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EVALUATION REPORT

EVALUATION ASSISTANCE PROJECT

No. 683-0229

USAID/Niger

Niamey, Niger

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18

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Table of Contents

- A. Summary and Recommendations**
 - 1. Background
 - 2. Current Project Situation
 - 3. Progress and Prospects
 - 4. Recommendations
- B. Methodology**
- C. External Factors**
- D. Inputs**
 - 1. Long Term Training
 - 2. Third Country Training
 - 3. Short Term Training
 - 4. Long Term U.S. Technical Assistance
 - 5. Short Term Technical Assistance
- E. Outputs**
 - 1. Development of Institutional Capacity
 - 2. Documentation Center
 - 3. Institutional Support to ENA
- F. Project Purpose**
- G. Project Goal**
- H. Project Beneficiaries**
- I. Unplanned Effects**
- J. Lessons Learned**
- K. Special Comments or Remarks**

A. Summary and Recommendations

1. Background

The Evaluation Assistance Project (683-0229) is designed to assist the Nigerien Ministry of Plan (MOP) to develop an institutional capacity to conduct systematic program and sectoral evaluations. Major inputs include long term U. S. participant training, third country training, short term training courses in Niger, short term technical assistance and long term technical assistance in the form of two U. S. technical advisors, a Development Administration Specialist and a Social Impact Analysis Specialist.

By the end of the project, an active, functional evaluation system will exist which is capable of carrying out professional critical analysis within any development sector and to which the MOP will look for reports and analyses of experience to date before formulating new programs or encouraging particular policies in one of the development sectors. Major outputs planned for the project are (a) establishment of a Bureau of Evaluation in the MOP, (b) formation of a pool of evaluation technicians trained for work in the Bureau, (c) establishment of a system of information exchange and support which links the MOP to the technical Ministries, and (d) development of a capability within the Bureau of Evaluation (BE) to conduct systematic program and sector evaluations.

2. Current Project Situation

Under the BE, a small nucleus of trained, competent technicians has participated and contributed to numerous evaluations, both ex-ante and ex-post, conferences, workshops and seminars and initiated ad hoc linkages and information with the technical Ministries, other GON organizations and external donors in particular. In several cases, evaluations in which BE participated led to significant changes in policy, project reorientation and redesign and even termination, particularly in "Productivity Project" programs supported by other external donors at Maradi, Zinder and Dosso. The potential uses and influences of evaluation have become better understood and appreciated but this success has led to jealousies and administrative difficulties within MOP.

In a major MOP reorganization in early 1983, BE staff and functions were absorbed in the new Studies and Project Evaluation Service (SEEP) of the expanded Program and Project Evaluation Directorate (DPEP). According to the Project Director, changes directly related to BE operations were made (1) because of the refusal of the other services to cooperate with the BE, and (2) because of insufficient emphasis placed on "ex-ante" (e.g. pre-project) evaluation. The new DFEP Director, also Project Director, is now in a position better to coordinate evaluation activity within MOP and strengthen linkages with technical Ministries and external donors.

Currently, DPEP aims to expand ex-ante evaluations through increased SEEP staff and in-service and related training. DPEP is also emphasizing the design and testing of computerized project cycle system as a mechanism for organizing data and coordinating planning on projects at all key stages from identification to final evaluation, thereby providing a feedback of evaluation results into design and redesign. Also planned are complementary project documentation and information systems compatible with the project cycle system.

3. Progress and Prospects

The small project staff has made good progress toward project objectives and evidences the capacity for organizing and conducting all phases of evaluation for small and medium sized projects. Increased personnel, more experience and additional in-service training, however, will be required to develop the capacity for systematic program and sector evaluation at both the national and regional levels and encourage the establishment of effective evaluation units in each technical Ministry.

Project extension until December, 1986, with available uncommitted project funds, is deemed necessary and advisable. This extension would enable the project (1) to help in the installation and continued improvement in the computerized project cycle system and accompanying documentation and information sub-systems, (2) to reinforce on a systematic basis the linkages between MOP and technical Ministries and external donors, (3) to maintain a steady volume of project evaluations and (4) to improve the number and quality of ex-ante evaluations.

With the current staff, it is not likely that DPEP will have the capacity for comprehensive program and sector assessments, even with a project extension through December, 1986. While such special assessments are particularly appropriate for MOP, they should receive a low priority in 1985 and 1986 so as not to detract from the basic objective of developing a systematic, functioning project evaluation system.

