

IDENTIFICATION DATA

A. REPORTING A.I.D. UNIT:
S&T/AGR
(Mission or AID/W Office)
(ES#)

B. WAS EVALUATION SCHEDULED IN CURRENT FY ANNUAL EVALUATION PLAN?
yes slipped ad hoc
Eval. Plan Submission Date: FY 88

C. EVALUATION TIMING
Interim final ex post other

D. ACTIVITY OR ACTIVITIES EVALUATED (List the following information for project(s) or program(s) evaluated; if not applicable, list title and date of the evaluation report)

Project #	Project/Program Title (or title & date of evaluation report)	First PROAG or equivalent (FY)	Most recent PACD (mo/yr)	Planned LOP Cost ('000)	Amount Obligated to Date ('000)
936-4099	Farming Systems Support Project Feb. 1988	82	6/88	9,953	6,062

ACTIONS

E. ACTION DECISIONS APPROVED BY MISSION OR AID/W OFFICE DIRECTOR

Action(s) Required	Name of officer responsible for Action	Date Action to be Completed
(1) Development of a concept paper on future AID support to FSR/E	R. Castro	April 1988
(2) Reassess concept paper's recommendation for establishing a Farming Systems Technical Secretariat	D. Bathrick B. Roche V. Cusumano R. Castro	Dec. 1988
(3) Conduct of an Inventory/Assessment of FSR/E Experiences	R. Castro	Oct. 1988
(4) Provide financial support for the FSR/E Newsletter	R. Castro	Aug. 1988
(5) Provide financial support for the Annual FSR/E Symposium	R. Castro	Feb. 1988

(Attach extra sheet if necessary)

F. DATE OF MISSION OR AID/W OFFICE REVIEW OF EVALUATION: mo 3 day 16 yr 88

G. APPROVALS OF EVALUATION SUMMARY AND ACTION DECISIONS:

Signature	Project/Program Officer	Representative of Borrower/Grantee	Evaluation Officer	Mission or AID/W Office Director
<i>R. Castro</i>	R. Castro	C. Andrew	E. Roche	D. Bathrick
Typed Name		Sec Appendix IX		
Date: <u>8-2-88</u>		Date: <u>10-13-88</u>		

APPROVALS

K. EVALUATION ABSTRACT (do not exceed the space provided)

The goal of the Farming Systems Support Project (FSSP) was to strengthen LDC agricultural research and extension programs through technical assistance, training and networking. The project was implemented by the University of Florida (UF) under a Cooperative Agreement. FSSP had a worldwide scope during its first three years, but it was reoriented towards the West Africa region during its last two years. The final evaluation (7/85-12/87) was conducted by a two-member team of Chemonics International. The evaluation team reviewed project documents, interviewed project personnel and FS practitioners (who were attending the 1987 FS Symposium at Arkansas), and interacted with a six-member panel of Farming Systems and Rural Development experts in a two-day workshop. The purpose of this evaluation was to analyze the accomplishments of FSSP five-year phase, principally accomplishments since the 1985 mid-term evaluation. The main finding of the evaluation report states that "despite its inability to adequately address the needs of AID/W, FSSP supported processes and produced... products that may serve to influence the direction and nature of farming systems work over the coming years." These processes and products included:

- o The implementation of training courses and workshops in the U.S. and abroad.
- o The preparation of FS training manuals (4 volumes) and other teaching materials.
- o The establishment of a Support Entity Network: 21 U.S. universities and four consulting firms.
- o The support to the West Africa FSR Network (WAFSRN), and the establishment of West Africa Integrated Livestock Systems Network.
- o The development of number of publications: FSSP Newsletter, two Internal Network Newsletter, and FSR Technical Networking Papers.
- o The support for the publication of an Annual Annotated FSR Bibliography, for the development of a statistical package for on-farm agronomic experiments (MSTAT); and for the establishment of an information center within PPC/CDIE/DI.

