PD-AAP-414

ISN 25043

MALI VILLAGE REFORESTATION

PROJECT 625-0937

MID-TERM EVALUATION

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PROJECT EVALUATION SUMMARY (PES) — PART I Symbol (1-44)

1. PROJECT TITLE	2. PROJECT NUMBER	3. MISSION/AID/W OFFICE
Village Reforestation Project	625-0937	Mali

4. EVALUATION NUMBER (Enter the number maintained by the reporting unit e.g., Country or AID/W Administrative Code, Fiscal Year, Serial No. beginning with No. 1 each FY)

☒ REGULAR EVALUATION ☐ SPECIAL EVALUATION

5. KEY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION DATES			6. ESTIMATED PROJECT FUNDING	7. PERIOD COVERED BY EVALUATION
A. First PRO-AG or Equivalent FY 80	B. Final Obligation Expected FY 83	C. Final Input Delivery FY 86	A. Total $ 835,500 B. U.S. $ 655,000	From (month/yr.) Sept, 1980 To (month/yr.) July, 1983 Date of Evaluation Review

8. ACTION DECISIONS APPROVED BY MISSION OR AID/W OFFICE DIRECTOR

A. List decisions and/or unresolved issues; cite those items needing further study. (NOTE: Mission decisions which anticipate AID/W or regional office action should specify type of document, e.g., airgram, SPAR, PIO, which will present detailed request.)	B. NAME OF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTION	C. DATE ACTION TO BE COMPLETED
1. The project will be continued until Sept. 30, 1987		
2. The evaluation calls for a minor re-orientation of project activities which is in accordance with the PP and ProAg and makes some specific recommendations on internal improvement. The specific recommendations (financial, technical, management and sociological) and the redirection will be spelled out in a Project Implementation Letter to be negotiated with the GRM.	Jon Anderson, Project Officer David Wilson Director	Dec. 1983
3. The evaluation calls for inputs of technical assistance. USAID and the GRM will analyze the financial status of the project to ascertain if funds are available. If so a PIO/T will be prepared. If not USAID will approach AID/W on the use of central funds.	Jon Anderson. Project Officer	Dec. 1983
4. The evaluation calls for changes in the financial management system used by the project. Collaboration with the Sahel Regional Financial Management Project 625-0950 is necessary to assist in implementing the changes.	Jon Anderson, Project Officer George Jenkins, CONT	Dec. 1983

9. INVENTORY OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVISED PER ABOVE DECISIONS

- ☐ Project Paper
- ☒ Financial Plan
- ☐ Logical Framework
- ☐ Project Agreement
- ☒ Implementation Plan e.g., CPI Network
- ☐ PIO/T
- ☐ PIO/C
- ☐ PIO/P
- ☒ Other (Specify) Implementation Letter
- ☐ Other (Specify)

10. ALTERNATIVE DECISIONS ON FUTURE OF PROJECT

- A. ☐ Continue Project Without Change
- B. ☐ Change Project Design and/or ☒ Change Implementation Plan
- C. ☐ Discontinue Project

11. PROJECT OFFICER AND HOST COUNTRY OR OTHER RANKING PARTICIPANTS AS APPROPRIATE (Names and Titles)

Jon Anderson, Project Officer
Hamid Ag Mohammed Lamine, Project Director
George C. Tyalor Jr., Team Leader- Djeidi Sylla, Socio
Stanislaw Wellisz, Economist Mohammed Ag Hamaty, Forester
G. Edward Karch, Forester-
~~Gerald Cashion, Evaluation~~

12. Mission/AID/W Office Director Approval

Signature: James M. Cheyler for
Typed Name: David M. Wilson, USAID/Director
Date: 3/5/84

AID 1330-15 (3-78)

13. SUMMARY

The Village Reforestration Project Grant Agreement was signed on September 26, 1980 reflecting USAID and GRM committment to implement a project in the 5th Region to improve the well-being of villagers and to contribute to the rehabilitation of Mali's Renewable Resource base. The purpose of the project is to identify successful and cost-effective processes for achieving reforestation and more efficient use of wood resources at the village level. The current project situation indicates that much has already been accomplished in setting-up the project systems. However, much remains to be done to achieve measurable progress towards project goals and purposes. Systems for supporting village reforestation have been tested in some 30 villages and some 130,000 trees have been produced. Approximately 20 hectares have been planted as woodlots. Survival rates have been approximately 30%. This low rate is in part a result of two years of poor rainfall. The systems are being refined and improved with more emphasis on timely planting and preparation, the use of hardier seedlings of more drought resistent trees, and the use of improved planting and protection techniques. Since the project is experimental, this slow improvement and identification of techniques is encouraging.

