



AGENCY FOR  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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**STRUCTURAL OPTIONS  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
REPORT FOR REVISING AID  
PERSONNEL HANDBOOKS**

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JANUARY, 1981

CONTRACT NO: AID/OTR-I-1859

WORK ORDER NO: 1

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**ARTHUR YOUNG**

# ARTHUR YOUNG & COMPANY

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January 30, 1981

Ms. Phyllis Drohat  
Office of Director, Management Planning  
Agency for International Development  
1400 Wilson Boulevard  
Rosslyn, Virginia 22209

Reference: Contract No: AID/OTR-I-1859  
Work Order No: 1

Dear Ms. Drohat:

Arthur Young & Company is pleased to submit the Structural Options and Recommendations Report, the second deliverable under our contract with AID to revise the ten personnel handbooks. The report describes the methodology used to perform this study, provides a summary of our data analysis and presents a series of structural options, and recommendations based on user requirements.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please telephone me at 828-7017, or Mr. Wayne Ploger or Ms. Loretta Auer at 828-7000.

Very truly yours,

ARTHUR YOUNG & COMPANY

By: Gerald Mendenhall  
Gerald Mendenhall  
Partner

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I. INTRODUCTION

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

This report is submitted as the second deliverable under our contract to AID to analyze and rewrite the ten personnel handbooks to conform to current legislative and regulatory requirements. The report contains our analysis of structural options and our recommendations for structural elements of the revised handbook set.

Chapter I, the Introduction, contains our discussion of the project background and scope as it relates to this deliverable, our objectives in preparing this report, and our methodology for the development of structural options and recommendations.

AID requested in their scope of work that the following requirements, among others, be met:

- . A brief review of the current structure of the ten personnel handbooks with particular focus on the mix of Foreign Service and Civil Service related guidance, the extent of coverage by State/AID/USICA Joint Regulations, and the level of procedural detail relative to end-user requirements.
- . Interviews with selected Agency staff on the utility of the personnel handbooks, including personnel officers, staff within AID/W Bureaus/Offices required in their work to use personnel procedures, individuals in AID/W with overseas experience who can provide insights on the use of personnel handbooks by foreign nationals and non-AID staff within Joint Administrative Organizations and AID/W staff -- both Civil Service and Foreign Service -- who have no personnel responsibilities but occasionally use the handbook to reference personnel policies and procedures.
- . Preparation of options and recommendations on the structure of personnel handbooks with generalized outlines and appropriate narrative description of each in sufficient detail for AID review and determinations. Such options and recommendations should specifically address questions of (1) level of procedural detail and (2) the relationship between Foreign Service and Civil Service text, i.e., integrated according to personnel function, fully separated, or a combination of both, with appropriate recognition of the impact of Joint Regulations.

We have followed these requirements in preparing our structural recommendations.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of our analysis of personnel handbook structure are to develop optional approaches to the AID handbook structure and level of procedural detail. The overall objectives of developing new structural options and to enhance the readability and to increase the utility of the handbook set.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The optional approaches to and final recommendations on handbook structure were accomplished as set forth in the Revised Workplan for the project -- through a review of the structure of the current AID personnel handbooks, interviews with selected agency staff and research on the structure of other agency handbook sets. Our task plan for this phase of the project is shown in Exhibit I-1. Following is a detailed description of our methodology for this phase.

### TASK 1 DEVELOP STRUCTURAL CRITERIA

In this task we reviewed current handbook structure, developed preliminary structural criteria and gained AID's approval of these criteria.

#### 1.1 Review Current Handbook Structure

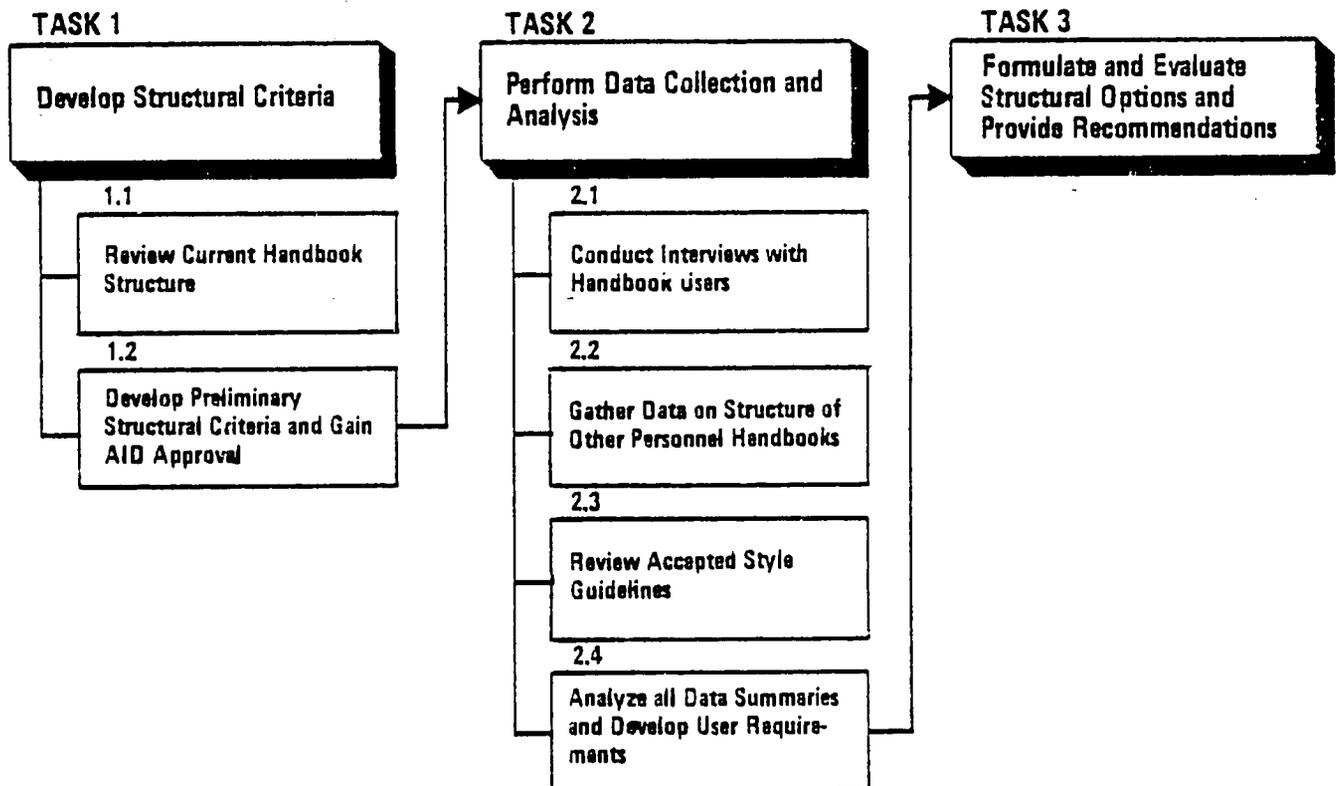
First, we identified specific structural elements of the current handbooks. We developed a preliminary list of the advantages and disadvantages of current structural elements. Specific issues relating to overall organization of the handbooks included the mix of Foreign Service versus Civil Service related guidance, the level of procedural detail relative to user requirements (including the extent of coverage by the State/Aid/ICA Joint Regulations), and overall topic organization. We also examined the other major structural element -- format -- and divided it into subelements also.

#### 1.2 Develop Preliminary Structural Criteria and Gain AID Approval

From our examination of the current structural elements, we developed concrete operational definitions of structural criteria which drove the data collection effort. The general definitions are included in the first section of Chapter II; the operational definitions are contained on the data collection instrument, the interview guide, Appendix A. After developing definitions of structural criteria, we reviewed these with AID and gained approval to finalize the criteria and proceed with the data collection and analysis.

# AID Personnel Handbook Revision

## Methodology for Development of Structural Options and Recommendations



## TASK 2 PERFORM DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSES

After developing structural criteria, we collected and analyzed data from 3 sources:

- . User interviews
- . Personnel handbooks of other federal agencies
- . Style guidelines

This data collection plan was designed to provide enough information for us to develop valid approaches to structural handbook elements.

### 2.1 Conduct Interviews With Handbook Users

The first step in our data collection plan was to conduct interviews with selected Agency Staff. The interviews assisted us in developing valid optional approaches to handbook structure and content. We determined users' perceptions of the current handbooks including the needs, problems and difficulties users may now experience; the level of current handbook usage, and any recommendations on structure and content which they may have. Following are specific activities which occurred during this task.

#### 2.1.1 Develop Final Interview Guide and Gain AID Approval

We developed and submitted an interview guide (see Appendix A), met with the Project Officer to gain input on the guide, revised it and gained approval. AID then sent an introductory memo to those individuals to be interviewed, to help prepare them for the interview.

#### 2.1.2 Develop Final Interview Schedule and Protocol

With the designated AID Project Officer, we developed the final interview schedule and protocol upon approval of the interview guide.

#### 2.1.3 Conduct Interviews with Designated AID Personnel

We conducted interviews with selected Agency staff. We targeted the audiences previously identified by AID as key users. Our interviews included the following audiences:

- . Personnel Officers
- . AID/W Bureau/Office staff required in the course of their work to use personnel procedures

- . AID/W staff with overseas experience who can discuss use of the handbooks by foreign national and non-AID staff within Joint Administrative Organizations
- . Civil Service and Foreign Service AID/W staff who are occasional users who reference personnel policies and procedures.

Our consultants used the structured interview guides to gain desired information.

#### 2.1.4 Summarize Interview Data

In this task we compiled and analyzed the data gathered during the interviews. From the data summary, we began to prepare several different options for handbook structure. A summary of our findings is contained in the next section of this report.

#### 2.2 Gather Data on Structure of Personnel Handbooks of Other Federal Agencies

In this task we performed research to determine how other federal agencies have approached personnel handbook structure. AID representatives referred us to the National Archives and the International Communications Agency. The National Archives coordinates the directives of all federal agencies and ensures that each agency has its own directives. The individual at the National Archives referred us to the other agencies listed below so that we could gain a small sample of how directives are written in other agencies. We interviewed individuals at the following agencies to discuss personnel handbook guidelines and discover their rationale for structural configuration:

- . International Communications Agency
- . National Archives
- . Small Business Administration
- . U. S. Forest Service
- . Federal Aviation Administration
- . General Services Administration

These individuals provided us with directives instruction materials. Analysis of the materials provided us with alternatives for consideration. A summary of the analysis is contained in the next section of the report.

