

PD-ABT-659



AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA A.I.D. MISSION  
TO EL SALVADOR  
C/O AMERICAN EMBASSY  
SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR, C.A

**ACTION MEMORANDUM FOR THE MISSION DIRECTOR**

**FROM:** David Johnston, SO4 Team Leader

**SUBJECT:** Project Assistance Completion Report of the Environmental Protection Project (PROMESA), No. 519-0385

**DATE:** December 10, 2000

In accordance with ADS 203 (Managing for Results: Monitoring and Evaluation Performance) and USAID/El Salvador Policy (Mission Operation Manual, Chapter 770), attached is the Project Assistance Completion Report (PACR) for the Environmental Protection Project, No. 519-0385. The PACR summarizes accomplishment of the Project, results of a mid-term evaluation as well as Lessons Learned and Recommendations.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That you approve the attached Project Assistance Report.

Approved [Signature]

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Date 27 Feb. 2001

**Attachments**

Drafted by: MLatino-Rodriguez, SO4 Latino Date 12/10/2000

Cleared by:  
ACMejía, SDO ACMejía Date 2/1/2001  
FBreen, CONT [Signature] Date 2/29/2001  
DHarrison, SDO [Signature] Date 2/19/01  
RGoughnour, DDIR [Signature] Date 2/21/01

2/20/01 CHMS  
2/1/2001 [Signature]

Office of the Controller  
**REVIEWED**  
[Signature] 02/16/01  
DATE

[Handwritten mark]

**PROJECT ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PROJECT**

**I. SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

The Environmental Protection Project was authorized, and the Project Grant Agreement between USAID/EL Salvador and the GOES was signed on April 1, 1993. The implementing entity was the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock(MAG), with project coordination to be provided by the Executive Secretary for the Environment (SEMA). The Project Completion Date was June 30 1999.

**A. Goal and Purpose of the Project**

The PROMESA Project goal was to improve environmental and natural resources management. The Project purpose was to halt and then reverse the degradation of El Salvador's natural resource base to safeguard year-round water supplies and rural incomes .

**B. Project Components**

The Environmental Protection Project was divided into three components: Policy Formulation and Reform; Demonstration of Benefits; and Environmental Education. A fourth component, NGO strengthening was implemented independently through a cooperative agreement with the Pan American Development Foundation.

The Policy component was developed in order to increase the capacity of SEMA and selected NGOs to lead a participatory policy reform process.

The second component, Demonstration of Benefits, called for establishment of a field demonstration area where the effects of policy reform, environmental education, and improved conservation practices could be measured.

The third component, Environmental Education, provided for assistance to the Ministry of Education, CENTA, DGRNR, CENDEPESCA and NGOs to establish four kinds of environmental and natural resource education programs:

- Formal education, through the primary school curriculum;
- Education of public audiences, through mass media campaigns;
- Education through the use of interpretation sites; and,
- Training of extensionists in natural resources management subjects.

To implement the Project, USAID/El Salvador entered into an institutional contract with a technical assistance consortium led by Abt Associates, with Winrock and Ronco as sub-contractors. In addition, the Project funded a buy-in with the Academy for Educational Development GreenCOM Project.

The technical assistance for the Policy component and Legislation and the Demonstration of Benefits component was assigned to a partnership constituted by Abt Associates and Winrock International. The Project's main counterparts institutions were headed by SEMA and included the Ministries of Education and Agriculture, The National Directorate for Natural Resources (DGRNR), The National Center of Agricultural Technology (CENTA), The National Center for Development of Fishing (CENDEPESCA), and two NGO's: SalvaNatura and AMAR. Abt and Winrock formed an integrated team and were located in the same offices to coordinate their efforts and capacities.

The technical assistance of the Environmental Education (EE) component to be supplied by GreenCom was hired originally for a three-year period, from March 1994 to March 1997. At first, and according to the terms of its contract, GreenCom was housed into SEMA facilities. In June of 1994, Abt and Winrock started their activities and GreenCom moved to those offices, ceasing the use of the GreenCom name to prevent confusion and to promote its integration into the PROMESA Project.