The project has had despite its size, significant policy impact. A condition precedent was negotiated which prohibited funding by project forestry agents in project areas during the life of the project. This was done to encourage the transition from a repressive forestry service to one with significant extension and production responsibilities. Although not all issues are resolved this has led to national level re-thinking of repressive policies. Additional policy dialogue has taken place on forestry economics, the role of social forestry and on certain management techniques.

Two planned project activities have lagged behind.. First, few rural forestry interventions other than woodlots have been attempted, mainly because of the lack of information and familiarity of project personnel as well as villagers with other possibilities and the difficulty of quantifying and measuring results. These other activities have been executed. Some of those tried look promising. Second, the promotion of more efficient use of wood resources has moved at a slow pace. This is due to the great deal of controversy surrounding woodstove models and to the techniques for extending the technology. The few stoves that have been installed may in fact be less efficient than traditional techniques.

Prospects for achieving project purpose appear to be very good in relation to reforestation but less promising in terms of woodstoves unless a socially acceptable and efficient model is developed and field tested. Prospects for achieving project goals are much more difficult to measure -- especially in an experimental project -- but good chances exist for the direct beneficiaries to increase their well-being, given less project emphasis on woodlots and more on agroforestry and other interventions. The evaluation team has noted a change in villager attitude which may be the most significant accomplishment to date.

Overall progress has been hampered by particular problems. These include lack of personnel trained and experienced in reforestation, lack of trained

financial management personnel, lack of technical assistance (prohibited by AID guidelines), inadequate rainfall, and lack of communication within the project and with other development organizations. All these problems are being addressed and most are well on there way to resolution.

14. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A mid-term evaluation was called for in the Project Paper as a means to measure progress towards achieving project purposes and outputs. However, the evaluation was greatly expanded in order to verify program and project hypotheses that forestry should play a larger role in development activities and as a means for improving and reorienting project implementation.

The Mission and the GRM agreed to recruit a joint team of five experts for a period of four weeks. To ensure objectivity an attempt was made to recruit outside of AID and the GRM Forestry Service. The team leader, economist and one forester were recruited from a private American firm and the Malian sociologist was recruited from a local firm. The Malian forestor was detached by the Forestry Service since qualified Malian forestors are not available from the private sector.

During an initial stage the team reviewed project related documentation supplied by AID and the Forestry Service and met with USAID and GRM officials. The second stage of the evaluation took the form of field work which included a) visits to project sites; b) interviews with villagers, c) investigation of interventions executed, planned or refused by villages; d) discussions with local authorities and project personnel and (e) review sessions where tentative observations, recommendation or critiques were aired to allow project personnel to respond. The final stage of the evaluation was report writing and presentation of conclusions verbally to the GRM and USAID.

15. EXTERNAL FACTORS.

Most project assumptions have held -- with the notable exception of adequate rainfall. In general GRM support for the project has been very good; policy direction, budgeting support and coordination has been adequate; project personnel have the basic technical skills to carry-out the project; Peace Corps Volunteers have been well-utilized; villagers are receptive to project activities.

Assumptions on water and land availability and the socio-economic uniformity of project setting are questionable but the project is progressing nonetheless.

16. INPUTS

Inputs have been on target; there have been no major delays in procurement of commodities, the training of project personnel or the availability of operating expense funds. No technical assistance (aside from Peace Corps) was planned. The project has progressed without this

input but the evaluation states it is desirable, if funds can be found, to provide short-term technical assistance of an experienced forester. This would probably increase the quality and diversity of outputs given the inexperience of project personnel.

It should be noted that a change in the commidity inputs planned in the project paper, from motor pumps to locally manufactured hand pumps, resulted in substantial savings to the project in terms of investment and recurrent costs. These pumps have been functioning well for two years.

17. OUTPUTS

Village woodlots, demonstration plots, experimental plots, nurseries, information systems, systems for village reforestation and improved technical capabilities of villagers and project personnel are outputs thus far achieved. As stated above the woodstove and rural forestry interventions have lagged behind for various reasons.

18. PURPOSE

Since this is a mid-term evaluation one cannot expect to find that the project purpose has been achieved. The project purpose is "to identify successful and cost effective processes for achieving reforestation and more efficient use of wood resources at the village level in Mali's Fifth Region." End of project status statements and progress towards achieving them are as follow:

a) "Methods or procedures for identifying villages and villagers who are capable of and interested in participating in woodlot development being successfully employed."

   Such methods have been developed in the form of village profiles, and surveys used by extension teams. They are being refined and are useful in identifying physical capabilities (land, water, labor) but naturally less exact when it comes to predicating villager's interest and ability to participate. The procedures have lead to increased project efficiency since some villages have been eliminated.

b) "Methods for introducing reforestation and technology for more efficient use of wood resources at the village level being successfully employed."

