

REVIEW OF A. I. D. SYSTEMS
FOR
TERMINAL AND TRANSFER-OF-EXPERIENCE REPORTING
OF
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

Systems Coordination Staff
Office of Management Planning
Agency for International Development

May 1973

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
I. Introduction.....	1
A. Statement of the review's origin.....	1
B. Purposes and frame of reference of the review.....	1
C. Summary -- conclusions, recommendations, implementing actions.....	2
II. Methodology Used.....	6
A. Documentary sources consulted.....	6
B. Sample survey of End-of-Tour Reports.....	6
C. Interviews with A. I. D. personnel.....	6
III. Discussion.....	6
A. Implications of A. I. D. 's Reform for terminal and transfer of experience reporting.....	6
1. Key elements of A. I. D. 's Reform, January 1972.....	6
2. Implications for terminal and transfer of experience reporting.....	7
B. Terminal reporting of a technical assistance project.....	8
1. Present steps in closing out a project and related reports.....	8
2. Issues.....	11
a. What are the purposes of terminal reports?.....	11
b. How useful are terminal reports?.....	11
c. Should the Joint Completion Report be maintained?.....	11
d. Should the project file summary be maintained?.....	11

3. Conclusions.....	20
C. Transfer of Experience Reporting.....	20
1. Definition.....	20
2. Existing A. I. D. resources for transfer of experience.....	20
3. Issues.....	22
a. Learning lessons from past experience.....	22
b. Felt needs.....	23
c. Categories of informational needs.....	24
d. Extending the utility of the data base.....	24
e. The role of existing reports for the transfer of experience.....	25
f. Should a special transfer of experience report be required?.....	27
g. Processing transfer of experience information problems and suggested solutions.....	28
h. Linking resources of information to users.....	29
4. Conclusions.....	29
IV. Recommendations.....	30
V. Implementation of actions required.....	35

Appendices:

- A. Scope of Work
- B. List of Documentary Sources Consulted
- C. A. I. D. Personnel Interviewed
- D. Questions Asked During Interviews

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the review's origin

The staff of the Office of Program Methods and Evaluation (PPC/PME), in cooperation with the Program Evaluation Committee, has discussed, during the past year, the existing requirements for end-of-project, or terminal, reporting as related to the function of the Project Appraisal Report (PAR). PPC/PME has concluded that the need for review and revision of terminal reporting requirements is only part of the transfer of experience function which is systemic in scope, and, therefore that revision should go beyond the purview of project evaluation. Consequently, PPC/PME has asked the Systems Coordination Staff (SER/MP/SYS) of the Office of Management Planning to address the problem from the points of view both of effective terminal reporting and of transfer of experience. The analyst assigned to this review and the drafter of the report was Donald H. Edwards, SER/MP/SYS. The scope of work for the review is attached as Appendix A.

B. Purposes and frame of reference of the review

As agreed between SER/MP/SYS and PPC/PME, the purposes of this review are:

1. To develop specific recommendations for changes in the existing requirements regarding terminal reporting within the established frame of reference of the Agency's new role, style and structure.
2. To propose a feasible system which will meet the Agency's needs for effective transfer of technical assistance experience. Due consideration is taken of the basic objectives of:
 - a. obtaining optimal reporting of experience,
 - b. for ready availability to users,
 - c. while imposing a minimal workload on Agency manpower resources, both direct-hire and intermediary.
3. The frame of reference for the review is limited to current perceptions of what the Agency's role, style and structure are at present and what they may become within the near future. Proposals developed in the report, therefore, are broadly designed to meet the conditions of an

organization in transition whose policies of reform have not yet had time to solidify into new patterns of information demand and supply. For example, shifts of emphasis from direct-hire to intermediaries with regard to project implementation, and from bilateral to multilateral project collaboration, are expected to affect the demand, and consequently the supply of information. Similarly, greater collaboration with cooperating countries in the administration of development assistance could significantly influence A. I. D. 's systems for information generation, collection and dissemination. However, given the present circumstances of transition under which the Agency is working, it is not possible to be more precise with regard to the nature or the magnitude of future demands for transfer of experience information. For these reasons, the proposals developed in the report place greater emphasis on an improved exploitation of existing resources rather than on "guesstimates" of future demand. Similarly, with regard to changes in existing systems of linking information resources with users' demands, the scope of the review does not extend beyond suggestions for further exploration and development when the demands of the users (e. g. , intermediaries and LDCs) becomes more evident than they are at present.

C. Summary -- conclusions, recommendations, implementing actions

1. Background

A. I. D. 's needs for useable and accessible information in order to improve its capabilities to plan and formulate new projects, as well as to manage ongoing programs, call for review and specific revision of certain existing requirements. Emphasis is placed on alignment of the information system with the organizational restructuring of the Agency following the policy reforms of January 1972. Two interconnected types of reporting constitute the foci of consideration in the present review:

- a. Terminal (end-of-project) reporting requirements, some of which seem ill-fitted to A. I. D. 's new directives stressing centralization of management, increasing use of intermediaries, and a more collaborative style in cooperating with the less developed countries seeking U. S. assistance.
- b. Transfer of experience reporting by means of which important experience gained and lessons learned during the life of projects can be systematically documented in useful forms, collected, announced, and made available to managers, planners, and policy makers in order to improve the planning, design and management of development projects.

2. Conclusions

a. Terminal reports

- Out of eight identified terminal reports, six should be maintained as meeting the needs of specific offices and fulfilling some basic purpose.

- Two reports, the Joint Completion Report and the Project File Summary, should be deleted.
- Contracts for intermediaries should be more explicit regarding reporting requirements.

b. Transfer of experience reporting

An effective system to meet A. I. D. 's present felt needs for transfer of technical assistance experience can, and should, be developed. This can be done with a minimal additional workload by:

- Maintaining and developing, in the A. I. D. Reference Center, a solid core data base of program information.
- Maintaining and developing up-to-date directories and announcements of existing A. I. D. and other information resources.
- Developing other linkages between transfer-of-experience information resources and users (i. e. , project matching services).
- Improving the processing of transfer-of-experience information.
- Selecting annually a few projects for special evaluations focused on gaining particularly valuable transfer-of-experience information.

3. Recommendations:

- No. 1: Delete the requirement for the Joint Completion Report (M. O. 1333.1, 1-18-66, Annex B, ProAg, Standard Provisions Annex, Section O)
- No. 2: Delete the requirement of the Project File Summary for completed projects (M. O. 1305.1.1, 8-10-70, Section IV, Attachment H to "Project Management Handbook.")
- ✓ No. 3: Maintain the End-of-Tour Report (ETR) as an optional document, to be prepared at the discretion of the Mission or of the technician.

- No. 4: Adopt and implement annually the extension of the special evaluation approach to transfer-of-experience reporting by determining centrally a few project/program activities of relevance to current development assistance issues, using qualified contractors to carry out the research and produce the reports.
- No. 5: Require intermediaries, through clear and specific instructions in contracts, to be explicit in their work plans and reports on progress of projects and completion of assignments. The use of quantified data and objective progress indicators should be required as much as possible in contractors' work plans and reports.
- No. 6: Improve the A. I. D. information resources management system, especially with regard to:
- a strengthened core data base for project information in the A. I. D. Reference Center.
 - bibliographies, current directories, catalogs and reference materials to be widely distributed to all key A. I. D. personnel.
 - development of other linkages between information resources and users, such as project matching and information retrieval services.
 - improved processing of transfer-of-experience information.

4. Implementation of actions required

Recom. No.	Subject of Recommendation	Action Required	Suggested Implementing Office
1.	Joint Completion Report	Rescind present M. O. requirement	PPC/PME
2.	Project File Summary	Rescind present M. O. requirement	PPC/PME
3.	End of Tour Report	No action necessary	N. A.
4.	In-depth case studies for Transfer of Experience purposes	Annual schedule of a few studies	PPC/PME, PPC/DPR, TAB, Regional Bureaus, Missions
5.	Reporting instructions in contracts	Revise project management guidelines, PIO/T and ProAg instructions; stress improved contractor reporting in project management training.	SER/CM PPC/PME
6.	A. I. D. Information Resources Management System - Program data base - Bibliographies, directories, catalogs, etc. - Info. resource - user linkages - Info. processing	Develop and implement long range plans to strengthen A. I. D. services for experience transfer information	SER/DM

II. METHODOLOGY USED

A. Documentary sources consulted

The analyst canvassed A. I. D. information resources for previous reports or documents on this subject, including manual orders, office files, the A. I. D. Reference Center and the quarterly announcement catalogue "A. I. D. Memory Documents," personal files, and to a limited extent the files of respondents interviewed. A selected bibliography of the relevant reports and documents is attached as Appendix B.

