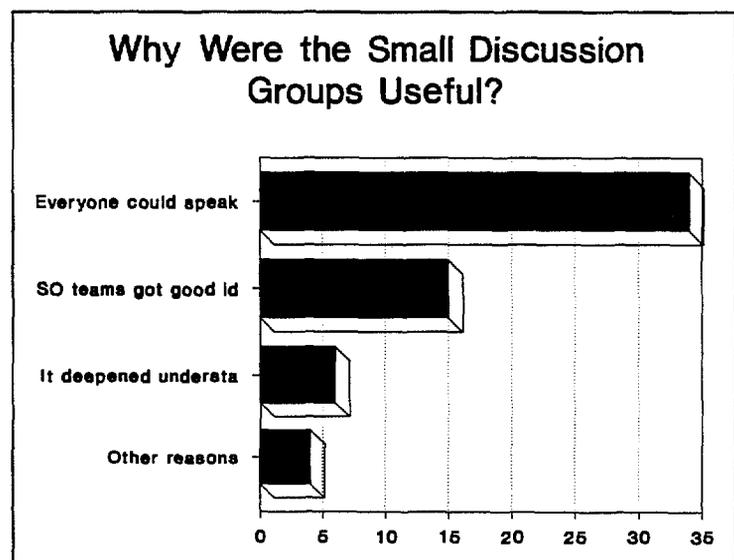


Figure 4

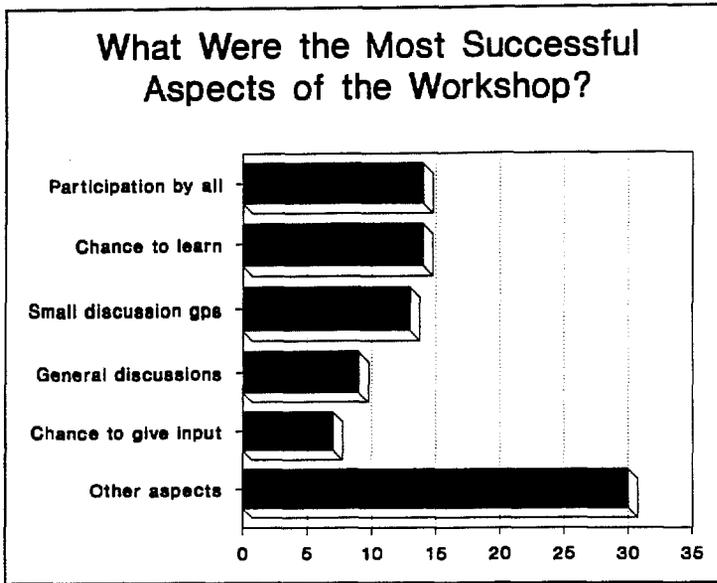


Figure 5

Like Figure 4, Figure 5 shows that respondents very much appreciated the opportunity for everyone in the Mission to participate in the workshop on an equal footing. When asked about the most successful aspects of the workshop, participation by all was rated just as highly as the chance to learn about the various RFs. Also, the small discussion groups, which participants valued for their participation, were rated the third most successful aspect.

On the other hand, not everything about the workshop went perfectly, and Figure 6 shows that those respondents who listed a least successful aspect (many did not) rated the plenary discussion on cross-cutting issues as by far the least successful aspect. This was apparent to the Mission at the time, so this finding is not unexpected. A few respondents also noted the eventual lack of consensus of some issues and the time the workshop took from their working time.

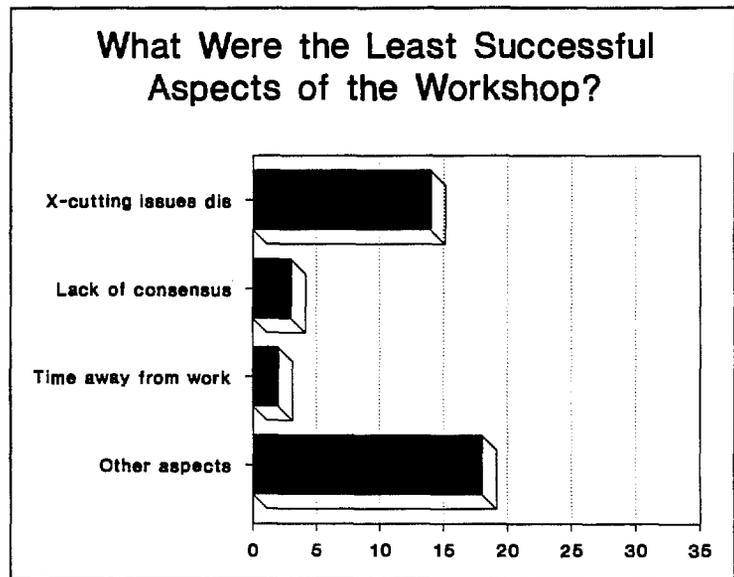


Figure 6

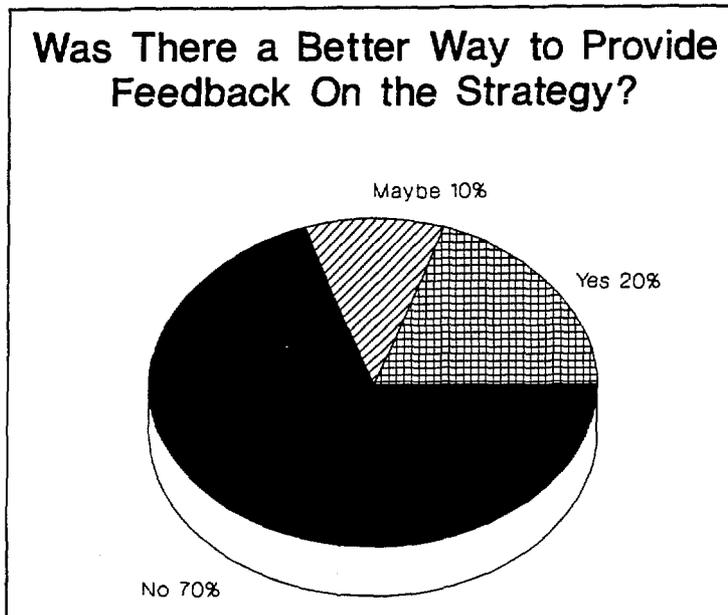


Figure 7

Figure 7 confirms the Mission's wisdom in choosing to hold a workshop on the RFs. When asked if there could have been a better way to provide feedback on the strategy, 70% of the respondents answered "No". The 30% who answered "Maybe" or "Yes" generally preferred a narrower approach which focused on a single Strategic Objective at a time.