   Such methods have been developed and are in the process of refinement. Extension efforts include village meetings, slide shows, demonstrations, training and follow-up. These methods have been almost solely used for woodlots and will have to be refined to deal with rural forestry interventions. Reforestation is taking place. Methods for woodstove (technology) introduction have not been developed mainly because the available technology has not yet been proven to be appropriate and extendable.

c) "Methods for achieving sustained motivation of villages/villagers being successfully employed." The key to this EOPS is simple; villages will stay motivated if they are benefitting from the intervention. Thus far in the project villager motivation has been high not only because of extension methods used but because villagers independently realize the potential benefits of reforestation.

d) "Technology that is more efficient in the use of wood resources used at the village level." This EOPS is unlikely to be met because present woodstove models have been proven to be less efficient than traditional methods. The EOPS will be meet only if new prototypes are developed and tested which give much higher efficiencies and are cheap and easy to build. This is unlikely to occur on a large scale before the end of the project.

e) "Woodlots protection methods acceptable to villages/villagers being employed." This EOPS will be achieved quite easily; villagers use traditional and effective means of protection and have been applying them to the project woodlots. The project has not had to introduce new forms of protection. In cases where village committment is high, traditional protection (guards, thoms, millet stalks, fines, etc.) can be very effective. The project's input has been to show villages that protection is essential for the woodlots and to work with villagers to chose the best of traditional methods for a particular woodlot.

f) "Species acceptable to villages/villagers in terms of cost of planting, maintaining and harvesting requirements." The project has tried to be responsive to village's expressed felt needs about species to be used. However, project personnel are unfamiliar with some of the species requested and it will take time to master the nursery techniques. Genrally not enough has been done on species diversity but villagers have so far found the species suggested and planted to be acceptable. The desire of the villagers often coincide with the capacity of the project. As a result of the evaluation more work is planned on species selection and production.

19. GOAL/SUBGOAL

The goal of the project is "to improve the well-being of villagers". The subgoal is "to contribute to the rehabilitation of Mali's renewable resource base". In general project purpose seems adequate for hypothesized impact and to the extent that purpose is being achieved the goal and subgoal are being effected. However, since the project is still relatively, new precise evidence is difficult to provide. In addition the rural forestry interventions which may have the most influence on agricultural productivity and food production have lagged and have not thus far realized their potential impact on the goal and subgoal. It is too early to measure positive economic, environmental, and social effects on the populations of affected villages. As stated in the evaluation, woodlots per se, unless carefully designed and implemented may be uneconomical and socially unacceptable from the villager

viewpoint. For this reason the project will be stressing the rural forestry intervention in the future. Two impacts should be mentioned here. First, the project has convinced villagers that they can successfully plant and nurture trees. Thus, villagers understand that rehabilitation of the natural environment is within their grasp and that it is desirable. Second, the trees that have been planted have and will increase the well-being of villagers to a certain extent, and upon their maturity will leand to a decrease in harmful pressure on the renewable natural resource base. The effect of tree planting on the project goal will increase as project systems' efficiency increases.

20. BENEFICIARIES

So far the main beneficiaries of the project have been the laborers hired to work in the nurseries and the sedentary farmers of the 30 some villages already reached by the project. Since most of the activities have been woodlots the benefits have been mostly the non-negligable elements of beauty and shade. When those woodlots mature more concrete benefits such as medicines, forage, building materials, and firewood will accrue. When the rural forestry interventions increase benefits such as protection and augmentation of agricultural production, production of forage, protection of the environment and other benefits will increase. Villagers in this region now, as a direct result of the project, have access to goods and services that they did not have before the project started. Great potential exists for decentralizing these systems further and making them self-financing.

21. UNPLANNED EFFECTS

The project has not had any unplanned negative effects in a major sense. The project has tried to work within the existing social structure, has probably positively benefited villagers in the areas of health, environment and their technical capabilities. The evaluation has pointed out, however, that the woodlot component (as opposed to other forestry interventions) might not be in some villages' economic best interest. Thus, this component is being de-emphasized and this analysis has led to project reorientation. In addition the slow adoption of the woodstove technology was unforeseen but perhaps advantageous to the extent that this technology is not yet developed enough for extension

22. LESSONS LEARNED

The following lessons may have been learned as a result of this project.

a) Collaboration during project design has lead to greater committment of the GRM to this project since it is seen as a Malian rather than an American project. Host country committment is of course essential to project success.

b) Small projects can have significant impact on policy dialogue.

c) Small projects can be used as a testing ground and learning experience without large investments. They can serve almost as a pilot phase where lessons are learned for larger investments in the same sector.

d) Experimental projects in particular should be within easy access of the supervising agencies.

e) Working through line ministries which are well-established and technically capable has significant advantages over creating new semi-autonomous organizations.

f) Projects can be successful without massive inputs of technical assistance, commodities, or construction provided they are well designed to local realities.