A possible follow-on technical assistance project should therefore be considered which would cover three broad areas: sector assessment; project appraisal, feasibility and design; and evaluation. A new, expanded project could ensure development of a solidly institutionalized MOP evaluation unit that could continue to function without external, material or financial resources. During 1985 and 1986, however, the topics of program and sector assessment and project appraisal, feasibility and cost-benefit calculation should be considered for in-service training, seminars and workshops. USAID and other donors should be consulted by project staff on possible MOP participation, as with current procedures on evaluations, in any impending or future program or sector assessments or similar studies.

4. Recommendations

Current Phase Activities, 1985

- a. Efforts should concentrate on the study, formulation, preparation and testing of the proposed computerized project cycle system.

- b. Within this system the place of mid-project evaluation, as distinct from management and monitoring, should be clearly identified as a definite, separate phase of the project cycle.
- c. In applying the system, efforts should be made to incorporate into new projects and redesigns specific evaluation plans, schedules and criteria as well as measures for project data collection and management. MOP should withhold its approval on new projects without evaluation plans.
- d. Consideration should be given to the convocation of ad hoc interdisciplinary working groups to facilitate implementation of appropriate components of the project cycle system.
- e. Efforts to design and install of the documentation and information sub-systems should be intensified.
- f. SEEP staff should be augmented in order to sustain a growing number of mid- and end-project evaluations.
- g. Steps should be taken to effect the reassignment to SEEP of the returned participant presently assigned to the Keita Productivity Project.
- h. Ex-ante evaluations should be expanded, mainly through increased staff, seminars, in-service training and consultant services.
- i. Project appraisals, cost-benefit analysis, and sector assessment should also be appropriate topics for training.
- j. Possible linkages with ENA and other training institutions should be re-examined.

Project Extension and Possible Follow-On Project

- a. The preparation of 1985 work plans should take account of the possibility for project extension to December, 1986.
- b. Social impact studies should concentrate on discrete activities that can be effectively completed in 1985 and suggest possible programs without long term technical assistance in 1986.
- c. Later in 1985, possible components of a follow-on project should be explored.

B. Methodology

This specific evaluation exercise is in compliance with the project's implementation plan of the Project Paper covering two mid-project or interim evaluations originally scheduled one 16 months and a second 27 months after

the arrival of the long-term technical team of U.S. advisors. Delays in implementation occurred mainly as a result of difficulties in hiring the U.S. Social Impact Specialist, as well as of important organizational changes of the Ministry of Plan in the wake of a deteriorating economic situation and negotiation of new large scale activities initiated by IMF, IBRD, FAC/CCCE and USAID. The chief purpose of this exercise is to monitor progress, suggest modifications and help re-orient or re-design work plans.

The exercise was conducted as a regular AID interim evaluation based upon the logical framework as an integral part of the project design of the Project Paper. Records and documents of the Project, Ministry of Plan and USAID were studied in depth, interviews were held with project personnel, staff of the Ministry of Plan and cooperating Ministries, and with regional officials of donors and Ministries who were considered decision-makers interested in the actual operations, results and accomplishments of the Evaluation Project and related implications.

Consistent with current AID and USAID practices, and in support of Evaluation Project objectives, the Government of Niger was invited to participate in the evaluation exercise. In January 1984 the Ministry of Plan selected Amadou Sala Assane, Chef de la Cellule de l'Analyse et de la Prevision Economique (CAPE), to participate and to organize and coordinate the contribution of project staff at that time still in the Bureau of Evaluation (BE) at the Ministry of Plan. Mr. Sala was chosen as a senior, experienced staff member quite knowledgeable about the workings of the Ministry but independent of the BE and DPEP. Preoccupied with regular and other duties, Mr. Sala was available only for a brief period, but was very helpful in arranging interviews and participating in several key talks. His findings and observations will be submitted to DPEP in a separate report.

C. External Factors

The Project Agreement was signed on September 1, 1981 with implementation begun shortly after and increasing its momentum following the arrival of Development Administration Specialist/Chief of Party in November 1981 and execution of his contract in February 1982 for a three year period. Since then several external events, described below, have had major impacts upon the project by re-inforcing the growing concern of the Government of Niger and major donors for systematic program and sectoral analysis and evaluation and for more critical economic and financial analysis in all development activities, both ongoing and planned.

The Five Year Plan for 1979-1983 contained an ambitious public investment program which was based upon the expectation of a generally favorable economic outlook and anticipated financing from GON's uranium revenue proceeds, sizeable donor contributions and considerable short-term commercial borrowing at average rates of 15 percent. During a "boom" period, increasing annual economic growth in real terms reached a peak of 13 percent in 1979. But after a sharp drop in uranium revenues because of the decline in the world uranium market, there was a deterioration in the national financial

situation, a sharp fall in investment expenditures and official recognition of a period of "pause and consolidation" in development.