### 2.3 Review Accepted Style Guidelines

We have reviewed the style guidelines as set forth in the Government Printing Office's style manual, the University of Chicago's A Manual of Style, and K. L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers. These reference sources have provided us with accepted style guidelines relating to handbook structure and format. We have analyzed and compared these sources, which provided us further grounding for selecting structural alternatives.

### 2.4 Analyse All Data Summaries and Develop User Requirements

Based on the tabulated data summaries from interviews with users and information gained from other federal agency handbooks and style guidebooks, we developed specific user requirements which had driven our selection of options and recommendations.

## TASK 3 FORMULATED AND EVALUATE STRUCTURAL OPTIONS AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the development of structural criteria, and the data collection and analysis, we have developed feasible structural options for each structural element under consideration. We have evaluated the options based on the requirements discovered through the data analysis and have provided selected options and recommendations for structural handbook elements. These phases have led to the recommendations summarized in the next section of this chapter.

## 4. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a brief summary of the structural recommendations to revise the AID personnel handbooks. These recommendations are divided into the following major areas:

- . Content
- . Organization
- . Referencing
- . Format

The remaining part of this section is a listing of the recommendations within each of the above areas. A detailed discussion of the analysis and recommendations is presented in Chapters II and III of this report.

- . Content

- Use of Policy and Procedures

Alternative 2, placement of the policy statement in a standard major topic heading at the beginning of the relevant procedures, is the recommended alternative.

- Use of Reference Documents

Alternative 1, including reference documents in the manual as necessary, is the recommended alternative.

Organization

- Sequence of Topics

Alternative 1, maintain current AID sequence of topics, is the recommended alternative.

- Numbering System

Alternative 2, adoption of the decimal numbering system, is the recommended alternative.

- Use of Standard Major Topic Headings

Alternative 2, identification of the following major topic headings as standard headings, is the recommended alternatives. These topics are purpose, scope, definitions, authority, responsibilities, procedure, and forms.

Referencing

- Table of Contents

We recommend alternatives 1, 4, and 6. In this case we recommend that chapters with sections and subsections are included in the table of contents. In addition, divisions are to be numbered consecutively within each chapter and division titles are to be indented to reflect the level of detail.

- Cross Referencing

Alternative 4, major cross-referencing in the index with critical references in the text, is the recommended alternative.

- Referencing Documents - Citations

Alternative 1, full citation of reference documents, is the recommended alternative.

- Dating

Alternative 2, placement of the effective date on each page and the issue date on the transmittal document is the recommended alternative.

- updating  
Alternative 5, use of effective date on each page to indicate the changed material, is the recommended alternative.
- indexing  
Alternative 2, indexing by the indentation method is the recommended alternative.

Format

- Paragraphing/Indentation  
Alternative 1, identify successive subdivisions under major topic headings, is the recommended alternative. An example of this alternative is outlined below:  
  
12.3 \_\_\_\_\_  
    12.3.1 \_\_\_\_\_  
        12.3.1.1 \_\_\_\_\_
- Pagination  
Alternative 1, the current system, is the recommended alternative.
- Page Size  
Alternative 2, page size to be 8-1/2 x 11" paper, is the recommended alternative.
- Page Layout  
Alternative 2, text printed across the page, is the recommended alternative.
- Title Page  
Alternative 2, the following information on the title page, is the recommended alternative. This information is name of agency, handbook number and title, and date.
- Forms and Attachments  
Alternative 1, placing filled-in forms and instructions to fill the forms at the ends of Chapters, is the recommended alternative.

- Tables and figures

Alternative 1, placement of figures and tables to be placed near the text, is the recommended alternative.

This was a listing of the recommended alternatives. The detailed analysis of the requirements and alternatives is presented in Chapter II and III.

In Chapter II we present our study analysis. In this section, we define the structural criteria under consideration, provide assumptions about the scope of the project and the specific criteria, present our findings of the data collected and the requirements which follow from the data analysis, and discuss key structural considerations. Chapter III presents the structural options and recommendations.

## CHAPTER II STUDY ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the analysis of structural options for the revision of AID personnel manuals. It is divided in four sections. These sections are:

- . Definitions and Assumptions
- . Analysis
- . Recommendations
- . Other Issues and Considerations

### 1. DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

#### A. General Definitions and Assumptions

As we near that portion of the study in which we develop options (choices) on handbook structure and content, it is important to arrive at common, refined meanings of terms as well as to surface assumptions. Therefore, we begin this section with what we consider the essential definitions. In so doing we wish specifically to convey certain aspects of the definitions such as their origin, their limitations and their contribution in the context of the AID Personnel Handbook Study:

- . Origin - In preparing definitions we have used numerous authoritative as well as academic references including the Government Printing Style Manual, the University of Chicago Style Manual, the Document Drafting Handbook - (Federal Register), guidance on Directives Preparation from the National Archives, and numerous examples of handbook approaches/directives from other Federal agencies. We have augmented this research with our own experience in this area of work to arrive at what we consider to be manageable, understandable meanings of terms.
- . Limitations. By their nature and their purpose, definitions, (any definitions), serve to limit or constrain. Thus, our definitions do not seek to describe anything totally; this would not be possible. Limitations exist in the interest of practicability and manageability.
- . Contribution. The test of the adequacy of definitions centers around their contribution to and maintenance of a body of understandable, agreed-upon meaning which serves to operationalize important factors in the task. In that regard, it is important to understand that it was necessary

to do extensive definitional work prior to the preparation of this report. Specifically the result of that work appears in the form of the detailed section of the interview outline and will serve as the basis for refined definitions in succeeding paragraphs.

## B. Defining Key Terms

Exhibit II-1 is intended to describe pictorially the basis and meaning of important terms in the study. Most importantly, it should convey:

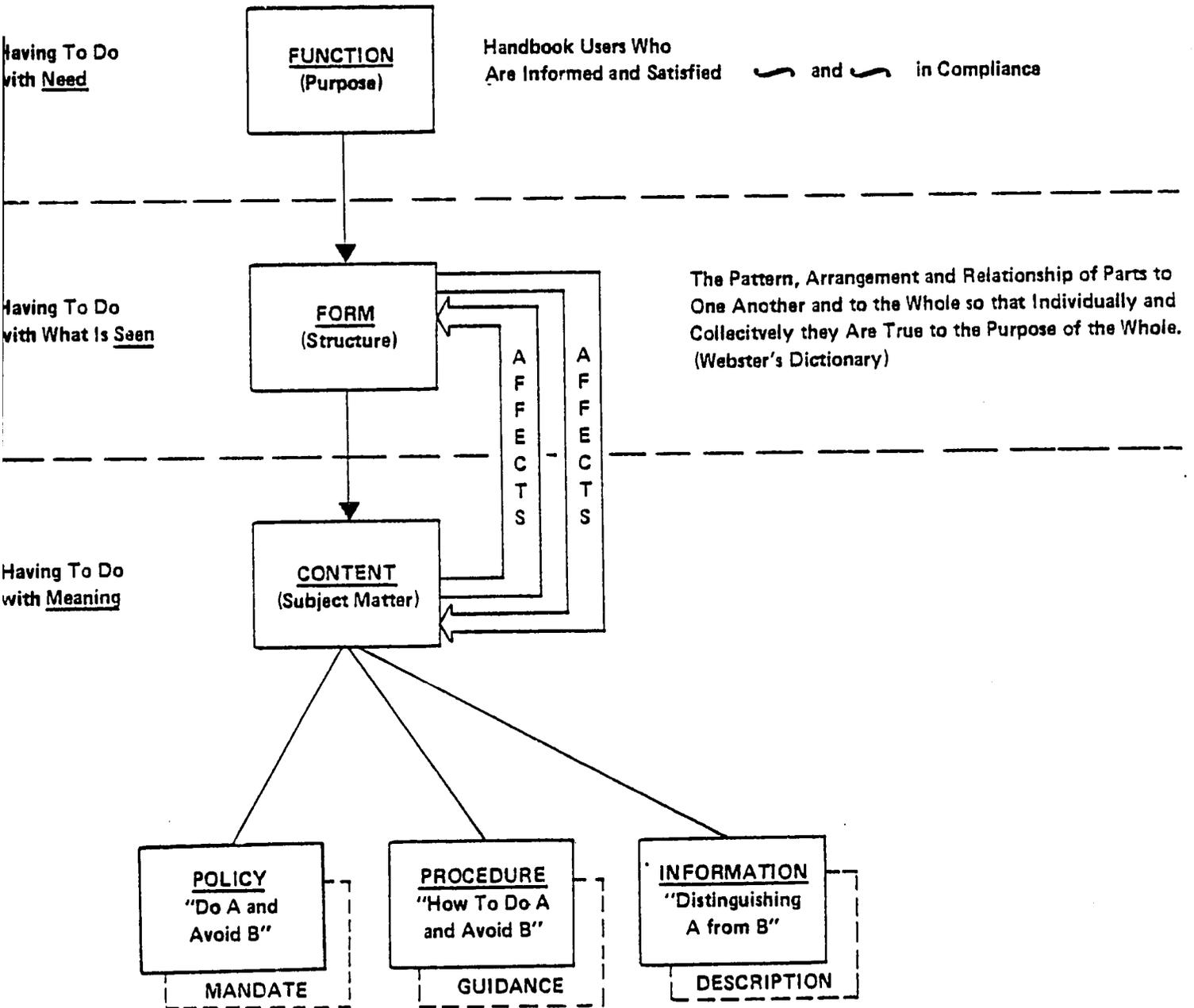
- . A reemphasis of the overall purpose of the study
- . The fundamental organizational corollary of "form follows function"
- . That while structure and content can be defined separately to some extent, they are mutual in the sense of affecting one another. Thus, for example, if you opt for brevity (a structural issue) you limit the extent of subject matter and its corresponding breadth and depth of meaning (content)
- . That there ought to be recognizable differences among the content areas of policy, procedure, and information so that choices can be made as to their inclusion or exclusion
- . That while the blocks shown provide the basis for an important conceptual understanding of terms, there is a need for more elaboration in order to operationalize them in the specific context of options for handbook preparation. This will be done in succeeding paragraphs.

