

# Agricultural Policy Implementation Project <sup>PD-AR-E-038</sup>

Ministry of Agriculture, General Directorate for Development Planning and Agricultural Investments (DGPDA)  
Project Office: Boite Postale 24, 1003 Cité El Khadra, Tunis, Republic of Tunisia • Telephone: (216-1) 681-570/573

## AGRICULTURAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

### APP

### FINAL REPORT

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## **AGRICULTURAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT**

**APIP**

**FINAL REPORT**

**Cheri Rassas**

**July, 1991**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Agricultural Policy Implementation Project (APIP) was designed and funded by the United States Agency for International Development, Special Mission for Economic and Technical Cooperation in Tunis to support the Tunisian Government in its goals for policy reform set out in the Agricultural Structural Adjustment Program (ASAP). To summarize, the purpose of the Project was to a) provide Tunisian policy makers with a series of specific and timely studies of key policy issues that include data analysis and options for making rational economic and agricultural policy choices; and b) reinforce the capabilities of technicians and analysts in Tunisian government agencies in identification and analysis of policy constraints, formulation of policy recommendations, and monitoring the impacts of policy changes on the agricultural sector.

The \$5 million Project began at the end of 1987 shortly after President Ben Ali assumed power. Abt Associates Inc. was awarded the 3 1/2 year, 235 person-month technical assistance contract worth approximately \$3 million; the other \$2 million provided funding for computer equipment, training and some local contracting, and was managed by the Ministry of Agriculture's General Directorate for Development Planning and Agricultural Investments (DGPDI). Although the Tunisian Project Director and Abt's long-term resident representative and Project Office were housed in the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministries of Plan and Economy, as well as other GOT agencies and private sector businesses, actively participated and received technical assistance and training through Project funds.

Abt Associates Inc.'s the prime contractor, is one of the largest research based consulting firms serving government business clients in the United States. It has experience in more than 85 countries. Abt Associates technical assistance team included the Institut Supérieur de Gestion (ISG), the University of Tunis' management school with a staff of highly qualified economists, Ithaca International Ltd., a U.S. firm with broad experience in competitiveness and export strategies for developing countries, and the University of Wisconsin, known for its work in developing useful models as tools to analyze impacts of agricultural policy reform. Several other subcontracts were initiated, especially among Tunisian firms, to respond to the special technical needs of specific studies.

Throughout the life of APIP more than 25 technical assistance assignments were accomplished collaboratively with Abt Associates, its various subcontractors, the Government of Tunisia, Tunisian consultants, and public and private institutions. Major accomplishments in the area of agricultural policy reform include liberalization of cereals assembly, storage and marketing; liberalization of imports of powdered milk, beef, animal feed ingredients; private sector participation in the distribution of fertilizer and other inputs and in the export of olive oil; reduction and/or elimination of subsidies on agricultural inputs, irrigation water, grain transportation, and a number of basic food items. Analysis of the competitiveness of Tunisian agricultural products and the development of export strategies for products including wine, specialty fruits, dates, olive oil, cut flowers and seafood products.

In the areas of training and capacity building, twenty-five Tunisian public and private sector staff attended various training courses in the U.S.; numerous high-level officials participated in study tours in the U.S.; and a DGPDIÁ working group worked closely with the University of Wisconsin and the Tunisian National School of Agriculture (INAT) in developing models as tools to monitor the impact of policy reforms on farmers' behavior in the public and private sector.

On a final note, Abt Associates and our subcontractors feel fortunate to have been afforded the opportunity to participate and work together with our Tunisian colleagues in the implementation of this important and successful endeavor, and we will keep a watchful eye on the reform and progress which continues to be carried out through the efforts of our Tunisian counterparts.

**Cheri Rassas**  
**Resident Representative**

**Mark Newman**  
**Project Director**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Agricultural Policy Analysis Project (APIP) was designed and funded by the United States Agency for International Development, Special Mission for Economic and Technical Cooperation in Tunis to support the Tunisian Government in its policy reform goals set forth in the Agricultural Structural Adjustment Program (ASAP). The \$5 million Project began in late 1987 when Abt Associates Inc. was awarded a contract for 235 person-months of technical assistance, including a long-term (40 months) resident advisor, representative in Tunis, to carry out a variety of agricultural policy studies, formal and informal training.

Abt Associates Inc.'s the prime contractor, is one of the largest research based consulting firms serving government business clients in the United States. It has experience in more than 85 countries. Abt Associates technical assistance team included the Institut Supérieur de Gestion (ISG), the University of Tunis' management school with a staff of highly qualified economists, Ithaca International Ltd., a U.S. firm with broad experience in competitiveness and export strategies for developing countries, and the University of Wisconsin, known for its work in developing useful models as tools to analyze impacts of agricultural policy reform. Several other subcontracts were initiated, especially among Tunisian firms, to respond to the special technical needs of specific studies.

Throughout the life of APIP more than 25 technical assistance assignments were conducted collaboratively with Abt Associates, its subcontractors, the Government of Tunisia, Tunisian consultants and numerous public and private sector institutions. Major accomplishments cover policy reform, training, study tours to the U.S. by various Tunisian officials, analysis of policy impacts through the use of mathematical models, and institutional development. Following are some highlights:

- Policy reform in cereals assembly, storage and marketing;
- Liberalization of imports of powdered milk, exports of edible oils and a plan to allow private sector imports of animal feed;
- Promotion of private sector participation in fertilizer distribution;
- Reduction and/or elimination of subsidies on agricultural inputs, irrigation water, grain transportation, and a number of basic food prices.
- Analysis of the food subsidy system assisting decision-makers to reduce basic food subsidies and search for an appropriate, efficient targeted food subsidy;
- Development of export strategies for wine, specialty fruits, dates, olive oil, cut flowers and seafood products;
- Finalization of public and private sector farm management models;
- Attendance by Tunisian personnel at a variety of U.S. training courses;

- Organization of a number of seminars on agricultural structural adjustment and policy reform;
- Institutional development including project management, contracting procedures, financial management, drafting scopes of work, and reporting; and
- A maximum amount of government ministries, agencies, institutions and private sector participation in APIP activities.
- Delivery of 23 final reports and 20 working papers in English and French;

The purpose of this final report is to summarize the activities of the Agricultural Policy Implementation Project (APIP), both in terms of the implementation process and technical achievements/studies, to assess its impact on policy reform in Tunisia and to document lessons learned for future USAID-funded policy projects.