Figure 8 also indicates that the workshop was extremely successful. When asked how we could have improved the workshop, only about half the respondents had any suggestions, and those suggestions which were offered were not consistent. The most typical suggestion (5 respondents) was to provide advance materials, a step the Mission had planned but was simply unable to fulfill.

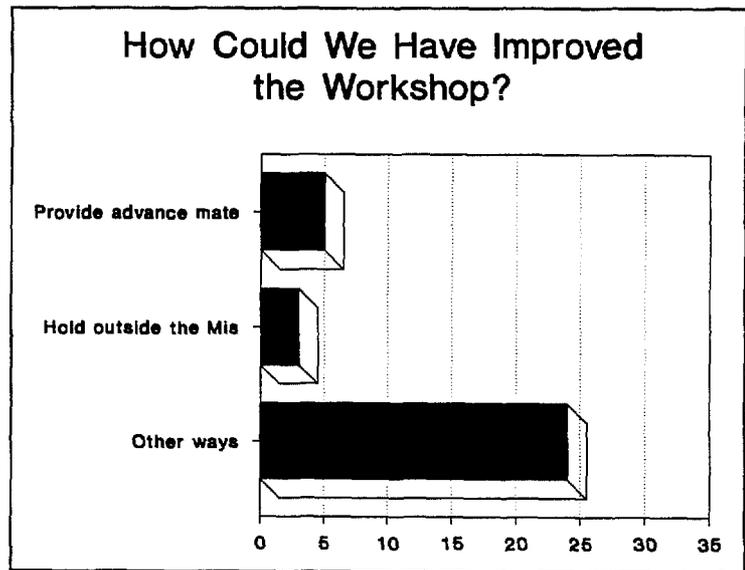


Figure 8

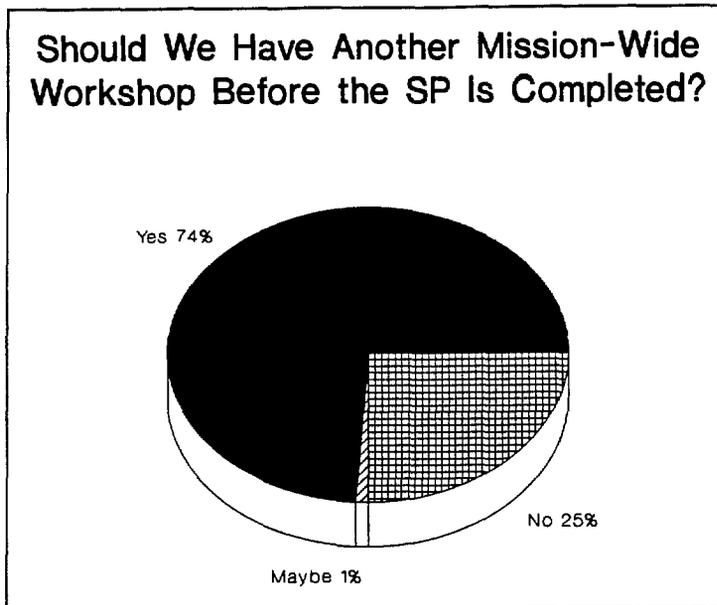


Figure 9

The Mission was undecided whether to hold a second, follow-up workshop before the strategic plan was completed, so it asked the respondents' advice. Figure 9 shows that 74% of respondents felt the Mission *should* have another workshop. Another 1% was undecided, and 25% voted "No".

Figure 10 shows that those respondents who favored another workshop did so primarily because they wanted to learn about the final version of the RFs. To a lesser degree, they also wanted to help improve the next versions and to continue the teamwork initiated during this workshop.

