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Agency for International Development
Technical Advisory Support Services Contract
(Research & Development/University Center)
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Project Office: R&D/UC, David A. Rakes

SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

(For Period 10/1/91 to 3/31/92)

Submitted by
International Science and Technology Institute, Inc.
Technical Advisory Support Services Project
(Research & Development/University Center)

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GLOSSARY

BIFADEC	Board for International Food and Agricultural Development and Economic Cooperation
CDIE	Center for Development Information and Evaluation
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FY	Fiscal Year
GMRS	Grants Management and Reporting System
HEAD	Higher Education and Development
HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
ISTI	International Science and Technology Institute
JCC	Joint Career Corps
JMOU	Joint Memorandum of Understanding
LDC	Less Developed Countries
NIS	Newly Independent States
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSG	Matching Support Grant
NAS	National Academy of Sciences
NRC	National Research Council
PI	Principal Investigator
PID	Project Identification Document
PIO/T	Project Implementation Order/Technical
PSG	Program Support Grant
R&D	Bureau for Research and Development
RFA	Request for Application
RGP	Research Grant Program
RUR	Office of Research and University Relations
SG	Strengthening Grant
SMOU	Single Memorandum of Understanding
S&T	Bureau for Science and Technology
TASS	Technical Advisory Support Services
UC	University Center
UDLP	University Development Linkages Project
USAID	AID Overseas Mission
VOB	Volume of Business

R&D/UC Support Project -- Semi-Annual Report (For Period 10/1/91 to 3/31/92)

As requested in Section "J", Progress Reports, of Contract Modification No. 2 dated September 9, 1991, effective July 21, 1991, there follows the semi-annual report for the period (10/1/91 to 3/31/92).

I. OVERVIEW

The first six months of FY92 was a very active one for the project with the successful issuing of the Request for Applications (RFA) for round two of the University Development Linkage Project. A total of 216 Task requests (TRs), were received and carried out for the activities described in Section II Contract Purpose below during the reporting period.

While the number of Tasks implemented does not describe fully the dedicated, intellectual effort carried out creatively during this period with a maximum of flexibility to meet the changing needs and deadlines, it gives some idea of the magnitude of the level of technical, logistic and administrative support produced under the contract. In spite of the heavy time pressures, the ISTI team worked especially hard with the full cooperation and support of R&D/UC to maintain high level of quality control for the diverse range of activities carried out under the contract.

First & Second Quarters Fiscal Year 1992

• Total number of Task Requests (TRs) received	216
• Total number of Travel Requests received	97
• Travel Requests completed	97
• Total number of HBCU Proposals received	1
• HBCU Proposals completed	1
• Total number of UDLP Proposals received	4
• UDLP Proposals completed	4
• Total number of Financial Vouchers received	26
• Financial Vouchers completed	20
• Total number of Annual Reports received	29

- Annual Report reviews completed 29
- Total miscellaneous Task Requests received covering financial analysis, typing/word processing, filing entering data, mailings i.e. a combined staff effort. 84

In addition, a number of the TRs included the intensive use of the project's computer support component which involves the practical use of the project's data base management system and capability including the financial component. This aspect of the system now facilitates R&D/UC's management of cooperative agreements, contracts, grants and other financial operations.

It should be stressed that the number of Task Requests, though large, do not reflect the relative magnitude of effort devoted to specific activities or programs. This was particularly true in the case of the UDLP, where a single TR could involve contacting 100 to 200 universities, researchers, plus 40 to 50 USAIDs often involved in the UDLP. Such TRs required intense efforts from two or more staff. Other important, but time consuming activities, such as the weekly UDLP meetings are attended by at least three of the project staff on a weekly basis, are not reflected in the Task Request numbers. Due to peak demands inherent in the nature of the UDLP in its second year, ISTI had to make frequent use of temporary secretarial services as well as professional inputs from senior consultants to meet these demands on a timely basis. The above observations are made in order to explain more fully the substantial, expanded nature of the workload for both R&D/UC and the ISTI Technical Support Group.

II. CONTRACT PURPOSE

The stated objective of this contract is for the International Science and Technology Institute (ISTI) to provide "program support and technical assistance to the University Center and to colleges and universities to help "structure elements of their programs in order to be useful collaborators with A.I.D." The importance and timeliness of this focus has been enhanced with the creation of the Agency's University Center, beginning formally on October 1, 1991, and now fully operational.

In order to reach this objective, the TASS contract calls for specific activities to be undertaken by the contractor. These activities are categorized below by specific program/activity areas which are reflected in the Annual Workplan for fiscal year 1992.