This report is presented in seven parts. Following this introduction is a brief overview of the project in relation to the Agricultural Structural Adjustment Program. Section three outlines the project's organization and implementation. Part four looks at policy impacts that resulted through support given by APIP. Informal and formal training are discussed in the fifth section and lessons learned are described in section six. And finally, part seven includes a short conclusion.

## **2. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW**

Since the early 1980's Tunisia has been facing severe economic difficulties, including budget and balance of payment deficits. One of the consequences has been a relative decline of the agricultural sector's contribution to the economy, particularly in terms of food production and exports. In addition, Tunisia has experienced problems in maintaining and expanding its agricultural exports, consisting primarily of olive oil, dates, seafood, specialty fruits, wine, and fruits and vegetables.

In response to these difficulties, an Agricultural Structural Adjustment Program (ASAP) was undertaken with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) support. The readjustment program focuses on four major goals:

- increasing the role of market forces in determining prices of agricultural inputs and products;
- increasing the role of the private sector in marketing farm inputs and products, both internally and internationally;
- enhancing the effectiveness of government agencies in supporting agricultural production and marketing; and
- protecting the welfare and nutritional well-being of poor consumers in urban and rural areas of Tunisia.

Although the ASAP specified goals and deadlines for the readjustment program, it did not provide the needed capability within the Government of Tunisia (GOT) to identify, analyze, and formulate alternative paths to reach them. In order to assist the GOT in achieving the ASAP goals, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Special Mission for Economic and Technical Cooperation in Tunis designed and funded the Agricultural Policy Implementation Project (APIP) to a) provide Tunisian policy makers with a series of specific and timely studies of key policy issues that include data analysis and options for making rational economic and agricultural policy choices; and b) reinforce the capabilities of technicians and analysts in Tunisian government agencies in identification and analysis of policy constraints, formulation of policy recommendations, and monitoring the impacts of policy changes on the agricultural sector.

### 3. PROJECT ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The \$5 million USAID-funded Agricultural Policy Implementation Project (APIP) started up at the end of 1987 at about the same time as President Ben Ali assumed power. Abt Associates, Inc. was awarded the technical assistance contract for approximately \$3 million; the other \$2 million was managed by the Ministry of Agriculture's General Directorate for Development Planning and Agricultural Investments (DGPDI) and provided the funding for computer equipment, training and some technical assistance. The Ministries of Agriculture, Plan and Economy as well as other GOT agencies and private sector businesses actively participated and received technical assistance and training through Project funds.

#### 3.1 Organization

##### 3.1.1 Prime Contractor and Partners

Abt Associates, Inc.'s contract for 235 person months included 40 months of a long-term resident advisor/representative, 40 months of home support and 155 months of short-term technical assistance. Primary subcontractors included the Institut Supérieur de Gestion (ISG), a branch of the University of Tunis, Ithaca International Limited, and the University of Wisconsin. Several other subcontracts were issued during the course of the project as specific special needs materialized. The majority of these additional subcontracts were with local Tunisian firms or research institutions.

A contract office was set up in the Ministry of Agriculture's General Directorate for Development Planning and Agricultural Investments (DGPDI) through a local subcontract with accounting firm, Afric Audit. Abt Associates Inc.'s Tunis office was staffed with the resident advisor/representative, assistant/office manager, secretary and two chauffeurs and worked closely with members of the DGPDI and other ministries throughout the contract life. The advisor/representative reported directly to the General Director of DGPDI on a day-to-day basis, while coordinating closely with USAID. The advisor/representative was responsible for coordinating technical assistance to the project, planning and managing research activities, and administration of the APIP office.

Abt Associates Inc.'s home office provided ongoing technical oversight from APIP's D.C.-based project director and project manager while other Abt staff members directed short-term technical assistance missions in Tunisia and recruited specific expertise when required.

##### 3.1.2 Annual Implementation Plan Meetings and Work Plans

During the life of the contract three annual implementation plan meetings took place plus an initial start up meeting in December 1987. Participants at these meetings included representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Plan, Ministry of Industry and Finance (now the Ministry of National Economy), USAID/Tunis, Abt Associates, Inc. and its primary subcontractors. The resident advisor/representative drafted a Work Plan which was

submitted in English to USAID and in French to the DGPDI for comment before each meeting. These Work Plans were revised after the annual meetings to incorporate any changes discussed.

The purpose of these meetings was to set the agenda for the year, including studies to be initiated by priority, responsible ministry or agency (chef de file), team member(s) by institution to undertake the work, and timing. They also provided a forum for discussing study results, status of ongoing work, and changing needs.

### **3.1.3 Project Reporting and Monitoring**

In addition to the annual work plans, Abt Associates' contract required quarterly reports and semi-annual reports. The resident representative was responsible for drafting these reports which were first submitted to USAID, then translated into French and submitted to the DGPDI. These reports provided an update on status of project activities and helped to address any issues in need of attention. An ongoing time-line with active studies and their status was helpful in monitoring APIP's activities. An example of this time-line can be found in Annex A. Brief monthly summaries were submitted from APIP/Tunis to the Abt project director and a copy sent to the USAID Project Officer.