B. Sample survey of End-of-Tour Reports

A sample of 128 End-of-Tour Reports was studied for relevance to the subject of transfer of experience information. The sample spanned a period of fifteen years, 1957 to 1971, and represents the experience of project officers and technicians, both direct-hire and intermediary, in all geographical regions and main sectors of past project activity (Refer to III, C, e (2)).

C. Interviews with A. I. D. personnel

Interviews were arranged with thirty A. I. D. officers at present assigned to the Agency's bureaus and offices in Washington. The officers were selected for their interest in and competence to address various aspects of the subject of this review. An attempt was made to have all relevant parts of the Agency represented in the sample of respondents, who, depending on their respective experiences overseas and in A. I. D. /W, contributed their considered judgment regarding the questions raised in the interview. The average interview lasted about one hour. The lists of respondents interviewed and of questions employed are attached as Appendices C and D.

III. DISCUSSION

A. Implications of A. I. D. 's Reform for terminal and transfer of experience reporting

1. Key elements of A. I. D. 's Reform, January 1972

- Concentrate A. I. D. 's resources, including the best U. S. scientific and technical talent, on a limited group of basic human problems common to the developing countries;
- Give greater emphasis to humanitarian assistance, i. e. , those activities which concern the most urgent needs of people, with special attention to increasing the participation of private voluntary organizations in these efforts;

- Improve A. I. D. 's organizational structure and administrative efficiency, while reducing the Agency's staff and contributing to a lowering of the U.S. profile overseas;
- Establish an operating style which emphasizes collaboration with the developing countries and improved coordination with multi-lateral institutions and other donors.

2. Implications for terminal and transfer of experience reporting

The following elements of A. I. D. 's Reform affect the reporting of development assistance:

- a. Shifts in the roles of A. I. D. Cooperating Countries and intermediaries:

A. I. D. 's policy for future action is to encourage the Cooperating Countries to assume increasing leadership in planning, management, and evaluation of technical assistance activities financially assisted by the Agency. It is expected, also, that intermediaries will participate to a greater degree than in the past with the Cooperating Countries and with A. I. D. in all aspects of project planning, implementation and evaluation. Thus a tri-partite process of development assistance is envisioned in which each party - Cooperating Country, intermediary, and A. I. D. - will be allowed to develop its own role which will vary as to degree of leadership and responsibility called for, depending upon the nature and phase of the activity in question.

The reporting functions of technical assistance will need to be patterned after the role each party assumes in a given project, according to agreement and contract. In some instances A. I. D. will initiate reporting, in other instances the intermediary, while in certain types of development assistance, the main reporting will be done by the Cooperating Country.

- b. Organizational restructuring and reduction of A. I. D. personnel overseas:

As A. I. D. , on the whole, will remain responsible for the planning, monitoring, and evaluating of A. I. D. financed projects, no reduction in the need for explicit project information relating to these functions is likely to occur.

On the other hand, with the shift of the burden of project implementation to intermediaries, the reporting requirements on the part of contractors may be expected to grow.

c. Transfer of technical information to the less Developed Countries (LDCs):

An important implication of the change in A. I. D. 's role, style, and structure overseas may be expected to be an increased need on the part of the LDCs for written reports and documents. The departing U. S. technicians will have to be replaced as sources of information by improved information systems. As pointed out by the GAO ("Needed Improvement in the Information System for Technical Assistance," May 3, 1972), A. I. D. 's experience over the past two decades, if made available to the developing countries, should prove to constitute a significant contribution to their development efforts, as they increasingly assume self-help roles.

d. Availability to other donors of reports relevant to A. I. D. 's experience in development assistance.

As A. I. D. improves its coordination with multi-lateral institutions and other donors of information about common interests in development assistance, the Agency's reports, case studies, and special evaluations of projects, both past and current, should prove especially useful for a meaningful exchange of experience. Although the most pertinent need on the part of other donors for the Agency's information will likely be that which relates to current activities and future plans, retrospective evaluations of activities sponsored by A. I. D. , the Agency with the longest experience in technical assistance, should play a constructive role in efforts to improve projects of multi-lateral agencies and other donors.

B. Terminal reporting of a technical assistance project

1. Present steps in closing out a project and related reports

According to standard prescription or practice for termination of the typical bilateral technical assistance project, the following steps are identified, most of which call for reporting of some kind:

- a. Final contribution date indicated in the Project Agreement (ProAg). (M. O. 's 1331.1, 1333.1). Wise practice draws the attention of the Cooperating Country to the fact, spelled out in the ProAg's narrative, that a final contribution is being made and that physical completion of the project is expected by a pre-set deadline date.
- b. Project phase-out plan formulated by USAID and Cooperating Country. Some large technical assistance projects involving significant components of technical advisory personnel and participant training in the U. S. of Cooperating Country personnel, formulate jointly, well in advance of the end-of-project, a phase-out plan which aims at an orderly withdrawal of U. S. assistance and the take-over by the Cooperating Country of both budgetary and manpower support of the project's activity. The phase-out plan is here indicated as a step, although there is no stipulation in A. I. D. 's requirements that such plans be submitted formally for technical assistance activities.
- c. Contractor's final report (M. O. 1422, A. I. D. 1420, 12-2-70, Gen. Provs., Section 29, a).

If a U.S. contractor, or intermediary, has been involved in the project, the Chief of Party submits a final report on his organization's activities during the full period of its involvement. This may or may not coincide with the full life of the project.

- d. Joint completion of project report (M. O. 1331.1, Attachment A, ProAg Standard Provisions Annex, Section O). This regulation stipulates that the USAID and Cooperating Country must prepare jointly a completion of project report summarizing the objectives, activities and achievements of the project.
- e. Last Project Appraisal Report (PAR) (M. O. 1026.1).

Although no requirements exist at present for a final PAR as differentiated from a regular PAR, the last PAR submitted ordinarily summarizes the results of the USAID's final review and evaluation of the accomplishments of the project as measured against its purposes and goals. Recommended follow-up actions for improved project management are indicated on the PAR's face page.

- f. Deobligation of project's fundings in Project Implementation Orders (PIO's) and pipeline.

The USAID controller deobligates excess funding for commodities and participant training, etc., in due course as final obligations are met after physical phase-out of the project. Reporting for "deobs" is done routinely to A. I. D. /W by means of standardized accounting reports.

- g. Project file summary for completed projects (M. O. 1305.1, Sec. IV. A. 1 b., Attachment 4, "Project Management Handbook - Technical Assistance," 10-26-70).

The project manager submits a summary of the project file with the Joint Completion of Project Report after all funding has been completed so that the file may be retired. Copies of key documents out of the project file should be forwarded to the A. I. D. Reference Center (ARC).

- h. Final audit and related actions (M. O. 791.3, 12-31-69, sections 8 and 9; Auditor General (AG) Instruction #21, 8-27-71).

The area Auditors General are instructed to give principal attention to current programs and projects and to limit the number and scope of completed project audits according to selected criteria. In-depth audits of completed projects are discouraged in favor of audits identifying loose ends or residual problems.

- i. Contract close-out procedures (M. O. 1423.11, Attachment A).

The project manager in cooperation with the Contracting Office, A. I. D. /W, circulate check lists to all relevant offices to ascertain compliance of the contractor with A. I. D. law and procedures. The checklists are completed after the final audit.

- j. Final Contractors performance report (U-1423/1) (M. O. 1423.9 9-13-72). Formerly known as the U-307 but recently revised in order to coordinate with the PAR, the report employs a factor rating system similar to the PAR, relative to contractor's performance. The final report is supposed to cover the life of the contract.

2. Issues

a. What are the purposes of terminal reports?

The above listing of the steps in reporting the end of a technical assistance bilateral project illustrates the fact that a number of purposes are served in the process.

Five purposes are identified as follows:

- (1) Contractual compliance vis-a-vis intermediary, Cooperating Country and A. I. D.
- (2) Communication, particularly between USAID and A. I. D. /W, of essential program, statistical and financial data.
- (3) Evaluation of the performance of organizations and personnel participating in the project, and of inputs and outputs as measured against stated purposes and goals.
- (4) Transfer of experience, or "lessons learned," i. e., interpretive reports relating to problem solving.
- (5) Historical data, i. e., uninterpreted factual data, quantified inputs for projects, etc.

b. How useful are the terminal reports?