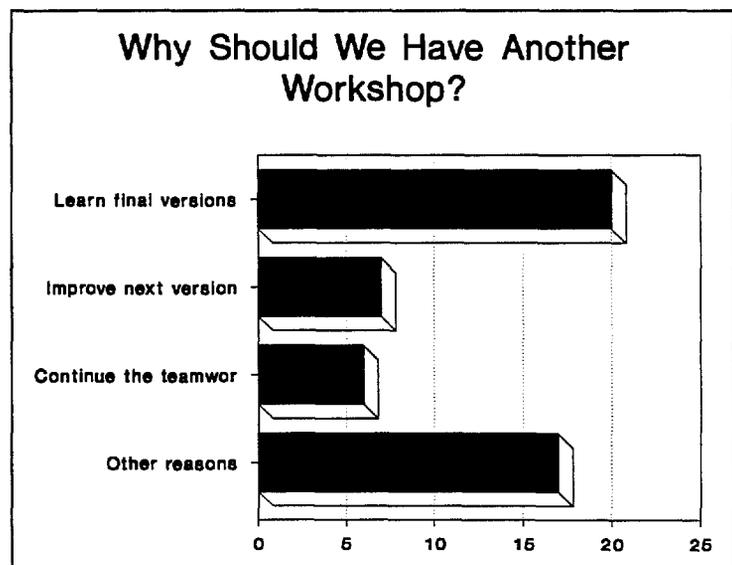


Figure 10

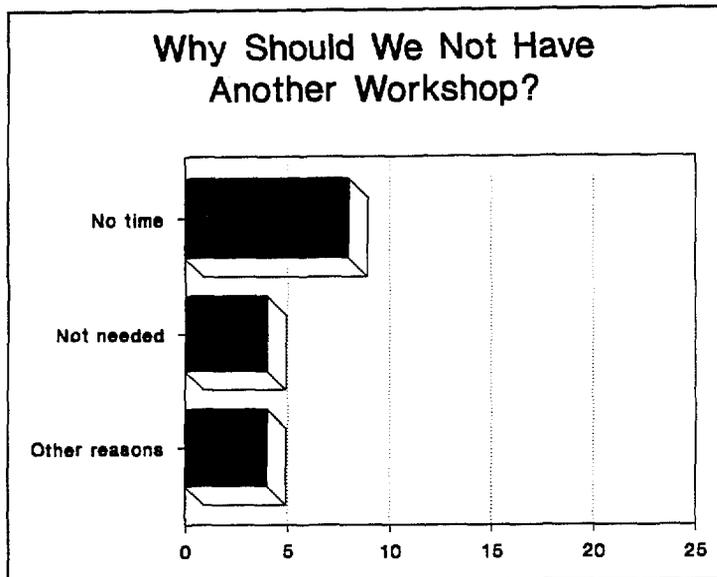


Figure 11

On the other hand, Figure 11 shows that those respondents who did *not* favor another workshop were primarily concerned about the time a second workshop would require. A few other respondents also felt that another workshop was not needed.

## II. RESULTS FRAMEWORKS

### Mission Context:

In preparation for a May submission of a combined Strategic Plan/R4, USAID/El Salvador requested a technical assistance/workshop facilitation team to help refine the RFs for four Strategic Objectives (SOs). The Special Strategic Objective (SSO) dealing with the transition from war to peace, is phasing out and was not included in the technical-assistance scope of work.

The TDY team benefitted greatly from the assistance and guidance of the seven-member mission re-engineering team, three of whom attended the re-engineering Training-of-Trainers course held last summer in Washington. This team has done an excellent job in overseeing the re-engineering process at USAID/El Salvador, and mission staff in general have gone a long way in applying the re-engineering principles in their strategic planning efforts.

### Status of strategic planning:

In addition to the Special Strategic Objective (SSO) dealing with the transition from war to peace, the mission strategy includes four SOs focusing on the following areas: SO Economic Opportunity, "reduced rural poverty in areas of geographic focus" (revised per Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan to “expanded access and economic opportunity for rural families in poverty”); SO Democracy, “more accountable selected government institutions” (revised to “more accountable government institutions”); SO Health, “improvement in maternal and child under 5 health among the poor and socially disadvantaged in under-served areas of El Salvador” (revised to “sustainable improvement in health of women and children”); and SO Environment, “natural resources conserved in specific fragile areas”, (revised to “increased use of environmentally sound practices in selected fragile areas”). (See Attachment B RFs for these SOs. These frameworks should be considered.)

As an introduction to the status of the mission’s strategic planning, a few words on cross-cutting issues are necessary. Faced with the reality of diminishing funding, the mission is considering several cross-cutting themes in an effort to realize the greatest impact from its programs. Among those issues are: Should there be a geographic focus across the entire program? Depending on customer definition, can the same group of customers benefit from the entire strategy? How can donor coordination across SOs, not just within SOs, be maximized to achieve USAID’s objectives? Other cross-cutting issues being considered include human capacity development, decentralization, policy dialogue and the environment. (See Attachment C for a complete list of possible cross-cutting issues under discussion.)

Using the pre- and post-TDY status of SO Economic Opportunity as an example, it is evident how some of the above-mentioned issues affected the mission’s strategic planning. Prior to the Mission-wide workshop at which the cross-cutting issues were discussed, SO Economic Opportunity was stated as “reduced rural poverty.” Based on feedback from workshop participants on the rather ambitious level of the SO, and taking the mission’s proposed plan to focus the overall strategy in specific geographic areas, the SO team amended its objective to state “reduced rural poverty in areas of geographic focus.” (Based on workshop feedback, the SO Economic Opportunity team narrowed the SO statement a second time to “expanded access and economic opportunity for rural families in poverty.”) The other SO teams also narrowed the scope or magnitude of their SO statements. SO Democracy focused its objective from “a government that better represents and protects citizens’ interests” to “more accountable selected government institutions,” while SO Health changed from “sustainable improvement in maternal and child health among poor and socially disadvantaged Salvadorans in underserved areas of El Salvador” to “improvement in maternal and child under 5 health among the poor and socially disadvantaged in underserved areas of El Salvador.” The level of SO Environment changed from “reduction/reversal of natural resources degradation in fragile areas” to “natural resources conserved in specific fragile areas.” (Based on workshop feedback, this was further reduced in scope to “increased used of environmentally sound practices in selected fragile areas.”)

The status of the SO RFs reflects the mission’s adoption of re-engineered strategic planning; each SO framework depicts at least three levels of results and explicitly includes the results of USAID’s development partners in the strategy. It is important to note that the SO teams understand and appreciate the utility of the RF as a management tool as well as a reporting device, and they are refining their frameworks accordingly.

**Performance monitoring and evaluation status:**

An important question still being discussed at the end of the workshop was how to usefully measure the progress of the "proliferation" of results in expanded frameworks. Understandably SO teams were concerned about the time and expense involved in monitoring additional levels of intermediate results and in some cases were wary of taking their frameworks beyond what they consider to be workable levels of detail. SO Environment, for instance, leaned toward including only those key intermediate indicators that would provide the critical management information necessary to conserve specific natural resources. SO Economic Opportunity, on the other hand, debated whether to build a framework that reflects the entire economic theory leading to a reduction in rural poverty.

Regardless of the levels of detail in each framework, SO teams found that the selection of performance indicators also informs the refinement of the frameworks. The subsequent step of finalizing performance monitoring plans, therefore, proceeded as each SO framework was completed.