The evaluators noted the following lessons:

- a) The two major problems that have been encountered and impeded efforts to achieve continuity were: a poorly defined FS concept, and severe budget cuts.
- b) The cooperative agreement created a conflict, UF staff treated the project like a grant, while A.I.D. wanted to treat the project as a contract. As a result, the response was not client-oriented towards A.I.D.

The main recommendation of the evaluators is that S&T/AGR should consider the establishment of a Farming Systems Technical Secretariat.

L. EVALUATION COSTS

1. Evaluation Team		Contract Number <input type="checkbox"/>	Contract Cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Source of Funds
Name	Affiliation			
Albert Brown	CHEMONICS INT'L	12		
James Chapman	CHEMONICS INT'L	30	20,000	

2. Mission/Office Professional Staff Person-Days (estimate) 20

3. Borrower/Grantee Professional Staff Person-Days (estimate) 6

A.I.D. EVALUATION SUMMARY PART II

I. SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Try not to exceed the 3 pages provided)

Address the following items:

- Purpose of activity(ies) evaluated
- Purpose of evaluation and Methodology used
- Findings and conclusions (relate to questions)
- Principal recommendations
- Lessons learned

Mission or Office: S&T/AGR

Date this summary prepared: April 26, 1988

Title and Date of Full Evaluation Report: End-of-Project Evaluation: The Farming System Support Project

J. SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Purpose of the Project Evaluated: The goal of the Farming Systems Support Project (FSSP) was to strengthen LDC agricultural research and extension programs in order to increase the productivity, income, and quality of life among small farmers. The purpose of the project was to provide technical assistance (TA) and to build institutional capacity. TA to be provided to USAID missions and LDC agricultural research and extension projects for the design, implementation, and evaluation of projects intended for the small or limited-resource farmer; institutional capacity to be built, within those countries, through training and networking. Over its initial five-year life (FSSP was designed to be a ten-year effort), the project was expected to undertake and accomplish eight major activities: (1) provide T.A. and develop a roster of FSR/E practitioners; (2) synthesize and disseminate experiences gained through T.A. in specific problem areas; (3) conduct 12 courses for LDC field practitioners and a like number of courses for policy makers; (4) establish seven regional networks of a FSR/E practitioners; (5) sponsor annually FSR/E regional workshops; (6) publish quarterly newsletters; (7) publish an annual annotated bibliography; and (8) establish a document center for FSR/E literature within S&T/DIU (currently PPC/CDIE/DI).

2. Purpose of the Evaluation and Methodology used: The main purpose of the end-of-project evaluation was to analyze the accomplishments of the first phase of FSSP since the mid-term evaluation. Specifically, the evaluation team was asked to assess the degree of compliance of the project with the objectives as stated in the PP, the tangible and intangible results achieved, and the managerial and technical effectiveness of the implementing institution in providing T.A., training, networking, and reporting. The evaluation was carried out by a two-member team of Chemonics International on the basis of a review of project documents, interviews with FSSP staff and with key professionals involved in the implementation of the project, and field missions evaluation of FSSP support. In addition, the evaluation team accessed the services of a six-member panel of Farming Systems and Rural Development Specialists; two of them had participated in the original design of the project.

3. Findings: The project was initiated in 1982 through a cooperative agreement with the University of Florida. In June of 1985, a five-person team conducted a mid-term evaluation; which formed part of the information base for the end-of-project evaluation. The main recommendation of the evaluation team was for A.I.D., FSSP staff, and Support Entities to forge a consensus leading to a redesign of the PP. This recommendation was not implemented, instead FSSP was refocused with delivery keyed to West Africa. Because of that--and a reduction in core funding for 1986 and 1987 (from a planned 4 million to just over 1 million)--the size of FSSP core staff was reduced, several activities were dropped, and resources were concentrated in fewer activities--activities that were designed to capitalize and consolidate previous work. The following is a summary of the accomplishments by FSSP since June of 1985.