Of the ten identifiable steps in closing out a typical technical assistance project, eight are related to terminal reports. Based on the analyst's interviews, the main users and purposes of these reports are as shown in the following table:

Scale:
 1 - Prime
 2 - Secondary
 3 - Tertiary
 4 - None

Termination Activity	Existing Document which Reflects Termination Activity	Purposes Served by Document	Information Content Needed to Fulfill Purpose	User(s)	Utility/Importance of Document to User(s)
(1) Last in series of annual commitments between US and Coop. Country to contribute material support to the activity.	Project Agreement, final document.	1. Indicates the final contribution date and the nature and costs of inputs committed by US and Coop. Country. 2. The main document binding all parties to commitments essential to achievement of activity's objectives.	1. Personal services, nature & costs 2. Participants, nature & costs 3. Commodities, etc., nature & costs 4. Other actions and support commodities, i. e., travel, housing, etc.	<u>US:</u> Mission (Prog., cont., tech., trg.) Reg. Bur. (desk, tech. support) ARC - Project File <u>Coop. Country</u> Tech. Ministry Planning " Finance "	1 1 1 1
(2) Contractor summarizes all aspects of his participation in the activity from start to finish.	Contractor's final report.	1. Details of planning, implementation, and evaluation, i. e., narrative and tabular presentation of all inputs by contractor.	1. Background description including relevant baseline data. 2. Details of personnel, training and commodities provided.	<u>US:</u> Mission (prog., tech.) Reg. Bur. (desk, tech. support) ARC - Project File	1 1 1

Termination Activity	Existing Document which Reflects Termination Activity	Purposes Served by Document	Information Content Needed to Fulfill Purpose	User(s)	Utility/Importance of Document to User(s)
(2) cont'd	Contractor's final report (continued)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Transfer of experience through description of problem solving. 3. Evaluation of outputs measured against objectives of activity. 4. Contractual compliance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Discussion of problem solving, ways & means. 4. Evaluation of outputs measured against objectives of activity 	Contractor: Sponsoring institution	1
(3) Collaborative summarizing of activity by US and Coop. Country	Joint Completion Report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Historical summary of work actions, inputs and outputs. 2. Listing of achievements and reasons for non-achievement of stated objectives. 3. Attempt to involve Coop. Country in the activity and to document the transfer of activity from US. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summary of work actions 2. Inputs, both US & Coop. Country <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - personal services - participants - commodities 3. Nature & costs of each above. 4. Achievements - 	<u>US:</u> Mission (prog., cont., tech) Reg. Bur. (desk, tech. support) ARC - Project File <u>Coop. Country:</u> Tech. Ministry	3-4 3-4 3-4 3-4

Termination Activity	Existing Document which Reflects Termination Activity	Purpose Served by Document	Information Content Needed to Fulfill Purpose	User(s)	Utility/Importance of Document to User(s)
(4) Last formal review by Mission, contractor and where possible the Coop. Country.	Last PAR	<p>Transfer of experience by means of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation of inputs and outputs against stated purposes and goals for final phase of activity. 2. Evaluation of performance of all parties participating in the project. 3. Identification of ^{key} follow-up actions to be taken prior to close-out 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Status of project info re personal services, participants, commodities 2. Status of assumptions 3. Issues 	<p><u>US:</u> Mission (prog. tech. admin) Contractor Reg. Bur. (desk, tech., prog./eval.)</p>	<p>1 2 2</p>
(5) Summary of project file's contents.	Project file summary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indexing of the project file's contents prior to retirement. 2. Historical summary of project's key documents. 	Listing of correspondence, reports and documents in the project file.	<p><u>US:</u> Mission: C&R office AID/W Records Mgt.</p>	<p>3-4(duplication of regular C&R function) 3-4</p>

Termination Activity	Existing Document which Reflects Termination Activity	Purpose Served by Document	Information Content Needed to Fulfill Purpose	User(s)	Utility/Importance of Document to User(s)
(6) Auditor General's final audit of activity	Final audit	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audit of incomplete actions recommended in previous audits; residual problems identified prior to close-out of activity. 2. Contractual compliance. 	Previous audit reports and related correspondence	<u>US:</u> Mission (controller prog., tech., admin.) AID/W Reg. Bur. - desk for info. Auditor General-	1 2 1
(7) Final check for contractor's compliance with all parts of his contract.	Contract close-out check list (attach. A to M. O. 1423.11)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verification by all Mission offices of intermediary's compliance, i. e., that no outstanding contractual commitments are unfulfilled by intermediary before release from contract. To be completed post-termination of final audit. 2. Historical data relating to purpose of No. 8 below. 	Review of records re intermediary's activities by: Tech. office Security Controller Mission exec. Local contracting office	<u>US:</u> Mission exec., tech., Cont. AID/W: Controller, Local contracting office	2 2

Termination Activity	Existing Document which Reflects Termination Activity	Purpose Served by Document	Information Content Needed to Fulfill Purpose	User(s)	Utility/Importance of Document to User(s)
<p>(8) Evaluation of contractor's performance during whole period of contract.</p>	<p>Contractor performance evaluation report.</p>	<p>1. Summary evaluation of whole period of contractor's performance. Factor rating system same as used in PAR includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understanding and planning re project purpose - qualifications of staff - adherence to scope of work & work schedules - relations with AID & Coop. Country - admin. of participants - input of commodities - timeliness of reporting <p>2. Historical data for contracting office's files for future reference re re-hiring of contractor in other connections.</p>	<p>Info. generated by PAR review, Project Manager's judgements, & Mission appraisal.</p>	<p>US: Mission: (tech.) Contract office</p>	<p>2 1</p>

Using a scale of 1 to 4 (1=prime utility/importance; 2=secondary; 3=tertiary; 4=none) to indicate the utility and/or importance of each report to the users, the above table shows that all the reports, with the exception of two -- the Joint Completion Report and the Project - File Summary -- serve needs, felt consistently by some identifiable offices. As the justification for the maintenance of any report is the validity of its end-use, the maintenance of these two reports should be questioned (see B.2, c and d below).

On the other hand, this table shows, and our interviews confirmed, that only two reports relate substantively to the function of transfer of experience:

- (1) Last PAR; an analysis of the performance of parties participating in the project as measured against the logical framework. Inputs, outputs, purposes and goal(s) and their interrelationships are weighed for impact value.

Although the PAR contributes incidentally to transfer of experience, it was not designed as a transfer-of-experience document per se, but as an evaluation document. Its significance as a source for transfer-of-experience information will remain secondary, although current plans for a revised PAR include the attachment of an updated logical framework, which would provide a schematic, summarized description of the project at a given point in time.

- (2) Contractor's final report, a life-of-activity description and analysis of the project insofar as the contractor had to do with it.

Contractor's reports, both final and progress, may constitute a significant source of transfer-of-experience information. In view of the Agency's policy increasingly to shift the responsibility of project implementation to intermediaries, the functions of data gathering, and submission of contractors' progress and final reports should be made explicit in their contracts.

The capability of A. I. D. 's experience transfer will depend increasingly on the quality and thoroughness of such reports. Therefore painstaking forethought will need to be given to the kinds of information needed, as well as to how and to whom the information should be submitted.

The above two reports, taken together with the project's PROP, logical framework, regular evaluations and special studies, End of Tour reports, and Project Agreements constitute the activity's portfolio of key documents out of which experience may be learned to the profit of other projects.

c. Should the Joint Completion Report be maintained?

As indicated above, the Joint Completion Report is at present required to be produced collaboratively. Actually, the requirement is honored more in the breach than in the observance, i. e., if observed at all, the report is written by the A. I. D. project manager, or a program officer, in order to fulfill the technicality so that the project file may be retired. The signature of a Cooperating Country official may be affixed but the report does not represent a true collaborative effort. The reasons for the ineffectuality of the requirement probably are as follows:

- (1) Cooperating Country officials, unaccustomed in other contexts to completion of project reporting, lack manpower, time or interest to meet a donor's requirements once the funding for the activity has ceased. There may be reluctance even to sign off on a completion report for fear of implying officially that the need for continued donor support of the activity has ceased.
- (2) Mission and contractor personnel having most to do with the project's implementation are often reassigned prior to the call for the report.

From respondents interviewed, the analyst concludes that comparatively few Joint Completion Reports have been submitted. This suggests either that the need for the report has not been appreciated enough to

enforce the requirement, or that the requirement was unrealistically conceived. It is motivated by no underlying juridical reason and it does not serve any identifiable purpose, including transfer of experience, which cannot be served better by other more purposeful, realistic approaches to reporting. It is, therefore, the conclusion of this review that the Joint Completion Report should be deleted.

d. Should the project-file summary be maintained?