**Achieving/implementation status:**

Developing results packages (RPs) has followed the finalization of the frameworks.

***III. THE MISSION PROCESS***

**Participation/customer focus:**

As is the case in many missions, USAID/El Salvador struggled with deciding when and to what extent customers and partners should be involved in the planning process. The questions raised are typical and do not lend themselves to easy answers. How can the customer be included at the beginning of the planning process without raising expectations that all their voiced needs/concerns will be met? How does one balance an open planning process with the reality of planning parameters? How does one actually utilize customers as members of SO teams once strategies are agreed upon and approved? How many customers should be included in the process in order to get enough of the right input to help SO teams manage for results? How does an SO team overcome the temptation of actually raising the level of an objective once all the other players are in the game?

Nonetheless, all SO teams created and convened extended teams prior to the Missionwide workshop, and all of them, with the exception of the SSO, incorporated input from the extended teams into their results frameworks. Subsequent to the workshop and prior to the submission of the strategy, a donor/partner workshop was held to present the strategy (RFs) and identify areas for cooperation. Development partners continue to play an active role in all of the teams' decisions. For example, the SSO is planning an extended-team meeting to

review preliminary results from the SO evaluation. The Environment SO will hold an extended-team meeting to present the final RF to outside members.

Perhaps a particular SO Democracy team meeting attended by one of the TDY consultants best illustrates the effects of USAID/El Salvador's attempt to open the planning process to wide participation. Almost 20 team members (mission staff only!) were trying to finalize the most recent draft of their framework to present at the upcoming workshop, when they were reminded by a colleague that they still had to consider feedback they had requested from several of their partners. With several possible versions of the framework already on the table, several team members seemed somewhat demoralized at the prospect of more revisions. The team agreed, however, that it was critical to continue the high level of participation they themselves had encouraged, and they decided to meet yet another time. The subsequent meeting revealed three more frameworks produced by their partners. Undaunted, SO Democracy forged ahead with the process, completing their draft framework in time for the workshop.

#### **Teamwork/empowerment and accountability:**

All SOs, including SSO War-to-Peace, are designed and managed by teams. All SO teams are organized across offices, including representatives from the SDO, the Controller's Office and the Contracts Office. The Economic Opportunity SO, in particular, has members from the Economic Office (ECON), the Productive Resource Office (PRO), the Education Office, SDO, Controllers and Contracts, as well as a shared member with the SSO. This team also hired the first "Strategic Objective employee" last year, who works not for a technical office but for the SO team. (Until the Mission reorganizes itself, this person has two offices and divides her time between the ECON and PRO offices.)

A detailed account of the above-mentioned Mission-wide workshop was presented earlier in this report. It is relevant to note here, however, the extent to which the workshop enhanced the sense of teamwork and empowerment throughout the mission. Before the workshop, which was attended by virtually all mission staff, SO teams were conducting their strategic planning within the SOs and with representatives of different offices. Furthermore, while the workshop did provide an opportunity for enhanced cross-SO interaction, it also provided a forum for the active participation of staff who were not members of SO teams and who had been more or less left out of the process. The workshop was particularly noteworthy in this regard because of the true engagement of the entire Mission, from secretaries to the Mission Director.

During and immediately after the two-day session each team took full advantage of the cross-SO interaction and Mission-wide feedback provided by the workshop. Many useful ideas about such issues as cross-cutting themes, accountability and sectoral integration are reflected in the ongoing revisions of the results frameworks.

As mentioned, the core value of accountability also has been embraced by mission staff, as

evidenced by the practical approach SO teams are taking in determining the level and scope of their objectives.

**Organizational implications:**

The Front Office made a conscious decision to use the strategy as the focus of the re-engineering effort. Soon after the workshop the Mission Director held a Missionwide staff meeting to highlight the many accomplishments the Mission had made to date in re-engineering, discuss Mission reorganization and discuss further plans. Reorganization remains on hold pending approval of the strategic plan. Nonetheless, it was evident to mission staff after the workshop that the great strides made to date in developing their country strategy have, indeed, been made in the true spirit of re-engineering.

(See Attachment D for complete list of mission “next steps.”)

***IV. LESSONS LEARNED***

Because several re-engineering “lessons learned” have been dealt with in the preceding pages, a summary of successes and challenges follows:

- While participation and customer focus go a long way in informing strategic planning, SO teams are still grappling with how and to what extent customers and development partners should be included in the process. The issue of teamwork is certainly not limited to planning, however, and SO teams are seriously considering just how the participatory process will play out when it comes to actually achieving and monitoring the progress of the agreed-upon results.
- Useful strategic planning, re-engineered or otherwise, still relies on a strong methodological approach. By looking closely at such things as sound causal relationships in the development hypothesis, SO teams have done an excellent job in the ongoing refinement of their strategies and RFs.
- The most obvious performance-monitoring issue in the context of re-engineering is the seeming proliferation of indicators inferred by the extended results framework. Although SO teams understand the utility of a sound performance measurement system, there is a real concern that diligently monitoring progress will present an overwhelming and costly challenge to an already busy and fiscally strained staff.
- There was some confusion over results packages. While most staff understood the RP concept as a useful way of organizing personnel, resources, activities, etc., there was a tendency to want to establish the RPs before finalizing the strategies. This seems counter-

intuitive; one might well ask how activities, for instance, can be determined and organized before one knows just which result one intends to achieve.

#### ***V. POSSIBLE AGENCY TRAINING IMPLICATIONS FROM LESSONS LEARNED***

Perhaps the most outstanding implication for the Training Division is the question of how mission staff can optimize team building and teamwork to better manage for results. As pointed out earlier, although USAID/El Salvador is operating as strategic objective teams, more work can be done to build on the interaction and cross-communication begun during the workshop. No doubt the team building/teamwork module the Training Division is developing will benefit USAID/El Salvador as the mission prepares to enter the achieving stage of their re-engineered operations system. Training is a two-way street, however, and the more the Training Division can tailor the delivery of its module to fit mission-particular circumstances, the better USAID/El Salvador and other missions will be served.