SUMMARY

a) Technical Assistance: Due to a less-than-anticipated level of demand and a significant reduction in financial resources of the latter years of the project, the level of T.A. provided to USAID missions declined substantially: only five missions were served, all of which located in Latin America and the Caribbean. West African countries, where FSSP was to focus its efforts, were not served as intended, because by 1985 most of those countries had FSR projects staffed by technical advisors.

b) Training: To some extent this activity received far more attention of the project efforts. Two sub-activities were carried out: training courses and development of training materials. The training courses served to test and improve the training materials.

1. Training Courses: Since June 1985, FSSP either organized, presented, or participated in thirteen training courses: 3-weeks courses, short-courses (4-7 days), and workshops. Two 3-week courses were held in 1986 in the Gambia (in English) and Mali (in English and French). During 1987, similar courses were held for professionals, from Niger, Honduras, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, and Guatemala, either in country or at the University of Florida. Five short-courses were presented; one in Latin America, two in West Africa, and two in the U.S. Workshops focussed on special topics or activities within the FSR/E framework. Two workshops focussed on gender issues one of which involved training of trainers. Two others were given to members of the Bean/Cowpea and Sorghum/millet CRSPs.

2. Training Materials: Slide-type modules and four volumes of training manuals were produced with the latter the most relevant for supporting agriculture research and extension systems. Two volumes of Training units were developed and released in July of 1986: Diagnosis in FSR/E containing nine units, and Technics for Design and Analysis of On-farm Experimentation containing five units. Those initial volumes were revised and modified to include crop-livestock interaction, economic analysis, and management and administration of FSR/E. In January 1988, two additional volumes were made available: Analysis of On-farm Experimentation, and Management and Administration of FSR/E. The intellectual material provided in the training units represents the collective and individual thoughts, and lessons learned of a broad based group of FS practitioners. The revised set of training units are available in English and French. Selected portions of the materials have been translated into Spanish and Portuguese.

c) Networking/Publications: FSSP developed the Support Entity Network, composed of 21 US universities and four consulting firms. This network developed a set of communication mechanisms: FSSP newsletter, two internal newsletters (on Demand and on-Networking); networking papers (workshop reports and technical documents), and the Annual FS Symposium (this event was held at Kansas State University from 1981 to 1986 and at University of Arkansas in 1987). The Newsletter and the Annual Symposium received the higher marks. In 1985 FSSP organized the West Africa Integrated Livestock System Network, and in March of 1986, it helped organize and participated in the first meeting of the West Africa Farming System Research Network (WAFSRN).

d) Synthesis and Analysis : The principal product of the synthesis/analysis process was the development of the Training Units. Other products of this process were: 1) the preparation of a report for the Office of Technology Assessment of the U.S. Congress; 2) the preparation of 5 case studies which examined intra-household decision making and the role of gender in FSR/E; and 3) Networking Paper series (total of 12).

e) Other Activities/Products: Other products included: (1) MSTAT, a microcomputer statistical package for on-farm experimental design and analysis, developed by Michigan State University; (2) FSR/E Practitioner Bio-data Base, a 1200-roster of FS practitioners; (3) FS Project Directory, which includes projects with FS components implemented by A.I.D. and other donors; (4) Africa Orientation Books, on Zaire, Burundi, Liberia, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Mali, and Rwanda; (5) Guidelines for Evaluation of FSR/E Projects, (6) Project Handbook, with material describing the principles of FSR/E and a series of topics with emphasis on FSR/E; (7) FS Library Documentation, at the Farroll Library of Kansas State University, and available on microfiche; and (8) the Annotated Bibliography of Reading on FS, available on four volumes, the first three translated into Spanish and French.

4. Conclusions: The main recommendation of the mid-term evaluation was for FSSP Staff and A.I.D. Officers to reach a consensus and re-design FSSP. This consensus was not reached. As a result, A.I.D. took a decision to severely reduce project funding and not to extend the Cooperative Agreement past its termination date. Among the factors may explain this lack of consensus was the personality conflicts developed between some of FSSP staff and A.I.D. officers. As a result, those core members decided not to pay attention to A.I.D./W, but to other client groups, including USAID field Missions. The result of the latter was somewhat of a paradox: FSSP received a very negative rating in A.I.D./W, but a fairly positive rating from field missions, especially from those in Africa.