In approaching IMF for assistance through standby and compensatory financing facilities, the Government of Niger acknowledged the need for

structural reforms and policy measures. IMF recommendations were directed at policy restructuring and various fiscal austerity measures. Several such changes which impinge upon the Evaluation Assistance Project have already been initiated, such as the thorough scrutiny of all government expenditures (with limits on staff personnel) and the critical examination of donor projects requiring counterpart financing, thereby requiring greater analysis and participation in the planning process on the part of DPEP (Direction de la Programmation et de l'Evaluation des Projets) of the Ministry of Plan .

The severity of the economic decline was cushioned somewhat by external aid commitments, which in 1981 reached a record high of 18 percent of GDP (or about \$240 million). In 1981 France alone provided additional emergency assistance of 5 billion CFA francs (approximately \$15 million) to help Niger make up some of the uranium revenue shortfalls. The IMF, World Bank and French aid agency (Caisse Centrale de Cooperation Economique - CCCE) all recognized the seriousness of the situation. IBRD, for example, is currently negotiating a large-scale Structural Adjustment Loan (SAL) to assist in the re-direction and reform of major development policies, programs and projects. Along with this program, the Bank has already begun a five-year technical assistance project totalling \$12 million, with coordination and implementation responsibility centered at the Department of Investment Programming (DPI) of the Ministry of Plan but involving also the Ministries of Commerce and Finance. Under pre-project funding, IBRD has helped establish a computerized system of Investment Budget monitoring and management now in place at the DPI.

DPEP is also considering a computerized project cycle system as an instrument for organizing data and coordinating planning on projects at all key stages, from identification to final evaluation, thereby providing feedback of evaluation results into design and redesign. A key mechanism for screening projects in the proposed DPEP system will be the Committee on Project Selection composed of members of DPEP, DPI, and Prime Minister's Office.

The proposed DPEP project system, including the information sub-system, will probably require additional DPEP re-organization after it is further revised and is operational and tested. It does work significant changes for the Evaluation Assistance Project by offering an opening for the staff to enter more fully into the project cycle, thus to have more influence at important decision making levels, provided of course that all the three meaningful levels or elements of evaluation, interim or mid-project, final or ex-poste and social impact are understood, respected, and properly situated in the project cycle, and that adequate, competent staff are efficiently and effectively managed and directed within the newly expanded DPEP.

With respect to agricultural policy changes, USAID also has negotiated important programs involving the Ministry of Plan, i.e. the Joint Program Assessment (JPA), which contributed to a group of meetings (Zinder Conference, Recurrent Costs Workshop) and organized studies (Cereals Marketing, Technical Packages, User Fee, etc.), and the Agriculture Sector Development Grant (ASDG) which, in connection with policy changes, will make available about \$30 million over five years for various project purposes. Negotiations on the programs have and will continue to involve key DPEP staff in analysis, planning and financing allocations. While not in the original Project Work Plans, personnel and resources of the Evaluation Assistance Project have and probably will continue to contribute significantly to these other large-scale USAID programs, thereby facilitating, increasing and enhancing contacts and relationships between the Ministry of Plan and USAID. As a consequence and for other reasons, the number of contacts between USAID staff members and the Ministry of Plan has greatly expanded and USAID has adopted explicit procedures for coordinating its working relationships with the Ministry.

D. Inputs * See Annex A for a tabular breakdown of input status.

1. Long Term Training

a. The original project budget specified three long term participants or six man years of Master's Degree (M. A.) training in the U. S. In accordance with this plan, three were selected early in 1982 and departed for the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Administration in the fall of 1982. They completed their degrees in the spring of 1982 and returned to Niger in August 1984.

b. Mr. Chaibou Aboubakar, the first participant, has been appointed to the Project Evaluation Division of the recently formed Service of Studies and Project Evaluation (SEEP) in the DPEP and is presently participating in the USAID second interim evaluation of the Niamey Department Development (NDD), an integrated rural development project which forms part of the GON's overall Productivity Project Program.

Mr. Souleymane Saidou, the second participant, has been assigned to the DPEP Regional Department as Chief of the Monitoring and Evaluation Section (Unit) of the Integrated Rural Development Project at Kieta in the Tahoua Department. It is not clear why this was done since in principle he had been scheduled for assignment to DPEP headquarters to strengthen the nucleus or cadre of trained evaluators capable of training other staff for service elsewhere in the Plan, other Ministries. Steps should be taken to offset the reassignment of this returned participant to SEEP in Niamey.