A note of caution: Just-in-time training is usually the most effective training. USAID/El Salvador is just one of many missions poised to begin the real work of achieving its objectives. How the Training Division can most effectively meet the challenge of serving so many clients in a timely manner is a critical question.

## ATTACHMENT A

**MISSION WIDE STRATEGY WORKSHOP  
USAID / EL SALVADOR  
FEBRUARY 28 - 29**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28**

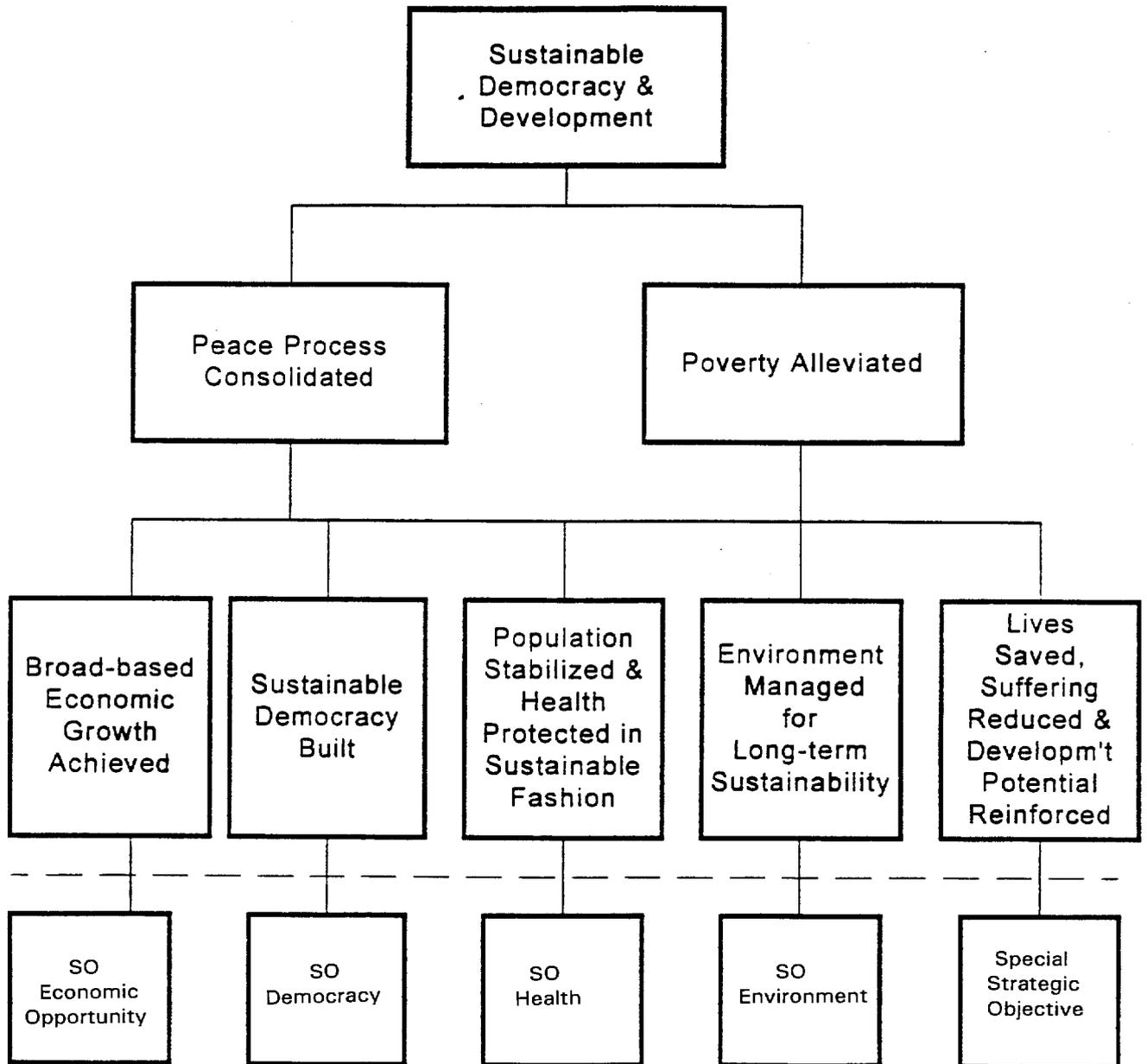
8:00 - 8:15	Coffee & Donuts
8:15 - 8:30	Welcome / Purpose of Workshop Introductions of Facilitators / Visitors (Carl Leonard) Workshop Format / Schedule (Mike Hendricks and Jon Hawley)
8:30 - 9:00	Strategic Objectives' Linkages to Mission's Goal and Foreign Policy Interests (Carl Leonard)
9:00 - 9:30	Agency's Strategic Framework and LAC Bureau Strategy (Erhardt Rupprecht, USAID/W)
9:30 - 9:45	Coffee Break
9:45 - 10:15	Strategic Objective Economic Opportunity Results Framework Presentation (Mary Ott)
10:15 - 11:15	Work Groups / Discussion of RF for SO Economic Opportunity
11:15 - 11:45	Presentation of Work Group's Conclusions (Work Group Representatives)
11:45 - 12:45	Lunch
12:45 - 1:15	Strategic Objective Democracy Results Framework Presentation (Kristin Loken)
1:15 - 2:15	Work Groups / Discussion of RF for SO Democracy
2:15 - 2:30	Coffee Break
2:30 - 3:00	Presentation of Work Group's Conclusions  (Work Group Representatives)
3:00 - 3:30	Special Strategic Objective War-to-Peace Presentation (Tully Cornick)

