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NATURAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRESS REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms	ii
Summary	1
Task 1. Reports, publications and research	1
Task 2. Activity and project tracking	2
Task 3. Web maintenance and management.....	3
Task 4. Information management	4
Task 5. Planning.....	4
Task 6. Conferences, training and communications	4
Task 7. NRIC project planning, monitoring, and reporting.....	5
Next Quarter.....	6

ACRONYMS

BIOFOR Biodiversity and Sustainable Forestry

CoP Chief of Party

CTO Cognizant Technical Officer

DOS Department of State

EGAT Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade Bureau

EGAT AA EGAT Assistant Administrator

EGAT DAA EGAT Deputy Assistant Administrator

FY fiscal year

GIS geographic information systems

ISSO Information System Security Officers

LRM land resources management

LPA Bureau of Legislative Affairs

NRIC Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse

NRM natural resources management

NRMO NRM Office

OPIN Online Presidential Initiative Network

PAICO Office of Program Analysis, Implementation, Communication and Outreach

PPC Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination

SOW Scope of Work

URL Universal Resource Locator

OMB Office of Management and Budget (executive Office of the President)

USAID U.S. Agency for International Development

SUMMARY

This document serves as the Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse's (NRIC) progress report for the 14th quarter of operation (January through March 2006). It details the NRIC products and activities for the second quarter of FY 2006. It describes tasks performed to support the USAID Natural Resource Office (NRMO). It also summarizes NRIC project planning, monitoring, and reporting activities. The final section describes likely activities for the next quarter and summarizes financial information.

In the second quarter of FY 2006, NRIC staff helped produce several notable products for the NRM office including technical reports and communications materials. NRIC helped the Sustainable Tourism project deliver a field training course in Tanzania and prepared a *Trainer's Guide* and *Participant Workbook* for the February session. NRIC staff also completed a draft of *the Natural Resource Management and Poverty Reduction Report* and circulated the *Report* for comments.

In addition, NRIC staff maintained web sites to inform NRM stakeholders and updated databases to track NRM projects and activities. The NRIC webmaster posted several new reports to public sites and conducted several training seminars to present implications of Section 508 disability access to the Web.

For the Water Team, NRIC information specialists maintained budget information in twelve categories for worldwide USAID programs and performed data analysis and provided reports about this information. NRIC also helped the USAID NRM office prepare an Annual Report to describe yearly activities. The director completed the FY 2005 NRIC Annual Report and the FY 2006 NRIC Workplan.

In support of the Biodiversity Team, NRIC staff facilitated a session of annual meeting of the Global Conservation Partners (GCP) and helped prepare notes and minutes of the meeting.

This report provides further details in seven task areas:

Task 1: Reports, publications, and research

Task 2: Activity and project tracking

Task 3: Web maintenance and management

Task 4: Information management

Task 5: Planning

Task 6: Conference, training, and communications support

Task 7: NRIC project planning, monitoring, and reporting

Task 1: Reports, publications, and research

NRIC assists the NRM Office and technical teams to research, write and produce reports, case studies, brochures and other informative documents.

In the first quarter, NRIC staff helped NRM technical teams complete several reports. Before printing, each report receives a formal approval from the Team sponsor followed by review and approval from the Office of Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA). Reports worked on during the first quarter include:

- **Combined Section 119: Biodiversity Report and Section 118 Forestry Report.** The overall format and key issues of the merged report was discussed and agreed with Forestry and Biodiversity Teams. Text was drafted with Karen Carney of the Forest Team for the main body of the report, and sent to team members for review. Preliminary set of best photo options was identified. NRIC biodiversity and forestry technical specialist worked with key USAID staff to confirm biodiversity and forestry attributions of relevant Missions and programs.
- **Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction Report.** NRIC staff worked with the Land Team to complete a draft report of series of presentations delivered in 2004-2005. In February, NRIC completed a draft version of the document and submitted it to USAID for comments. NRIC sent the report out for comments and received input from six reviewers.
- **Conservation and Governance.** NRIC staff selected an environmental/human rights lawyer to prepare a background paper related conservation and governance. The lawyer will begin working on the project 24 April 2006.
- **Water Reports and Factsheets.** With Dan Deely, the water technical specialist and information manager completed a final Report to Congress for the Water for the Poor (WfP) Presidential Initiative highlighting global achievements under this three-year initiative. The water technical specialist completed a draft communications and knowledge management strategy for the Agency Water Team (AWT), which was shared with the AWT working group members for review. The water technical specialist prepared seven fact sheets and six banners for the USAID partnerships booth at the World Water Forum held in Mexico City in March.

Task 2: Activity and project tracking

Under Task 2, NRIC collects data on NRM-related activities and expenditures, tracks field support provided by the NRM Office, and provides analysis and reporting based on these data.

Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act

Obligations data was updated by the information manager on an as-needed basis for discussions concerning the water strategy being written in response to the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005. Discussions were still ongoing at the end of the quarter as to how to adapt the Online Presidential Initiative Network (OPIN) water reporting framework to meet the needs of the ten-year reporting effort under this Act of Congress. Initial discussions regarding an internet-based reporting system have stalled, due largely to a recent moratorium on new reporting systems.

Task 3: Web maintenance and management

NRIC designs, produces, and maintains web sites and pages for the NRM Office.

NRIC's webmaster continued to maintain web pages for the NRM Office on three different web sites: the public web site, the NRIC web site and the EGAT Intranet.

Public Web site

NRIC's Webmaster continued to provide support to the NRM Office by submitting updates to USAID's Bureau of Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) for USAID's public site, www.usaid.gov.

Revised edits were predominantly for Biodiversity, Forestry, and Water sectors. These updates also include URL changes to reflect DEC's new subdomain name.

In addition, a couple of Section 508-compliant PDFs were submitted to LPA for posting. They include a Biodiversity 119 Congressional Report (FY2005) and a new *Nature, Wealth, and Power* publication for Land Management.

In the next quarter, NRIC's Water Technical Specialist will work with the NRIC Webmaster in revamping Web content for the Water sector. Plans are to include additional pages to explain USAID's approach to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) by technical sub-sector.

NRIC web site

During this period, general maintenance of the web site included minor updates to URLs to reflect the new subdomain name change of DEC and readings list for Seminar 1 of the Poverty Reduction and NRM seminar series. In the next quarter, NRIC plans to incorporate materials from the Sustainable Tourism training conference in Arusha, Tanzania onto the site.

USAID Intranet.

During this period, NRIC's Webmaster continued general maintenance of the Intranet Web pages. In particular, some minor modifications to the "What's New" module, and the main homepage and Biodiversity Team page were submitted to IRM Web Services for posting to the live EGAT Intranet.

During this quarter, NRIC's Webmaster met with the EGAT Webmaster and NRIC CTO to discuss NRIC's role in the continued maintenance of the Users' Guide pages for the NRM Office due to the pending EGAT Intranet redesign process. It was decided that the update and review process already in place with the NRM Office, NRIC, and EGAT Webmaster would remain unchanged and that NRIC's Webmaster would be given access to incorporate updates as appropriate to the Users' Guide pages.

However, NRIC received word that due to privacy and security concerns raised by the Agency's Information System Security Officers (ISSO) and Privacy officers, the Users' Guide database was taken offline at the end of March. It is expected that once these issues are addressed by USAID, NRIC will continue to support the NRM Office in this capacity.

In addition to general web maintenance, a Newsflash article for EGAT's Intranet highlighting the new *Biodiversity 119 Congressional Report* was submitted to the EGAT Webmaster for posting.

Task 4: Information management

NRIC acquires, organizes and archives information about USAID natural resources projects and related cross-sector activities. Also, it distributes information, lessons learned, and other tools over the Internet.

In the second quarter of 2006, the NRIC information manager updated 26 projects and added 3 projects to the NRM Online Library bringing the total number of projects to 573. The information manager also added 125 documents to the library, bringing the total number of documents to 3,930. The number of images remained the same (380); however, the information completed a redesign of the image portion of the database and online data entry and editing system.

Task 5: Planning

Under Task 5 NRIC supports planning and special project activities within the NRM Office and teams.

The NRIC team provided no significant planning activities during the fourth quarter.

Task 6: Conference, training, and communications support

Under Task 6 NRIC prepares materials and provides logistic support for conferences, meetings, workshops and training activities. Also produces communications and outreach materials for the NRM Office and teams.

Sustainable tourism training program.

NRIC staff helped deliver a week-long Sustainable Tourism training course in Tanzania. In this context, NRIC worked with PA Consulting to develop seven modules targeted toward training USAID field staff for tourism development activities. The NRIC/PA sustainable tourism team completed course materials, including a *Trainers's Guide* and a *Participant Workbook*. NRIC staff worked with USAID to coordinate logistics, presenters, and participants for a week-long presentation scheduled for Tanzania in February 2006. To supplement the training materials, NRIC purchased relevant materials from partner organizations that included George Washington University, The Nature Conservancy, and Conservation International. The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International also helped in training delivery.

Section 508 Workshops and Training.

In January, NRIC's Webmaster co-presented *An Introduction to Achieving Section 508 Compliance* with Christian Pennotti, Analyst, (QED Group, LLC) to the EGAT Extended Communications Team. The purpose of the technical workshop was to educate Cognizant Technical Officers (CTOs), contractors, and grantees on how to help USAID achieve Section 508 compliance and accessibility with documents formatted in MSWord, PowerPoint, and PDF.