g) Collaboration during project implementation has lead to a certain amount of flexiability in the project and the ability to discuss and reorient the project as it progresses.

h) Woodlots, from an economic and social standpoint, are probably not the most efficient means to increase fuelwood and complement food production. More emphasis is needed to integrate forestry into the major crops and livestock production systems.

i) Forestry agents are prepared to be more active in extension rather than repression if the right incentives are provided.

j) Evaluation criteria or production quotas imposed by donors or governments may have a negative effect on the project. In this instance project personnel perceived that they would be judged on how many hectares they planted and thus emphasized one hectare woodlots. A better evaluation criteria would have been the number of surviving trees planted. This of course is more difficult for donor and government agencies to measure but must be accepted.

k) Forestry projects in particular require long-term committment of the donor and government. These projects are often slow to show benefits and all parties must be prepared to be patient.

l) Evaluations are more meaningful and carry more weight if they are jointly conducted. Care should be exercised in the competitive selection of evaluors both expatriate and host-country. Evaluators must debrief project personnel before the end of the evaluation to allow project personnel to provide additional explanations to critiques that the evaluators have.

m) All project personnel should have copies of all project documentation in a language they understand.

This evaluation has outlined the potential for follow-on activities. The Mission expects to design a new project from lessons learned which will address policy, organizational and research issues at the national level as well as information needs, natural resources management, and other complementary and comprehensive activities at the regional level.

The evaluation methodology was adequate. Good planning with comprehensive, agreed-upon scopes of work, full participation by qualified host-country experts, and open discussion are keys to good evaluations.

23. SPECIAL COMMENTS OR REMARKS

Attachments to this PES are (a) the evaluation Scope of Work, (b) the evaluation report, (c) the Forestry Services comments and (d) USAID comments.

The evaluation team was as follows:

George C. Taylor, Jr., Team Leader
Stanislaw Wellisc, Economist
George Karch, Forester
Mohamed Ag Hamaty, Forester
Djeidi Sylla, Sociologist
The project officer, Jon Anderson
The design/evaluation officer is Gerald Cashion

Part II : EVALUATION SUMMARY FOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Project: Village Reforestation (625-0937)

Mission: AID/Bamako

Date : January 9, 1984

I. What Constraints does this Project Attempt to Overcome?

The project attempts to address the lack of cost-effective technical packages for achieving reforestation, more efficient use of wood resources, and village-level autonomy in natural resource management.

II. What Technology does the Project Promote to Relieve this Constraint?

The project supports the creation of a tree nursery and extension service infrastructure to provide goods (seedlings) and services (technical advice) to promote village executed and managed reforestation and woodstove activities.

III. What Technology does the Projects Attempt to Replace?

Outside of the technique of selective protection of naturally germinating species few technologies existed in the project area for increasing forest capital and encouraging environmental rehabilitation. The woodstove activity is based on the improvement of existing three-stone cooking technologies.

IV. Why do Project Planners Believe that Intended Beneficiaries will Adapt the Proposed Technology?

As fuelwood and forest product supplies diminish and as agriculture productivity becomes more unsure, rural populations are becoming progressively convinced of the value of reforestation and natural resource management. Although some incentive is negative, i.e. the desire to appease the forestry service, there is evidence that some rural forestry interventions (other than village woodlots) provide significant return on investment either directly or indirectly through increasing or stablizing agricultural production. The project techniques are lower cost and more appropriate to village skills than alternatives such as imported fertilizers or fuels or irrigation infrastructure.

V. What Characteristics do Intended Beneficiaries Exhibit that have Relevance to their Adopting the Proposed Technologies?

Although the target populations are not functionally literate nor do they practice the same socio-professional occupations, they share a dependence on the diminishing resource base, a sensitivity and awareness of the need to efficiently manage resources and, despite a largely subsistence production system, the desire and ability to invest land, labor, and water in activities that promise a return.

VI. What Adoption Rate has this Project or Previous Projects Achieved in Transferring the Proposed Technology?

Adoption rates are difficult to estimate at this point in this experimental project. However, it is clear that villagers communally continue to care for trees and that certain individuals have shown great initiative in planting wind-breaks and living fences. Since not all the problems in the technical package and its delivery heve been solved and since forestry projects have long gestation periods, a comprehensive study of adoption rates will have to wait another two years.

VII. Will the Project Set in motion Forces that will Induce further Exploration of the Constraint and Improvements to the Technological Package Proposed to Overcome it?

One of the purposes of this pilot project is to induce further exploration of the constraint and techniques. This is happening both at the level of the Forestry Service and at the village level. The Forestry Service is considering policy changes, more efficient use of its resources, and new techniques such as natural forest management. At the village level individuals are trying out new techniques and continue to propose new problems for the project to address. The project is being used as a model by the GRM and so continuation, spread-effect, and committment seem fairly well assured.