1. **University Development Linkages (UDLP)**
2. **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Program**
 - A. **A.I.D./HBCU Committee**
 - B. **HBCU Research Grant Program**
3. **University Center (UC)**
4. **Program Support Grants (PSGs)**
5. **Matching Support Grants (MSGs)**
6. **Joint Career Corps (JCC) Activity**
7. **Project Administration and Management Tasks**

- 8. Other Agency Supported Activities**
- 9. Computer Inputs**

A description of the above activities for the past six months is set forth by quarter and month in the Annual Workplan (10/1/91 to 3/31/92) which was agreed between R&D/UC and ISTI. (See Attachment #1 for an updated copy.) (Note: Attachment #2 contains an updated Financial plan as of 3/13/92.)

It should be noted that the basic contract was added to and extended during FY91 in Modification Nos. 1 and 2. Modification No. 1 provided additional resources to provide support for the new UDLP program, and Modification No. 2 extended the contract through September 29, 1992. Modification No. 3 added the remaining \$232,964 needed to fund the project through September 29, 1992.

III. MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

A. MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. University Development Linkages Project

This project has been one of ISTI's major activities in FY92 with the volume of work growing as the second year of the project becomes fully operation and the work for FY92 is added to the execution of the original 13 grants approved in round one of this project. Weekly planning meetings have assured excellent communications between ISTI and the UC and facilitated the smooth joint cooperation in implementing this project which involved over 500 requests by Universities and other groups for the Request for Application (RFA) for round two of UDLP. The following items summarize the more important elements of the UDLP project and ISTI's contribution.

a) 1991 UDLP AWARD CYCLE

ISTI continued to maintain files for 1991 applications. Prepared 23 letters to unsuccessful applicants transmitting detailed reviewers comments and other information from the review process. In March, the 1991 files were boxed for archival purposes and sent to the University Center for storage.

b) 1992 UDLP AWARD CYCLE

To facilitate management of the second round solicitation for the UDLP, ISTI has kept the schedule by means of Time Line project management software. As additional tasks have been identified and as delays have arisen, the impact on the project can easily be estimated and adjustments have been made as necessary.

As the Request for Applications (RFA) was revised by the UC staff, ISTI managed the document production. The 1991 RFA was converted to WordPerfect and reformatted to make revision simpler. Extensive comments and suggestions from ISTI project staff helped produce a much improved RFA, both in terms of organization and clarity.

A number of RFA annexes were designed and/or written by ISTI as supporting documentation for the RFA review process.

ISTI assisted with contacting USAID Missions to determine which countries should be on the eligible list. Once the RFA was completed, ISTI sent copies to the USAID Missions in the UDLP-eligible countries. An up-to-date database of Mission Directors, Mission phone numbers, and mailing/courier delivery addresses is maintained to assist the UC in communicating with Missions.

By the deadline of March 30th, 130 Letters of Intent (LOIs) were received in response to the RFA. ISTI assisted with the initial review of the LOIs for responsiveness to the conditions of the RFA.

c) MONITORING OF 1991 UDLP COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

Shortly after the first 13 UDLP agreements were awarded in September of 1991, ISTI helped arrange a two-day workshop for the new awardees. The workshop was designed to give the principal investigators/project directors (PIs), training and financial representatives of the universities a briefing on A.I.D. procedures and to get the projects started "on the right foot." A.I.D. representatives from the Office of Financial Management, Office of Procurement, Office of International Training and the University Center made presentations. ISTI handled all logistical details including invitations, hotel and meeting arrangements, handouts and facilitation.

As the projects passed through the first set of reporting deadlines, ISTI set up systems to collect, review and file the reports. Computer spreadsheet templates were developed to standardize reporting of budgets and expenditure information. These template were customized for each agreement and distributed to the PIs. Collection of the data in a computer format has greatly simplified analysis of the project budgets.

Project implementation plans, first-year workplans, workplan budgets and the first quarterly reports were reviewed by ISTI using an ISTI developed review instrument. Reporting deficiencies, inconsistencies or other problems were noted and appropriate letters were written to the PIs.

A filing system based on three-ring binders was developed to enhance monitoring of the agreements. Parallel files are being kept at the ISTI project office and the UDLP Director's office, maintained by ISTI, so that a complete record of each project is readily accessible to all involved.