M. O. 1305.1.1, Attachment H to the "Project Management Handbook -- Technical Assistance," (Paragraph IV. A, 1, b) states:

"If a project is completed or cancelled, the project manager is responsible for insuring that the project file summary is prepared for Mission and/or A. I. D. /W records, as appropriate. Since this summary need not cover fiscal data, the final Project Appraisal Report (PAR) may be used for this purpose."

The above cited manual order is an attachment to the Handbook which is explicitly described as "an operating guide," but which does not elaborate on the Project File Summary.

So far as the analyst can determine from interviews with respondents and his own experience in project management, the Project File Summary is not viewed as an essential requirement.

Therefore, it is the conclusion of this review that the requirement for the Project File Summary should be deleted. The responsibility of the project manager to select out of the project file the reports and documents relating to transfer of experience for inclusion in the ARC should, however, remain clearly spelled out in future operational handbooks.

3. Conclusions

From the above discussion of issues we have come to the following conclusions regarding the end-of-project or terminal reporting system of the Agency:

- Out of the eight identified terminal reports, six should be maintained as meeting the needs of specific office(s) and fulfilling some basic purposes.
- Two reports -- the Joint Completion Report and the Project File Summary -- should be deleted for the reasons cited above (see III 2, c and d).
- Contracts for intermediaries should be more explicit regarding reporting requirements.

C. Transfer of Experience Reporting

1. Definition

Transfer of experience reporting, as used in the context of this report, means the description, analysis, and evaluation of the critical factors, as illustrated by the pertinent incidents, which, in the life of a project affect the achievement of its purposes and goals. The spectrum of critical factors includes resources, concepts, strategy, plans, methods and performance as well as the elements of time, place, major actors and their interrelationships. These kinds of information, in addition to the bare bone, quantified data about inputs and outputs, constitute the flesh and blood needed by the future analyst to reconstruct the real project story and to learn whatever lessons are taught by previous experience.

2. Existing A. I. D. resources of transfer of experience

The evolution of A. I. D. over a period of years from several earlier foreign aid agencies has produced a mass of documentation of the agencies' accomplishments and experiences. These reports and documents have been deposited in various appropriate subject matter offices within A. I. D. with the result that the Agency's informational resource materials have been largely decentralized and held in over 12 collections or information resource units.

A large degree of centralization has taken place within the past six years with the establishment and development of a selective "memory bank," the A. I. D. Reference Center (ARC). The recent institution of a

computerized quarterly catalogue of ARC holdings, the "A. I. D. Memory Documents", announcing the materials available on loan provides a significant tool for achievement of the objective of linking A. I. D.'s memory of past experience with planning for future action in development assistance.

Other important means of collecting and/or announcing transfer of experience documentation on ongoing and/or completed activities and projects are the following (not listed in order of priority):

- Central project files, located in the ARC, containing key project documents, i. e., PROP, PARs, ProAgs.
- "A. I. D. Bibliography Series;" a series of annotated bibliographies, covering the subject areas of agriculture, development administration, health, education and human resources, civic participation, and technical assistance methodology, listing reports, documents, articles and books which should be helpful to technicians in the field as well as to A. I. D. /W personnel who seek to learn lessons from past experiences.
- Audit reports and information retrievable by means of the Auditor General Information System (AGIS).
- Technical Assistance Guidance Series (TAGS); presents to TA planners and advisors generic methods and techniques which have been found to make technical assistance processes and relationships more effective. The first issue (TAGS-1) was published November 1972.
- "Focus: Technical Cooperation," published quarterly as a section of the International Development Review, Society for International Development (SID), is devoted to the theory and practice of "technical assistance" and "technical cooperation." Supported jointly by A. I. D. and the UNDP, "Focus" is conceived as a publication for use by all those involved in the technical assistance process for the purpose of communicating experience.
- Development Digest - a quarterly journal of excerpts, summaries, and reprints of current materials on economic and social development, is prepared for A. I. D. by the National Planning Association.
- Progress and final reports of contractors or intermediaries, required variously according to contractual agreement.

- End of Tour Reports (ETR's) (M.O. 326.3, 11-18-66). The ETR is not a mandatory requirement. Missions, optionally, may require a direct-hire officer/technician to write the report if they desire to preserve a written summary of selected experience for the sake of project continuity.
- Special studies, such as those generated by the Spring Review exercise and the existing procedures for special evaluation, provide a body of transfer of experience literature which differs qualitatively from the other resources, listed above. It is distinctive because it is problem - or issue-centered and it is accomplished by trained experts in the field who are assigned full time to do the required research within a definite time-frame for an identifiable group of users.
- The Bureau for Technical Assistance (TAB) directory of services; e. g. , draft of directory in Agriculture and Development Administration, November 1972.

Provides current information about resources (people, documentation, and services) available to USAIDs and A. I. D. /W in each subsector of agriculture and development administration. This directory is the first of a series which will cover the priority sectors.

- People, their personal files and memories (the "old boy network")

Although the rosters of A. I. D. personnel undergo constant change and reduction, there are "on board," either in the field or in A. I. D. /W, a significant number of officers, who from personal professional experience would be able to assist in the solution of project planning design and implementation problems if called upon to do so.

3. Issues

- a. Learning lessons from past experience.

A. I. D. 's system for program/project evaluation assumes that (1) a given activity can be improved from periodic assessment of its performance, and (2) that within limits Project A in Country X can "learn" with advantage from

Project B in Country Y. The problem of generating, collecting, sorting and disseminating such information has proven to be feasible in the first instance. However, in the second instance, where lessons learned out of a project in one country may be applicable to a project in another cultural and geographical context, the transfer of experience process becomes much more difficult to systematize.

Within the scope of this report, it is not possible to do more than to suggest ways in which improved linkages can be effected between the supply of experiential information and its user. The burden of the review deals with existing sources of informational supply and the perceived demands of known user groups. As previously discussed (See I, B, 3 above.), this report's proposals dealing with generation and supply of information are broadly designed to meet the conditions of an organization in transition. Therefore, in view of existing constraints of manpower and funds, we propose only what can be clearly justified by present requirements.

b. Felt needs.

The questions "Who wants particular kinds of information?" and "Who wants transfer of experience project information?" were asked by the analyst of many A. I. D. personnel in the course of the review. As to the felt needs for any single kind of information, everyone interviewed answered that he needs all sorts of data, depending on the problem he is addressing. He obtains the information he needs in any way he can, either from resources known to him in Washington and elsewhere in the U. S., or from "the field" within the time limits provided by the problem's deadlines.

Specifically, with regard to transfer of experience information relating to particular projects, the typical A. I. D. officer depends on his own and others' experience in addition to what the project file may yield. Except for identified gaps where data are inadequate or non-existent, A. I. D. officers express no urgent need for information further than what seems to exist in the system at present. Most are unconcerned with information beyond that which pertains directly to their duties and tend to feel overwhelmed by more data than they have time to absorb. However, the purpose of developing a better

system for identifying and retrieving information is precisely to alleviate such an information flow problem. An improved information system makes it possible for the A. I. D. officer to be better protected from unwanted "noise" on one hand, and on the other, to reach out and widen his acquaintance with pertinent information about which he was unaware.

c. Categories of informational needs.

Four main categories of information are identifiable as being needed in the ongoing data base of A. I. D:

- (1) Program information, i. e., the content, aims and status of current programs for each project/activity.
- (2) Substantive technical or problem-solving information, i. e., for selected problem areas, a thorough range of research, technology and experience made available for alleviation of the problem.
- (3) Situational information, i. e., politico-economic-cultural setting of countries where U.S. projects exist or are proposed; information re other donor activities in each location.
- (4) Administrative information, i. e., status of A. I. D. personnel, funds, supplies, and communications as required for internal administration.

d. Extending the utility of the data base.

- (1) Information useful to LDCs and other donors.

Throughout the history of the Agency, the main users of its self-generated transfer of experience information have been its own personnel or outside researchers who, in some special relationship, have had interest in the Agency's reports and documents. As previously mentioned, one of the key elements of A. I. D. 's Reform is the establishment of an operating style emphasizing collaboration with the developing countries and the improvement of coordination with multilateral institutions and other donors. There remains much to be done

in "translating" (i. e. , adapting and packaging) A. I. D. 's "lessons learned" from experience in development assistance for the benefit of the LDCs. Improved documentation of A. I. D. experience will strengthen efforts in this area.

(2) Information useful to intermediaries.

As A. I. D. moves increasingly towards the involvement of intermediaries in all aspects of development assistance, the Agency's unclassified memory should be made more available to them to improve their effective participation. The problem in this case is not so much "translation" of lessons learned (as in the case with the LDCs) as it is of supplying a broadened user public with A. I. D. -generated materials, copies of which are in short supply.

e. The role of existing reports for the transfer of experience.