## C. Refined Definitions

Key terms are defined as follows for purposes of this study:

- . Organization/Flow - Having a discernible, functional logic in terms of positioning major subject matter areas. Affected by such content issues as the mix of Foreign and Civil Service material. Evident to a large extent in the Table of Contents.
- . Format - Having to do with layout, sequencing, identification and highlighting of material within chapters, sections and sub-sections. Includes such observable factors as numbering and lettering of chapters, sections and paragraphs, typefaces, underlining, page orientation and the location/clarity of supplementary material such as forms, tables, and attachments. One important test of adequate format is user ease in locating specific topics within chapters.

# Defining Key Terms



- Indexing. The process and an associated listing which allows the user to quickly locate a specific item within a relatively large body of written material. Its adequacy is evident in user success and ease in finding specific items.
- Cross-Referencing. The process and related notation used to lead the user from one topic item to an important related item located elsewhere within the body of material. Cross-referencing may be accomplished by notations in text, in the index, or in both. Adequacy is evident in such factors as the level of relatedness, ease of updating and ease of use.
- Updating. The process and related documentation used to achieve maximum currency and accuracy. Adequacy is evident in user confidence in currency and, ultimately, in the level of compliance/non-compliance with new or changed policy and procedure.
- Content. Subject matter material included to convey desired meaning relative to policy, procedure, and information. Adequacy is evident in user understanding, satisfaction and response (compliance) as well as consistency with higher authority policy, procedure, and guidance.
- Size/Volume. Having to do with the bulk of content material included. Affected by extent/scope required; by the use of repetitious text vs. references, and by value judgments concerning brevity vs. length. Also affected by format (type size, spacing, column presentation) and the extent of inclusion/exclusion of related reference documents in the handbooks.
- Readability/Clarity. Having to do primarily with choice of words and sentence/paragraph structure. Specific factors include use of jargon, definitions, and compliance with policy and guidelines on word usage and sentence structure contained in Federal Style Manuals.
- Economy. An important result of considering and deciding cost-benefit tradeoffs under various options. There are cost-benefit issues implied to some extent within all of the definitions listed above.

#### D. Assumptions

As in the case of definitions, assumptions are designed to satisfy both a clarifying and limiting purpose. And, similar to definitions, they were formulated from a variety of sources and authorities including AID interviews, research into federal guidelines on directives preparation, government style manuals, inquiry into approaches used by other agencies and, finally, our professional judgement. . Because of their effect of providing limitation and focus,

assumptions and definitions were provided for AID scrutiny and comment prior to final preparation of this report.

- . User categories most heavily targeted are agency employees and managers
- . Consistency with outside agencies with respect to accepted structure will be maintained in the interest of user utility
- . Efforts will be made to accomplish a clear identification and distinction of material related to FS vs. CS
- . Material is organized logically aside from the issue of CS vs. FS material. Functional organization of material will be maintained
- . Approach to format will be governed by simplicity, clarity, and ease of reproduction and updating (compatible with government printing technology and word processing)
  - While we will strive for comprehensiveness in indexing, the current level of detail and style are adequate
  - Emphasis on cross-referencing will be placed on index references rather than textual references. Cross-referencing which is deemed critical will be accomplished in both places.
  - Scope of work allows/demands that we address updating in the context of its structure and effect on other aspects of the handbooks but not the management process of updating (AID clearing policy, etc.). Specifically methods of pagination and other handbooks' structural considerations must facilitate future changes
  - Personnel policy, procedure and information provided for inclusion in handbooks are correct, accurate, and in compliance with applicable authority. Responsibility of certification rests with AID
  - Readability can be improved by improved sentence structure and simplified, more precise word choice
  - In an effort to reduce vagueness, AID will be responsive to providing clarification of ambiguous terms such as "generally", "normally", "in most cases" so that decision authority and latitude of discretion will be apparent to users
  - All criteria necessary for developing and comparing options are present either explicitly or implicitly in the preceding paragraphs on definitions. Criteria

areas will be expanded to explicit detail as necessary in succeeding portions of the report to present and discuss options clearly.

In this section we outlined the major definitions and assumptions. The next section of this chapter includes a summary of the data.

## 2. Analysis of Data

Our data collection and analysis on which we have based our selection of options and our recommendations is generated from two sources: (1) the interview findings and (2) the information gained from the reference materials. In this subsection, we provide the data from and discuss both of these sets of findings.

### Interview Findings

We tabulated the responses for each structural sub-element on the interview guide according to the following five user categories:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Interviewee Type</u>	<u>User Type</u>
I	Personnel Officers (AID/W)	___ Same
II	Personnel/Administrative (AID/W)	___ Same
III	AID/W with Recent Overseas Experience	___ Foreign Nationals and ___ Non-AID Staff
IV	GS Staff (AID/W)	___ Same
V	FS Staff (AID/W)	___ Same

A total of 33 individuals were interviewed. An average of 10 responses on each interview guide item was obtained.

In most cases, individual analysis by user category had little meaning because of the small number of responses per category. As a result, we have summarized our findings in narrative form in Appendix B. However we have cited findings by specific use groups if significant within the context of the broader discussion.

Highlights of the summary are as follows:

- Separation of civil service and foreign service material. This is one of two items to which twenty or more people responded. Nineteen of the twenty-three respondees wanted some type of separation of foreign and civil service materials so that users could immediately identify directives which apply to them.
- Size/volume. This item is one of two items on the guide to which twenty people or more responded. Twelve of the twenty indicated the need for more procedural detail at various points throughout the handbooks. Most of these individuals could not cite specific instances; instead, they suggested that common sense be the guide in expanding procedures. In terms of the State/AID/ICA Joint Regulations, seven people out of thirteen responding wanted all of the joint regulations left in the handbooks to provide easy access to these materials.

Other and more detailed information regarding interviewee responses is contained in Appendix B.

#### Reference Materials

In addition to the interview findings, the project team consulted reference materials. These reference materials are in two categories. The first category includes standard references such as the U.S. Government Printing Office (Style Manual and A Manual of Style published by the University of Chicago Press.

The second category of references included the directives systems manuals of selected U.S. government agencies. These agencies included the Small Business Administration, the General Services Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration, and International Communication Agency.

The directives systems manuals of these and other agencies such as the Department of Defense and the Department of Agriculture were suggested by AID and National Archives personnel. However, only the SBA, GSA, FAA, and ICA were visited and their directives systems were analyzed in more detail for the following reasons:

- Applicability to AID functions and missions such as ICA
- Best representation of different approaches to writing directives in general, and handbooks in particular.

Information obtained from both reference material categories are analyzed and presented in the options. In addition, this analysis formed the basis of the handbook revision requirements presented in the next section of this chapter.

### 3. REQUIREMENTS

Our analysis of AID's and other agencies' handbooks revealed a set of content, organization, and structural requirements common to handbook development. Analysis of the interviews with AID personnel identified additional requirements and served as the basis for development of criteria specifically relevant to AID on which alternative methods of meeting the requirements could be evaluated. This section presents the requirements identified and discusses the criteria applied in evaluating each alternative structural option.

#### (a) Content Requirements

Interviews with AID handbook users and review of other agencies' handbooks uncovered a number of requirements regarding the presentation of policy and procedures. These requirements were then transformed into the criteria of evaluating handbook structural options. The requirements which we believe are relevant to AID's operational needs in using the handbooks to resolve questions of policy or procedure are, as follows:

- Conciseness of Policy Statements

Policy statements must be concise in their interpretation of the rules and regulations to assist top management's review of these statements and employees' efforts to understand the policy statements.

- Placement of Policy Statements

Policy statements must be placed in the AID handbooks in such a manner as to facilitate quick and easy reference.

- Access to both Policies and Procedures

Both policy statements and their related procedures should be placed in the manual to provide top management with the opportunity to assist in improving the procedures and provide both employees and field staff with the full picture of the relevant personnel matter.

- Degree of Detail in Procedures

Procedures should be written in sufficient detail to minimize vagueness and reduce the need to consult the handbook originator. This is especially important in the case of State and AID field staff where access to the handbook originators is impeded.

- Separation of Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures should be separated to allow the flexibility to improve the procedure in cases where policy has not changed.

- Use of Standard Major Topic Headings

Standard major topic headings are required to provide uniformity in the handbook chapters. Standard major topic headings can be used to describe legal authority, policy statements, personnel affected, and employees' and officials' responsibilities.

- Sequencing of Topics

In order to prevent extensive searching, topics should be arranged in a logical sequential order.

(b) Referencing Requirements

Each AID handbook must incorporate a system of references which facilitates user location of handbook material. Additionally, AID handbook users must be informed of the timeliness of handbook material and of any changes in the material. The specific requirements identified for this area of focus are:

- Table of Contents

The table of contents must provide users with a method of locating information without burdening them with confusing detail or forcing them to search extensively for desired material. Additionally, the method chosen should be readily updatable on AID's word processing equipment.

- Method of Cross-Referencing

The preferred cross-referencing method should be easily used, readily updated, and minimally disruptive to the flow of the text material.

- Method of Indicating Changes

The highlighting method chosen should draw user attention, define the extent of the change, and be within the capabilities of AID's word processing equipment.

- Method of Referencing Documents - Citations

AID handbook users rely on citations to identify source documents and extensions of the handbook text. The citation

method chosen should maximize ease of use and updatability while minimizing the disruption in the flow of the text material.

- Dating

The dating method chosen should provide both issuance and effective dates while minimizing the possibility of confusion. Additionally, the method should impose the least possible load on word processing.

- Indexing

In choosing between indexing methods, two criteria dominate: ease of use and ease of maintenance. It is particularly important that the indexing method chosen support use by all AID handbook user groups.

(c) Format Requirements

Analysis of other agencies' handbooks and the interviews with AID personnel identified several format requirements which must be addressed. The specific requirements are:

- Paragraphing/Indentation

The chosen method of paragraphing and indentation should provide for reader ease in using the AID handbooks, quick location of topics on a page, and reader understanding of topic separation. In addition, the method of paragraphing should be economical in terms of amount of material on the page.

- Pagination

The method of pagination should provide readers with easy access and enable quick location of information. The chosen method should also allow for insertion of new material during updating.

- Page Size

Ease of usage requires consistent page size throughout each handbook. The page size should be compatible with word processing equipment.

- Page Layout

The layout of information such as update number, handbook number, page number, and date is extremely important to ease of use. The layout should allow the user to spot these items with ease, while remaining pleasing to the eye.

- . Title Page

The title page should be simple, clear and economical. It should also be easily reproduceable on AID equipment.