The third participant, Mr. Aboubakar Souleymane, has returned to ENA as originally planned, although this assignment is similarly problematical since ENA has not yet been involved in teaching, training or other activities relating to BE as laid out in the Project Paper. This problem is discussed in further detail in Section E-3.

c. These three long-term U. S. participants were not afforded the opportunity to work at the BE during the summer of 1983, as was foreseen in the PP, but were able instead to attend a special summer course in Development Management at the University of Pittsburgh.

2. Third Country Training

One long term third country participant, Moussa Abdou, has returned from Tunisia and is presently assigned to the Impact Studies Division of SEEP. In a short time he has become adept on the project's micro-computers and is making a positive contribution to the analysis phase of a comparative study of Productivity Program projects in the Niamey, Maradi and Zinder Departments. He will likely continue to work in this Division after the departure of the U. S. Technical Advisor. A second third-country participant, Maliki Chaibou, has completed long term training in documentation at Dakar. After the required year of national service in the Service Civique he will join the Documentation Division in DPEP. These two long term participants will contribute significantly to attainment of project objectives.

3. Short Term Training

a. The relation is less direct in the case of three members of the Data Processing Department (Direction de l'Informatique) who attended a seminar on data base management in Libreville, Gabon, since BE had little connection with the Data Processing Department in the past. However, the latter provided a short term participant who attended a course on the subject of Micro-Computers in Development at Stanford University in the U.S. in 1984 and then joined the DPEP Documentation Division.

b. Project experiences with workshops and seminars has been positive. Within the first year a key BE member served as the representative for the ministry of Plan at the important Zinder Conference held in 1982 and financed in part under USAID's JPA project. While conducting a study of Public Health recurrent costs, BE staff had discussions with USAID which led to mounting of the Niger National Recurrent Cost Workshop organized under BE auspices in Niamey in June 1983 with JPA financing and with technical assistance from CILSS and Club du Sahel. Under the JPA project, BE was involved in the review of papers and preparations for other studies and workshops on Cereals Marketing, Technical Packages, User Fees and Irrigation. The 1984 BE Work Plan envisaged an evaluation training session but the date is being deferred pending availability of suitable materials from project experiences such as the comparative impact study of three Productivity Program projects at Niamey, Maradi and Zinder and other similar project materials.

c. The 1982 Zinder Conference revived interest in mid and end project evaluations as a mechanism for correcting recognized deficiencies in past projects and for redirecting current projects. USAID concluded that the Recurrent Cost Workshop was well prepared and attended, stimulating a highly productive exchange of information and views and producing a range of useful recommendations likely to facilitate better GON management of recurrent costs

in the future. Through its participation, the BE bolstered its confidence, demonstrated technical competence, and strengthened the lines of communication with ministerial services and other donors. The BE is presently involved in follow-up activities, including transmission of final reports to interested parties in Niger and the international community and participation in a study group to monitor the application of Workshop recommendations.

4. Long Term U.S. Technical Assistance

a. The Development Administration Specialist arrived in November 1981 and played an active leadership role in laying the groundwork for the project, making contacts: preparing work plans and reports, arranging for office materials, commodities and participants and generally coordinating project components until the Project Director and staff were on board and functioning. The arrival of the Social Impact Specialist was delayed due to problems in the selection and contract negotiation process but coincided with the delivery of micro-computers, which are considered essential for the analytical phases of the various impact studies which will form the bulk of his work. Little loss in effectiveness is evidenced, therefore, particularly if the funds already earmarked can be made available for project extension beyond the scheduled termination date of 31 December 1985. By virtue of education, technical competence, background, experience, familiarity with local situation, language facility, energy and temperament, the two expatriate technicians comprise a team eminently suited for the project.

b. Other than the Terms of Reference in the individual contracts, specific work plans for these advisors were developed. They have, however, participated fully in the preparation of annual project work plans and progress reports.

c. Professional working relations between the expatriate technicians and their Nigerien counterparts and other staff members are very good. Both the former and current Project Directors have very effectively assumed the leadership role previously played by the Development Administration Specialist. In the case of Social Impact Specialist, the counterpart is newly assigned and thus the latter's capacity to assume full responsibility will only be evidenced later this year.