Project (contract) finances were monitored by the home office with input on upcoming expenses provided from Tunis. A project account was set up in Tunis at a local bank and money was transferred as needed. Local consultants, office staff, expenses incurred in Tunisia were paid out of that account which was monitored by the office staff in Tunis. These locally incurred expenses were reported back to Abt Associates' Cambridge office with receipts and included in Abt's vouchers to USAID.

### **3.1.4 Steering and Executive Committees**

In the original design of APIP, the Coordinating Committee for the GOT/IBRD Agricultural Sector Adjustment Loan Program was to serve as the overall policy coordinator for the project. This key institutional component between APIP-generated data/policy recommendations and policy implementation was to be the focal point of the project and all analytical outputs were to flow directly to it for use by decision-makers. The Committee was also to participate in the Annual Work Plan review and provide guidance and final approval for its implementation. However, the Committee never functioned in this capacity, due in part to the difficulties encountered in trying to get its numerous, very high level representation to meet on a regular basis. Both USAID/Tunis and Abt Associates Inc. were concerned that the project's priorities and dissemination of findings were not including key decision makers among the various ministries.

To compensate for these concerns and following an APIP mid-term evaluation, a Steering Committee, composed of the Secretary of State for Agriculture, Secretary of State for National Economy and the Ministry of Planning and Finance's General Director for Planning, set up

weekly meetings to review APIP's Work Plan, establish GOT priorities within APIP and provide general guidance to the project.

In addition, an Executive Committee was formed to oversee all project activities, recommend priorities, set deadlines, delegate responsibilities among APIP participants, and report back to the Steering Committee. This committee met weekly and was composed of the Director of the Prices and Economic Control (DPCE), the DGPDIA's APIP coordinator, member of the Ministry of Plan, APIP's USAID Project Officer and Abt Associates' resident representative. The committee's most important accomplishments were a) expanded participation by both public and private sector in APIP's activities; and b) broader dissemination of information about the project and technical studies.

### 3.2 Getting the Work Done

An essential component of APIP's operational organization was the ability to respond to the changing needs of the government for agricultural policy analysis. Although the approved Annual Work Plan was intended to set the overall agenda of policy study and training activities for each year, the Plan remained flexible to accommodate changes in GOT priorities as they occurred.

#### 3.2.1 Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference (TOR) for technical assistance were drafted in collaboration with the DGPDIA, the resident representative, the U.S.-based Abt Associates' project director, and the lead institution(s) taking responsibility for the implementation. Estimated budgets, level of effort and the TOR in French were submitted to the DGPDIA. (See Annex B for guidelines for writing TORs). For each study a committee comprised of the DGPDIA coordinator, resident representative and concerned public and private sector organizations was asked to review the TOR and provide comments during a specified review meeting, usually at the MOA. These comments were then incorporated into the final TOR.

Once the TOR had been approved, the Executive Committee would decide which representative organization would most appropriately serve as the "chef de file" or lead institution to assist with implementation. The Executive Committee also decided which was the best qualified resource, APIP contractors or local contractors/consultants, to carry out the work. On several occasions a combination of Abt Associates and a local contractor would combine forces. In all studies, Tunisian expertise was drawn upon heavily; in several studies, only Tunisian consultants or firms performed the work.

#### 3.2.2 Getting Ready to Work

While Abt Associates, Bethesda, lined up a team of staff and/or consultants, the resident representative and staff in Tunis conducted literature reviews, collected documentation on the specific topic and interviewed local expertise available to work with the team.

Names of candidates from Abt Associates, Bethesda and Tunis along with resumes, the expertise and role of each candidate in context of the team were submitted to the Executive Committee for review and approval. This process was quite rapid since timing was of the essence in assuring availability of qualified expertise and completing the work done in time to impact policy decisions. Clearance was obtained from USAID for team members traveling into Tunisia.

Local consultants and/or APiP staff put together background pieces before the study actually began. In many cases, the resident representative was able to use electronic mail to provide background reports to the team members for review before coming to Tunisia. Specific information requested by the expatriate team was put together for them ahead of time and appointments with key public and private sector participants were organized so the team wasted no time in-country. An APiP notice announcing a new study, arrival of team members and their expertise was published and distributed before field work was initiated. These notices also served as letters of introduction when setting up appointments.

### 3.2.3 Collaboration

Abt's resident representative and Project Director worked closely together with the GOT in order to meet the analytic needs in as efficient a manner as possible. Within the GOT, a working group of ministry staff members was formed for each study. Ideally, one or two members of the working group would be involved in drafting and/or reviewing the TOR and collaborate with the consultant team. Weekly meetings were set up with consultants and working group members in order to clarify issues and keep "on track". This also provided the opportunity for the team to give an update on the status of the work and to request assistance in obtaining appointments or information. The actual "contribution" of the working groups to the report varied greatly from one study to another depending on amount of time available and expertise/interest on the part of the ministry staff.

With the exception of the University of Wisconsin activities which continued over the life of the contract and some of the export promotion studies, generally consultant teams could not rely on ministry staff for written contributions to their work. The concept of "on-the-job" training posed a conflict early on for short-term consultants and ministry staff. Although interest was generally high on both sides, it was not always possible for consultants to spend the time required with staff because their first priority was to complete their contract and deliver a report in a specified timeframe. On the other hand, ministry staff found it difficult to devote a large percentage of their time to working with consultants because they had their own job-related tasks to accomplish each day. Nevertheless, important contributions were made by members of the working group who offered assistance in gathering data and documentation, set up and attended many of the meetings and commented on draft reports.