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29**

8:00 - 8:15	Coffee & Donuts
8:15 - 8:45	Strategic Objective Health Results Framework Presentation (Peter Deinken)
8:45 - 9:45	Work Groups / Discussion of RF for SO Health
9:45 - 10:15	Presentations of Work Groups Conclusions  (Work Group Representatives)
10:15 - 10:30	Coffee Break
10:30 - 11:00	Strategic Objective Environment Results Framework Presentation (Gordon Straub)
11:00 - 12:00	Work Groups / Discussion of RF for SO Environment
12:00 - 12:30	Presentation of Work Groups Conclusions  (Work Group Representatives)
12:30 - 1:15	Lunch
1:15 - 1:30	Introduction to Cross-Cutting Issues (Ken Ellis)
1:30 - 3:00	Plenary Discussion on Cross-Cutting Issues
3:00 - 3:15	Coffee Break
3:15 - 3:45	Next Steps (Carl Leonard)
3:45 - 4:00	Workshop Evaluation (Facilitators)
4:00 - 4:15	Workshop Closing Ceremony (Carl Leonard & TOTS)

**ATTACHMENT B**  
**RESULTS FRAMEWORKS**

**USAID/El Salvador's Strategy Links to**  
**U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives**



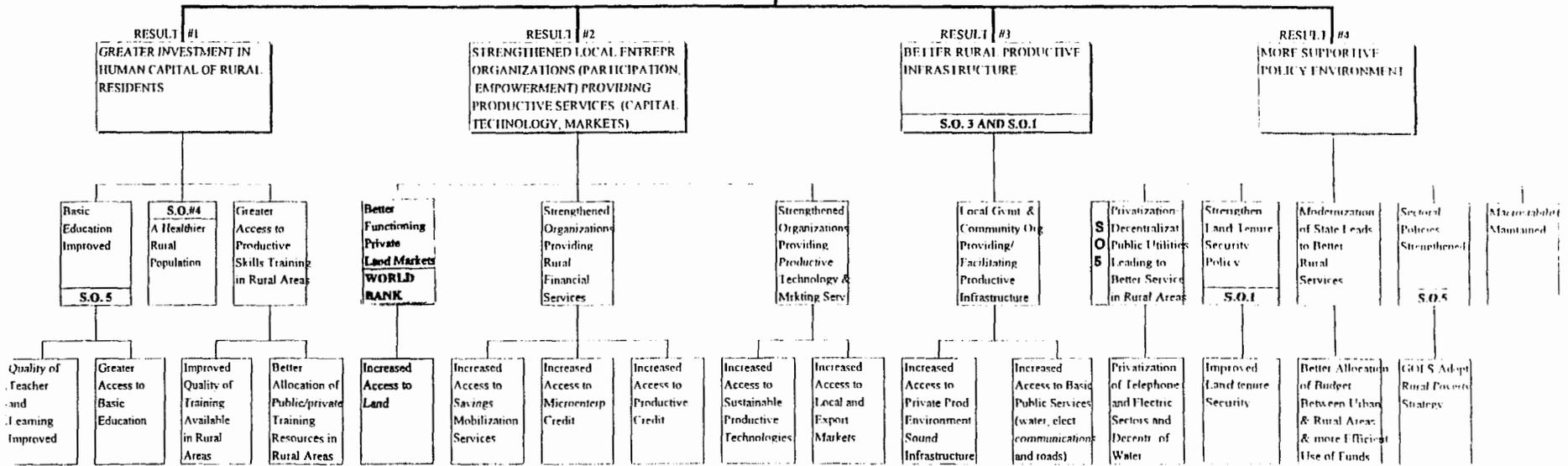
SO Economic Opportunity as of 3/5/96

RESULTS FRAMEWORK  
S.O.No.2

Agency Goal No.1: Broad-based Economic Growth Achieved

Mission Strategic  
Objective No 2

**Reduced Rural Poverty in Areas  
of Geographic Focus**  
Indicators: (disaggregated by gender)  
% Households with basic needs unmet  
% Households in poverty



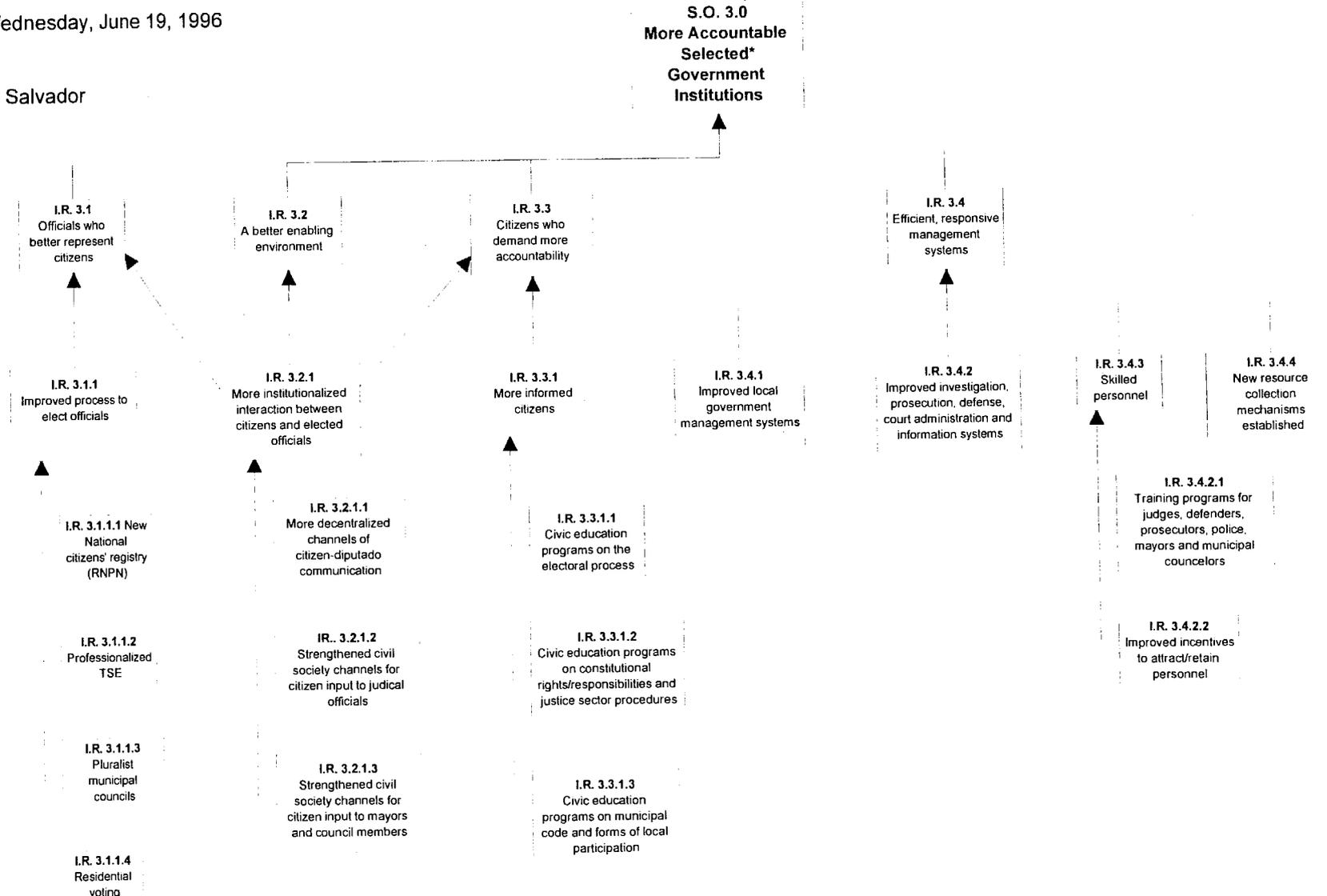
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# SO Democracy as of 3/6/96