- (1) The Project Appraisal Report (PAR) is a document which records in the briefest way, mainly for the information of A. I. D. /W, the conclusions reached by the Mission relative to the most recent evaluation of a project as measured against progress indicators cited in the logical framework. Not intended of itself to be a transfer of experience report, the PAR is primarily a report card, a device by means of which the Mission communicates to A. I. D. /W the end results of its annual review of the project. It thus also serves as an instrument for the assessment of the review's quality. However, it should be acknowledged that the PAR can be useful in transfer of experience if carefully coordinated with the other key program documents in the project file.
- (2) The End of Tour Report (ETR) was conceived as a transfer of experience document; the opportunity for a technician to record his accomplishments and judgments relative to technical assistance as he views it at the end of his tour.

As part of this review, the analyst sampled 128 representative ETR's submitted over a fifteen year period (1957-71) by Agency personnel (direct-hire, PASA's and contract) as follows:

Direct-hire	30
PASA's	11
Contract	83
Name only	<u>4</u>
Total	128

The reports represented experience in all geographical regions and main sectors of past A. I. D. project activity, as follows:

	<u>Agric.</u>	<u>Educ.</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
Africa	4	20	6	30
Asia	18	12	13	43
Latin America	33	7	15	55
Totals	<u>55</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>128</u>

The substantive analysis of these ETRs brought out the following points:

- For a reader with no prior knowledge of the activities referred to, 25% of the ETR's contained significant transfer of experience information.
- Written by project personnel for other Agency staff acquainted with the specific project, the reports become less and less intelligible the farther the reader is removed from the scene.
- The main purpose served by the ETR appears to be at the operational level to brief successor project managers and Mission personnel regarding the background of the activity in question.

- Of the random sample written by direct-hire personnel, and covering the same 15 year span, only 10% were submitted since the M.O was made optional. It was therefore impossible on such a small scale to judge if the quality of the reports improved by virtue of the non-mandatory condition.
- Many reports were overly defensive and subjective. Their purpose had probably been served as soon as submitted and cleared by the Mission director with his comments.

(3) Special and/or case studies

The value of the special and/or case study for transfer of experience can be high, depending, of course, on the reliability of the data used and the techniques of research employed. One of its chief values lies in the fact that it tries to reconstruct a complete situation for analysis. The user can then use his own judgment as to the objectivity of the conclusions.

(4) Contractors' reports.

Similarly, contractors' reports, when the contract is explicit regarding the specifications desired, may hold high value for experience transfer. With increasing reliance on intermediaries for the implementation of A. I. D. -financed activities, the Agency should build into contracts the requirements for reporting on experience transfer information and conclusions, thereby enriching its resources for future reference.

f. Should a special Transfer of Experience Report be required?

Consideration has been given to the implementation of GAO's suggestion that a special report highlighting "lessons learned" be required of project personnel on a regular basis. (Refer to GAO Letter-report "Needed Improvements in the Information System for Technical Assistance, "May 3, 1972) A preliminary proposal was considered by the Program Evaluation Committee (PEC whereby a Transfer of Experience Report (TER) would be required of each project manager, direct-hire or contract,

at the end of each tour. (Refer to Appendix B, McCarthy, John W., "Terminal Reporting for Non-Capital Technical Assistance Projects").

However, from the perspective of this review, the disadvantages inherent in the TER proposal outweigh the advantages, since (a) such a report would revive mandatorily the functions served by the optional End of Tour Report (ETR), and (b) add to the reporting responsibilities of Mission personnel at the same time that the Agency is eliminating all but the most necessary and effective reporting requirements.

g. Processing transfer-of-experience information -- problems and suggested solutions.

Some of the continuing problems affecting the collection, storage and retrieval of terminal and transfer-of-experience reporting are:

- The incomplete flow of newly-generated documents to ARC. Improved procedures and an aggressive acquisition policy by the ARC management should alleviate this problem.

Post-completion retirement of key documents, which withdraws significant transfer-of-experience information from easy availability. Here too, improved procedures for transmittal to ARC, as well as enforcement of existing directives, and continued vigilance by ARC personnel will help solve this problem.

- Inconsistencies in the coding of projects, especially where projects of multi-year duration undergo programming reformulation so as to fit prevailing budgeting constraints. This problem, which affects the identification and retrieval of project information, could be alleviated by a clear designation of responsibility for assigning project numbers and the development of a simple system to keep track of changes.
- Lack of complete bibliographical information (e. g., project number, contract number, etc.) on every A. I. D. -generated document, including contractors' reports. A solution to this would be to implement by

M.O. and contract "boiler plate" the standardized Council on Scientific and Technical Information (COSATI) guidelines for title pages of all A. I. D. -generated reports. (Refer to the NARS report recommendations.)

h. Linking resources of information to users.

For the future, the existing systems for linking information resources to users, which are outlined in III, c, 2 above, will have to serve present needs due (1) to lack of more precise formulation of users needs during the period of Agency transition, and (2) to existing manpower and funding constraints that affect the feasibility of long-range plans for radical systems improvement in this area. Nevertheless the following alternative linkage mechanisms are suggested for future exploration:

(1) Project matching service:

A non-automated project matching service whereby one or two individuals are designated to develop and maintain the Central Project Files in the ARC and to match new project proposals with key documents (PROPs, special studies, etc.) generated out of previous, similar activities for the use of project planners.

(2) Designation of information liaison personnel within each regional bureau and for the major sectors (agriculture, education, etc.) who would link the known sources of A. I. D. research and experiential information with the projects and their managerial and/or technical personnel overseas.

(3) The formation of an Information Analysis Center, associated with the ARC and other information resource centers, whereby a small staff of qualified specialists, with expertise in the development assistance subject areas would effect the services suggested in (1) and (2) above but on an Agency-wide basis.

4. Conclusions.

A realistic system to meet the Agency's present felt needs for an effective transfer of technical assistance experience can, and should, be developed. If responsibly supported and implemented, it should produce

optimal reporting of experience, for ready availability to users, while imposing a minimal workload on the Agency's manpower resources. We believe this can be done by:

- Maintaining and developing in A. I. D. /W, mainly in the ARC, a solid core data base of program information. Such a base would consist of key documents to be kept current in the Central Project File (i. e., PROPs, ProAgs, PARs, cross referenced contractors' reports, special evaluations, etc.), organized for ready availability through project and contract codes.
- Strengthening the effectiveness of such a data base through:
 - (a) maintenance and development of up-to-date directories and announcements of existing A. I. D. and other information resources, designed and distributed to increase the Agency's experience transfer capability through its administrative and operational staffs.
 - (b) Development of other linkages between transfer-of-experience information resources and users, such as project matching and information retrieval services.
 - (c) Improved processing of transfer-of-experience information.
- Selecting annually a few projects for special evaluations focused on gaining particularly valuable transfer-of-experience information. Using qualified contractors, a few in-depth case studies or special evaluations of projects would be initiated, based on a centralized determination of needs, for the following purposes:
 - (1) Improved Agency planning, design, and management of development projects.
 - (2) Dialogue and exchange of information with multi-lateral institutions and other donors.
 - (3) Informational assistance to the LDCs re A. I. D. experience with development assistance.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

No. 1: Delete the requirement for the Joint Completion Report.

(M. O. 1333.1, 1-18-66, Annex B, ProAg. Standard Provisions Annex, Section O).

A. Background: The requirement has proved to be ineffectual and unrealistic. An ongoing data base of key project documents will provide all needed information more effectively.

B. Advantages: Deletion of the requirement will relieve the Missions of one more unnecessary report and, in contrast, increase the importance of objective terminal reporting by contractors and of final evaluations of projects by Missions.

C. Suggested implementing actions and office:

1. Rescind present M. O. requirement
2. PPC/PME

No. 2: Delete the requirement of the Project File Summary for completed projects (M. O. 1305.1.1, 8-10-70, Section IV, A. I. D. Attachment H to "Project Management Handbook").

A. Background: Although the responsibility of the project manager remains intact to select out of the project file the reports/documents relating to transfer of experience for forwarding to the ARC, the purpose and users of the Project File Summary are questionable.

B. Advantages: Deletion of the requirement will not impair the present system for orderly retirement of files for completed projects; it will relieve field personnel of an unessential report to prepare.

C. Suggested implementing action and office:

1. Rescind the M. O. requirement
2. PPC/PME

No. 3: Maintain the End of Tour Report (ETR) (M. O. 366.3, U-513) as an optional document, prepared at the discretion of the Mission or of the technician.