5. Short Term Technical Assistance

a. Recruitment of the Archivist/Information Specialist had been timed for the return from Dakar of the long term documentation participant. When this participant was assigned to Service Civique (civic service), contract preparations were begun for three months of technical assistance by the Archivist/Information Specialist to help organize the files of the documentation center and classification system. In addition, two Nigerien university level persons under contract are employed as documentalists until the scheduled project termination date in December 1985.

b. Concurrently, similar contract preparations are underway for three person months of technical assistance from a U.S. Management Information Specialist.

c. These short term technical assistance activities are directed toward the achievement of two key project outputs, the documentation and information systems, thereby contributing significantly to project goals.

E. Outputs - Overview

In relation to the overall project implementation plan, project progress has been impressive. A small nucleus exists of trained, experienced, competent Nigerian evaluation technicians, capable of conceiving, leading, coordinating, and managing a variety of evaluation, research and related analytic exercises and studies. The BE or project staff have participated in and contributed to numerous ex-ante, mid-project, end-project and impact evaluations, special ad hoc exercises, and important conferences, seminars and workshops. Linkages, cooperative working relations and information exchanges have been established with technical services, other GON organizations and with other donors in particular. Evaluation, with its tools, techniques, pertinence and potential usefulness and influence in decisions, has become better understood and appreciated. Success in this regard has in fact to some extent been a cause for jealousies and attendant administrative difficulties within the MOP itself.

With respect to certain specific outputs, however, targets are not being met within the time frames contemplated. The MOP reorganization, which offers real long term potential for significant support and administrative improvement for evaluation and related analytical planning, has temporarily disrupted operations and slowed momentum. Key evaluation personnel have been re-assigned, albeit to important MOP posts, thus lessening project influence. There has been, on an ad hoc basis, voluminous collection and exchange of evaluation and related planning materials, and more systematic management efforts are in preparation. Progress will be accelerated, however, only if a major project cycle system, together with compatible and complementary sub-systems for information and documentation, are completed, installed and tested. The present target date for completed installation of these systems and sub-systems is December 1985.

While a demonstrated MOP capability does exist for organizing and conducting all phases of evaluation for small and medium sized projects, completion of several major outputs is not likely unless the project life can be extended another year to December 1986. These outputs include (1) an adequate training component and (2) a capacity to conduct major program evaluations and sector assessments at the national and regional level. A further highly desirable output, though not specifically foreseen in the PP, would be a capability to assist technical Ministries in establishing their own monitoring and evaluation units. The BE would then be in a position to monitor and assist, from a central vantage point, in the activities of these technical ministry level monitoring and evaluation units.

Annex B provides information on the project's financial situation. The indicated total of uncommitted funds is \$951,290. Most of the uncommitted balance shown for personnel will likely be needed for

22

short term consultants and contract extension for the U.S. Development Administration Specialist. But the remainder of about \$650,000, particularly in Commodities and Other Costs, should be available for 1986 and perhaps longer.

With respect to sector assessments, which require more complex, sophisticated and deeper critical analysis than do conventional project and/or program evaluations, it is not likely that a MOP capacity in these areas can realistically be expected even by December 1986 except in the sense that high level MOP officials could be assigned to concentrate efforts for short periods on such comprehensive studies. Assignments of this nature are disruptive to normal preoccupations and workloads, however, and are therefore unlikely to occur on a regular basis. A new USAID technical assistance project, therefore, should be considered for the period 1987-1989 which would be aimed at strengthening MOP capacity to conduct professionally critical analysis in several areas including sector and program assessment, evaluation in all its phases, and project appraisal, feasibility and design. Additional technical assistance beyond December 1986 under a new expanded project would ensure a solidly institutionalized MOP evaluation unit that could continue to function and endure without external, material or financial resources.

In addition, consideration should be given during 1985 under the present project to sector assessment, project appraisal, feasibility and impact study, cost benefit calculations and related economic and financial analyses as appropriate topics for in-service on-the-job training seminars and workshops, perhaps even involving short term technical assistance. USAID and other donors should be consulted as with the current pattern for evaluations, in any development activities or studies initiated by these same donors. Note is taken here and also in Section E-3 of the World Bank's intention to provide DPEP ten person-months of consulting services in both 1985 and 1986 for project appraisal studies on selected development efforts under its new \$12 million technical assistance project for the Ministries of Plan, Finance and Commerce.