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Wednesday, June 19, 1996

El Salvador



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\* Judicial sector institutions (Public Ministry, Ministry of Justice, Courts and Justices of the Peace). = Results Package #1  
 = Results Package #2  
 Local Government institutions, with emphasis on 15 municipalities.  
 Result #1 = Results Package #3

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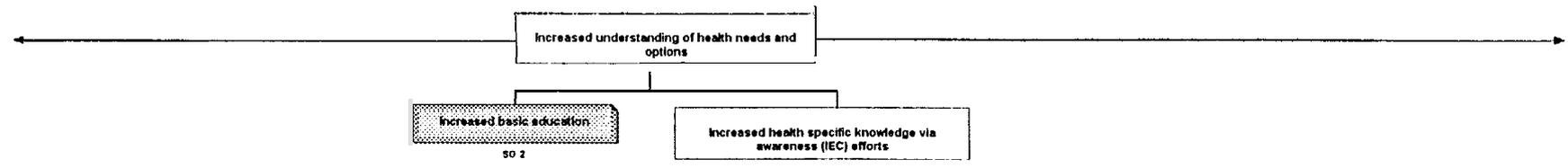
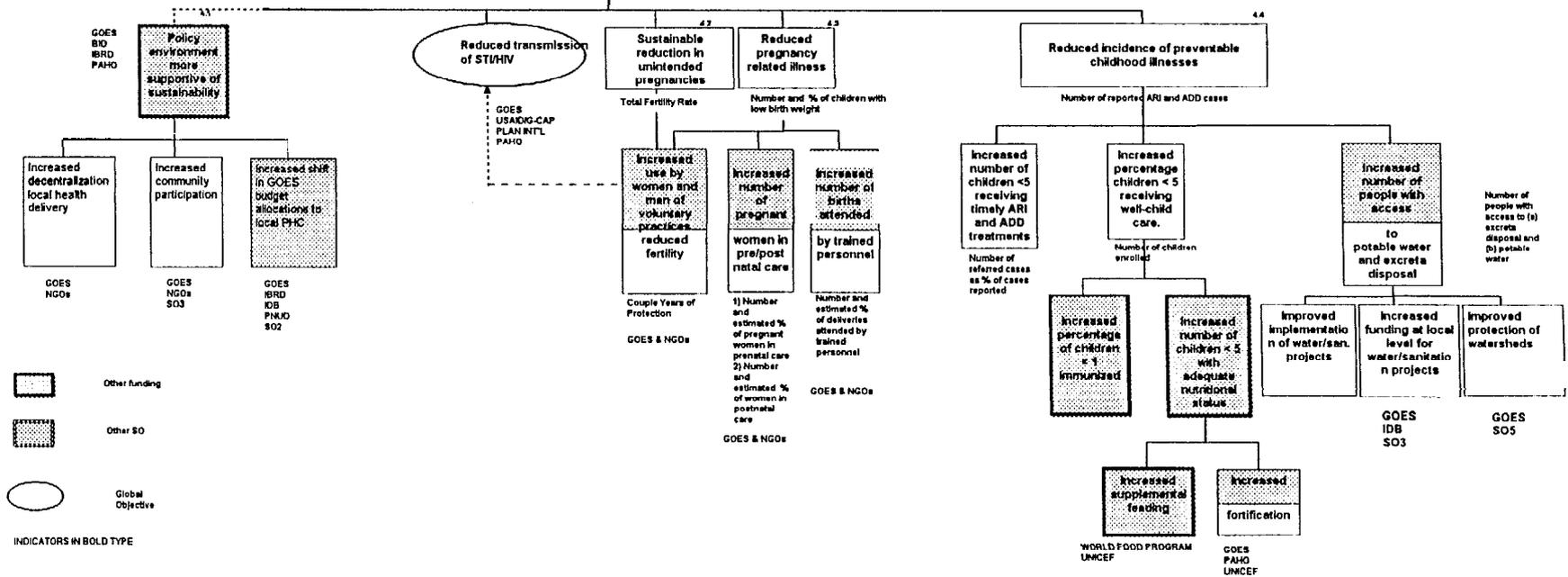
USAID/EL SALVADOR  
OFFICE OF HEALTH AND EDUCATION