GreenCom's counterpart institutions established themselves according to the nature of their activities, the terms of their contracts and the results expected from them in the different educational areas. SEMA was then the main counterpart for PROMESA and was responsible for the national environmental education (EE) campaigns and the activities related to the mass media and the NGOs. The Ministry of Education was the counterpart in the area of formal education, and the National Directorate for Natural Resources was the counterpart for activities related to National Parks, along with AMAR (responsible for the coad-ministration of the Barra de Santiago Park), and SalvaNatura (responsible for the coadministration of the Imposible National Park). CENTA, with its departmental extension agencies, was the counterpart for work with agricultural extensionists.

### C. Analysis of the Present Status of the Project

Over the years since 1993, the expected results from the Project evolved as the Mission went through a major re-engineering effort. This effort involved development of strategic objectives as a management tool. The Mission Strategic Objective #4 (SO4), approved in June 1996, called for Increased Use of Environmentally Sound Technologies and Practices in Selected Fragile Areas. In June 1997, due to a reduction of funds for the Environment Strategic Objective, the Mission proposed to Washington the idea of restructuring the Strategic Objective with a new one entitled, "Increased Access by Rural Households to Clean Water"; which coordinated, integrated, and completed the results of water-related activities planned under existing Health, Economic Growth and Democracy Strategic Objectives. The Water SO was approved by USAID/W in October 1997.

Taking as a reference the reengineering process that USAID/El Salvador held in 1996, the PROMESA Project was divided into two main stages:

- a) A first phase corresponding to the period from March 1994 to June 1997.
- b) A second phase corresponding to the period from June 1997 to June 1999.

In the first phase, the scope of work was at the national level and dealt with multiple environmental topics. In the second phase, the work was focused on the 18 priority municipalities and sought to increase people's access to sufficient supplies of clean water. Achievements in these two phases are described in section III, Project Accomplishment, of this document.

## II. FINANCIAL STATUS

In May 1998 a Project Grant Agreement Amendment was approved by the Mission Director which reduced the authorized budget level from \$20,000,000 to \$16,402,500. The remaining \$3,597,500. authorized under the original Agreement was re-assigned to the Activity "Access, Management and Rational Use of Water (AGUA)" under the new Strategic Objective Grant Agreement (SOAG) signed with the GOES. This allowed the funds to be used to support the USAID's new Water Strategic Objective. In addition, the downward adjustment of the dollar funds assisted the GOES in meeting their counterpart obligation under the Project Agreement; therefore at the end of the Project, the counterpart contribution was 100% accomplished by the GOES.

The Project budget was spent in the following manner:

LINE ITEM	OBLIGATIONS	EXPENDITURES	GOES COUNTERPART CONTRIBUTION TOTAL
1) Policy, Formulation and Reform	5,400,000	5,400,000	1,900,000
2) Demonstration of Benefits	5,460,000	5,148,914	3,067,500
3) Environmental Education	4,107,494	4,035,923	1,100,000
4) Audit	0	0	0
5) Management and Evaluation.	733,169	733,169	0
6) NGO Strengthening	686,151	686,151	0
TOTAL	16,386,814	16,004,157*	6,067,500

\*NICRA from contractor for FY 1997 and FY 1998 rates are still provisional; once the Office of Contracts and Grants receive the official rates, the NICRA will be paid. Any balance after the NICRA payment will be de-obligated and transferred to the US Treasury.

### III. PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- A first phase corresponding to the period from March 1994 to June 1997.

Progress towards achieving expected results was mixed. Major contributions were achieved regarding awareness of environmental problems by policy makers, stakeholders and the general public, and in developing mass media capacities to continue awareness activities. There was some notable progress in internalizing selected institutional capacities to develop and implement environmental education activities.

Abt Associates made a mayor contribution to policy reform in El Salvador by supporting the preparation and public consultation of a draft comprehensive environmental law, a draft forestry law and a draft protected areas law.

The participation process carried out with Project support contributed significantly to raising awareness and concerns about the environment among stakeholders and the general public. The group dynamic methodology applied contributed greatly to the environmental strategy, the policy framework and the environmental agenda.