Beyond the MOP reorganization, other external factors have slowed the attainment of project outputs and shifted operational emphasis. During the Five Year Plan 1979-83, the economy deteriorated and there was a period of budgetary austerity and investment consolidation. These difficulties led to IMF help in stabilization and similar large scale interventions by France, World Bank and USAID involving significant policy and developmental adjustments. An atmosphere of urgency underscored the need to manage and allocate scarce resources more efficiently and effectively, leading to an increased desire on the part of MOP and DPEP to place greater emphasis on ex-ante evaluation, including economic and financial feasibility and, in particular cost benefit analysis for new and re-designed projects. This shift in emphasis should be considered and reflected in 1985 project work plans, particularly in the area of training.



1. Development of Institutional Capacity

a. In 1982 and 1983, the BE made good progress and managed to cooperate with some of the other Services of the former Directorate of Plan and Program (DPP). To a significant degree, however, it faced difficulties with jealousies, competition, non-cooperation and fear of encroachment on the part of other divisions within the Directorate. During the January 1982 MOP reorganization, remaining BE staff and functions were absorbed in the new Studies and Project Evaluation Service (SEEP) with the former BE Director as Service Chief and also Deputy Project Director in the absence of the Evaluation Assistance Project Director. The new DPEP Director, who now also serves as Project Director, explained in a written statement for USAID that the changes were made to resolve several problems, i.e. the refusal of the Services to cooperate with the BE, insufficiency of evaluations (mainly ex-ante), with corresponding under-utilization of available funds and faulty administration through lack of coherence, unclear lines of communication and ambiguous or conflicting responsibilities and assignments.

The new DPEP Director is now in a position to exert strong leadership and support to the project by orchestrating and coordinating its activities within the DPEP and MOP and reaching out to other ministries, GON organizations and donors. The Director intends to expand ex-ante evaluations through seminars, on the job training and related means. To accomplish this he expects to add 4 or 5 graduating or returning students to SEEP within the next few years. With the increased size of DPEP, already the largest Directorate within MOP, and the Director's highly responsible role in GON's efforts aimed at economic stabilization, medium-term structural adjustment and long run growth and development, there is a real need for a project Deputy Director (to manage day-to-day operations).

Project work plans for 1984 should make specific references to these topics of staff size and changes, administration, ex-ante evaluation emphasis, project appraisals, sector assessment and training.

b. There is clear evidence of improved coordination between MOP and the technical ministries and external donors. Information is being exchanged and ad hoc invitations to participate in evaluations and related studies are growing in volume to the extent that SEEP is having some difficulty in keeping pace because of insufficient staff and communication problems not yet settled under the reorganization. Coordination should continue to improve under more formal procedures when and if the main DPEP project cycle system and two complementary sub-systems for information and documentation are installed, tested and functioning with adequate MOP official support.

Of prime importance to this project is the treatment of mid and end project evaluation in the workings of the project cycle system. Ideally, within this system, MOP should be able to determine the scheduling of such evaluations through milestone setting or similar technique. This is considered impractical and unrealistic, however: Rather, technical ministries

and external donors should be directed and encouraged through the system to include in project dossiers schedules and adequately detailed evaluation plans that include criteria and indicators.

c. Project staff either partially or fully participated in or encouraged roughly 25 to 30 evaluations or related exercises at several levels, including ex ante project appraisals, project redesigns and social impact studies. There were several cases of noteworthy changes in policy direction, e.g. with respect to USAID's Forestry Planning Project (FLUP), IBRD's re-design of irrigated perimeters, and "Productivity Program" projects supported by IBRD at Maradi, FED at Zinder and by FAC at Dosso. Pressures for policy and project design redirection were either reinforced or emerged concurrently from other sources. For example, the Minister of Plan at the 1982 Zinder Conference, and the President of Niger at Maradi in November, 1984, have both made public statements containing sharp criticism of rural development activities being carried out under the Productivity Projects. Of particular concern are heavy, expensive infrastructure, overbalanced staffs, and high, burdensome recurrent costs, little benefit to farmers and low or negligible economic return.

d. As mentioned in other sections, several alternative project approaches for the information system detailed in the PP have been worked out, but they are now superseded by the proposed project cycle system and supported by complementary documentation and information sub-systems. Early reluctances, natural inertia and related obstacles are gradually being removed, but continuous efforts are still required.

2. Documentation Center

a. During the DPEP reorganization a separate Documentation Division consolidating two former centers, one within the project and the other at the Economic Analysis and Studies Service (SEAE), was created and attached to the Director as shown in the organization chart in Annex C. The current documentation center is now housed in three separate rooms within the Plan Ministry (MOP) building, the ground floor room reserved for MOP archives, the second floor room for GON publications and documents and the third floor room, is presently being furnished and supplied directly by the Evaluation Assistance project for active project dossiers and recent sectoral and general studies. Furnishings for the ground floor archives are to be supplied from the Fond National de l'Investissement (FNI), and for the second floor room from the MOP's operating budget.