- . Forms

Sample forms are used to illustrate those required in various AID functional areas. Forms, like other exhibits and attachments, should be easy for the user to locate while minimizing disruptions in the flow of the text.

- . Tables and Figures

Tables and figures offer a useful means of presenting large amounts of detailed information in a small amount of space. The information on tables and figures should be clear, concise and accurate. Table formats should also be compatible with AID's word processing and reproduction equipment.

In the next section of this chapter we outline other issues and considerations relating to the revision of AID personnel handbooks.

#### 4. OTHER ISSUES/CONSIDERATIONS

The following items are included here because of their important bearing on options selected as well as their implications to the policy analysis work which will commence in the next phase of the project.

- a. Separation of Foreign Service (FS) and Civil Service (CS) Material

As noted in the analysis discussion, an almost consistent theme emerged around this issue. Specifically, that it would be desirable to achieve a clear distinction between FS and CS information. The final choice is central to the overall structure, appearance, and utility of the handbooks. Currently, the mix is as follows in relation to handbook pages:

- . Out of approximately 1600 pages of AID material (excluding Handbook 33 and Joint Regulations)

39% are exclusively FS  
17% are exclusively CS  
44% mixed FS & CS

What is unknown is what will be the impact of revised CS and FS material on page count; we suspect a net increase is likely based on the advisability of erring on the side of too much rather than too little in relation to new, unfamiliar material. (Civil Service Reform Act and Foreign Service Act)

- . Page count is illustrated simply as a means of illustrating one effect of separation: the requirement for duplication. Such a requirement would obtain in either of two separation possibilities: separation within current handbook binders, or completely separate handbook series. Another separation possibility is within chapters which, to some extent, exists now. This would not increase page count to the extent of other options. The issue of duplication plus the possible inconvenience of a few users who would occasionally have to refer to both sources, appear to be the only disadvantages of total separation. On the other hand, there appears to be numerous advantages:
  - Clear and less confusing to even infrequent users
  - Capacity to organize material in functional sequence (tailored to CS and FS needs)
  - Flexibility and economy of distribution (everything does not have to be sent to everybody)
  - Current lagging development of FS policy in contrast to CSRA which, in terms of ready policy, is available for immediate inclusion.
- . Therefore, at this stage we recommend separation; either into separate handbook sets or in two clearly divided handbook sections unless other issues related to this separation can be identified.

b. Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA)

Substantial new content relating to the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 will have to be incorporated. Current handbooks are uniformly out of date in this respect. Changes will range from the superficial (changing "Civil Service Commission" to "Office of Personnel Management") to dramatic, substantive changes with respect to such issues as:

General

Merit System Principles  
Prohibited Personnel Practices  
Role of OPM & Delegation  
Merit Systems Protection Board  
Performance Appraisal - System/Procedures  
Adverse Actions  
Appeals  
Action Involving Discrimination  
Judicial Review  
Employment Considerations

## Senior Executive Service (SES)

Defining SES  
Position Authorization/Limitations  
Appointment/Reassignment/Transfer/Development  
Removal/Reinstatement  
Pay/Performance Awards

## Merit Pay

Defining Merit Pay Group  
Merit Pay System  
Cash Awards  
Performance Appraisal  
Training/Development

## Other Issues

Research and Demonstration Projects  
Labor-Management Relations  
Grievances  
OPM's Implementing Guidance

Preliminary review of handbook content reveals that the above mentioned considerations affect at least seven of the ten handbooks as they are currently structured. The breadth of this impact highlights the need for expeditious assembly of new policy currently in AID's hands as well as identifying specific gaps.

### c. Foreign Service Act

All handbooks as currently structured deal with FS content. We do not now know the extent of revision required once new material growing out of the Foreign Service Act is ready for inclusion. We understand that a significant number of key policy issues are awaiting decision but have no indication when decisions will occur. Handbook updates will therefore focus more on CSRA than FS with the exception of dealing with the split of these materials.

In this chapter we discussed the definitions and assumptions, analysis, requirements and other issues and considerations relating to the revision of AID personnel handbooks. These items form the basis of the options and recommendations presented in the next chapter.

III. STRUCTURAL OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### III. STRUCTURAL OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the structural options and recommendations to revise AID personnel handbooks based on the analyses and requirements discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter is divided into the following four sections based on the four major structural categories which are:

- . Content
- . Organization
- . Referencing
- . Format

In these sections we present alternative approaches to the structural elements within each category and recommend alternatives based on AID's requirements. The following are detailed discussions of the structural categories.

#### 1. CONTENT

In this section we outline the content options and recommendations. Content structural elements are those that affect the consistency and uniformity of the handbook. This in turn affects user understanding, satisfaction, and acceptance of the handbooks. The content structural elements are those included to convey the policy, procedures and other information contained in the handbooks. Therefore, the content of the handbooks should be constructed to increase the availability of information to the users.

A policy is defined as statements describing a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals of AID in personnel matters. Procedures outline the series of steps to be followed in implementing AID personnel policies. In addition to policies and procedures, reference materials may be used in the handbooks as further information to enhance the application of policies and procedures. This increases the utility of the handbooks to the user and improves user acceptance and satisfaction. Therefore, this section is divided into two subsections which are:

- . Use of Policy and Procedures
- . Use of Reference Documents.

The following is the detailed discussion of options within these two subsections.

(a) Use of Policy and Procedures

As outlined earlier, a policy is defined as high-level statements describing the goals and objectives of personnel laws and regulations. Procedures are the series of steps to be followed in implementing those policies. Policies and procedures are the main content of the handbooks and therefore their placement within the handbook and the level of detail of each should increase the utility of the handbooks to the various AID user categories. Based on the analysis of interviews and reference materials, the placement and level of detail of the policy statements and procedures should fulfill the following requirements:

- . Policy statements must be concise in their interpretation of the rules and regulations in order to assist top management's review of these statements and employees' efforts to understand the policy statements.
- . Policy statements must be placed in the handbook to facilitate an easy and quick review of policies within top management's time constraints.
- . Policy statements and their related procedures should be placed in the handbook. The placement should provide top management with opportunities to assist in improving the procedures and provide employees and field staff with the full picture of relevant personnel matters.
- . Procedures should include concise, detailed steps that eliminate vagueness and reduce the need to consult the handbook originator. This is especially important in the case of field staff where access to the handbook originators is difficult.
- . Policies and procedures should be separated to provide the flexibility to improve procedures in cases where policy has not been changed.

Based on these requirements, the following are the three alternatives that address the use of policy and procedures.

- . Alternative 1

Placement of policy statements in a separate handbook. In this alternative, a separate policy handbook will contain policy statements that will be referenced in the procedure. This approach is taken by the International Communications Agency (ICA).

- Advantages

- .. Policy is contained in one handbook for review by top management, saving management review time.
- .. Procedures will be written without the high-level policy statements, increasing the simplicity of procedures and making them more acceptable to the users.
- .. Provides for flexibility if procedures are to be changed but policy is to remain constant.

- Disadvantages

- .. Top management does not review the detailed procedure when reviewing the policy statements and thus may not be provided the chance to assist in improving procedures
- .. Increases cross-referencing between the procedures handbook and the policy handbook
- .. Two sets of handbooks have to be updated in case of a policy change
- .. Users have to review two handbooks to get the full picture.

Alternative 2

Placement of the policy statement in a standard major topic heading at the beginning of the relevant procedure. This major topic heading will be called "purpose" and would contain the policy statement. This approach is taken by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

- Advantages

- .. Provides for top management review of both policy and detailed procedure, thus providing top management with the opportunity to assist in improving procedures.
- .. Users review one handbook to get the full picture.
- .. Only one handbook has to be updated when policy is changed.

- .. Reduces cross-referencing between policy and procedures

- Disadvantages

- .. Does not provide top management with a handbook devoted to policy

Alternative 3

Placement of the policy statements in both a separate handbook and at the beginning of the relevant procedures. This alternative is a combination the two previous alternatives. This approach is taken by the General Services Administration.

- Advantages

- .. Provides a separate handbook to top management for policy review as well as providing the opportunity to improve the procedure if management wishes to review the detailed procedure
- .. Users review one handbook to get the full picture

- Disadvantages

- .. Increased costs in updating two handbooks in the case of a policy change
- .. Increases repetition in the handbooks as policies are in two handbooks.

Recommendation

Alternative 2 presents the best advantage to AID top management and other users. Its advantages combine the advantages of the other two alternatives by presenting top management with the opportunity to review policy only or to review both policy and the detailed procedure. This allows top management the opportunity to review procedure and improve it or to review only the policy depending on top management's time constraints. In addition, it provides the user with the policy background of the procedure being implemented.

This alternative reduces cross-referencing between policy and procedure and provides for a flexible updating process, updating only one handbook. The alternative is also less costly as it does not introduce an extra policy manual.

(b) Use of Reference Documents

Reference documents are additional documents added to the handbooks such as copies of relevant regulations, FPM or FAM, to enhance the utility of the handbooks to the user. The issue addressed in this subsection is whether reference materials should be kept separate and cross-referenced in the handbook text, included in the handbook text, or included as appendices to the appropriate chapters. As discussed in the requirements section of Chapter 2, including reference materials in the handbook text should fulfill the following requirements:

- . Ease of use of the handbook to AID employees and field staff
- . Flexibility in updating the handbook where the regulations are changed
- . Completeness of handbook procedures to increase the utility of the handbook to the users and reduce cross-referencing to materials outside the handbook
- . Uniformity of the handbook to increase user understanding and acceptance.

The following are alternatives to the use of reference materials in the AID personnel handbooks.

- . Alternative 1

Include reference documents in the handbook as necessary. Inclusion of reference materials in the handbook can be either as appendices, or, incorporated in the handbook text. The use of reference documents should be analyzed on a case by case basis. The analysis will be based on the required level of detail given AID staff size and the types of issues faced by AID personnel. This approach is taken by the SBA, FAA, and GSA.

- Advantages

- .. Provides the user with the total picture of the alternative procedures related to certain personnel policies that occur infrequently because of the special AID staff size and issues faced by the AID users
- .. Decreases the use of cross-references to the FPM and the FAM
- .. Increases handbook utility to users as, the relevant material will be available in the manual.

- Disadvantages

- .. Increases the size of the handbook - especially if reference materials were incorporated indiscriminately
- .. Reduces the uniformity of the handbook with references used on a selective basis

. Alternative 2

No inclusion of reference materials in the personnel handbook. Under this alternative, reference material will be cross-referenced in the text to the original reference documents.