VIII. Do Private Input Suppliers have an Incentive to Examine the Constraint addressed by the Project and Come up with Solutions?

Although there is a limited market for goods there is little market or incentive for private suppliers to provide technical advice. Private input suppliers have started to develop tree nurseries for the provision of plants. At this point, however, they can compete only because the project cannot produce enough trees to satisfy demand, not on the basis of competitive pricing. When the project developes systems for the scale of seedlings, additional incentives will exist for private suppliers. The government forestry service is open to the establishment of private nurseries.

IX. What Delivery System does the Project Employ to Transfer the New Technology to Intended Beneficiaries?

The project works through the well-established Forestry Service structure. The delivery system has two main parts -- the nursery infrastructure for the production of seedlings and the extension system consisting of a team of one forester, one PCV and one Community Development Agent. The project has provided extension training and technical assistance (mainly Peace Corps Volunteers) to address the traditionally weak extension orientation of forestry agents. In turn the extension agents and foresters train villagers in reforestation and woodstove techniques. The extension system uses a village profit procedure to identify constraints and resources (such as people) to ensure project efficiency. So far, the joint extension teams provide both goods and services on a regular basis.

X. What Training Techniques does the Project use to Develop the Delivery System?

The project has taken advantage of several in-country training programs to train project personnel. These programs, sponsored by the National Forestry Service, have included technical training, mainly nursery techniques, and extension training. The training of villagers is done through discussion groups, slide shows, visits to demonstration plots, and hands-on technical training at the start of and during the growing season.

Part IV : THE FORESTRY SERVICE'S COMMENTS (UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION)

Subject: Intermediate Evaluation Mission
of the Village Reforestation Project
MALI-AIP at Mopti and Bandiagara

1. First of all, I would like to emphasize that I have greatly appreciated the quality of work carried out by the Mission and the way the Malian party has been closely associated with the Mission.

2. Concerning the Administrative and Institutional Evaluation, I believe that all the personnel working on the project were probably not well and sufficiently informed and made aware (of necessary procedures) due to lack of prior training. I also believe it necessary to strengthen the Project administrative team by appointing a technical assistant to the Director General, in the absence of the Volunteer Advisor which the Peace Corps has not provided. It is not necessary to train this technical assistant in Upper Volta: he can follow a training course within the Extension Animation Unit at the "Eaux et Forêts" Regional Direction at Sikasso and then do the Region Forestry seminars by the end of the year.

The personnel is sufficient in number at the level of the "Cantonnements"; however, the one responsible for the nursery must be quite capable of following the trial component.

3. Financial Management

The Financial management system established by the "Direction Nationale des Eaux et Forêts" and the USAID must not be questioned; its role is to assure a sound control of expenses. If some delays have been noted at the start of the project, this was due on the one hand to the fact that some procurement of material could not be carried out in Mopti and on the other hand to successive modifications of the accounting system imposed by the USAID. These modifications required the training of the Project accountant. At present all expenses are executed locally on the project special bank account in Mopti which is always replenished in accordance with requests for funds by the project direction. It is not therefore necessary to install a project commercial agent in Bamako.

4. Overall Plan and Implementation Plans

It seems to me indispensable to draw up an overall project plan for the period which remains (1983-1987) so as to better guide the implementation of the Project by specifying its objectives. By the same token, the design of annual implementation plans and their breaking up into quartely technical and financial implementation plans will facilitate by far the implementation and monitoring of the project. The Direction of the Project must undertake this task immediately.

5. Economic and Financial Evaluation.

The mission has attempted to evaluate economic and social profitability of village reforestation and has come to the conclusion that the woodlot was to be rejected. We have been convinced for a long time that the fire wood trees are not profitable in the economists' view but are indeed profitable in the ecologists' view. It appears that forestry economists are not yet capable of taking into account all the components in the calculation of reforestation profitability and use simple hypotheses that falsify the results. Nonetheless, I believe that the village woodlot method is not actually the most adequate in areas where there is a lack of land, but it must not be completely proscribed.

6. The poor keeping of analytical accounting documents is due to-- I must re-emphasize-- the slow progress of the training course in data collection held in Mopti in December 1981. I strongly wish a new training course could be organized this year on the basis of elements provided by the evaluation document in terms of information and control systems (Chapter 3.7.). By the same token, we fully agree on the necessity to place an accounting agent in the project direction.

However, I believe that the project economist was not able to use -- for lack of time -- all the information contained in the financial and acounting documents kept in Mopti as well as in Bandiagara.

7. The sociological evaluation fully confirms the BECIS prior sociological investigation data and all the recommendations made are retained. This demonstrates the evidence of an imperative need for training for which the Project has not yet fulfilled its committments.