The archives were recently put in place, with selection and cataloging just underway. Over the past eight months 4,500 documents have been coded on the second floor. On the third floor, active project dossiers have been organized under the same classification to be used in both the DPEP and DPEP computerized data bank systems. A staff of 7 Nigeriens has been working at the three Center sites, three of whom have been provided on a temporary basis by the newly combined Statistics and Computer Department (Direction de Statistique et de l'Informatique-DSI), two are regular DPEP

cadres, and the remaining two are the project contract employees described in Section D.5.

The current cataloging is taking place in preparation for the planned 3-month visit in early 1985 of the documentation consultant who will design and implement a set of policies and procedures for acquiring, processing and accessing the project center's literature and documentation. At present, the center is being used only by the MOP. A working group has been set up, however, to consider ways and means of sharing and exchanging information among other Government of Niger documentation centers. The consultant is to consider procedures for the coordination of these activities.

b. The documentation center is, for the MOP, a principal resource, the backbone or basic component of the whole evaluation system, and a key project output. Previously, documents were coded without any clear system, posing a serious obstacle to evaluation and related MOP planning.

c. The micro-computers have not yet been used for documentation purposes but are planned to be in service for search and indexing procedures to be worked out with the consultant's assistance.

3. Institutional Support to ENA

a. To date there has been negligible progress in forging institutional linkages with the Ecole Nationale de l'Administration (ENA) as outlined in the PP. Long term participant A. Souleymane returned from Pittsburgh University in time for this scholastic year. Efforts to manage a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) or other replacement during his absence were not successful since Peace Corps did not then support this type of assignment in support of a USAID project.

ENA was interested in project equipment support but suggested teaching materials and reproduction machines instead of a micro-computer as ENA's own computer was then performing satisfactorily. Discussions on this issue still continue.

b. No courses in evaluation topics have yet been considered. At one point it was felt that Civil Service approval was necessary to introduce such courses. BE did not follow up or attempt to overcome this perceived problem, however, because of priorities on other activities, uncertainties about the level of ENA training and doubts about the appropriateness of MOP support for this kind of training function.

c. No other linkages with ENA have yet been considered. In recent discussions however, ENA indicated some interest in reviewing certain seminar possibilities involving faculty researches and student trainees, mainly during vacation periods. Furthermore, there is information that IBRD, in the second phase of a new \$12 million technical assistance project is considering ENA as a major training vehicle for programs in economic and financial management for employees of several ministries, including the Ministries of Plan and Finance. At an appropriate point, therefore, the project should re-examine possible linkages with ENA and other alternative training facilities. Under no circumstances, however, should further assistance be offered ENA without mutually beneficial arrangements.

F. Project Purpose

The project purpose is to establish a functioning program evaluation support unit in the Ministry of Plan and effective linkages and information exchanges with the technical ministries. This purpose remains valid.

The set of EOPS conditions contained in the Project Paper Logical Framework is still a good description of what will exist when the purpose is achieved.

A small staff is carrying out a wide variety of evaluation activities and is already capable of professional, critical analysis within any major development sector, although staff resources are spread thinly. The MOP is attaching increasing importance to evaluation experience, and in several cases the staff has made significant contributions in the areas of policy reform, re-orientation or redesign of continuing projects and the appraisal and design of new projects. Linkages and exchanges of evaluation information have been established with technical ministries and particularly with external donors.

These staff activities, however, are being carried out on what appears to be an ad hoc basis. There is as yet no evaluation system, per se. MOP evaluation activities will become systematized, however, within the comprehensive DPEP project cycle system proposed for installation and testing early in 1985, along with two compatible, complementary project documentation and information sub-systems. These systems should be fully functional by the end of 1985.

The EOPS can likely be achieved fully by December 1986 assuming the project as currently implemented can be extended with available project funds. The extension would permit achievement of several major outputs, including an adequate training component, a capacity to conduct major program (as opposed to project) evaluations and sector assessments at both national and regional levels, and establishment of an effective functioning evaluation unit in each ministry.

As explained in Section E-1 (Outputs), delays in output attainment have resulted largely from internal MOP reorganizations which have shifted staff and temporarily slowed momentum, and from external factors, principally the new stabilization programs of IMF, IBRD and USAID which have placed heavier responsibilities and workload burdens upon DPEP.

G. Project Goal

The approved goal to which the project contributes is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the GON's development program in management and administration.