Overall, FSSP staff did a creditable work in some areas, while in others they lacked acceptable performance. In training, while the total number of courses exceeded the targets the number of courses for policy-makers were lower. In TA, the demand was less than expected due to the proliferation of FS projects; in general, the quality of the TA provided to Missions was well regarded. The publications envisioned as part of the synthesis/analysis of lessons learned were not produced as such. On networking, FSSP created one network in the U.S., and supported two regional networks in West Africa, while the PP called for the establishment of seven regional networks. The FSSP Newsletter was creditable and reached more than 5,000 professionals worldwide.

5. Lessons learned: Work in a poorly defined area, such as FS, is appropriate for S&T, but for this work to be effective a key factor is the contracting mode. A cooperative agreement was not the appropriate choice in the case of FSSP. In a sense, UF treated FSSP like a grant, while A.I.D. wanted to treat the project as a contract. To avoid those conflicts more care should have gone into the design of the project, and greater care into the selection of the cooperator.

6. Recommendations: The major recommendation of the evaluators is that S&T/AGR should consider supporting FSR/E for the foreseeable future because of the following three reasons: (a) there are several projects with FS components currently under way or in the planning stages; (b) other donors are also maintaining or increasing their support to FS work; and (c) the products of work during the previous five years (e.g., training materials) are just emerging. The most desirable alternative that S&T/AGR should consider is the establishment of a Farming Systems Technical Secretariat.

ATTACHMENT

End of Project Evaluation: The Farming System Support Project

Report submitted by Albert Brown and James Chapman
CHEMONICS INTERNATIONAL

L. COMMENTS BY MISSION, AID/W OFFICE AND BORROWER/GRANTEE

L. Comments by AID/W

The evaluation report complies with the scope of the evaluation. The summary of the events that took place from the initiation of the project up to the mid-term evaluation in June 1985 provides to the reader with an adequate base for the analysis of accomplishments and problems faced during the evaluation period. The description and analysis of the activities that were undertaken during the last two years of the project--the scope of the evaluation--reflects a balanced view of a wide range of individuals who played a role in the implementation process. The assessment of the evaluation team on the quality of the main outputs is relevant for justifying future S&T/AGR support to FSR. The evaluators' discussion on possible courses of action after FSSP takes into account financial and political realities that cannot be ignored.

The evaluators devoted sufficient time to interviews, both with FSSP staff as well as with A.I.D. officers and farming systems practitioners who had some involvement in the implementation process. The team members also assessed field missions' experience with FSSP based on their responses to a questionnaire cabled worldwide. In addition, the evaluators accessed the services of six professionals with recognized experience in FS and rural development. Two of these professionals, who had been involved in the design of the original project, provided to the evaluators with useful insights about the nature of the implementation problems and their likely causes. To avoid any possible bias in their findings and conclusions, the evaluation team discussed them with a broad representation of U.S. and LDC farming systems professionals who participated in the 1987 FS Symposium at the University of Arkansas.

An activity not frequent in evaluations was the participation of a panel of FS and rural development experts in a 2-day workshop, some of them had participated in the design of the original project. This event served two main purposes: first, to review and expand the scope of the evaluation; and second, to gather a comprehensive view of the project from a multidisciplinary group. It also helped to reduce the cost of the evaluation and became a good substitute for the absence of visits to specific project sites. In addition, their participation permitted the reconstruction of information dated back to the origin of the project, which would not have been possible otherwise.

The findings and lessons learned from the evaluation are relevant for future A.I.D. work when dealing with projects designed around an ill-defined concept, such as farming systems.

Finally, the evaluation report includes the comments of FSSP staff, the implementing institution, and the FSSP Support Entities.

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MISSION COMMENT ON FULL REPORT

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