- Advantages

- .. Reduces the size of the manuals and thus, reproduction and distribution costs.
- .. Increases the uniformity of the materials included in the handbook.

- Disadvantages

- .. Increases the use of cross-references to reference materials such as FPM and FAM.
- .. Reduces handbook utility to the user because of the need to consult reference materials such as the FAM and FPM on a regular basis.

. Recommendation

Alternative 1, including reference documents in the manual as necessary, is the recommended alternative. The advantage of providing the user with reference materials as necessary outweighs the disadvantage of the reduced size of the manual because of the exclusion of reference materials. This is due to the increased user acceptance as a result of the inclusion of references in the manual. Reference materials should be incorporated in the text or included as attachments as appropriate. Figures should be placed as close to the text as possible.

In the next section of the handbook we outline the alternatives and recommendations of the organization structural elements.

2. ORGANIZATION

This section presents the handbook organization alternatives and recommendations. The organization of the handbooks affects the ease of use of the handbooks by providing structure, completeness and easy access to topics in the handbook. This in turn affects the utility of the handbooks to the user and reduces handbook complexities, especially to the infrequent user, such as management and agency employees. In addition, the increased utility of the handbooks reduces the learning period of AID personnel staff.

This section is divided into three structural elements. These are:

- . Sequence of topics
- . Numbering system
- . Use of standard major topic headings.

In the following parts of this section, we present detailed discussions of the alternatives and recommendations for each of the organization structure elements.

(a) Sequence of Topics

The sequence of topics is an important structural element in the organization of the handbook. Topics must be arranged in a logical order that assures easy reference to handbook materials. In addition, the sequence of topics also affects the numbering system which is discussed in the next subsection.

The issue is whether the sequence of topics should remain as it is, follow the sequence of topics in the FPM, follow the sequence of topics in the FAM, or follow a new sequence of topics that tracks the life-cycle of personnel activities. In the latter case, the topics would start at recruitment and selection of candidates and end with separation and retirement. These alternatives are based on requests made by some handbook users. However, the analysis of interview findings indicated that a vast majority of the users did not see the current sequence of topics decreasing the utility of the handbooks. In addition, we found that GSA is in the process of resequencing their personnel handbooks to follow the FPM sequence. This decision was made to simplify GSA directives cross-referencing to the FPM.

The differences in the sequence of topics in the AID, FPM, and FAM are based on the needs, regulations, and development process of these topics. For example, FPM topic sequence tends to follow topics in the relevant Code of Federal Regulations. The current AID sequence of topics seems to be tailored to the needs of AID as the regulations and AID's working environment developed. For example, in the case of the FPM and the FAM, each sequence starts with a general section. However, contents of the section tend to cater to the specific needs of the particular agency. Further discussion of the relevance of each sequence to

the AID user needs is discussed in the remainder of this subsection in the form of alternatives followed by our recommendation.

. Alternative 1

Maintain the current AID personnel handbooks sequence of topics.

- Advantages

.. User familiarity with the current sequence.

- Disadvantages

.. Unsequential cross-references to FPM and FAM topics.

. Alternative 2

Adopt FPM sequence of topics.

- Advantages

.. Simplifies cross-references to FPM topics increasing the utility of the handbooks to users of the CS sections. The CS section is 17% of the handbooks' materials and combined FS/CS materials comprise another 44%.

- Disadvantages

.. Requires user adaptation to a new sequence.

.. Unsequential cross-references to FAM topics.

. Alternative 3

Adopt FAM sequence of topics.

- Advantages

.. Simplifies cross-references to FAM topics increasing the utility of the handbooks to users of the FS sections. The FS section is 39% of the handbooks' materials in addition to the 44% of the handbook materials comprising the combined FS/CS sections.

- Disadvantages

- .. Requires user adaption to a new sequence.
- .. Unsequential cross-references to FPM topics.

. Alternative 4

Adopt a new sequence of topics that is based on the life-cycle of personnel actions starting with recruitment and candidate selection and ending with separation and retirement.

- Advantages

- .. Provides a sequence of topics that is based on the life-cycle of personnel activities. This may increase utility to the infrequent user and new personnel employees.

- Disadvantages

- .. Requires user adaption to a new sequence.
- .. Provides for unsequential cross-references to both FPM and FAM topics.

. Recommendation

Alternative 1, maintain the current AID sequence of topics is the recommended alternative because of the advantage of this alternative in not requiring user adaption to a new sequence of topics. This advantage outweighs the disadvantage of cross-referencing to both FPM and FAM. In addition, the advantage of this alternative outweighs the increase of handbooks utility to certain users by following either the FPM or the FAM sequence. This advantage particularly outweighs the advantage of adopting a new sequence based on the life-cycle of personnel activities. The separation of CS and FS materials in the handbooks may require a reexamination of this recommendation.

(b) Numbering System

The numbering system should simplify the indexing and referencing of topics in the handbook increasing the utility of the handbooks to the user. In addition, the numbering system should be flexible enough to accommodate changes in the handbook text such as additions and deletions. The numbering system should also be consistent and logical for use in providing information throughout the handbook. Alternative numbering systems and the recommended numbering system are presented below.

. Alternative 1

Maintain the current AID numbering system. This system is based on arabic digits indicating the chapters within each handbook. Major topic headings are identified by assigning an alphabetical order within each chapter (e.g. major headings from Chapter 1 are 1A, 1B, 1C, etc.). Paragraphs within each major heading are identified by arabic numerals.

- Advantages

- .. Maintains the current system, reducing user need to adapt to a new system

- Disadvantages

- .. Provides little flexibility in accommodating changes to handbook materials
- .. Does not facilitate easy indexing of materials.

. Alternative 2

Adopt a decimal numbering system based on arabic numerals. The numbering system will be of four digits (e.g. XX.YY) where XX represents the chapter number and YY represents major topics within the Chapter.

Paragraphs within each major topic can then be represented by the major topic heading number followed by a decimal point and a 2 digit number (e.g. XX.YY.ZZ) where ZZ is the paragraph number.

- Advantages

- .. Facilitates flexibility in accommodating changes to handbook materials
- .. Increases the utility of the handbooks due to the ease of referencing and indexing.

- Disadvantages

- .. Presents AID with the requirement to change the numbering system in all the handbooks.

. Recommendation

Alternative 2, adoption of the decimal numbering system is recommended because of its advantages in increasing the utility of the handbooks by providing a system that is flexible to changes in text materials. Furthermore, the

system increases handbook utility by providing systems that facilitate easy referencing and indexing of handbook materials.

(c) Use of Standard Major Topic Headings

The use of standard major topic headings provides uniformity within the handbook system. This is a major requirement resulting from the analysis of findings and reference materials. In addition, the use of standard major topic headings increases the utility of the handbook to users such as employees and field staff as well as the personnel staff. The purpose of adopting standard major topic headings is to provide a location for policy, scope, definitions, authorities and responsibilities within each chapter. These items should be clearly defined to simplify the content of the handbook and make them more accessible to infrequent users.

The proposed standard major topic headings are:

- . Purpose: includes the policy statement
- . Scope: includes the personnel, situations and locations affected
- . Definitions: defines the key specific terms used in the chapter of the handbook to ensure uniformity of meaning
- . Authority: lists the regulations and guidelines on which the chapter is based
- . Responsibilities: defines the responsibilities of personnel implementing the policy or procedure
- . Procedure: Outlines procedural steps
- . Forms: lists forms used in the chapter of the handbook.

The alternatives listed below specify which of these major topic headings are to be adopted as standard.

. Alternative 1

Identify purpose, scope, and authority as standard major topic headings, the rest to be identified as optional major topic headings.

- Advantages

- .. Provides for uniformity in outlining the policy, scope, and authorities of each chapter of the handbook.

- Disadvantages

- .. No significant disadvantages

Alternative 2

Identify all the above major topic headings as standard major topic headings.

- Advantages

- .. Provides for uniformity in organization of the handbook
- .. Increases user familiarity with the handbook because of uniformity

- Disadvantages

- .. No significant disadvantages.

Recommendation

We recommend the adoption of Alternative 2, identification of all the major topic headings outlined in this subsection as standard. Providing a uniform system of standard major topic headings offers the advantage of increased user acceptance of the manuals and reduced user learning periods due to the ease of finding appropriate topics in each chapter.

The next section of this chapter discusses the referencing structural options.

3. REFERENCING

Users locate information in the AID handbook series through a series of references. These references provide access to information on the bases of subject category, name, and relatedness. Timing and updating information is also provided. This section presents alternative approaches to:

- . Table of Contents
- . Cross References
- . Referencing Documents
- . Dating
- . Updating

- . Indexing

- (a) Table of Contents

A table of contents must provide users of the AID handbooks with a method of locating information without burdening them with confusing detail or forcing them to search extensively for desired material. The interviews revealed that many users now rely on the index to access information because the table of contents does not meet these criteria. Additionally, the method chosen should be readily updatable on AID's word processing equipment.

Agencies have addressed these requirements by developing a number of approaches to the format and level of detail provided within their tables of contents. Alternatives are:

- . Alternative 1

Chapters with sections and subsections

- Advantage

- .. Facilitates development of a comprehensive table of contents

- Disadvantage

- .. Table of contents can easily become too long for easy use

- . Alternative 2

Chapters with sections

- Advantage

- .. Quick, easy use

- Disadvantage

- .. cursory coverage of handbook material

- . Alternative 3

Divisions numbered consecutively throughout handbook

- Advantage

- .. Simple referencing of divisions

- Disadvantage

- .. Difficult to update. Likely change areas must be foreseen.

#### Alternative 4

Divisions numbered consecutively within chapters

- Advantage
  - .. Ease of updating
- Disadvantage
  - .. Reference requires specification of both chapter and division

#### Alternative 5

Division titles aligned at left margin

- Advantages
  - .. Ease of typing or word processor input
  - .. Maximum space for division titles
- Disadvantage
  - .. No discrimination in presenting material having different levels of detail

#### Alternative 6

Division titles indented to reflect level of detail

- Advantage
  - .. Major sections of material can be located more easily
- Disadvantages
  - .. More difficult typing or word processing input
  - .. Less space for titles.

#### Recommendation

Alternatives 1, 4, and 6 are recommended. The most usable tables of contents appear to be those which identify chapter sections and subsections, number sections and subsections within each chapter, and follow an indented format reflecting

each division's level of detail. Inclusion of subsection titles provides a significantly more informative table of contents. Numbering sections and subsections within chapters eases handbook maintenance. An indented format allows users from each of AID's user groups to search the table of contents on the basis of level of detail desired (or known).