A. Background: Although the ETR has not proved to be a document of primary importance to the experience transfer system, the sample survey indicates that approximately 25% of the ETRs available contain significant transfer of experience information. They also serve to brief successor managers.

B. Advantages: Maintenance of the requirement is advisable for the sake of continuity of projects where Missions determine that project managers need to brief successor managers; and to allow the technician to state his end-of-tour appraisal of his experience for the record. The ETR, even secondarily, adds to the resources of A. I. D. memory in the ARC.

C. Suggested implementing action and office:

1. No action required
2. PPC/PME

No. 4: Adopt and implement annually the extension of the special study/evaluation approach to transfer-of-experience reporting by determining centrally a few project/program activities of relevance to current development assistance issues, using qualified contractors to carry out the research and produce the reports.

A. Background: The Agency has various information resources at present in its ongoing data base which can be announced for the use of A. I. D. personnel systematically and efficiently by means of directories, bibliographies and catalogs. Comprehensive reporting on specific project experience, however, is generally not readily available in useful forms to serve the people who could benefit most from it.

B. Advantages: In-depth studies of selected projects in order to gain comprehensive transfer-of-experience information related to problems and issues of particular interest would considerably strengthen the A. I. D. memory. Such reports would also command the attention of multi-lateral agencies, other donors, and the LDCs. Normally such studies would be carried out by expert analysts contracted from outside the Agency. The cost to the Agency would be comparable to, but need be no more than, that of present special evaluations by contractors.

C. Suggested implementing action and office:

1. To schedule such studies on an annual basis.
2. PPC/PME in cooperation with PPC/DPR, TAB, the Regional Bureaus and Missions.

No. 5: Require intermediaries, through clear and specific instructions in contracts, to be explicit in their work plans and reporting on progress of projects and completion of assignments. The use of quantified data and objective progress indicators should be required as much as possible in contractors' work plans and reports.

- A. Background: As the Agency shifts to an increasing reliance upon intermediaries for the implementation of its projects, A. I. D. 's dependence on contractors and PASAs' reports may be expected to increase proportionally.
- B. Advantages: The objectivity of contractors' and PASAs reporting will be enhanced if the requirement for increased specificity and use of quantified data is spelled out in advance in the contractual instruments. The usefulness of such improved reporting for experience transfer research will similarly be greatly increased.
- C. Suggested implementing actions and offices:
1. Revise project management guidelines (M. O. 1305.1.1), PIO/T instructions (M. O. 1352), and ProAg instructions (M. O. 1352.1), and stress improved contractor reporting in project management training, to ensure that PIO/Ts, ProAgs, contracts, and PASAs reflect above recommendation.
 2. SER/CM
PPC/PME

No. 6: Improve the A. I. D. information resources management system especially with regard to:

- A strengthened core data base for program information in the A. I. D. Reference Center (ARC). Such a base would consist of copies of key documents to be kept current in the Central Project File (i. e., PROPs, ProAgs, PARs, cross-referenced contractors' reports, special evaluations, etc.) organized for ready availability through project and contract codes.
- Maintenance and development of bibliographies to be distributed widely to all key A. I. D. personnel to announce the availability of existing information resources having bearing upon experience transfer and its relationships to improved planning implementation and evaluation of development assistance.

- Development of other linkages between information resources and users, such as project matching and information retrieval services.
 - Improved processing of transfer-of-experience information, such as the issuance, and enforcement, of more effective procedures for directing the flow of copies of documents to the ARC, standardization of bibliographic information for all A. I. D. -generated reports, etc.
- A. Background: The universal style of A. I. D. personnel is to seek needed information on a basis of personal "ad hocism" depending on the job to be done. An improved information system, in support of this fundamental behavior pattern, should:
- (a) widen the acquaintance of its officers to include the areas of information with which they are possibly unacquainted in order to improve the quality of their work;
 - (b) protect them from unwanted "noise."
- B. Advantages: The proposed improvements in the information management system, none of which require more than minimal additional workload, will be reflected in more efficient and better quality Agency operations.
- C. Suggested implementing action and office:
1. Development and implementation of long-range plans to strengthen A. I. D. 's information services.
 2. SER/DM

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS REQUIRED

Recom. No.	Subject of Recommendation	Action Required	Suggested Implementing Office
1.	Joint Completion Report	Rescind present M. O requirement	PPC/PME
2.	Project File Summary	Rescind present M. O. requirement	PPC/PME
3.	End of Tour Report	No action necessary	N. A.
4.	In-depth case studies for Transfer of Experience purposes	Annual schedule of a few studies	PPC/PME, PPC/DPR, TAB, Regional Bureaus, Missions
5.	Reporting instructions in contracts	Revise project management guidelines, PIO/T and ProAg instructions; stress improved contractor reporting in project management training.	SER/CM PPC/PME
6.	A. I. D. Information Resources Management System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program data base - Bibliographies, directories, catalogs, etc. - Info. resource - user linkages - Info. processing 	Develop and implement long range plans to strengthen A. I. D. services for experience transfer information	SER/DM

SCOPE OF WORK

Review of A.I.D. Systems for Terminal and Transfer-of-Experience Reporting
of Technical Assistance ProjectsI. BackgroundA. Problem

A.I.D. needs more useable and accessible information about its ongoing and completed technical assistance activities in order to improve its capabilities to plan and formulate new projects and to manage its ongoing programs. In particular this applies to two types of reporting that are closely interconnected:

1. Terminal reporting (end-of-project) requirements, some of which at present seem ill-fitted to A.I.D.'s new directives stressing centralization of management, increased use of intermediaries, and a more collaborative style in cooperating with the less developed countries seeking U.S. assistance.
2. Transfer of experience reporting by means of which important experience gained and lessons learned during the life of projects can be systematically documented in useful forms, collected, announced, and made available to managers, planners, and policy makers in order to improve the planning, design and management of development projects.

B. Discussion of past efforts

Existing requirements for terminal reporting of technical assistance projects are listed in the Attachment. Most of the listed requirements have been conceived to fulfill some legal purpose confirming the compliance of A.I.D., its intermediaries or the cooperating countries with stated contractual agreements. But none is found to be adequate to communicate the dimension of in-depth experiential, or "lessons learned," information which should be invaluable to planners, managers and evaluators in order to help them avoid old pitfalls as they design and implement new projects or redesign ongoing activities. For example, the End of Tour Report (ETR), now only optionally required, elicits little more than a running and often defensive account of the technician's experiences, whereas a substantial discussion of why and how he resolved practical administrative or technical problems would have more permanent value. Similarly, the now defunct Project History and Analysis Report (PHAR) turned out more so-called "history" (work-plan data and figures) than useful analysis. The Project Appraisal Report (PAR) reports to A.I.D./W the evaluative conclusions reached

at some point in time but these conclusions are too brief to answer the questions that planners and managers of similar activities elsewhere are likely to ask. There is now no specific requirement for transfer of experience ("lessons learned") reporting; however, such a procedure was recommended in the GAO letter report dated May 3, 1972, titled "Needed Improvements in the Information System for Technical Assistance Projects."

C. Basis of request for service from MP/SYS

During the past few months the Program Evaluation Staff (PPC/PE), in cooperation with the Program Evaluation Committee, has discussed the existing requirements for end-of-project reporting as related to the function of the PAR. PPC/PE has concluded that the need for review and revision of terminal requirements are only part of the problem which is systemic in scope and that revision should go beyond the purview of project evaluation. Therefore PPC/PE has asked MP/SYS to address the problem from both the points of view of effective terminal reporting and of transfer of experience. Since the total information system for technical assistance is involved when the end-use of generated reports is considered, the scope of review would include the participation of other offices (refer to III-B below).

II. Work Plan

A. Purpose of the review

As agreed between SER/MP/SYS and PPC/PE the proposed review will:

1. Establish the frame of reference, reflecting the Agency's new role, style and structure, within which a revision of A.I.D.'s terminal reporting requirements for technical assistance projects can be accomplished. This will include an analysis of the present project termination process in order to develop specific recommendations for changes in the existing requirements regarding terminal reporting.
2. Propose a feasible system, which will meet the Agency's needs for effective transfer of technical assistance experience. The review will take due consideration of the basic objective of: (a) obtaining optimal information reporting, (b) for ready availability to users, (c) while imposing a minimal workload on Agency manpower resources, both direct-hire and intermediary.

B. Methodology

The analyst will: (1) review previous studies on the subject of project termination and transfer of experience reporting; (2) peruse samples of terminal, end-of-tour, and other pertinent reports; (3) interview selected officials who have experience in the subject area; (4) analyze the data collected; and (5) develop recommendations for future action.