Training which was provided to CENTA extension agents strengthened CENTA's institutional capacity to transform soil and water management and agro-forestry technologies to target population of small, hillside farmers in the demonstration area (DA). Removal of counterpart-founded extension agents from CENTA in late 1996 and creating a parallel group of Green Project/SEMA training specialists with NGO supervisors slowed the progress in achieving DA objectives.

GreenCom made good progress in assisting to establish environmental education and communications (EE/C) technical units in the Ministry of Education, SEMA and Parks and Wildlife Division (PANAVIS) of MAG. Also GreenCom assisted the Ministry of Education to prepare teachers guides for including environmental topics in primary education.

GreenCom supported SEMA's environmental media campaigns and worked with environmental journalists, newspapers and television channels to develop and disseminate better quality environmental information. A national environmental journalism awards program was created. These activities contributed significantly to increase quantity and quality of coverage of environmental issues by major newspapers and television channels for 1996 and 1997.

- A second phase corresponding to the period from June 1997 to June 1999.

In February 1998 the Mission terminated the contract of Abt Associates and Winrock. All the commodities purchased under the Abt contract were transferred to counterpart project office located at MARN, the project continued with the contracting of GreenCom having as counterpart the Ministry of Environment.

At the en of 1998, the Project was located within the offices of the recently created Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN), with both technical-assistance partners and national staff in those offices. Simultaneously, the Mission selected the 18 priority municipalities for water focus activities, and prepared the objectives, intermediate results and indicators for this approach to water issues. GreenCom and the MARN acting as the national counterpart drew up a plan to implement the new USAID objectives in the priority municipalities. To implement the plan, eight rural promoters were hired, four financed by GreenCom and four by MARN as part of their counterpart contribution. These rural promoters, along with the staff from the Demonstration of Benefits component of PROMESA, were housed in an office in Santiago de María (Usulután) that turned out to be the first regional MARN's office.

Next, to tackle the new USAID/El Salvador Strategic Objective "Increased number of rural homes with access to adequate supplies of clean water", GreenCom designed an Environmental Education strategy, aimed at the sustainable management and protection of water resources. This strategy, implemented from September 1998 until the end of the Project in June 1999, was based on results from a Knowledge, Attitude and Perceptions (KAP) survey of the targeted rural communities, related to water and other environmental issues. The strategy included:

- A regional communication campaign that broadcast the messages through both national and local mass media (radio and television) and distributed graphic materials to the population.
- Training for mayors, members of the municipal councils, community water committees, technical and community leaders, that protected the integrated management of municipal water resources.
- The mobilization of relevant existing water-related organizations and the creation of new local water-related organizations.

### **The Communication Campaign:**

The educational communication activities centered on a regional campaign, with the slogan "Let's stop polluting the water, we need it clean for life". Mass media were the main channels used in the campaign, but interpersonal and alternative communication and educational materials were also developed to support the training and social mobilization activities.

For the regional communication campaign, GreenCom created a character who was called "Cantarito". This character represented a pitcher (in Spanish, cántaro) salvadoran women used to carry water. "Cantarito" was in charge of transmitting the campaign messages and advice. Three radio messages were produced about the water's quality and quantity, and broadcast by six radio stations with national coverage and four with local coverage; two television spots were produced and broadcast by a local cable channel. Among the alternative media were used a poster, a calendar, leaflets, the 14 healthy stories of "Cantarito", and script puppets shows. Educative materials were also produced such as: a flipchart "What a small watershed offers"; the audiovisual series, "Clean Water for Life" (three educational programs on water quantity and quality and communications organizations); an audiovisual series for schools, "The Water House" (with six videos, six complementary booklets, and a teacher's guide); the Basic Library of Water and Sewage" (12 booklets on water and protection) for local leaders and technicians. New editions of earlier GreenCom educational materials, like the radio series "Drop by Drop" and the audiovisual series "Our Environment, Our Home" were also produced.