The GOT assistance requested through APiP was in direct response to needs and priorities of the agricultural structural adjustment program. All work was done in collaboration with the government and results were used by Tunisian analysts and decision makers to put

together action plans for implementation of reforms. There was some reluctance in the beginning of the Project to involve the private sector, but in the latter part of the project, the GOT was, in most cases, quite receptive and open to actively soliciting private sector involvement and collaboration. The private sector itself was very helpful in giving information, and in the case of the export studies, was enthusiastic and extremely cooperative and informative. These studies often provided the private sector a forum for voicing constraints they faced in government regulations, customs, transportation and others.

#### 3.2.4 Getting out the Results

A final debriefing took place at the end of each technical assistance study both at the DGPDIA and USAID. The preliminary draft was normally submitted to Abt Associates, Bethesda within 30 days after completion of the TDY. The U.S.-based project director set up a peer review in the U.S., comments were incorporated into the draft, and the draft was then translated into French. This process could take up to one month. Revised drafts (English and French) were submitted to USAID/Tunis and the DGPDIA respectively. A review committee (often the same as for the TOR) was sent copies of the draft and was asked to attend a meeting with comments on the document. These comments were then summarized by APIP's DGPDIA coordinator and sent officially to the resident representative, who forwarded them to the project director. Thirty copies of the final document were submitted with red covers and final report numbers to the DGPDIA in French, 10 copies in English to USAID/Tunis and five copies to USAID/Washington. Distribution of the final French documents was the responsibility of the DGPDIA.

Although this whole process from beginning to end seems fraught with approvals, reviews, etc., each time-consuming, information and issues were highly sensitive and it was difficult to come up with a more streamlined process. The additional constraining factor was getting documents translated into French so that the information was available to policy makers. Early in the project, the Project tried translating only executive summaries of draft reports to speed up the review process. It soon became obvious, however, that this was unacceptable and frustrating to the most concerned parties who needed detailed information from the main body of the report. The APIP staff thus concluded that the draft documents should be translated in their entirety to assure adequate review and distribution.

### 3.3 Seminars/Workshops

Although workshops and seminars were not foreseen in the project paper, they provided an efficient method for dissemination of information and meaningful discussions on sensitive issues among a broad range of public and private sector participants.

#### 3.3.1 Agricultural Structural Adjustment Seminar - May 1989

A well attended two-day seminar was held in May 1989 at the Hotel Abou Nawas in Gammarth, just outside Tunis. The purpose of the seminar was to provide a forum for both

public and private sector participants in the agricultural sector to discuss the impacts of the agricultural structural adjustment program in general and in the context of Tunisia. Results of APIP studies were presented and discussed among Tunisians and outside experts through four themes: 1) structural adjustment; 2) export growth: competitiveness and export markets for agricultural products; 3) subsidy reductions: impact on supply and demand; and 4) the role of the public and private sectors in the markets for agricultural products. To many, this seminar was an introduction to APIP as a project, and put the individual studies into a broader context of policy reform. The seminar was also a useful and efficient vehicle for disseminating two years worth of policy work.

### 3.3.2 Round Table - Cut Flowers - October 1990

At the end of field work carried out by an Abt Associates team studying export promotion of cut flowers, producers/exporters, potential exporters, foreign partners, transport companies, promotion agencies and GOT officials were invited to participate in a Round Table in Tunis to discuss the potential and opportunities for increasing Tunisian exports and the constraints confronting both current and potential flower exports. Examples of a variety of developing countries were cited as illustrations of how specific problems can and have been dealt with (post harvest handling, government regulations, transport). The Round Table was a successful way to bring together all the players involved in the export process.

### 3.3.3 Final APIP Seminar - June 1991

"Agricultural Policy Reform and Structural Adjustment: Progress and Perspectives" was the theme of the final APIP seminar. Among the 150 attendees were a wide range of private agribusiness executives and government officials from Tunisia's Presidency, Prime Minister's office, Ministries of Agriculture, National Economy, Planning and Finance, Export and Investment Promotion Agencies, academic institutions and international agencies.

Presentations by government officials indicated major impacts of action plans developed under APIP on the new policy directions being put in place. These include increased transparency throughout the system, reorganization and reduction of subsidies in order to facilitate market reforms, reduced and reoriented roles for parastatal organizations in the grain and oilseed sectors, including private assembly, marketing and imports, and the development of export-oriented industries in sea products, cut flowers, dates, olive oil and processed grain products.

## 4. POLICY IMPACTS

APIP's support to the Agricultural Structural Adjustment Program has led to major achievements, including: a) liberalizing imports; b) reduction in agricultural subsidies; and c) promotion of private sector participation in support services, such as distribution of agricultural inputs. Following are specific examples of APIP's contribution to agricultural reform.

### 4.1 Cereals

The Office of Cereals (OC) has controlled the buying, importing, storage and marketing of cereals. It has also provided most of the inputs for cereals, including seeds, fertilizers and herbicides. The GOT is opting for a more liberalized system which would divest the OC of many of its activities and allow the private sector to take on many of its former responsibilities. It is in the process of redefining its role to that of monitoring and regulating the sector.

#### 4.1.1 Liberalization of Cereals Collection and Storage

Based on recommendations from the Cereal Marketing Master Plan, Phase I, the GOT has issued an administrative order which authorizes private sector participation in cereals assembly and storage. These activities had previously been the responsibility of two government cooperatives.