(b) Cross-References

Cross-references tie the handbooks together and provide bridges between related materials throughout the AID handbook series. To be most informative to AID handbook users, the preferred cross-referencing method should be easily used, readily updated, and minimally disruptive to the flow of the text material. Alternative methods identified are:

Alternative 1

Provide cross-references within the text material

- Advantages

- .. Ease of associating text with related material
- .. Ease of typing or word processor input

- Disadvantages

- .. Adds to the number of distractions within the text
- .. Revision of a section of one handbook may require revision of all cross-references to the section in that and other handbooks

Alternative 2

Provide cross-references as footnotes to the text

- Advantage

- .. Retains association of text and cross-reference while minimizing distraction

- Disadvantages

- .. Adds to difficulty of typing or word processor input
- .. Revision of a section of one handbook may require revision of all cross-references to the section in that and other handbooks

### Alternative 3

Integrate cross-references into the handbook indices

#### - Advantages

- .. Allows the user to identify all associated material at the time of initial reference
- .. Simplifies updating cross-references when handbook sections are revised - only indices need be changed

#### - Disadvantage

- .. Separates text and cross-references within the handbook. Unless user goes back to index as a final check, user may miss critical cross-referencing

### Alternative 4

Provide complete cross-references in the index while repeating critical cross-references in the text

#### - Advantages

- .. Allows the user to identify all associated material at the time of initial reference
- .. Allows most changes in cross-references to be effected solely by changing the indices - changes in text are minimized
- .. Provides critical information in the text while avoiding the inclusion of less important detail

#### - Disadvantages

- .. Changes in cross-referenced documents may require changes in the text as well as in the indices

### Recommendation

Alternative 4, major cross-referencing in the index with critical references in the text, is the recommended alternative. Interviews with the AID handbook users revealed that two criteria dominate the choice of a cross-referencing method: usability and maintainability. Locating cross-references in the handbook indices while providing critical references in the text maximizes both criteria. Users routinely locate handbook information through the indices

and are most in need of references to related material at that time. Providing critical cross-references within the text insures that users will not miss highly important information. Grouping most cross-references in the indices adds to handbook maintainability by reducing the amount of searching necessary to update revised references.

(c) Referencing Documents - Citations

Users rely on citations to identify source documents and extensions of the handbook text. The citation method chosen should maximize ease of use and updatability while minimizing the disruption in the flow of the text material.

Three methods of citing documents have been identified. They are:

. Alternative 1

Citation in full within the text

- Advantage

.. Facilitates users' use of other resources

- Disadvantages

.. Disrupts the continuity of the text

.. Changes in cited references may require changes in textual references

. Alternative 2

Citation to a bibliography

- Advantages

.. Ease of updating

.. Reduction of typing and word processing input

- Disadvantage

.. Users must access the bibliography to follow citations

. Alternative 3

Full initial citation with subsequent citations abbreviated

- Advantages

- .. Citation remains with text
- .. Typing and word processing load is reduced

- Disadvantage

- .. User wishing to follow any subsequent citation must locate the initial citation

. Recommendation

Alternative 1, full citation, is the recommended alternative. The interviews with AID handbook users made it clear that the key criterion for evaluating citation methods is their usefulness to the user. They rely heavily on clear, accurate citations. The use of full citation puts the greatest amount of information at the user's command. It also provides the advantage of linking the text to its cited source. We believe these advantages greatly outweigh the small additional clerical load imposed by the use of a full citation system.

(d) Dating

Our interviews with AID handbook users revealed that they require knowledge of both the issuance and effective dates of handbook changes. Agencies vary in their treatment of this issue, but routinely provide both types of information to their handbook users. The dating method chosen should provide both dates while minimizing the possibility of confusion. Additionally, the method should impose the least possible load on word processing. Alternatives are:

. Alternative 1

Provide the issuance and effective dates on each page

- Advantage

- .. User has complete knowledge of the date of issue and date of effect

- Disadvantages

- .. Possible confusion when occasional users mix the dates
- .. Adds additional typing or word processing input

## Alternative 2

Provide the effective date on each page with the issue date confined to a transmittal document

### - Advantages

- .. Minimizes the possibility of misunderstanding the effective date
- .. Minimizes typing or word processing input

### - Disadvantages

- .. Users attempting to verify the currency of a handbook page will have to check all transmittal documents to identify any dates of change

## Recommendation

Alternative 2, placement of the effective date on each page and the issue date on a transmittal document, is the recommended alternative. Effective dates of handbook material are a regular concern of AID handbook users. Issuance dates, however, are needed only for tracking changes and currency of information. AID's current system of supplying the effective date on each page and the issue date on a transmittal document parallels the systems adopted in many other agencies and conveys the needed information. A similar system should be maintained.

## (e) Updating

Our interviews with AID handbook users have identified a great concern that changed material be highlighted or offset to draw additional attention. The highlighting method chosen should draw user attention, define the extent of the change, and be within the capabilities of word processing equipment. Available alternatives include:

### Alternative 1

Placement of a character such as an asterisk at the beginning and end of changed text

#### - Advantages

- .. Explicitly indicates the extent of the changed material
- .. Easy to type or input to a word processor

- Disadvantage

- .. Unfamiliar users may not realize the significance of the character

Alternative 2

Placement of a character such as a star next to the changed text

- Advantage

- .. Draws strong user attention to the change

- Disadvantage

- .. Fails to indicate the extent of changes

Alternative 3

Use of an italic typeface for all changed material

- Advantages

- .. Draws strong user attention to changes
- .. Indicates extent of changes

- Disadvantages

- .. Infeasible on most word processing equipment

Alternative 4

Placement of a solid bar adjacent changes

- Advantages

- .. Draws strong user attention to changes
- .. Indicates extent of changes

- Disadvantages

- .. Difficult to implement on word processing equipment - Bar would probably take the form of a column of characters

Alternative 5

Use of the effective date on each page to indicate changed material

- Advantages

- .. Avoids the implication that changed material is current material
- .. Lowers the number of distracting breaks in the text
- .. Requires less typing or word processor input

- Disadvantage

- .. Provides no indication of the extent of AID handbook changes

Recommendation

Alternative 5, use of the effective date on each page to indicate changed material, is the recommended alternative. This alternative avoids the implication that information is current merely because it is changed. It also highlights the importance of the effective date in establishing currency by avoiding the distractions imposed by use of special characters.

(f) Indexing

Two forms of indexing are generally considered acceptable: run-in and indented. In choosing between these forms two criteria dominate: ease of use and ease of maintenance. It is particularly important that the indexing method chosen support use by all AID handbook user groups throughout their varying needs. Moreover, the interviews with AID handbook users indicated the overriding importance of accuracy and currency in the indices as the users regard them as a primary access mechanism.

Alternative 1

Indexing by the run-in method

- Advantages

- .. Method requires less space
- .. Method requires less columnar typing and word processor input

- Disadvantages

- .. Updating the index is difficult, even on word processing equipment
- .. Sub-subentries are awkward

Alternative 2

Indexing by the indentation method

- Advantages

- .. Method allows for easy revision
- .. Sub-subentries are clearly identified

- Disadvantages

- .. Method requires more space
- .. Method requires extensive columnar typing and word processing input.

. Recommendation

Alternative number 2, indexing by the indentation method, is the recommended alternative. Indices must be easy to use and easy to update. While both methods are acceptable forms of indexing would meet AID's needs, the indentation method is preferable for two reasons. First, indentation indices are easier to update on word processing equipment. Their single entry to a line structure allows easy insertion of new material. Second, indentation indices' allow simpler English grammar and simple use of sub-subheadings makes them more usable to foreign national personnel in AID missions. These twin advantages clearly make indentation indexing the method of choice.

In the next section we present the format structural elements alternatives and recommendations.

4. FORMAT

The format of the handbooks includes the arrangement of parts on the page. The format of the pages is extremely important, because it becomes a deciding factor in handbook usage. Clarity, simplicity, consistency, and ease of use, in terms of quickly locating desired information, are major criteria we have used in determining what options to consider and what recommendations to make. We have examined the following items pertaining to format and have selected options and recommendations based on the criteria stated above:

- . Paragraphing/Indentation
- . Pagination
- . Page size
- . Page layout
- . Title Page
- . Forms
- . Tables and Figures.

(a) Paragraphing/Indentation

The chosen method of paragraphing and indentation should provide for reader ease when using the handbooks, quick location of topics on a page, and reader understanding of topic separation by paragraph. In addition, the method of paragraphing should be economical in terms of amount of material on the page.

- . Alternative 1

Identify successive subdivisions under major topic headings. Subheadings are optional. The paragraph/subparagraph number is followed by two spaces and the heading or text. An example is given below.

In the example, 12 is the chapter number, 3 is the major topic heading, 1 is the paragraph, and the last digit is the subparagraph

```

12.3 _____
    12.3.1 _____
        _____
            12.3.1.1 _____
                _____
                    12.3.1.2 _____
                        _____

```

- Advantages

- .. The method of indentation saves space
- .. Precision of a numbering system
- .. Use of one symbology (numbers) versus two (numbers and letters)

- Disadvantages

- .. No significant disadvantages.

Alternative 2

Identify and indent successive subdivisions of material under major topic headings. The paragraph will contain the chosen numbering system, and underlined heading, and appropriate subdivisions. Subheadings are optional. The paragraph/subparagraph number is followed by two spaces, and the heading or text strives to eliminate the last two sublevels. An example is contained below:

681.1 Paragraphing

681.1.1 \_\_\_\_\_

681.1.1.2 \_\_\_\_\_

681.1.1.3 \_\_\_\_\_

681.1.1.4 \_\_\_\_\_

- Advantage

- .. The method of indentation saves space, as compared to some other methods

- Disadvantages

- .. Indenting sublevels uses more space
- .. Numbers are cumbersome at sublevels.

Alternative 3

The following method of paragraphing in directives is used by the Department of Agriculture.

Number major paragraphs consecutively throughout the handbook, with arabic numbers followed by a period, two spaces, and the heading. Write the heading in all-capitals, underline, and end with a period. Begin the text on the second line below the heading, indent eight spaces from the starting margin, and block as in this paragraph. Following is an example:

SUBPARAGRAPHS.