C. Report

The analyst will develop a report including (1) a discussion of issues and problems; (2) a review of alternative courses of action with consideration of pros and cons for each alternative; and (3) specific recommendations for new or restructured Agency-wide terminal/transfer-of-experience reporting requirements and procedures, and possibly a draft policy determination. Prior to finalizing the report, a draft will be forwarded to the client office (PPC/PE) for comment and concurrence, and to other relevant offices for comment.

D. Implementation

PPC/PE has agreed to work closely with SYS in the development of proposals and together to seek ultimate concurrence from the program offices of the regional bureaus, the key central staff offices, such as PPC, TAB, etc., and finally top management, for better reporting requirements.

III. Personnel/Offices Involvement

- A. MP/SYS staff assigned - D.H. Edwards
- B. Principal offices to be contacted - PPC/PE, R.L. Hubbell
H.D. Turner
J.W. McCarthy
PPC/DPR, A.M. Handley
TA/PM, D.G. Mathiasen
J.W. Green
AA/TA, R.E. Kitchell
SER/DM, L.A. Rhodes
TA/RUR, C. Barker
SER/PROC/CSD, Branches of
contract policy & review
Regional Bureaus' technical,
program and evaluation
offices
Selected country desks

IV. Schedule of Work

- A. Data collection including perusal of pertinent documents and interviews with other offices:
 - B. Analysis of data collected and development of recommendations:
 - C. Preparation and finalization of report: = 1 man-month
- } = 2 man-months

cc:SER/MP, J.T.McMahon (Info)

Clearances:

PPC/PE, R.L. Hubbell (draft) 9/27/72
SER/MP/SYS, E.J. Lachman 9/28/72

SELECTED LIST OF DOCUMENTARY SOURCES CONSULTED

A. ORGANIZATION AND ROLE OF A. I. D.

Arndt, Thomas M., A/AID/EXSEC. Certain Regional Bureau Relationships with TAB and Interbureau Coordination on Sector Emphasis and Priority Development Problems. Memorandum for the Executive Staff and attached guidelines paper. Washington, D.C., October 16, 1972. p. 10.

Hannah, John A. Development Assistance Planning Guidance-FY 1974. AIDTO Circular A-543 drafted by Philip Birnbaum, AA/PPC, and Sidney Brown, PPC/RB, April 13, 1972. Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development, April 15, 1972, (date sent). p. 13 (Typewritten)

_____. Memorandum for A. I. D. Employees, and Attachment: Reform of the U.S. Economic Assistance Program. Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development, January 24, 1972. p. 20. (Multigraphed)

_____. Policy Determination: Employment and Income Distribution; Objectives for A. I. D. Programs and Policies. Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development, October 2, 1972. p. 8 (Typewritten)

Hubbell, Robert L., chm., Ad Hoc Task Force. USAID Role, Style and Structure. Draft AIDTO airgram, August 1, 1972. Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development, p. 12 + attachments:
Attachment A: "Project Monitoring, FY 1973." p. 15 (Benz report)
Attachment B: "Roles of Cooperating Countries, A. I. D., and Intermediaries in Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation of Technical and Other Non-Capital Assistance." p. 12 (Typewritten)

Stern, Ernest; Birnbaum, Philip; and Arndt, Thomas. Analyses of A. I. D.'s Objectives, Functions, Organization, Implementation Capacity, and Management Systems to Identify A. I. D.'s Role in Development Assistance in the 1970's. Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development, December 1971. p. 52 (Multigraphed)

B. MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS OF A. I. D.

Crane, Jacob. Technical Assistance Project Management. Report to PPC/RS, A. I. D. Washington, D. C., July 6, 1971. p. 35 (Multigraphed)

Herder, R. W., study coordinator. Report on Project Management Problems; a staff report prepared for A. I. D. management by a special study group composed of representatives from regional bureaus and the Auditor General. Washington, D. C.: Agency for International Development, November 1969. p. 38

Hinman, Carroll S. Management Requirements for Future U.S. Technical Assistance: A Report to Joel Bernstein, AA/TAB, Agency for International Development. Washington, D. C., July 16, 1971. p. 52 + summary table. (Multigraphed)

McMahon, James T., SER/MP; Herrick, Allison B., LA/DP; and Manley, James W., SER/MP. Draft Report of the Study Team on Reduction of Mission Workload. Washington, D. C.: Agency for International Development, SER/MP, January 22, 1973. p. 48 incl. attachment. (Typewritten)

National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC) and Agency for International Development (A. I. D.), Joint Committee. The Institutional Development Agreement: A new operational framework for A. I. D. and the Universities. A joint report. Washington, D. C., January 1970. p. 88

C. TRANSFER OF EXPERIENCE DOCUMENTATION: Announcements of sources, proposals and previous recommendations.

Agency for International Development Reference Center. A. I. D. Memory Documents. A quarterly, computerized catalog of A. I. D. -generated documents. Springfield, Virginia: National Technical Information Service (NTIS), 1972. Vol. 1, Nos. 1-2.

- _____, Bureau for Technical Assistance, Office of Research and University Relations. The A. I. D. Research Program 1962-1971; Project objectives and results. Washington, D. C.: Agency for International Development, March 1971. p. 115
- _____, Bureau for Technical Assistance. Directory of Services in Agriculture and Development Administration Provided by A. I. D. Bureau for Technical Assistance. Draft. Washington, D. C., November 1972. p. 116
- Hubbell, Robert L., and McCarthy, John W. Reporting for Completed Non-Capital Projects; issues for discussion. Agenda for Program Evaluation Committee Meeting. Washington, D. C.: Agency for International Development, May 4, 1972. p. 2 + attachment: "Compliance Reporting for T. A. Projects."
- McCarthy, John W. Terminal Reporting for Non-Capital Technical Assistance Projects. Memorandum to C. William Kontos, Development, A/AID/PE, January 21, 1972. p. 5 + attached logical framework. (Typewritten)
- Rice, Edward B. Proposal for an Evaluation of Systems Predecessor to GPOL. Memorandum to C. William Kontos, A/AID/PE. Washington, D. C.: Agency for International Development, A/AID/PE, January 27, 1972. p. 7 (Typewritten)
- _____, Search for Historical Records of U.S. Technical Assistance. Case Study: Agricultural Program in Latin America, Report No. 1. Memorandum to Donald R. Snodgrass, PPC/PPD, March 29, 1968. Washington, D. C.: Agency for International Development. p. 13 + annexes and footnotes. (Mimeographed)
- Schwab, Gerald, ed. Evaluation Handbook, Second Edition. Washington, D. C.: Agency for International Development, Office of Program Evaluation, February 1972. p. 113 (Manual Circular 1026.1, Supplement II)

United States General Accounting Office (GAO). Needed Improvements in the Information System for Technical Assistance. Letter-report from J.E. Milgate, Assoc. Director, GAO, to Philip Birnbaum, AA/PPC, Agency for International Development, May 3, 1972. p. 3 + p. 15 attachments.

Refer also to the official A. I. D. response to the above cited GAO Report, as follows:

Birnbaum, Philip, AA/PPC. Letter response to J.E. Milgate,

Assoc. Director, International Division, GAO.
Washington, D. C. : Agency for International
Development, July 12, 1972. p. 7 + attachment:
"Dissemination of A. I. D. Bibliographies."

D. OTHER REPORTS AND MATERIALS RELATED TO TRANSFER OF EXPERIENCE

Agency for International Development. Fourth Annual Report to the Congress Under Section 621A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 as Amended: Strengthened Management Practices in the Agency for International Development (A. I. D.). Washington, D. C., July 1972. p. 16 (Referred to as the Fourth Tunney Report)

_____, Technical Assistance Bureau. Research Networks. Technical Assistance Guidance Series (TAGS) No. 1. Washington, D. C., November 1972. p. 7

Committee on Scientific and Technical Information (COSATI). Progress in Scientific and Technical Communications; COSATI Annual Report 1971. (Report on A. I. D. activities relating to information transfer to the Lesser Developed Countries, pp. 47-49). Washington, D. C. : Federal Council for Science and Technology, 1972. p. 96

National Archives and Records (NARS), Office of Records Management. Information Documentation Resources Study. Washington, D. C. : General Services Administration, February 1971. p. 28 + 15 exhibits.

