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GUIDELINES ON RESEARCH

PD-47

The attached Policy Determination, "Guidelines on Strengthening the Innovative and Research Thrust of AID Programs," has been approved by the Administrator as Agency policy. Together with Attachment A --Section VIII of the FY 1974 Development Assistance Planning Guidelines (AIDTO CIRCULAR A-543), a comprehensive statement of A.I.D.'s research objectives and the means of pursuing them is provided.



Thomas M. Arndt
Executive Secretary

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Guidelines on Strengthening the Innovative
and Research Thrust of AID Programs

Policy

The problems of development are changing and many are becoming more acute. In some cases basic knowledge is inadequate, in some technology is inappropriate, and in some institutional and policy frameworks are outdated. These circumstances call for increasing AID focus on innovation and research. The twin aim should be to help LDC's find better answers to their most important development problems while helping them hasten the development of their own capabilities to find such answers

The basic policy guidance for stronger Agency innovation and research are provided in the Administrator's January 24 memorandum on "Reform of the U.S. Economic Assistance Program" and the April 15 Development Assistance Planning Guidance for FY 1974 (AIDTO CIRCULAR A-543). This paper amplifies that guidance.

AID does not seek innovative activities such as research and pilot projects for their own sake. Rather it seeks increased use of such activities as important tools in advancing development purposes. The extent and nature of opportunities to do so will vary greatly among countries and subject fields.

Inter-Relationship of Country, Regional and Interregional Planning

The interrelationship of country, regional, and interregional research programs is important. Interregional activities directed centrally by AID/W are intended to build quality Agency response capabilities to LDC assistance needs in terms of both personnel and knowledge in priority areas. Therefore, central program strategies need to reflect the global pattern of country level and regional concerns -- both current and longer term. At the same time, country and regional (as well as interregional) strategies should endeavor to concentrate activities where the U S. has the strongest actual or potential response capabilities.

Because of the variety of programming and funding formats for the Agency's research activities, central supervision of the total program by the Administrator requires special staff management. The Technical Assistance Bureau will be responsible for keeping the Administrator informed on all research progress and problems,

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whether TAB or other central office-funded (including population research) or regionally or country-funded. TAB also will assemble the composite package which will provide the basis for the Administrator's annual review of the research program, discussed below.

Role of Central Technical Offices

AID's central technical offices should lead in developing the Agency's innovative thrust because such approaches are meant to have world-wide application and use relatively scarce and specialized human resources. It is a complex matter to identify and bring together the best technical and scientific capabilities in appropriate experimental designs to discover and test better ways of doing things in LDC's. A high degree of central management is appropriate for many types of research and innovative activities in order to provide the specialized review and monitoring needed for such activities, to avoid needless duplication and to facilitate interregional transfer of experience. Other aspects, such as pilot testing in the field, usually require central guidance to achieve coordination with related efforts elsewhere. However, the value of interregional activities fostering innovation will depend on the Agency's ability to identify research activities of sufficient importance to the LDC's to encourage their involvement in developing local applications and in contributing to the findings that have multi-country applications.

Country Level Efforts

There are a number of ways in which missions can strengthen the innovative content of AID activities at the country level and the contribution of those activities to global progress toward solving LDC problems. Missions can:

- Support projects, including training, to strengthen the capabilities of promising country institutions to do research on priority country problems, with emphasis on adaptive research, and on encouragement to researchers to relate their efforts closely to operating country programs.
- Support research activities which attack particular country problems, where expert appraisal suggests good cost/return prospects.

- Use of their good offices, and appropriate financial support, to help selected LDC institutions build linkages on high priority LDC problems (involving joint research, technical or training help, and/or information exchange) with international and other national research programs. Individual LDC efforts can be made much more productive by this reinforcement from outside and can, in turn, contribute to the global attack on the major LDC problems.
- Finance projects to test new ways of coping with priority development problems, in so doing, country efforts should be tied to broader research and testing activities in other countries, where this is feasible, so as to gain maximum benefit of experience in designing, guiding and evaluating pilot projects.
- Encourage LDC government financial allocations to support high priority local research activities. Incentive grants may be an appropriate tool for encouraging promising programs.

Networks

The Agency central technical offices are responsible for supporting the build-up of global networks of mutually supporting research, information and technical assistance activities in priority subject areas. Networks are being encouraged to achieve "critical massing" of resources and efforts for breakthroughs on the important LDC problems because

- research can be expensive in the use of scarce talent and money, and the resources needed to achieve significant breakthroughs often exceed by far what individual LDC's or even individual donors can muster,
- knowledge building on common problems can proceed at widely separated locations in mutually reinforcing fashion, if supported by suitable coordination and information exchange;
- the great bulk of research facilities and capabilities exists in the developed countries, especially the U. S., whereas extensive LDC involvement ususally is indispensable for effective work on their problems.

Network building is most advanced in agricultural research but it is being developed in other fields where feasible.

The central technical offices will provide guidance and assistance to Missions in identifying potentially productive country tie-ins to these networks.

Identifying Global Priorities

Priorities for research projects, 211(d) grants and central technical assistance support projects will be developed from statements of what the global priority development problems are within broad sectors and how they relate to other agency activities and to activities of other assistance organizations. These global sector statements will be built from information contained in field submissions as well as from central assessment of future needs. It is expected that a rough first version of these global statements will be completed by December 31, 1972 and that there will be periodic revisions as needed. These statements will be reviewed at the AID/W senior technical and management level and by the Administrator. Meanwhile, the Key Problem Area papers of the Technical Assistance Bureau and similar efforts by other central technical offices provide an interim basis for establishing priorities for interregional projects (as well as for some related regional projects.) Descriptions of Key Problem Area work to date are available to Missions, as are materials on research and development activities and central service contracts in other areas of global program concern. These indicate where the Agency has or is building good response capabilities.