8. Technical evaluation:

Changes in personnel: I fully agree, as stated above, to strengthening the team at the regional level with a technical assistant (engineer) to the (regional) Director (and an accountant), but I believe it unnecessary to strengthen it at the level of "cantonnements". In addition, it is obvious that labor costs must be reduced at the nurseries'level and stabilized at 5 laborers and 1 watchman per nursery. This will be done by the end of the current campaign.

9. I am in favor of the development of local species, particularly those with the great forage and production value. But this must not exclude the introduction and development of exotic species --- such as Neem, Gmelina, Leucaena --- especially apt to rapidly produce firewood , forage, shade, and soils protection cover. Finally, the Eucalyptus must be planted wherever appropriate considering its aptitudes, production, and the village demand but there is no need for supplying and using insecticide.

10. I agree with the evaluation mission to give a new orientation to the experimentation to define the agrosylvicolous reforestation techniques.

11. Taking into consideration the constraints expressed about woodlots, I believe they should no longer have priority, but they may be proposed wherever their implementation is possible.

12. Improved woodstoves: The mission was not able to fully inquire about the research and dissemination progress of improved woodstove technology in Mali. It is the first generation of improved woodstoves that aims at introducing the notion of woodstoves and all subsequent consequences this leads to in households rather than an actual saving of firewood. The second generation of woodstoves of better performance will be introduced later on. I therefore think that it is necessary to send a permanent specialist (at this time).

13. Village nurseries: This idea is not new to Eaux et Forets which has turned out (a number of) documents on it. But it seems premature to envision a plant trade in spalings organized by the project. Such trade will start spontaneously if it appears needed.

14. In conclusion, the present delays and insufficiencies are not mainly due to reasons suggested by the Mission but to both parties' insufficient information and inadequate project implementation training (at the start of the project). I therefore recommend the organization of an information and training seminar before the end of this year in which the representatives of rural development and administrative services and political regional and local officials can participate.

V. ACTION MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR

FROM: VILLAGE REFORESTATION PROJECT COMMITTEE

625-0937.9A

SUBJ: MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE VILLAGE REFORESTATION PROJECT

REF: COMPLETED EVALUATION REPORT JULY 1983

I. PROBLEM

Your approval of the Project Committee's review and commentary on subject evaluation report's "General Conclusions and Recommendations" is required. If granted, approval will constitute the adoption of official Mission policy reflecting the Project Committee's position and official acceptance of the evaluation.

II. DISCUSSION

A. Mission Observations. The Project Committee has analyzed the final report and found it to be generally well done. The major recommendations from the evaluation are accepted by the Mission with the following observations:

(i) General Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The Mission accepts the recommendation that the project continue and notes that Project Assistance Completion Date (PACD) has already been extended until September 1987.

2. The Mission agrees that collective woodlots should be de-emphasized but not totally phased out. Other interventions, as suggested in the Evaluation, should form the focus of project activity.

3. A. The Mission believes that certain U.S. approved pesticides can be justified for limited use at the nursery sites in order to assure good quality seedlings. Use of pesticides at the village-level and by villagers should be avoided.

3. B. Eucalyptus has not yet been produced in any quantity by the project and the project should not enter into its production. However, if Operation d'Amenagement et Production Foresterie (OAPF) wishes to continue to support eucalyptus production in project nurseries for special purposes, this should be accepted on a space available basis. If OAPF cannot distribute the plants the project will be free to distribute them to satisfy demand.

4. Mission believes that the recommendation to initiate sales of trees is valid in itself in order to offset recurrent operating costs, but is a non-sequitor following the observation that nursery management is poor. The Mission disagrees with the conclusion that there is a lack of motivation and initiative at all levels of the project, since this directly contradicts USAID experience indicating that some of the project personnel are very motivated and committed.

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5. As a general recommendation the Mission agrees that private or decentralized village nurseries be initiated for several reasons including the reduction of cost per tree.

6. The Mission believes that the recommendation to plant and care for specially trained and pollarded trees is interesting but of lower priority and could result in a diversion of energies from other more basic activities. It therefore rejects this recommendation.

7. The Mission concurs with the recommendation that fruit trees be included among species available to villagers and notes that this overlaps with the second general recommendation.

8. The Mission accepts the recommendation that further extension of stove activities be deferred until a highly qualified stove design and extension specialist is assigned to the project. The Mission adds that further extension should also await results of field testing of a second generation of stoves that is now underway.

9. The Mission agrees with the recommendation on the need for additional training for project personnel but notes that project funds for training are severely limited.

10. The Mission concurs that technical assistance is desirable but notes that the Accelerated Impact Program criteria precludes the provision of technical assistance. However, since the project has benefitted from bilateral funding and since there appears to be some funding flexibility in Contingencies and Training line-items, the Forestry Service and USAID will explore the possibility of short-term technical assistance.