For monitoring of UDLP travel, the travel component of ISTI's Grants Management and Reporting System (GMRS) was revised to include tracking of Mission concurrences, trip reports and the cooperative agreement objectives involved. Monthly travel reports are printed for the UDLP Director.

d) UDLP REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Over 220 UDLP requests for information packets were filled during this semi-annual period. A mailing list was maintained at ISTI and updated as new inquiries came in. This packet is now being revised/updated to reflect changes for the 1992 awards year.

e) REQUESTS FOR RFA (RFA)

Over 500 RFA requests were filled during the month of March and April. ISTI assisted with this process, and still receives daily requests for the RFA through R&D/UC and from universities and individuals.

f) **GENERAL UDLP INQUIRIES**

ISTI has also been given the responsibility of assisting universities (as necessary) with general inquiries regarding the UDLP. This usually involves sending a UDLP packet of information to give a better understanding of the project.

2. **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Programs**

A. **A.I.D./HBCU Committee**

ISTI has continued to provide the secretariat for this important committee -- arrange for the monthly meetings, prepare the minutes, distribute them after approval by the UC. Reproduction and distribution of documents needed by the Committee for their work or as a mutual sharing of information.

B. **HBCU Research Grant Program (HBCU/RGP)**

a. **Publication of HBCU/RGP Abstracts**

Undoubtedly the most significant HBCU/RGP achievement during the period under review, was the publication a compendium of: "Abstracts of Research Projects, conducted by US HBCUs", during 1984-1991. This publication was prepared by ISTI's agricultural and health evaluation specialists and to date approximately 800 copies have been distributed by the Center to all HBCUs (Presidents and PIs), all USAID Missions, host country investigators who participated in the research investigations, as well as to all Title XII U.S. institutions. Copies of the publications were also distributed to Senior Staff in A.I.D.(W) and to NAFEO.

b. **Evaluation of HBCU/RGP**

In October 1991 the University Center initiated plans for conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the HBCU/RGP, primarily to facilitate efforts to design a replacement program. Although not directly involved in this activity, ISTI advisors have nevertheless provided technical inputs regarding the overall nature and scope of the evaluation. A considerable amount of time was also spent by ISTI's specialists in briefing the Center's new HBCU Research Coordinator (Dr. Brij Shrivastav), who joined the Center in November 1991.

c. **General Support to R&D/UC**

Although no new research proposals were submitted by HBCU scientists in FY92, ISTI's specialists worked closely with the Center in the final consideration and award of research projects for FY92 funding, which previously had been accepted and recommended for funding by the NAS. ISTI's agricultural and health evaluation specialists continue to participate in numerous special internal review processes, in particular, extended discussions have taken place regarding the Center's decision

to reduce the back-log of "pending" research proposals, on which no final decisions have yet been taken by the Center.

During the period under review ISTI's staff continued to provide technical support to the Center in:

1. maintaining files tracking the progress of research proposals and concept papers;
2. maintaining computerized tracking and financial data including vouchers, obligations and expenditures supplied by UC;
3. evaluating travel requests submitted by HBCU-PIs and maintaining computerized data base of travel requests; and
4. evaluating progress on funded projects as requested by UC.

3. University Center (UC)

Within the limits of the Scope of Work and resources available ISTI has tried to make itself available to assist the University Center in carrying out its broad mandate. While the major thrust of its activities is the support of the Center's Program Management and Implementation Division under the direction of Acting Director, David Rakes, as noted throughout the report ISTI has tried to make itself available to carry out innovative tasks involving the UC as a whole -- e.g the University Center Workshops, the informal survey of Universities working in the Newly independent states, etc.

4&5. Matching Support Grant (MSG) and Program Support Grant (PSG) Programs

During the six-month period under review, a total of 33 U.S. Universities had active programs under the PSG and MSG projects in Agriculture. Of these 29 have PSGs, consisting of 5 Single Memoranda of Understanding (SMOU/PSG) and 24 with Joint Memoranda of Understanding (JMOU/PSG). A total of 4 Universities also had MSGs, namely Iowa State, Kentucky, Cornell and California Polytechnic Universities.

From October 1, 1991 to March 31, 1992, a total of 29 Annual Reports (for 1990/91 project year) from PSG-Universities, were reviewed, using instruments originally designed by ISTI. Although the PSG program is scheduled for termination on June 30, 1992, most Universities have already requested, and obtained no-cost extensions; thus the PSG program will remain "active" well beyond July 1, 1992.

For the MSG no Annual Reports or Forward Workplans were submitted by Universities with active grants.

Foreign Travel under PSG, MSG and HBCU-Research Programs

Over the 6 month period under review a total of 97 requests were reviewed for foreign travel under the PSG, MSG and HBCU/RGP. These were submitted by 34 Universities and involved 48 different countries. Of this number, 89 were recommended for approval by ISTI. As part of the overall review process ISTI also prepared all the necessary cables to be sent to the various Missions by UC.