Project Design and Management for Optimum Payoff

Success of research, 211(d) and other innovative project activities depends not only on their addressing priority problems for improving the lives of LDC peoples, but on a number of design and management factors that focus on obtaining maximum useable results. Thus, AID must stress

- initial assessment and periodic review of the relative value of anticipated results and the cost of the research;
- expert assessment of the design, methodology and management of research projects,
- active expansion of the use of research findings and 211 (d) capabilities.

Budgeting for Research and Related Activities

The global sector statements (or key Problem Area analyses until such time as the global sector statements have been worked out) will provide the analytical base for research, 211(d) and other technical assistance budget decisions. Research included in the Regional Bureaus' and PHA's annual program submissions as well as research and related activities included in TAB's program submission will be reviewed as a package during the Administrator's annual program review process and examined for compatibility with global problem priorities.

The annual allocation of central research funds among activity fields should reflect (a) the relative priority of research gaps, taking account of other Agency and non-Agency related activities, (b) the funding requirements for on-going projects and (c) the scope of good research opportunities in each global problem area. The 211(d) allocation will be based on assessment of the most important gaps in U S. capabilities for working in priority problem areas. In all cases the quality of individual project proposals will be a critical factor in determining the success of the Agency's innovative efforts. To allow for adjustment in response to project reviews, the annual pre-allocations among activity fields will be indicative planning estimates only, to indicate desired directions of program emphasis, rather than firm allotments.

Project Review

Research proposals, reflecting the priority noted above, will be submitted by the sponsoring Bureau for review successively by the allottee Bureau (if different from the sponsoring Bureau), the inter-Bureau Research and Institutional Grants Committee (RIGC) and the Agency's external Research Advisory Committee (RAC). The findings and recommendations of these committees will be advisory to the Assistant Administrator of the allottee Bureau, who will decide whether to put the projects forward, together with his recommendation on disposal of any substantial issues raised by RIGC or RAC, for the required approval by the Administrator

This applies to all central or interregionally-funded research, including population research which is funded separately from other central research. This review process applies also to regionally

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or country-funded research activities of sufficient importance or appropriate type to warrant such review. TAB will work with Regional Bureaus in establishing appropriate criteria for this process and will submit such proposed criteria for review by the Administrator.

Issues arising in the project review process and proposed variation from these guidelines may be considered by the Project Approval Committee.

Approved


John A. Hanna
Administrator, A.I.D.

Date:

9-13-72

EXCERPT FROM
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PLANNING GUIDANCE - FY 1974
(AIDTO CIRCULAR A-543, 4/15/72)

"VIII Research, Innovation, and Development

"1. The concept of concentrating on priority problems whose solution is crucial for development also involves greater integration or links between A I D. central research efforts, 211(d) grants, pilot research projects, and operational programs in the field. The guiding principles are as follows

- A I.D has a limited amount of research funds which requires selectivity, and therefore the majority of A I D 's research funds will be concentrated on applied research and on pilot projects integrated with priority development problems. To the maximum extent feasible, research will be conducted in the LDCs and will involve their institutions and personnel so as to relate more effectively to the social and economic setting that surrounds the problem and to create the LDC capacity to carry on the work.
- A.I D.'s research efforts will be concerned with innovative application of technology, sector/sub-sector analytical methodology, and new forms of institutional development and delivery systems as well as innovation in the development process and policy
- Research efforts in the LDCs will be linked, wherever possible, to similar efforts in the U S , in other countries and to international research institutes, e g IRRI and IITA. This will provide a research network linking the LDCs to the developed world, and will provide a "critical mass" of research effort that will help to obtain significant results from the comparatively limited resources the LDCs can apply to research
- more emphasis will be placed on systematic evaluation of A I D - financed research efforts in order to get more pay-out and utilization in developing countries

"2 A clear cut example of the potential beneficial linkage between research and operational programs is A.I D 's effort in the management of tropical soil and water resources. A I D has provided central research and Section 211(d) grants to highly qualified U S universities to conduct some specific research and to expand their response capability in tropical soils and water work. In addition, A I D is participating in a multi-donor effort involving research technicians from both the developed and underdeveloped countries in support of international research institutes

concerned with tropical agriculture and soils in Ibadan, Nigeria (IITA) and in Cali, Colombia (CIAT) Increasing efforts are being made to include economic studies and inputs as well as technical considerations in efforts such as these These A.I D -financed U S and international research efforts in tropical agriculture are increasingly being tied into LDC local research and production programs

"3 We encourage you to build research elements into your development assistance programs and FY 1974 budget submissions We look to Missions to recommend priority problem areas that need additional research efforts to help insure successful implementation of operational programs and LDC research efforts The identification of opportunities to support research and innovative activities at the country level will be more productive if they are tied into emerging regional or international networks involving the U.S and other donors Additional expert resources may also be available for country-specific problems at reduced incremental costs and/or time which, in turn, may have significant regional or worldwide ramifications

"4 Consideration should be given to the special resources of knowledge and people created by the Agency's central programs for research and 211(d) institutional grants. The research program was described in a document entitled "The A.I D Research Program, 1962-71 Project Objectives and Results," distributed on 5/7/71 by AIDTO Circular A-972 A similar publication on 211(d) institutions will be distributed shortly We also seek Mission recommendations with regard to how existing central research and 211(d) grants can be made more relevant to country programs "