11. The Mission agrees that a Technical Assistant be assigned by the Forestry Service to the project. The Mission notes that a Technical Assistant already works at the regional direction. Hence the recommendation might be fulfilled by officially assigning the Assistant the scope of work as defined in the evaluation.

12. The Mission concurs in the recommendation that a system of work schedules be established. This system should include the Regional Office as well and effect better overall project planning and management.

13. The Mission accepts the recommendation that an analytical accounting system be established, that a professional accountant must be assigned to Mopti, and that the Project accounting be concentrated at the regional level. The Mission notes that the Forestry Service is in the process of recruiting a professional civil service accountant for Mopti.

III. RECOMMENDATION

That you concur with the Project Committee's review of the General Conclusions and Recommendations, approve its position as official Mission policy toward the project, and formally accept the final evaluation report on behalf of USAID/Bamako.

Approved _____

Disapproved _____

Date 15 XI 83

Drafted by: G. Cashion, DEC
J. Anderson, GDO
11/4/83

Clearances: J. Ford, GDO (draft)
R. Day, PROG (draft)
G. Jenkins, CONT (draft)
B. Rhinehart, MGMT (draft)

Copy to: Louise Werlin, AFR/SWA
Paul Holmes, AFR/PD/SWAP
PDRI/PDD, REDSO/WCA
Tom Catterson, AFR/TR/SDP
Henry Miles, AFP/DP/PPEA

products such as food, fiber and firewood, and by encouraging locally autonomous environmental management. In its long-term strategy USAID has proposed increased investments in the forestry sector with emphasis on increasing the Forestry Service institutional capacity, implementing activities as a complement to on-going USAID agricultural projects in the First and Second Regions and expanding activities in the Fifth Region, and supplying policy and research support to the GRM.

II. OBJECTIVES

The Mission and the GRM have identified four objectives to be achieved by the evaluation effort. These are:

A. An assessment of progress of project implementation vis-à-vis progress foreseen in the Project Paper.

B. An assessment of the current feasibility of the project as it was originally conceived.

C. An assessment of the feasibility of an expanded project based upon lessons learned from the Village Reforestation project and other forestry interventions in Mali.

D. Formulation of the necessary analyses - technical, institutional, social, financial, economic, and environmental - for a potential expanded project.

The evaluation and analytical effort will thus be divided into two phases. This first phase will focus on an evaluation of the Village Reforestation project. The second phase will concentrate on an investigation of the feasibility of a larger project and will generate the several individual analyses that will constitute the core of a new project paper.

Part VI : MALI VILLAGE REFORESTATION PROJECT (625-0937)
SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE MID-TERM EVALUATION.
BAMAKO 1263 OF MARCH 1, 1983.

I. BACKGROUND

USAID/Mali and the GRM Ministry of Rural Development's Forestry Service are seeking assistance to conduct an objective evaluation of subject project.

The goal of the project is to contribute to the rehabilitation of Mali's renewable resource base and thereby improve the well-being of the rural population. The project has a dual purpose: first, to identify successful and cost effective means for achieving reforestation and a more efficient use of wood resources by and with the full participation of the rural population at the village level; and second, to encourage locally autonomous and responsible environmental management at the village level.

The project strategy includes the development of a support system with three elements: first, the creation of a tree nursery infrastructure; second, the strengthening of the Forestry Service's extension capabilities; and third, the implementation of demonstration, experimentation and data collection activities.

The Project Agreement was signed in 1980 but funding did not become available until May of 1981. The rainy season of 1982 (July-October) represents the first year of full project implementation. The project sites in general received about 50% of "normal" rainfall in 1982.

USAID is convinced that forestry intervention can play a large role in Malian development by helping to sustain and perhaps increase agricultural production, by increasing the supply of economically important forest

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III. ISSUES

The African Bureau, the Mission, and the GRM will ask the evaluators to focus on a number of important issues:

A. Technical and Social

1. An identification of those constraints which project activities seek to overcome or minimize.
2. Identification of the technology intended to address the constraints and what it will replace.
3. Feasibility of suggested technology and acceptance by beneficiaries.
4. Reasons why beneficiaries can be expected to accept new technology.
5. Experience with similar technology elsewhere, including adoption or rejection rates.
6. Extension system which might be able to efficiently introduce the technology.
7. Impact of the technology on women.

B. Institutional

1. Policies and procedures which will affect implementation.
2. Management performance
3. Financial accountability.

C. Economic

1. Recurrent Costs
2. Means by which such costs may be minimized or covered by service fees, sales, receipts, etc.
3. The potential for private sector involvement in project activities.

These and other issues are incorporated and made more explicit in the Scope of Work. The evaluation team must concentrate on such issues when

rendering judgement on the feasibility of increasing the project in scope and geographical coverage.