Of the 97 requests received, 69 involved use of PSG and MSG funds, and 5 were on HBCU/RGP funds. The remaining 23 travel requests were on UDLP funds.

6. Joint Career Corps (JCC) Activity

ISTI maintains the data base for this Activity, and in previous years designed the systems for receiving applications, processing them, and tracking the assignment of candidates for Career Corps assignments overseas who have been selected. There was no new activity under this title during FY91, but ISTI understands that Administrator Roskens is considering the possibility of reactivating this program in FY92.

7. Project Administration and Management Tasks

ISTI, by working vigorously as a team on major individual programs such as the UDLP, HBCU Research and Committee, Program grants, etc., has continued to carry out the following tasks effectively, in spite of the reduced level of staff to:

1. improve and coordinate work flow of Task Requests (TRs) and maintain project office;
2. review update and maintain ISTI's manual and automated filing systems for appropriate project files;
3. review Grant Management Reporting System (GMRS) procedures for logging, tracking and reporting to insure that RUR (now R&D/UC) objectives are met;
4. interact as needed with R&D/UC/Program/Contracting Office officials to insure common expectations on project deliverables;
5. maintain project financial controls;
6. provide reports, as requested to R&D/UC on all appropriate program areas, draft progress reports and workplans required under the contract, and submit to CTO/Contracts and other interested A.I.D. officers as appropriate;
7. assist the R&D/UC to do activities related to ISTI's technical and administrative support role but not specifically required under the contract to help in the transition

from the old Office of Research and University Relations (S&T/RUR) such as the informal survey of Universities working in NIS countries, assistance with the PID for the Higher Education and Development (HEAD) project, etc.; and

8. provide technical and administrative assistance in planning, organizing and implementing conferences, workshops and seminars on request.

8. Other Activities

- a) Helped plan and implement informal survey of Universities working in the Newly Independent Countries (Commonwealth of Independent States), and prepared necessary reports, tables and notes for the University Center.
- b) Assisted in the revision of the draft PID for the Higher Education and Development (HEAD).
- c) Prepared mailing list for BIFADEC to over 450 Universities with whom the University works.

9. Computer Support

ISTI's computer "know-how" was devoted to assisting all aspects of R&D/UC's different programs and activities (i.e., UDLP, HBCU, Program Support Grants, University Center activities, etc.). All of its applications from establishing data banks, recording applications, facilitating mail merges, recording financial data, using graphics to highlight reports are custom done in order to maximize the utility of the information recorded and make it available as an effective management tool.

ISTI has been very successful in its adaptation of the very latest in computer software to practical applications to facilitate and increase the productivity of many of R&D/UC operations over the last six months. This flexibility and creative applications to individual aspects of the programs described above have made it valuable over the last year, and will continue to increase in value as the UDLP project moves fully into the implementation phase and other R&D/UC) activities are designed and brought on stream.

10. To sum up

A. Ambiance

ISTI is fulfilling its contract obligations including the UDLP activities as they become more fully operational during the second year, and will continue to do so under the contract through September 29, 1992. It has particularly enjoyed the leadership, guidance and team spirit in its work with R&D/UC), much of it on a collegial basis. Not only has this assistance contributed to the output of the broad range of support activities described above but also to help the Center initiate new activities when requested.

B. Constraints

On the whole, as noted in the last report, there have been few significant constraints to the achievement of project objectives and tasks during the period covered by this report (10/1/91 to 3/31/92) despite the appreciable increase due to the cumulative effect of UDLP entering into round 2 with continuing responsibilities for the implementation phase of the 13 awardees of the first round, the issuance of the RFA, LOIs for the second round, etc. Although not a constraint, it is perhaps useful to note that the contract has been implemented in a very flexible manner, so as to accommodate numerous tasks which could not have been predicted by the client at the beginning of the contract.

C. Financial

Modification No. 3 signed on 3/18/92 is an important addition, since it has fully funded the project as planned through September 29, 1992.

As indicated in earlier reports, with UC's agreement, ISTI has put a "lion's share" of the resources remaining under the contract into the first six months of activity because of the three university workshops involving over 200 Universities and Colleges and 500 university professionals, the revision of the RFA for round two of the UDLP, and the start up of the new University Center which was formally launched on October 1, 1991.

Therefore, funding will be very tight for the last six months of the two year contract. As of 3/31/92, the sum of \$1,087,964 has been obligated. Of that amount \$834,559 had been billed (or 77% of the total budget) leaving \$253,405 (23%) to cover ISTI contract costs during the second semester of FY 1992. We believe that this amount will be sufficient, if no new unforeseen major tasks are added to the already busy contract team.