As a result of this effort, at least 285,380 people from the 57,067 homes were reached directly or indirectly by these different media with this educational intervention.

### **The Training:**

Training on community organization, decision-making and management was designed to strengthen the community's ability to solve local problems locally. Sixty five training events were held, in which 434 different community leaders (252 men and 182 women) from 13 priority municipalities of the department of Usulután learned how to manage their water supply systems in sustainable ways, with emphasis on the protection of water.

GreenCom formed local teams with these training activities and programs, made up of local technicians, development workers and teachers. These teams then had to define and implement a common

approach for sustainable community water and sewage projects. As a result, GreenCom and MARN trained 329 technicians and development workers (208 men and 121 women) and 1,589 teachers (565 men and 1024 women).

### **Organization and Social mobilization:**

An ADESCOS Federation, a Regional Water Organization (ORA), an ORA network, and water communities were created and/or reinforced in the 18 priority municipalities.

The Project sought to either create local organizations related to water issues or reinforce those already existing, like water community, water assemblies, health committees, ecological clubs and other forms of local organization. Eighteen water committees, 16 ADESCOS, and five youth groups were created or strengthened.

Another strategy was to involve municipal authorities. Nine municipalities of the Usulután Department received orientation, training, and technical assistance, through a municipal training program called "How to sustain water and sewage projects". Nine mayors and 18 councilors participated in this program. Other products of this training program included the drafting and enactment of 12 environmental municipal ordinances (two have already being published by the Official Newspaper), and the investment by eight municipalities half a million colones (more than \$57,000) for the improvements of their water supplies and the protection of their water quality.

Given the important role of local and regional institutions and organizations, the Project developed activities to coordinate actions with them. Among these actions was the First Regional Encounter for Development Institutions held during the first quarter of 1999 with institutions working in eastern El Salvador. This meeting allowed different organizations and programs in the priority municipalities to get to know one another and to coordinate their actions. Through an agreement with The European Community and the Department of Social Promotion of the Rural Systems Management of ANDA, 23 community plumbers were trained, and among them, the first woman plumber.

Schools were key to the educational strategy of the Project, in fact, 15 water festivals that mobilized nearly 15,000 people, including hundred of teachers and students. Most of these festivals occurred with the organized participation of communities, and were held in public areas like parks and municipalities. It is estimated that these mobilization and information activities reached approximately 285,000 people.

The Project trained a total of 1,589 teachers (565 men and 1,024 women) in water-related topics, and through them reached at least 158,000 students of these priority municipalities. A total of 329 technicians (208 men and 121 women) also received training, and through them the Project reached approximately 9,870 households. Training was also provided to 434 community leaders (252 men and 182 women), 9 mayors and 18 councilors in the different aspects of sustainable water projects.

#### **IV EVALUATION**

A mid-term evaluation of the Project was conducted for USAID/El Salvador during the period April 21 through May 30, 1997, by the Cambridge Consulting Corporation team composed of John O'Donnell, Team Leader and Institutional Development/Management Specialist, Dr. Fred Mann, Natural Resources Policy Specialist, Robert Peck, Natural Resources Management Specialist, and Raymond Dodd, Environmental Communications Specialist.

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess progress for the three components of the Project and recommend mid-course corrections to facilitate attainment of Environmental Strategic Objective #4, including the new emphasis on water as a crosscutting issue.

Upon arrival in country, the Cambridge team reviewed relevant Project documentation. A full interview schedule was completed during weeks two through four, including meetings with key Project personnel, national counterparts, USAID/El Salvador staff, personnel from relevant GOES agencies, and staff of a number of NGOs working in environmental protection and natural resources management.

Team members made field visits to the Project Demonstration Area, to selected alcaldías municipales, and to other sites outside of San Salvador, where Project related activities were taking place. Presentations of team findings, conclusions and recommendations were made to the SO4 team, the USAID Mission Director and other interested USAID personnel.

Changes to the Project Agreement were implemented and major recommendations for mid-course corrections were developed, changes following the mid-term evaluation follows:

- 1) Abt activities and GreenCom activities continued to be programmed and managed separately.