IV. DETAILED SCOPE OF WORK

A. Phase I - Village Reforestation Project Evaluation

1. Administrative, Managerial, and Institutional Capacity. The evaluation team will assess:

   a. the extent to which project objectives are clearly defined and understood by GRM forestry personnel;

   b. the institutional structure of the project in relation to efficient decision-making implementation procedures and the achievement of project goals;

   c. GRM project administration and management performance;

   d. USAID project management;

   e. the extent of collaboration between the GRM Forestry Service, USAID, and the Peace Corps;

   f. the efficiency of systems of communication and coordination with other rural forestry projects and organizations;

   g. project supervision and monitoring by the National Forestry Service and USAID;

   h. the efficiency of allocation, use, and competence of personnel (Forestry Service and Peace Corps);

   i. the allocation and use of financial resources by project personnel;

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j. the allocation and use of physical resources;

k. procurement procedures;

l. the adequacy of the project reporting system;

m. the ability of project management to utilize data and reports for decision-making;

n. the need for management training of project personnel;

o. the project's construction component and its beneficial or negative effect on facilitating project implementation and the achievement of project goals.

2. Financial and Economic Analysis. The team will assess:

a. USAID's ability to clearly define project financial requirements and anticipate financial needs;

b. the soundness of the Forestry Service's financial procedures and management system;

c. the responsiveness of the National Direction to regional financial needs;

d. the appropriateness of the project financial management system in relation to project size and funding level;

e. the adequacy and timeliness of project budgeting and financial reporting vis-à-vis USAID accountability requirements;

f. the impact of financial procedures on project implementation;

g. recurrent cost requirements;

h. the project ability to and success in keeping costs to a minimum;

i. the feasibility of present plans to help cover recurrent costs, and identify alternative strategies for such;

j. the feasibility of private sector involvement in input delivery, marketing, or processing, and identify modalities for such involvement;

k. the adequacy of the original project economic analysis and its assumptions, and provide an updated analysis;

l. the utility of the economic analysis performed by Asif Shaikh (see below VII, A, I);

m. the validity and usefulness of economic information being gathered;

n. the usefulness of project interventions (woodlots, windbreaks, stoves, etc.) and provide a cost/benefit analysis from individual, village, project, and social points of view.

3. Sociological Analysis. The team will investigate and assess:

a. the extent to which villagers participate in the project (with careful attention to the role of women) and recommend ways to increase this participation if necessary;

b. the differences in the receptivity of ethnic groups at the project sites to project objectives and activities and analyze how the project can better accomodate these differences;

c. the effectiveness of the animation and extension efforts, especially in overcoming or adapting to social constraints and make recommendations to improve the efforts;

d. the rapport between project personnel and potential and actual beneficiaries;

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e. whether project goals including such things as benefit distribution, ownership rights, etc. are clear to the villagers;

f. the usefulness of the condition precedent prohibiting repressive forestry activities and whether it has effected the desired result;

g. the absorptive capacity of villages in the project zone and recommend appropriate levels of effort in those villages;

h. project activities' responsiveness to priority village concerns and whether the technologies are appropriate;

i. the project social soundness analysis and identify and address outstanding or omitted constraints;

j. the extent to which the project promotes locally autonomous environmental management and promotes local control over resources, technologies and techniques;

k. the importance of the roles played by the Peace Corps Volunteers and the Community Development Agents in the extension work;

l. the integration and collaboration between project extension efforts and those of other organizations in the same area.

4. Technical Analysis. The team will assess:

a. the technical soundness of the project activities as conceived and set forth in the Project Paper;

b. the technical quality of the nursery work and make concrete recommendations for improvements, if necessary;

c. the technical quality of the demonstration sites and their effectiveness and make recommendations on their continued use;

d. the appropriateness of the experimental work and it scientific validity and importance and make concrete suggestion for future experimental work including that which might respond better to villager's priority problems;

e. the quality and quantity of work on "other forestry interventions" including the competence of personnel to extend these themes, the appropriateness of the themes to the area and villager's priority concerns, the process of selecting these themes and the villager's involvement in that process;

f. the suitability of the project's activities with regard to the on-going farming systems of the project area;

g. the quantity and quality of the rural woodlot component; determine whether this is the most appropriate intervention under the circumstances, analyze the technical assumptions underlying this component, and make concrete recommendations;

h. the feasibility of implementing additional technical themes and identify any such themes;

i. and identify tree and bush species that might be appropriate for the project but have not yet been tried;

j. the technical competence of the field workers and make concrete recommendations about their strengths and weaknesses;

k. the overall progress towards the achievement of project technical goals;

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l. the quality and quantity of technical data being gathered, analyzed, and reported and if necessary make concrete recommendations to improve the system;

m. the impact of project interventions on the human and natural environment; if this is not yet possible make concrete suggestions for appropriate impact analysis at a later date;

n. quality and quantity of training provided under the project and make concrete recommendations for any future training deemed necessary.

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