SO Health as of 3/5/96

Agency Goal 3:  
World's population stabilized and human health protected in a sustainable fashion

Mission's Strategic Objective 4:  
Improvement in maternal and child under 5 health among the poor and socially disadvantaged in underserved areas of El Salvador

(a) Maternal Mortality  
(b) Infant Mortality

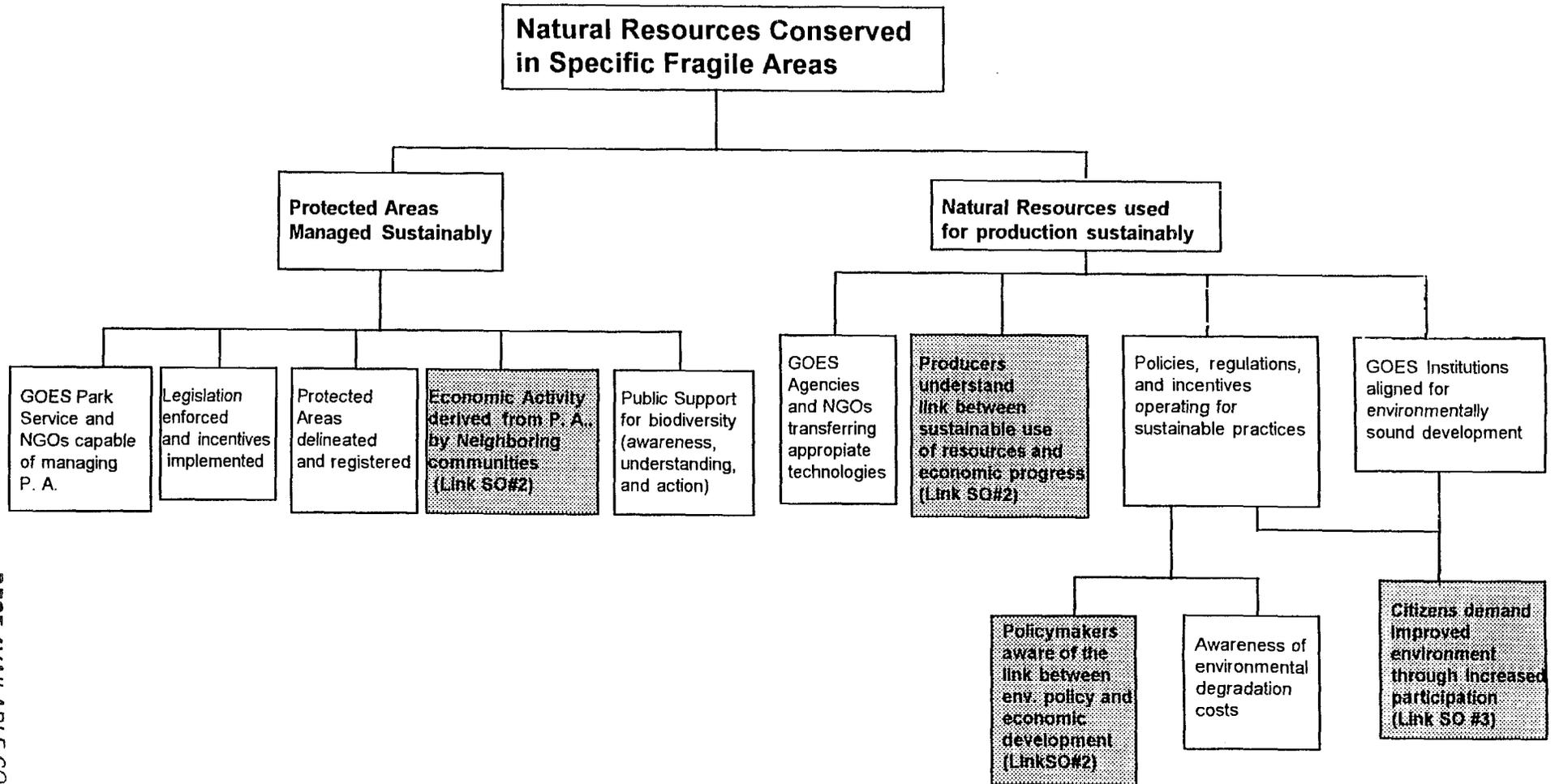


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# Strategic Objective #5

SO Environment as of 3/5/96



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Key Assumptions:

Institutions strengthened to carry out biodiversity research for inventories and monitoring

Population growth stabilized (link SO#4)

Land Tenure Security (World Bank)

■ Link to other SO

○ Other donors

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## ATTACHMENT C

### **Cross-cutting Issues (Presented by Deputy Director)**

- Customer Definition
- Geographic Focus
- Gender
- NGOs
  - partners and intermediate customers
  - importance for sustainability
- Donor Coordination
- Human Capacity Development
  - basic education
  - skills training
- Decentralization
  - devolution of authority
- Policy Dialog
- Environment Issues

### **Cross Cutting Issues (Presented by Workshop Participants)**

- Community Participation
- Sustainability
- Sectoral Integration
- Multiplier Effect
- Windows of Opportunities (activities)
- How Policies Will Be Treated Across SOs
- Do SOs Need Exit Strategy
- Threshold
- Scarce USAID \$\$ Be Shared Across SOs
- Civil Society Means More Than Just NGOs
- Poverty Approach To customer Focus
- Access Roads To Communities
- Host country Coordination
- Relative Emphasis on Public vs Private Sector Solutions

## ATTACHMENT D

### NEXT STEPS

March 5 - 27		New Management System TOT training
March 14	--	Results Frameworks Finalized
	--	Results Packages Identified
	--	Results Package Teams Identified
March 15		Donor/PVO/NGO Workshop
Late March		Mission-wide discussion of Reengineering - First (an afternoon) of a series
April		Portfolio Review
Late April		Final Mission Review of the Strategic Plan
May 10		Strategic Plan shipped to Washington