- Lachman, Erwin J. Transfer of Technical Information to the LDCs. Discussion paper. Washington, D. C.: Agency for International Development, SER/MP/SYS, October 2, 1972, revised November 24, 1972. p. 5 + selected bibliography. (Typewritten)
- Neal, Ernest E. Hope for the Wretched: A narrative report of technical assistance experiences. Washington, D. C.: Agency for International Development, Bureau for Africa and Office of Public Affairs, 1972. p. 130
- Ohly, John H. The Mobilization of Federal Resources in Support of the Foreign Aid Program. Washington, D. C.: Agency for International Development, July 23, 1962. p. 220 + appendices. (Typewritten)
- Rice, Edward B.; Lehmann, Glenn A.; and Birnbaum, Harold. Utilization of Economic Research. A. I. D. Evaluation Paper No. 4. Washington, D. C.: Agency for International Development, PPC/PDA, October 1971. p. 52

LIST OF A. I. D. PERSONNEL INTERVIEWED

December 1972 - January 1973

<u>Organization Symbol</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
AG/OAS	John S. Benz	507G PP
PPC/RB	Sidney L. Brown	3316A NS
PPC/PME	Walter Furst	2536A NS
PPC/DPR	Arthur M. Handley	3938 NS
PPC/RB	Richard C. Nygard	3637 NS
PPC/PDA	Edward A. Rice	2635 NS
AA/PPC	Larry Smucker	3889 NS
TA/RUR	Curtis Barker	2744C NS
TA/PM	James W. Green	2937 NS
TA/RUR	James R. Hoath	2737 NS
AA/TA	Robert G. Johnson	2842 NS
AA/TA	Raymond E. Kitchell	2842 NS
TA/RUR	Delbert T. Myren	2737 NS
SER/CM/ROD	Russell Dilts	731C PP
SER/CM/COD	Robert J. O'Brien	773B PP
SER/DM/ISD	Linwood A. Rhodes	721 SA-12
SER/CM/SD	John A. Sewell	613 PP
AFR/ESA	Hunter Farnham	4845 NS
AFR/DP	Irving Licht	6744 NS
AFR/ESA	Charles A. Sanders	4752 NS
AFR/CWA	Leroy A. Sands	4530 NS
ASIA/TECH	James J. Dalton	5316 NS
ASIA/TECH	Harold Freeman	5312 NS
ASIA/TECH	Edgar L. Owens	5318 NS
LA/DR	Marshall Brown	2249 NS
LA/MRSD	Richard Green	3482 NS
LA/DP	Allison Herrick	3482 NS
SA/PPB	James Cudney	3208 NS
SA/TCD	Francis J. Murphy	613C RPC
M/FSI/SSFP	Kenneth S. Levick	1209 SA-3

QUESTIONS

General

1. What is your work?
2. What have been your previous responsibilities with A.I.D. and its predecessor agencies:
 - a. in Washington?
 - b. overseas?
3. What kinds of information (e.g., technical, statistical, problem solving, political, socio-economic) relative to project planning/formulation, implementation and evaluation do you depend on in your work?
 - a. regularly?
 - b. occasionally?
4. In what ways do your needs for project information differ in A.I.D./W from what your needs were overseas?
5. To what extent have you consulted reports relative to other projects when you formulated or reviewed new project proposals?
6. If access had been easier to information on experience gained from other similar projects, might you have drawn on this experience at the time you were formulating or reviewing a new project?

End-of-project, or terminal reporting requirements

Existing requirements for terminal reporting of technical assistance projects are listed in the Attachment. Most of the listed requirements were conceived to fulfill purposes relative to the compliance by A.I.D., its intermediaries, or by the cooperating countries with regulations or contractual agreements.

7. Have you had experience with the following reports: (see a,b,c,d, below)
 - a. Joint USAID/Cooperating Country Completion of Project Report?
 - b. Project File Summary?
 - c. Contract Close-out Checklist?
 - d. Audit related reports for completed projects?
 - e. Within the new role, style and structure of A.I.D., which of the above reports would you:
 - (1) keep unchanged? Why?
 - (2) alter? Why?
 - (3) eliminate? Why?

- f. In your opinion, with regard to the Joint completion of Project Report cited above, does it need to be a joint report? Can you suggest better ways of fulfilling the report's stated purpose?
8. Which of the following purposes should be served by terminal reports:
 - a. In advance of project close-out, to decide final actions needed for orderly clean-up operations, and to recommend follow-up activities?
 - b. To complete the record, including the summary on all funding and accomplishments for the life of the project?
 - c. To communicate lessons learned?
9. How should the final report be designed for each of the three purposes cited in No. 8 above:
 - a. Structured?
 - b. General narrative?
 - c. What should be the roles of the Cooperating Country and of the intermediary in each case?
10. A.I.D.'s traditional pattern of reporting has required the intermediary to submit semi-annual progress reports and one life-of-project final report. In the future, intermediaries will be expected to assume increasing responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating projects.

To what extent can A.I.D. delegate to its intermediaries the reporting function of the planning, programming, implementing, and evaluation of technical assistance, while, at the same time, retaining effective control, specifically with regard to terminal reporting and transfer of experience reporting?

Transfer of experience reporting

A.I.D. has frequently been criticized for its lack of adequate in-depth, "lessons learned" information which should be valuable to project planners, managers and evaluators in order to assist them in the avoidance of old pitfalls as they design, implement or evaluate future or ongoing activities.

11. Is it reasonable to assume that lessons learned from one project may be applied to another project? If not, why not?
12. At present the End-of-Tour Report (ETR) is optional, to be required of an advisor/technician only if a Mission deems it advisable that the report be submitted (see Attachment C,2).

So far as you know, to what extent are direct hire A.I.D. personnel submitting ETR's at present?

Do you utilize ETR's in any aspect of your work? If so what aspect?

13. In your opinion, given the kinds of reporting that in the past have been required in ETR's, and in order to maintain in A.I.D.'s data-storage system as complete a collection of information as might be potentially useful, do you favor:
 - a. keeping the ETR optional at the Mission's discretion?
 - b. eliminating the ETR requirement entirely?
 - c. replacing the ETR with a periodic report which would highlight "lessons learned," and requiring that it be submitted only by full-time project managers and intermediaries?

14. If a periodic "lessons learned" report were to be required:
 - a. who should author it:
 - (1) project manager?
 - (2) intermediary?
 - b. how often should it be submitted?
 - c. should it be organized and submitted as a project document, i.e., identified by the project number to which it relates?
 - d. should it be a technician's personal statement with Mission comments attached?
OR
 - e. should it be a Mission statement re "lessons learned" from a project, i.e., report to be drafted by the project manager/intermediary but cleared and issued by the Mission?

15. For transferring lessons, do we need 100% coverage of projects to be reported. If not, what kinds of completed projects would you select? Why?

16. What should be the role of selected analyses, e.g., special evaluations?

17. Should the present PAR be used for transfer of experience reporting if new instructions were to be issued?

Alternatively, should a new final PAR be devised to include the "lessons learned" dimensions of the completed project?
If not, why not?

Existing Requirements for Terminal Reporting
of Technical Assistance Projects

Existing requirements for completion-of-project, or terminal, reporting amount to approximately a half-dozen manual orders, each conceived to serve some legal or informational purpose. These requirements are:

A. Compliance reports

1. Completion of project report, (M.O. 1333.1, 1-18-66, Annex B, PROAG Stand. Provs. Annex, Section O)
Action agents: USAID and Host Govt.
Report constitutes the international sign-off between signatory parties to the PROAG.
2. Project file summary for completed projects, (M.O. 1305.1.1, 8-10-70, Section IV, A, 1 b Attachment H to Project Management Handbook)
Action agent: Project Manager.
3. Contract close-out check list, (M.O. 1423.11, 7-1-68, Section IV, B)
Action agent: A.I.D. contracting officer
4. Audit related reports for completed projects (area AG's), (M.O. 791.3, 12-31-69, Sections 8&9; AG Instructions #21, 8-27-71)

B. Final evaluative reports

1. Contractor Performance Evaluation Report -- U-1423/1 (M.O. 1423.9, 9-13-72, Attachment A (TL 13:511))
Action agent: Project Manager
This report, in substitution for the former U-307, employs a factor rating system used in the PAR and constitutes a summary of contractor's performance during entire life of the contract.
2. Contractor's final report, (M.O. 1422, 6-70; A.I.D. 1420-12, 2-70, General Provisions, Section 29)
Action agent: Contractor's Chief of Party

C. Other related reports

1. Performance Appraisal Report, PAR (M.O. 1026.1, 11-13-70 and M.C. 1026.1, 3-25-72)
Evaluates implementation against GPOI.
2. End of Tour report - ETR (M.O. 326.3) the U-513 report.
This report, written by technicians and project managers, is at present optional at the discretion of the Mission.