#### 4.1.2 Elimination of a Portion of the Transport Cost Equalization System

A transport cost equalization system reimburses the cost of transporting grains without taking into account whether the actual routing used is the most efficient. A study completed by a local consulting firm under APIP has set out an action plan designed to eliminate the system for semolina and wheat flour.

#### 4.1.3 Elimination of Feed Grain Subsidies and Liberalization of Imports

Consistent with the efforts to gradually eliminate subsidies on feed ingredients, redefine the role of the Office of Cereals and to promote private sector participation, a team was requested to analyze the impacts of elimination of subsidies on the cost of production and income of poultry and livestock producers, the demand for inputs, and the supply of livestock products. In addition, the report evaluates the effects of liberalization of imports of inputs into the formulation of feed. Major conclusions show that benefits from liberalization include: a) more variety in feed ingredients; b) improved timing in availability; and c) better quality. Removing subsidies would lead to higher costs in the short run, and better allocation of resources and increased efficiency (lower prices) in the long run. The GOT is in the process of putting together an Action Plan to implement recommendations from the study over the next few years.

## **4.2 Milk**

Two government parastatals have controlled the processing industry which uses predominantly low cost imported powdered milk. The government subsidizes the prices by offering the difference between the cost of production and the fixed consumer price to the parastatals. Although local milk production varies and is insufficient to meet the demand, government policies discourage its consumption. Since private sector is ineligible for subsidies, it has been basically eliminated from the processing industry.

The case study on milk processing illustrate benefits from letting private sector into the milk processing industry. Recommendations from the study were instrumental in the GOT's decision to authorize (May 1990) the private sector to import powdered milk. In order to protect the national production against unfair competition, these imports are subject to an import duty (no greater than 15%) calculated on the basis of unsubsidized world market prices. All powdered milk was previously imported by two GOT parastatals.

## **4.3 Meat**

Meat imports have been assured through two government parastatals. In May 1990 a communique was issued by the GOT which allows private sector imports of beef. A priority study to be carried out with project funds by a local firm in late 1991 will evaluate the impact of this measure.

## **4.4 Edible Oils**

Olive oil is one of Tunisia's leading agricultural exports. Approximately 30% of arable land is devoted to olive production. Most of the production is exported and cheaper oils imported to meet the demand of the local market. Control of prices, marketing, processing, imports and exports is held by the government parastatal, the Office of Oil. Several studies carried out since the start of the project have identified increased potential for the sector, given a liberalized market and private sector participation. An Edible Oil Marketing Master Plan has been developed with recommendations to a) allow the private sector to export; b) liberalize imports and decontrol domestic processing; and c) encourage olive production. The GOT continues to develop its action plan through APIP for this important sector.

### **4.4.1 Blended Oils**

In the past the National Office of Oil (ONH) has imported grain oil, consigned it to refineries, recuperated the refined oil to mix with surplus olive oil as a subsidized mix, then sold it, a costly system. After a study conducted under APIP by Comete Engineering, the GOT (November 1989) decided to eliminate the blending of olive oil with other edible oils.

#### 4.4.2 Liberalization of Exports

Increasing competition within the EEC make it more critical for Tunisia to diversify its markets. Since the ONH has no commercial incentives for improved performance, it is reasonable to allow private sector participation in seeking new markets and products. APIP's agricultural export promotion study identified export potential beyond the traditional markets and outlined marketing strategies. A communique issued in May 1990 announced that private operators could export olive oil. A "cahier des charge" defines conditions necessary and other requirements.

Additionally, as a result of contacts made between Tunisian industry and the U.S. olive and oil traders during various work in the sector, negotiations are currently underway with two U.S. firms aimed at providing export diversification options for Tunisian olive oil.

#### 4.5 Inputs

##### 4.5.1 Input Subsidies

The GOT is phasing out input subsidies. This action is slower than anticipated because of two years of drought. APIP's report on subsidy reduction of agricultural inputs analyzed the impact on farmers' demand for inputs and the production response. The study warns that elimination of subsidies could have a negative impact on the use of inputs, especially for smaller farmers. Means should be found for making credit available to these less advantaged farmers.

##### 4.5.2 Fertilizer Marketing

Fertilizer marketing has been controlled by the monopoly, Societe Tunisienne d'Engrais Chimiques (STEC). Budgetary constraints, quantities and timeliness of distribution have resulted in poor service to farmers. APIP's fertilizer marketing study led to an action plan which allows private sector and cooperative participation in fertilizer distribution at the wholesale level by eliminating the monopoly and implementing accompanying measures.

##### 4.5.3 Subsidies on Irrigation Water

A key action under the Sectoral Adjustment Policy requires the GOT to increase the price of irrigation water by 9% in real terms. During negotiations with the World Bank, the GOT agreed to review the structure of irrigation charges and take action to improve cost recovery. An APIP team and Centre National des Etudes Agricoles were charged with this task. Based on the analysis, an action plan was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture.

#### 4.6 Food Subsidies

APIP's study of the Subsidy Fund was requested by the GOT to evaluate the present food subsidy system, identify options for improving the efficiency of the Fund and reduce subsidy

costs through various means, including targeting food products, transferring income to disadvantaged groups and increasing prices while keeping in mind the nutritional status of the lower income groups. The GOT is looking at experiences in other countries to come up with an appropriate targeted food system for Tunisia. Technical experiments are being carried out on different types of bread products as well.

#### 4.7 Exports

Studies on competitiveness and export marketing strategies have been published for wine, olive oil, specialty fruits, cut flowers, dates and seafood products. These reports examine constraints and opportunities to expanding these exports. The GOT is drafting action plans based on study recommendations.