A. Heading and Spacing. Identify subparagraphs with alternating letters and numbers in accordance with paragraph

5 below. Follow the number with a period, two spaces, and the heading. Write the heading in initial capitals and underline; follow with a period and two spaces. Start the text on the same line, and block as illustrated in this paragraph.

B. Enumerations. Treat enumerations and listings in the same manner as other subparagraphs.

ARRANGEMENT OF SUBPARAGRAPHS.

A. Heading. Indent the first line eight spaces from the starting margin, and block all succeeding lines.

1. Heading. Indent the first line twelve spaces from the starting margin, and block all succeeding lines.

a. Heading. Indent the first line sixteen spaces from the starting margin, and block all succeeding lines.

(1) Heading. Indent the first line twenty spaces from the starting margin, and block all succeeding lines.

(a) Heading. Indent the first twenty-four spaces from the starting margin, and block all succeeding lines. (Avoid these last two levels in all possible cases.)

- Advantage

.. Headings clearly identify the material.

- Disadvantages

.. Last sublevels may not require headings

.. Less economical than Alternative 1 in terms of amount of type per page

.. Use of letters and numbers

. Alternative 4

The following paragraphing method is used by the Small Business Administration.

- Paragraph titles are typed on a separate line and underscored. All letters are capitalized. No period follows a paragraph title.

- Subparagraph titles are underscored and only the initial letters of principal words are capitalized. Text material begins on the same line at the subparagraph title. No period is used after a subparagraph heading which is not immediately followed by text material on the same line.
- Paragraphs and subparagraphs are blocked on the first letter of the title. When subparagraphs are not titled, block on the first letter of the text.

#### ALL CAPS TITLE

- a. Initial Caps Title. Text continues.
  - (1) Same as above.
- b. Subparagraphs may not be titled.
  - Advantage
    - .. Subparagraph headings are optional
  - Disadvantages
    - .. Type does not extend flush left so there is more unused space on a page
    - .. Numbers and letters are not consistent with FPM numbering system.

#### Alternative 5

Following is the paragraphing method used by the U. S. Forest Service.

All paragraphs except enumerated ones are in block style without indentation. Enumerated paragraphs contain sublevels and are identified by a number, space, dash, space and underlined title in initial capital letters. The text may be expanded by using one or more of four sublevels. All the sublevels are indented five spaces from the left margin. Remaining lines of such a paragraph are flush with that margin. The sublevels may or may not have underscored headings. An example of the method is below.

#### 3.13d Enumeration

- 1. First level
  - a. Second level

(1) Third level

(a) Fourth level.

- Advantage

.. More space for narrative because indention only occurs once.

- Disadvantage

.. Difficulty in distinguishing sublevels of information.

Recommendation

Alternative 1, identify successive subdivisions under major topic headings, is the recommended alternative. Advantages of this alternative are that sublevels are maintained which help divide material into logical parts. In addition, we recommend a decimal numbering system. Another major advantage of this system is the use of one symbology rather than two.

(b) Pagination

The method of pagination should provide readers with ease of access and should enable them to locate information quickly. The chosen method should allow for insertion of new material when updating.

Alternative 1

Use of roman numerals to indicate chapter and arabic numerals to indicate page (i.e., I-1, I-2, etc.)

- Advantage

.. A clear distinction is made between chapter and page

- Disadvantage

.. Many individuals expressed the desire not to use roman numerals. Evidently they are more confusing than clarifying.

Alternative 2

Use of arabic numerals to indicate both chapter and page (current system, i.e., 6-3 stands for chapter 6, page 3.)

- Advantages

- .. Simplicity and brevity
- .. Readers are accustomed to this method.

- Disadvantage

- .. May not work well when inserting new material or, deleting old material, which causes page numbers in the chapter to change.

Alternative 3

Use of a decimal system to indicate chapter, major sections within chapters, and pages within sections. An example of a decimal system is as follows. For example, page 3.100 would indicate chapter 3, section one. Each chapter could have up to nine major sections. Within a section, for example, 3.100, numbers would run from 3.101 to 3.199.

- Advantage

- .. Would not have to change numbers of all pages in chapter after a change has been made.

- Disadvantages

- .. Many people are unfamiliar with the decimal system for pagination.
- .. Complex system

Alternative 4

Use of the current system, with the addition of a decimal system for any changes which would require renumbering pages in the chapter. For example, if 2-20 were replaced with an addition of 3 pages, the system would work as follows: 2-20, 2-20.1, 2-20.2, 2-20.3, 2-21.

- Advantage:

- .. New inserts may be included without renumbering every page in the chapter.

- Disadvantage

- .. The system is more complex than the present system, and may be more confusing to the occasional user than is the present system.

### Recommendation

Alternative 1, the current system, is the recommended alternative. Other systems are more complex and would be less clear to most users.

#### (c) Page Size

Page size must be consistent throughout the handbooks for ease of reader usage. This issue arose because the pages in AID's handbooks are currently different sizes. There are basically two options - 8x10-1/2" paper or 8-1/2x11" paper. The disadvantage of the smaller size is that there is not as much information per page.

### Recommendation

We recommend 8-1/2x11" paper. This is now the standard government size.

#### (d) Page Layout

The layout of information such as update number, handbook number, page number and date is extremely important to the user. The user should be able to spot these items with ease, and the layout should be pleasing to the eye. Two issues arise in this category; we will address them one by one.

### Arrangement of Print

#### Alternative 1

Double column format.

##### - Advantage

.. This method of arranging type is geared to fast reading or skimming.

##### - Disadvantage

.. This method is not geared to indented sublevel paragraphs.

#### Alternative 2

Text printed across page; space and a half between lines.

##### - Advantage

.. For individuals examining and interpreting policy, and learning procedures, this method allows for

more detailed perusal. Text is not "crammed" into small spaces.

- Disadvantages

.. No significant disadvantages.

Recommendation

Alternative number 2, text printed across the page, space and a half, is the recommended alternative. The double column format should be avoided.

Arrangement of Detail Items

Alternative 1

Keep the detail items (handbook number, transmittal number, date and page number) as they are in the current text, within the rectangle at the top of the page. However, include two vertical lines on either side of the page to make a frame.

- Advantage

.. A frame clearly delineates and highlights information such as the page number, revision number, and date.

- Disadvantage

.. Frame must be preprinted.

Alternative 2

Separate detail items at the top of the page, placing them in the four corners of a frame

AID HANDBOOK

PAGE NO

TEXT

TRANS. MEMO. NO. -

EFFECTIVE DATE

- Advantages

.. Less "information overload" at the top of each page

- .. Less confusing for employees and occasional users.

#### Disadvantage

- .. Users unfamiliar with separation of this material.

#### Recommendation

Alternative number 1, detail items remain in their current location at the top of each page is the recommended alternative. Each page should be framed.

#### (e) Title Page

The title page should be simple, clear and economical.

#### Alternative 1

Name of agency, agency logo or identification, handbook number and title, and date. Different type size or style for agency name and handbook name. This method is similar to the current title page. It is still simple but the implementation will be highlighted. All references provided very similar information regarding title page layout.

#### - Advantage

- .. Visually attractiveness

#### - Disadvantage

- .. Logo must be preprinted. More costly than Alternative 2.

#### Alternative 2

All of the above with the exception of the logo.

#### - Advantage

- .. Less expense

#### - Disadvantage

- .. Less visually attractive.

#### Recommendation

Alternative 2, provide all information except the logo, is the recommended alternative. This recommendation is based on cost considerations.

(f) Forms and Attachments

Sample forms are already used extensively in the AID handbook to illustrate those required in various functional areas. Forms, like other exhibits and attachments, should be easy for the user to locate. Attachments are brief supplements to procedural guidelines contained in the chapter.

Alternative 1

The GSA directives recommend including fictional fill-in data on sample forms in cases where it will be helpful to the user. The directives also state that instruction/explanation in completing the form is optional. If instructions are needed, they are included in boxes in the margin connected by lines to the columns or boxes on the form. Explanations may also be included in the separate figure. Forms may be included as exhibits at the end of a section. They should be cross-referenced in the text. Attachments are also placed at the end of each chapter.

- Advantages

- .. Including sample data on forms can be extremely helpful to the user. Including forms at the end of each chapter provides the reader easy access.

- Disadvantages

- .. No significant disadvantages.

Alternative 2

The Small Business Administration's directives require that forms and sample form letters, and procedures for their preparation must be placed in an appendix. They should be cross-referenced in the text.

- Advantage

- .. Convenient to locate forms.

- Disadvantage

- .. Locating all forms for each handbook in an appendix would take more time than locating forms at the end of each chapter.

Recommendation

Alternative 1, placing filled-in forms and instructions at the ends of chapters, is the recommended alternative. Placing

filled-in sample forms with instructions at the end of appropriate chapters provides the reader easy access to them.

(g) Tables and Figures

Tables and figures offer a useful means of presenting large amounts of detailed information in a small amount of space. The AID handbooks currently make use of figures and tables. The information on tables and figures should be clear, concise, and accurate.

Alternative 1

Following is the GSA method of including figures in directives material.

Figures should be framed. Center figure captions two spaces below the frame. The word "Figure" is typed with an initial letter, followed by one space, the figure number, a period, two spaces, and the caption. If the caption is more than one line, the additional lines are blocked with the first word of the caption. Figures are numbered in arabic numerals to reflect the chapter and paragraph where the figure is first mentioned. Capitalize the first letter of the first word in the caption. All other words have small letters unless they are proper nouns. In addition, for page numbering purposes, figures appear with arabic numerals in sequence with the rest of the pages.

GSA recommends that figures and tables be placed near the appropriate text. However, the directive also states that whole units of text should not be separated and that figures may appear at the end of a chapter if necessary.

- Advantage

- .. The reader can immediately refer to the graphic when figures and tables are placed near the text.

- Disadvantage

- .. Units of text may be separated if numerous figures are contained in a chapter.

Alternative 2

Following is the method used by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Figures are inserted near the text that refers to the figures. Figures should be one page or less. Place longer bodies of supplementary materials in appendices. Center and

capitalize the word "FIGURE," and the number and title of the figure at the top of the page. Number figures with consecutive arabic numerals preceded by the chapter number. Thus, the third figure in chapter 6 is numbered FIGURE 6-3.

- Advantage

.. Figures are limited to one page each, forcing conciseness and clarity.

- Disadvantage

.. As in Alternative 1, if there are numerous figures in a chapter, units of text may be separated.