It is not possible here to show direct evidence of improved efficiency of the GON's overall development program brought about by the project itself. However, the project has contributed to project appraisal and

redesign efforts on projects supported by IBRD at Maradi and FED at Zinder under the Productivity Program, efforts which have drawn considerable high level GON attention. These interventions, for example, were at least partially responsible for statements made by the Minister of Plan at the 1982 Zinder Conference, and of the President himself in November 1984 at Maradi, to the effect that the "productivity project" system as presently conceived is flawed by the use of heavy, expensive infrastructure, large staff structures and burdensome recurrent costs, resulting in little benefit to farmers and low or negligible economic return.

The project helped organize the successful Recurrent Cost Workshop in June 1983 and contributed to the USAID financed JPA and Agricultural Sector Grant Programs which, through policy dialogue with the Government of Niger, aims at changes in input supply and subsidies, prices and marketing, agricultural credit, cooperative developments and other related issues.

H. Project Beneficiaries

As an institution building effort, the Evaluation Assistance Project provides direct benefits to the MOP in helping to expand evaluation activities, thereby improving the capacity for more effective planning and coordination of development projects and programs. Linkages and information exchanges with the technical ministries stimulate an appreciation of evaluation methodology, thereby improving the capacity for project monitoring, management, design and redesign. While certain major studies are still in process, the project's social impact evaluations have provided preliminary indications on returns to farmers in certain areas of the national Productivity Programs that have led to significant project redesign efforts and attention of high GON levels.

I. Unplanned Effects

There are no indications that the project has had any unexpected results or impacts.

J. Lessons Learned

An evaluation unit at central Ministries such as MOP needs to receive active ministry support and to be placed high enough in the organization, either attached directly to the Minister or have the status of a directorate, so that it will have sufficient credibility and weight to ensure that feedback from the evaluation process reaches important decision makers.

In this project the unit was initially created as a Bureau but rivalries and conflicts arose at the service level. In a reorganization, the Director of Programming and Project Evaluation was also named Project Director. Consequently, there has been improvement in administration and coordination within MOP and with the technical ministries and external donors.

23

Host country participation in joint evaluations with external donors not only increase the involvement and usefulness for technicians and officials but can also contribute important inputs to donor staffs as well. Joint participation on project evaluations has worked well in this project and should now be tried on more complex program and sector assessments and similar studies. (new Wang page no. 41 - Thurs 11/15)

K. Special Comments or Remarks

None.

Annex A

Progress on Inputs

<u>Category</u>	<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Progress to Date</u> ^{1/}	<u>Pending</u>
Long-term technical assistance	72 person months	66 person months	6 person months
Short-term technical assistance	24 person months	11 person months	
Commodities, maintenance, fuel, vehicles	10	5	
Micro-computers	6	2 ^{2/}	
Long-term training in U. S.	6 person years	6 person years	
Long-term training in third countries	4 person years	4 person years	
Short-term training in third countries	20 person months	7 person months	
In-country seminars, workshops and in-service training courses		4 person months ^{3/}	

^{1/} Including on-going contract commitments

^{2/} Underbudgeted

^{3/} For Recurrent Cost Workshop not financed by project

130

Annex B
 Project Financial Situation
 10/31/84
 Dollars

Items	Budget	Earmarked	Unearmarked	Committed	Uncommitted
Personnel	972,865	911,660	61,205	670,117	302,458 (100,000*)
Training	280,000	190,046	89,954	190,046 (36,577)**	89,954
Commodities	373,000	240,400	132,600	100,568	272,432
Other Costs	269,500	269,500	0	89,799	181,701
Misc./Inflation	104,635	0	104,635	0	104,635
	2,000,000	1,611,606	388,394	1,048,530	951,290

*Estimated surplus funds under contract 1/PAI/82 for which termination date is 85

**Undisbursed funds under PID/Ps for which training terminated in 7/84

ujl

Annex C

ORGANIGRAMME DU PROJECT 683-0229

S.G. : Secrétaire Général

MINISTRE DU PLAN

B. : Secrétariat

SECRETARIAT D'ETAT

A.T.L.T. : Assistance technique long terme

Point d'impact majeur

S.G.

autres points d'impact

D.P.E.P.
DIRECTEUR DU PROJET

COMPATIBILITE

S

DOCUMENTATION

A.T.L.T.
L.SIEGEL

Sces DEPARTEMENTAUX

SPRAT

S.E.E.P.
Dr. ADJOINT

S.P.

SAPS

SPRH

dⁿ Etudes d'impact

dⁿEVALUATION

dⁿ QUESTION DES
ETUDES