## **5. TRAINING**

### **5.1 Formal, Informal and On-the Job**

Under the APIP contract Abt Associates (funds set aside in the University of Wisconsin subcontract) was responsible for arranging up to 12.5 person months of short-term overseas training. USAID/Tunis requested that the contract training funds also include training in Tunisia. Training funds outside the contract have been used to send staff from the Ministries of Agriculture, Plan, and Economy and a few private sector individuals to the U.S. for formal courses in management, economic development, statistical methods, privatization and grain marketing.

On an informal basis APIP team members have provided on-the-job training in analytical and technical procedures of economic analyses to project participants (members of the working groups). Other forums of informal training have consisted of short workshops and seminars given by the consultants in their particular skill areas, relevant to the project's activities.

The University of Wisconsin has hosted at separate times four staff from the DGPDI and Statistical Unit to spend one month each of supervised on-the-job training in developing models for determining the impact of policy changes on farmers' behavior. This type of training continued in Tunis with the same staff members through a local subcontract with the National Agriculture School (INAT).

In addition, the following courses were arranged at local institutions in Tunis and financed under the contract:

1. Microcomputer Operations and Lotus 123 computer course
2. Operational Research Methods for Policy Analysis
3. Econometric Methods for Policy Analysis
4. Modeling and Forecasting of Economic Data
5. Beginning and Intermediate English

### **5.2 Study Tours**

#### **5.2.1 Grain Marketing**

As part of the second phase of the Grain Marketing Study, Abt's APIP Project Director organized and hosted a week long study tour in the U.S. for the President of Tunisia's Grain Marketing Board and the Ministry of Agriculture's Director of Planning. These two high level officials have worked closely with Abt Associates' team in developing a cereal marketing master plan which aims to improve operations of the system, remove constraints to private sector participation, and define the role of the Marketing Board as an effective regulator of the cereals sector. The visit included Chicago and Kansas City Boards of Trade, private and cooperative grain companies, a grain storage silo exporter, the International Grains Program at Kansas State

University, and government agencies concerned with market information, grading and farm support programs.

### 5.2.2 Export Strategies

Ithaca International, Ltd. hosted a number of Tunisian officials during its export studies for wine, citrus and olive oil. The wines group visited major wine production enterprises in New York and California. They were put in contact with a number of wine importers and distributors on the east coast, Texas and Canada. These contacts permitted the Tunisians to make detailed assessments of complete wine import/wholesale/retail operations in several key markets. Several wine tasting sessions were arranged in New York to introduce American wine specialists - including the principal wine critic for The Washington Post - and importers to a range of Tunisian wines.

The olive oil export marketing group was put in contact with commercial importers and domestic producers of olive oil and other olive products on the east and west coasts of the United States. Initial contacts made during these visits have subsequently resulted in at least one major contract being signed between the Tunisian National Oils Office and Lindsay Olives in California for marketing of Tunisian olive oil in the U.S.

The citrus group visited major commercial and research organizations in Florida and California in addition to trips on the east coast to assess marketing and importing opportunities for Tunisian citrus products. In addition, the group investigated American citrus production, processing and marketing practices and contacted several firms interested in supplying Tunisian citrus producers with modern irrigation technologies and technical advice on use of safety codes for agricultural chemicals related to citrus enterprises. It should be noted that the official citrus group participants were joined in California by a group of private Tunisian citrus producers who paid their own way to be included in this opportunity.

## 6. LESSONS LEARNED

In the course of 40 months working on an overseas project, one acquires a wealth of insights into how to manage a project more efficiently, predict and abate conflict, deal with various technical and administrative issues, create better working relationships and environment, obtain necessary information and data, plan ahead, communicate clearly with home office and counterparts, network, interact effectively with bureaucracies, get other people to get their work done, know where the money is, and keep a sense of humor. This section of the report attempts to summarize what worked offers suggestions to be considered for similar projects in the future.

### 6.1 Technical Issues

#### 6.1.1 Data

As in many developing countries, data are difficult and time-consuming to obtain and often inconsistent from one ministry office to another. The use of computers for data management is fairly new in Tunisia; the concept of "sharing" information is lacking and, therefore, a constant and severe constraint.

**Suggestion 1:** Local office staff and consultants should gather as much data as possible before arrival of expatriate team in order to make most effective use of technical specialists.

**Suggestion 2:** The technical assistance team must share data on which the analysis is to be based with the chef de file and other GOT officials to reach a consensus on its reliability.

**Suggestion 3:** Reports should cite sources of information and list names and titles of persons interviewed during course of the study.

**Suggestion 4:** When information and data appear unobtainable, a memo with specific requests should be submitted to the responsible ministry (chef de file) and USAID if appropriate.

#### 6.1.2 Terms of Reference and Reports

Terms of reference were drafted either by the GOT or by Abt Associates and subcontractors. Although each TOR was submitted to a review committee for comment and approval, the GOT often made additions to the tasks after the team's arrival. The impact of these additions or changes meant that on several occasions time scheduled was not sufficient to meet the requirements of the additional tasks and/or experts recruited were not prepared or entirely appropriate.

**Suggestion 1:** Review meetings, whether for TORs or draft reports, ought to have as many key participants as possible from the public and private sector. Getting everyone on board from the TORs onward will assure a product which is useful in the end.

**Suggestion 2:** Terms of reference should be geared toward studies which can come up with useful results within a few months so that decision makers can have timely input into their policies. On a technical assistance contract, there is neither time nor money to carry out research projects.

**Suggestion 3:** Although the technical assistance teams debriefed USAID and the GOT before leaving the country, it would have been useful for the team leader to come back to Tunis for presentation and review of the report findings. At the same time a seminar or workshop could be organized. This did, in fact, occur for the Liberalization of Animal Feed study. Resources for the additional trip would have to be included in the study budget.