Recommendation

Alternative 1, in which figures and tables are placed near the text for easy reader access, is the recommended alternative.

In this chapter of the report, we have described and analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of various structural options, and have presented our recommendations.

Closing Statement

In this section we have presented a number of options related to what we have identified as requirements for the handbooks. The requirements were developed based on numerous facts, impressions and opinions from a variety of users as well as research into government style guidelines and approaches used by other agencies. Alternatives taken together are intended to represent a range of possible options while each describes a unique approach within constraints of the handbook purpose as we have defined it. Undoubtedly, there are other possibilities and combinations which may indeed surface. If that occurs, it is still consistent with what we see as one of the major functions of this report; a catalyst to discovering the best approach among a wide range of choices.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A  
SECTION I

Code \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEW OUTLINE  
AID PERSONNEL HANDBOOK REVISION

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE \_\_\_\_\_ OFFICE \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION \_\_\_\_\_ HOW LONG IN POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY (RELATE TO HANDBOOK USAGE) \_\_\_\_\_

PREVIOUS POSITION \_\_\_\_\_ INTERVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_

USAGE PROFILE

Describe generally what use you make of the Handbooks. (more detailed inquiry into individual handbooks will follow.)

FREQUENCY OF USAGE	HANDBOOK	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
		General Personnel Policy	Employment and Promotion	Position Classification Pay and Allowances	Attendance and Leave	Training and Staff Development	Employee Relations and Benefits	Separations and Disciplinary Actions	Foreign National Personnel	Personnel Actions, Records and Reports	Overseas Position Management
Several times a day											
Once a day											
Three times a week or less											
Five times a month or less											
Six times a year or less											

Is non-use based primarily on no need? Inadequacy of Handbooks?

When you need personnel policy information but cannot (or do not) use the manual, how do you get the information you need?

a. People? Who?

B. Other Documents? Which ones?

How accessible are the manuals to you as user?

\_\_\_ Do you have the handbooks you need? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ If not, how/from whom do you gain access to them? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Are your handbooks updated? \_\_\_\_\_ By whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the level of your involvement in the development of personnel policy and procedure.

\_\_\_ Development of policy/procedure

\_\_\_ Review and comment on draft policy/procedural guidelines

\_\_\_ Final review/approval

\_\_\_ I am not involved in personnel policy/procedure development.

What is your overall impression of the general utility of the Handbook set to you?

\_\_\_ Very Useful? \_\_\_ Moderately Useful? \_\_\_ Mixed?

\_\_\_ Marginally Useful? \_\_\_ Barely Useful? \_\_\_ Useless?

Explain:

(Note: Ask following question at end of interview)

If you could make one improvement in the handbook or the Handbook system, what would it be?

Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION II

AID PERSONNEL HANDBOOKS INTERVIEW OUTLINE

Person Interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_ . Type \_\_\_\_\_ .

Detailed Outlines for Handbooks 's: \_\_\_\_\_ .

General Comments:

- Major Observations

- Further Research Leads/  
Additional Information Requirements

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria Area	Current Condition	Desired Condition
<u>Structural</u> <u>Organization/Flow</u> Sequence of topics logical?		
If mix of foreign and civil service material, how appropriate?		
Table of Contents easy to use? - In enough/too much detail?		
Chapter divisions logical?		
<u>Format</u> Method of outlining the chapter (numbering and lettering system) clear and understandable?		
Able to locate specific topics in chapter quickly?		
Satisfactory method of highlighting important material?		
Logical location of forms, tables, attachments to chapter?		
Is use of different typefaces consistent and explainable? Which types are most useful?		
Reason for different page size? Does it affect ease of use?		
Method of pagination easy to understand and		

Criteria Area	Current Condition	Desired Condition
<p>3. <u>Indexing/Cross Referencing</u></p> <p>Method of indexing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Easy to use?</li> <li>- Consistent?</li> <li>- Appropriate choice of subjects and key words?</li> <li>- Appropriate level of detail of subjects and key words?</li> </ul> <p>Method of cross referencing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Easy to use?</li> <li>- Consistent?</li> </ul>		
<p>4. <u>Updating</u></p> <p>Method of updating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Easy to use?</li> <li>- Consistent?</li> <li>- Timely?</li> </ul> <p>What should be included in update information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Authority/Origin?</li> <li>- Date?</li> <li>- Identification of subject area changed?</li> </ul> <p>Procedures followed for updating appropriate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too complex?</li> <li>- Clear?</li> </ul>		

Criteria Area	Current Condition	Desired Condition
<p><u>. Content Organization</u></p> <p>Inclusion/Exclusion of Major Subject Areas</p> <p>Impact of Civil Service Reform Act - what topic areas should be added, revised or deleted?</p> <p>Impact of Foreign Service Act - what topic areas should be added, revised or deleted?</p> <p>Other topic areas which need inclusion or revision?</p>		
<p><u>. Size/Volume</u></p> <p>Level of detail relative to policy vs. procedure (length vs. brevity).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate as is?</li> <li>- Too little/too much detail?</li> </ul> <p>Inclusion of reference documents (regulations, circulars)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate as is?</li> <li>- Documents to be added, dropped, revised? Which ones?</li> </ul>		

Criteria Area	Current Condition	Desired Condition
<p><b>7. Information Quality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Is information readable to users?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum use of jargon?</li> <li>- Terms defined clearly?</li> <li>- Short and simple sentence structure?</li> </ul> </li> <li>. What information is not current and correct? (Add any items not covered in number 5)</li> </ul>		
<p><b>8. Cross-Utility to Different Users</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Personnel Officers AID/W</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Administrative/Personnel staff required to use handbooks.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. AID/W civil service staff who are occasional users .</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. AID/W foreign service staff who are occasional users.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Foreign Nationals</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Non AID staff in Joint Admin. Organizations</li> </ul>		

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWEE RESPONSES  
TO STRUCTURAL CRITERIA

1. ORGANIZATION

- Separation of civil service/foreign service material

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
19	4	10

Of those who said yes, several commented that they were not sure how this could be accomplished, and noted that it might involve duplication of material. Eleven individuals in Category I suggested separation of material; one individual in Category I suggested keeping the materials as is. Responses in other categories were equally divided.

- Logical Sequence of Topics

In most cases, this was not a problem. Three (3) people indicated Handbook 24 could be improved in this area and two (2) people indicated Handbook 26 could be improved.

- Table of Contents

Eight people responded to this item. Five of the eight responses were from Category I users. Most interviewees found the Table of Contents easy to use. Two individuals suggested clearer and fewer subheadings. Five suggested that it be "simplified." Those individuals not as familiar with the handbooks, used the Index more frequently than the Table of Contents.

- Chapter divisions

Interviewees had few comments. The material has been categorized into distinct functional areas which appear logical to most users. Only two individuals stated that material could be grouped more logically.

2. FORMAT

- Method of Outlining

Only a few (8) individuals had specific suggestions on this item. Three (3) interviewees felt this current method could be improved but did provide other input. The remainder had no opinion. Following are the suggestions received and the number of people who gave input on this item.

- Use a numbering system which corresponds to the FPM (2)
- Use only a numerical system instead of one composed of numbers and letters (3)
- Cross reference the FPM at the beginning of every chapter (1)
- Cite the corresponding regulations/legal basis for the policy (2)
- Make headings consistent from chapter to chapter (2)
- Use fewer sublevels/subheadings (3)

#### Location of topics within chapters

This depends on the user's familiarity with the handbooks. Two people suggested clearer subheadings, and two suggested better indexing.

#### Location of forms, tables, attachments

Interviewees agreed unanimously to keep these at the end of each chapter. Three individuals suggested better referencing within the text of the chapter. One person suggested using more tables/graphs when appropriate. One person recommended reducing the number of attachments.

#### Difference in typeface (method of highlighting updates)

Nine individuals commented. Five suggested maintaining the current method. Four suggested changing the method showing updated material. Those who were aware of the use of the asterisk (2) thought that it should be continued as the method to show new materials.

#### Page size

The eleven interviewees who responded felt that the same size paper should be used.

#### Method of pagination

Nine interviewees had comments on this topic. The suggestions that were received are as follows:

- Drop the number and letter system (3)
- Use continuous page numbers (1)

Simplify (no explanation) (5)

3. Indexing

Eight (8) individuals responded. Interviewees stated that accuracy is important in the index. One person suggested that topics should be included more than once. Another suggested the possibility of an alphabetical and numerical index similar to that of the FPM. The remainder of the population expressed no problem with the current index system.

4. Cross-referencing

All interviewees who responded to this question (13) stated that cross-referencing of topics was extremely helpful and should be continued. Two individuals cautioned against too much cross-referencing, which could indicate poor organization. Two interviewees also suggested that all cross-references be specific as to handbook, chapter and section or paragraph number. One individual suggested cross referencing in the index. Four out of the 13 respondees stated that there is currently too little cross-referencing.

5. Updating

In terms of the update summary material currently contained in the beginning of the handbooks, interviewees stated that this was helpful and should be continued. Two individuals recommended that it be included at the back of the handbook. In addition, three (3) individuals thought that the filing instructions should be deleted and kept in office files, or else be placed at the back of the handbook.

Regarding the updating process of incorporating new material into the handbooks, several people indicated that more coordination between policy and operating offices is needed. A policy office individual suggested that one person in each office be designated to update the handbooks.

6. Size/Volume

Twenty individuals responded. Twelve interviewees stated that they would like more procedural detail at various points in the handbooks; eight of these were in Category I. The remaining responses were equally divided by category. However, only a few individuals could identify specific topics on which they would like elaboration. The area of grievances/adverse actions was mentioned by three individuals as an area where more specific procedural guidance is needed. Most people suggested that common sense be the guide in making changes in this area.

Thirteen people responded in the area of reference document use. Five of the thirteen responses were in Category I. Two of these recommended no change; two recommended separating the foreign/civil

service documents; and 1 suggested reducing the amount of material. Over all the categories, 7 of the 13 recommended leaving in all current references.

#### 7. Information Quality

Fifteen of the interviewees, eight in Category I, stated that the readability and clarity of the information could be improved. The remainder of the responses were evenly spread among categories. Currently, in many cases, policies can be interpreted several different ways, as a result of unclear terminology. While this situation cannot be avoided at times, interviewees suggested that clearer, more precise statements could alleviate part of the problem. Suggestions received from interviewees include shortening sentence length, writing more precisely, and using fewer sublevels and subheadings.