- 2) The Abt and Green Project operation was relocated into the Ministry of Environment at the Despacho Ministerial as the National Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Management Improvement Project (ENREM) Unit. The Green Project name and logo was eliminated immediately and the national director of the Project reported directly to the Minister. Project administrative and logistic support staffing and cost were primarily supported from counterpart funds and not from Project funds.
- 3) A common annual and LOP action plan for the policy reform and demonstration area components directed activities for both USAID-funded Abt advisors and counterpart-funded professional staff.
- 4) Abt expatriates and local-hire administrative and logistic support was reduced substantially.

#### **V. ISSUES AND SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED**

- For the development of environmental and water projects, it is necessary to evaluate and strengthen the organizational capacity already existing in communities. This is the fundamental means for the project development and for the consolidation of activities for the supply of clean and sufficient water.
- Community leaders are the main allies for and during the implementation of water and sewage projects and for their sustainability. Because of this, it is important to involve these leaders from the beginning, and train them on the project's benefits and empower them to realize those benefits.
- Strengthening joint efforts of the government and NGOs allows the achievement of concrete results and impacts.
- Training women was key in achieving results in each stage of the water and environmental projects.
- Training on how to sustain the water projects is an ideal tool to strengthen the administration and management capacity of the water and sewage projects.
- The community's participation in the assessment of the water problems encourages them to take decisions and, more importantly, to take actions.

- It is very important in a community project to involve all the actors and/or social groups in the search for solutions to problems related to water and environmental quality.
- Political conflicts between different mayors and between mayors and their communities are an obstacle for the community and municipal development.
- Health promoters, inspectors and supervisors are recognized as ideal allies for the implementation of water projects.
- There is community acceptance of the application of low cost technologies for the management of sewage.
- Improved financial and legal management are concrete products of the municipal training program for mayors and community councils.
- There are no "recipes" for winning municipal and community commitment to water projects.
- Municipal plans are recognized as ideal instruments to encourage the protection and supply of the water resources.
- When working with water projects, an integrated approach is essential for successful results.

#### **VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE FOLLOW UP ACTIONS/PROJECTS:**

- Avoiding non-sustainable or isolated actions by including water activities in integrated municipal plans for the sustainability of water resources, and at the same time being part of integrated municipal environment plans. It is necessary to include the municipalities in the formulation of such plans, as a basis for the joint work on water resources.
- Encouragement of new community leaders it is very important for successful projects.
- Creation of strategic alliances and strengthen those already existing are crucial for the implementation of water projects.
- It is very important to include in the training plan of the rural promoters a conflict resolution training.
- Assessment and supervision of the municipal governments by COMURES, ISDEM, PDDH, etc., so that they allow and encourage the exercise of their rights, as is stated in the Constitution and the Municipal Code.

- The Formulation and implementation of municipal ordinances must be based on environmental priorities with the participation of their communities.
- Conducting epidemiological studies on a municipal level to measure the health impact achieved by water and sewage projects.
- Promoting community actions to improve drainage, increase water quantity and quality, and reduce water-related illness.
- Preparation of letters of understanding with Ministry of Health officials where the new AGUA Project will be implemented, in order to coordinate activities.
- Incorporating the actions of the AGUA Project into the work plans of the national counterpart.
- Inaugurating mobile laboratories as a fundamental step for monitoring water quality at different sources.
- Strengthening the municipalities with technical assistance and qualified human resources who can respond to technical, administrative and legal demands involved in water projects.
- Continuing the municipal training program to sustain water projects.
- Creating an information unit for the follow up on the established indicators and obtain better evaluation and management for the AGUA Project.
- Urging the Ministry of Health to supply health promoters with the equipment and agents necessary to monitor the water quality.
- Providing financial and logistic support for the implementation of activities in the field.
- Recognizing and supporting the work of the Usulután Municipal Development Association as a key ally in working with the municipalities.
- Employing the technical capacity that is already installed in the PROMESA Project for the new AGUA project.
- Initiating soon the activities under the new AGUA project to maintain continuity to the work that has already been started by the current technical teams.