**Suggestion 4:** More private sector participants need to be involved in TOR review and review of documents. Policy makers would benefit from private sector ideas and support.

## **6.2 GOT Issues**

The issues described below pertain to Project resources outside Abt Associates' contract but had an impact on our technical assistance.

### **6.2.1 Local Long and Short-Term Consultants**

According to the original project design and contract, the funding managed by the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) was to provide 102 person months of local consultants, both long- and short-term, in support of APIP activities. In this way, the Project would be assured participation of Tunisian experts throughout its life. In fact, each study originally specified local level of effort to be funded with resources outside Abt's contract. However, the GOT and USAID were unable to solve contracting issues for hiring local expertise. Abt Associates and its subcontractors filled the gap by hiring individuals through our contract. In Contract Modification #2 reference to these person months was eliminated.

**Suggestion 1:** The participation of host-country consultants is key to the successful implementation of overseas projects. During the project design stage, USAID should look into realistic ways to ensure this participation. In the case of Tunisia, legal issues posed serious constraints on using GOT funds, although financed by USAID, for hiring. USAID's own regulations posed additional constraints.

**Suggestion 2:** The prime contractor of an overseas project should subcontract with a reputable local consulting firm to provide the local expertise required. Additional subcontracts can be funded if needed.

### **6.2.2 Host-Country Contracts**

Although procedures and concurrences within USAID are lengthy, the GOT regulations are fairly easy for contracting with local firms using USAID funding, and several local contracts

were awarded following the USAID competitive bidding process. Problems occurred, however, when local research institutions were recruited since individuals, under Tunisian law, are unable to be paid directly for their contributions or receive a small percentage of their daily rate. In the case of a subcontract with the National Agricultural School (INAT), for example, a misunderstanding on the payment of two professors held up the contract for more than a year. This caused delays in finalizing the modeling activity since the University of Wisconsin and INAT professors were working in close collaboration with the DGPDIA working group.

Towards the end of the Project, USAID was opting for direct contracting for technical services. This meant that the actual contracting between the Mission and the firm or institution rendering services. In this way, the GOT was relieved of preparing, administering and monitoring the local contract.

**Suggestion 1:** In cases where host-country counterparts on overseas projects have funding for contracting with their local institutions and private firms, procedures and regulations for both USAID and local government should be established and reviewed at length. The USAID Project Officer needs to be very involved, at least initially, in the process.

**Suggestion 2:** Examples of several types of host-country contracts should be translated into the official language and reviewed by legal advisors at USAID and local government at the onset of a project.

### 6.2.3 Procurement

Procurement of vehicles and computers was the responsibility of the GOT and USAID supplied Project funds for these purposes. A management audit took place before the Project began and the report clearly assessed the GOT computer needs. Delays in decisions for procurement meant that during APIP's first year there were no computers. Much wasted time, effort and frustration went into this issue.

Three Project vehicles were ordered for APIP's start-up but remained at the port for several months while the GOT and USAID searched for a way to register them. To facilitate the process, we were requested to register the vehicles in Abt's name and funds were added to our contract to maintain and insure them.

Although these are perhaps typical problems with project start-up there are ways to avoid such situations.

**Suggestion 1:** An audit of computer needs before project start-up is ideal. The procurement process should begin as soon as funding is available to assure that the computers are in place as soon possible.

**Suggestion 2:** If computers are procured locally, heavy consideration should be given to maintenance services provided by bidders.

**Suggestion 3:** Local computer experts are best to hire for installation of computers. They would also have useful suggestions for the most efficient location and use of computers.

**Suggestion 4:** USAID could probably avoid a lot of frustration by including procurement as part of the prime contract.

**Suggestion 5:** Project vehicles are extremely important on projects with lots of technical assistance and teams in-country. When vehicles are the responsibility of the prime contractor, the project is assured that they are well-maintained and always available to Project consultants.

### **6.3 USAID Support**

Although APIP was housed in the Ministry of Agriculture, the USAID project officer was very much involved in the project and worked well with the resident representative. Issues that arose were usually solved with a phone call. The project officer was kept well-informed on all activities and issues.

**Suggestion 1:** The resident representative was not always well-informed about USAID activities that were relevant to APIP work. On the other hand, USAID staff was not always aware of APIP activities. More sharing of information from both sides would be useful to everyone involved in the policy work and private sector promotion.

**Suggestion 2:** The resident representative should work with the USAID project officer to promote project activities and technical assistance studies within USAID and other U.S. representation, such as the Agricultural Trade Office and Commercial Attache.

### **6.4 Dissemination**

A variety of methods were used to disseminate information about the project and its activities. Many of these were initiated by Abt Associates' project staff and later taken on by ministry counterparts. Brochures, newsletters, announcements were distributed in the various ministries associated with APIP.

**Suggestion 1:** Project brochures in French and English are extremely useful to inform public and private sector about the project's activities. This brochure should be updated at least once a year.

**Suggestion 2:** Newsletters each month about status of studies, announcements of upcoming work and activities, arrival of consultants, workshops and so on would help keep the issues alive.

**Suggestion 3:** Roundtables, seminars, workshops, for topics studied under the project provide forums for discussions among public and private sector participants.

Suggestion 4: A seminar with Morocco was suggested during the project but did not take place. A regional seminar on policy reform and implementation would have served to exchange experiences.

## 6.5 Administrative/Management Issues

### 6.5.1 Roles of the Resident Advisor/Representative and Project Director

The Terms of Reference for the long-term resident advisor position (see contract pg. 20 and 23) read, "this person will be...responsible for implementing...the research and training activities of the Project. This will necessarily include planning and management of activities with local counterparts, recruitment of technical assistance, procurement, liaison with consultants, administrative and logistical support." The ideal representative would have both a Ph.D. in agricultural economics and have a high level of management experience.