Hard copies of the PowerPoint presentation and a "how-to" manual were distributed to over 60 people representing 32 organizations. Feedback received from attendees of the workshop has been positive. As a result, the EGAT Extended Communications Team is developing plans to potentially sponsor future technical workshops on achieving Section 508 compliance with publishing software in the coming months.

Global Conservation Partnership Annual Meeting

The Biodiversity and Forestry Technical Specialist supported the Biodiversity team's GCP annual partners meeting. In particular, the Biodiversity team asked NRIC to facilitate greater collaboration among the GCP partner organizations learning initiatives. This entailed working with representatives of the six partners in advance of, and during, the annual meeting. NRIC

liaised with GCP partners to develop and distribute brief proposals on the learning initiatives that partners were most interested in funding in FY07. The Biodiversity and Forestry Technical Specialist facilitated a day long session at the annual meeting to discuss the proposals with the Biodiversity Team and GCP partners, to begin to narrow down which proposals would move forward. NRIC also wrote and distributed the notes for the annual meeting.

Other Communication Products

The Biodiversity and Forestry Technical Specialist drafted and distributed an updated version of the GCP brochure for partners review.

Outreach material in the form of a postcard providing information on USAID's FY04 biodiversity annual report (119 report), and the Biodiversity Guide was produced for the Biodiversity team.

Task 7: NRIC project planning, monitoring, and reporting

During the second quarter the NRIC Chief of Party (CoP) worked with his USAID CTO counterpart to plan budget scenarios for the final year of the NRIC contract; scheduled to in end in March 2007. NRIC provided budget information summarizing contributions from each team and estimating spending, or "burn rates" for coming months. Also, we reviewed specific budget numbers for the Water Team, which traditionally pays extra for a full-time Water Specialist. Moreover, we discussed changes in NRIC staff assignments among teams and suggested shifting Carol Hansen to full-time Land Team duties. By the end of the quarter, the USAID CTO outlined a funding strategy and commitment to maintain NRIC staff and program function until the March 2007 completion date.

Next Quarter

In the first quarter of FY 2006, NRIC will support technical teams with ongoing and new projects. Important activities include:

- **NRM Office.**

The office-wide communication strategy will be revisited, and a draft outline and mock-up of an office-wide newsletter has been submitted to CJ Elron, Forestry Team Leader, and Todd Harding, NRIC CTO, for discussion with team leaders. NRIC proposes a quarterly newsletter featuring cross-sectoral and cross-office initiatives to raise the profile of the office and to describe how NRMO projects and activities relate to broader USAID development priorities in other sectors, such as economic growth, democracy and governance, and conflict reduction.

- **Forestry and Biodiversity Teams.** The forestry and biodiversity specialist will work with Forestry Team and Biodiversity Teams to 1) finalize the combined forestry and biodiversity annual report, shepherd the report through the review process, and produce a final version for distribution; 2) produce a final version of the GCP brochure; 3) complete the writing and layout of five to ten new web pages for the USAID.gov website; and 4) draft five fact sheets for general outreach activities. However the two teams will continue to function as independent units and not merge into a single team.

- **Water Team.**

The water technical specialist plans to achieve the following in the upcoming quarter: 1) adapting the water reporting framework, including internet-based data-gathering and a substantially expanded annual report format; 2) complete the "Land-based Sources of Marine Pollution Report" for review by the Department of State and potential presentation during the Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action in Beijing; 3) completing initial data gathering for the global fisheries assessment; 4) complete the writing and layout of five to ten new web pages for the USAID.gov website; and 5) update one brochure and eight fact sheets for general outreach activities.

- **Land Team (and Tourism)**

The land technical specialist will work with NRIC's webmaster to complete conversion of Sustainable Tourism (ST) training course material for posting to NRIC's ST web pages, and will complete revisions to the training modules to reflect content as delivered in Tanzania. Archive copies of the updated training material will be printed (Trainers' Handbook and Training Manual), and outreach activities to promote sustainable tourism within the Agency and to showcase activities outside the agency (Department of State Day exhibit, Sustainable Design Exposition, for example) will continue. NRIC will continue to investigate partnering and co-funding opportunities to support future ST training deliveries in other USAID regions, building on the success of the Tanzania pilot delivery.

In the next quarter, the NRIC Land Specialist will work with the Land Team to define and produce relevant communication, outreach, and training materials. She will focus on preparing a summer edition of the Land-Links newsletter.

Finally, NRIC staff plans complete the Poverty Reduction and Natural Resource Management Report and distribute it by June 2006.