A project with four local office staff and 155 person months of short-term technical assistance requires daily management, coordination and administration. After the first 16 months Abt Associates, Inc., the DGPDI and USAID/Tunis opted to replace the original resident advisor with a resident representative who had a strong management background. The solution to the required technical input was to have a U.S.-based project director who would spend one quarter time each year in Tunis on technical studies and who would be involved throughout the year in the project at technical levels, such as review of TORs and technical studies. The resident representative could also call on the project director to assist as necessary. This arrangement worked well and enabled the project to benefit from a variety of skills and strengths.

The lesson from this experience on APIP can be applied to most, if not all, overseas projects with long-term staff. AID generally overlooks the managerial demands of running technical assistance projects, and tends to look for too many qualifications in one position. USAID and Abt Associates' creative response provided all the skills required to implement this technical assistance project. It proved to be an effective solution with implications for future project design.

Suggestion 1: Contracts should be flexible. What is most important is to develop a structure that works to the best advantage of project implementation. The contractor and USAID were able to work together to come up with a management/technical assistance team that was acceptable to all parties.

Suggestion 2: Regular communications between home office technical support and in-country management is required. The combination of management and technical skills provided by the

APIP structure worked because of timely feedback and amount of participation of project director both from the home office and in Tunisia.

Suggestion 3: In a project with one long-term advisor, it is advisable to hire a local assistant who knows how to get things done in the context of that particular country and/or bureaucracy. Ideally, and especially if the advisor is a technical person, an administrative manager from the home office should spend a month at the outset of the project to assist in setting up the local office.

### 6.5.2 Local Office

One of the great benefits of the APIP contract was the establishment of a local office staff based in the Ministry of Agriculture. The staff, supervised by the resident representative, provided all the necessary support for the many technical assistance teams (many times more than one team were in Tunis at the same time). Two chauffeurs and three project vehicles maintained by Abt Associates were available to the teams for fieldwork. The project assistant and secretary were both trilingual and could work in French, Arabic or English.

The Tunis office, although it was in the MOA, was like a slice of private sector in a government bureaucracy. It worked to support the Project and ministries' needs and had its own budget, photocopy machine, computers and other supplies. It could buy publications, buy someone's time for a literature review, finance seminars. It enabled the work to get done in an efficient, timely manner.

Suggestion 1: Establish a project office within the responsible institution. Although working conditions within the MOA were not always ideal for staff and consultants, the location within the implementing institution had extensive benefits. It established the fact that the project belonged to the GOT. Abt's APIP office facilitated the work for everyone involved in the Project. It also provided "hands-on" training as ministry personnel sought out assistance with computer problems, information for their work, or special materials for a presentation. The office created a positive atmosphere within the DGPDLA.

Suggestion 2: Assure adequate office space for consultants. If a team is obliged to do its work in a hotel room, this defeats the "working group" concept.

Suggestion 3: In terms of equipment, a project should have a sufficient amount of computers for the daily management of the project, for typing documents and for consultants. A photocopying machine capable of producing double-sided documents with a sorter is required.

### 6.5.3 Home Office Support

Home office support is extremely important in a project such as APIP with three subcontractors, recruitment of technical assistance teams from the U.S., translations of

documents, bills paid both out of the U.S. and from Tunisia. This is a line item which, unfortunately, is one of the first to get cut back when funding is limited.

**Suggestion 1:** There should be one main point of contact for the home office support. That one person can coordinate information needs, be it technical, financial or administrative, with other home office staff.

**Suggestion 2:** A communications system, such as email, is more efficient than a phone call or a fax and facilitates project implementation. Messages are logged in directly to a computer both in the field and in the home office. Work plans and monthly reports, for example, can be sent via email to the home office, comments incorporated by the project director, and emailed back to the field. Technical reports and translations can also be transmitted. Financial spreadsheets can be transmitted with formulas intact.

**Suggestion 3:** Fax is still necessary for sending contracts, bills and information which cannot be transmitted by e-mail.

**Suggestion 4:** All electronic communications should use some kind of numbering system to keep track of messages received and answered.

#### **6.5.4 Other Practical Suggestions**

**Suggestion 1:** All consultants should follow a specific format when writing up reports. A guide should be given to the team leader to follow.

**Suggestion 2:** Reports should have a) some kind of numbering system; b) different color report covers for draft and final, with name of project and contractors, date work was completed and list of authors.

**Suggestion 3:** If report reproduction is done in country, be sure that covers are same size as the paper available.

### **6.6 Project Implementation**

#### **6.6.1 Project Coordination**

APIP was originally conceived to be an interministerial project assisting ministries of agriculture, plan and economy. Since the project was housed in the Ministry of Agriculture's Direction of Planning and signing authority for project activities and funding was with the director of this unit, decisions about the project activities and funding for training and computer equipment tended to remain in this unit. The director, busy with other ministry affairs, assigned the project to a "sous-directeur". Until the formation of the Executive Committee, the project had no decision-making body.

**Suggestion 1:** An interministerial committee is vital in getting consensus on priorities and making decisions about project implementation. At the same time, the minutes from these meetings update higher level policy makers on the status of project activities.

#### **6.6.2 Policy Seminar and Inventory**

APIP held two policy seminars during its 40 months. Both were successful in discussing policy issues and disseminating results of the policy studies conducted under APIP.

**Suggestion 1:** Begin the project with a policy seminar that raises the issues to be studied or addressed. Such a seminar would bring together the multitude of players and announce the objectives of the project and its support to government programs.

**Suggestion 2:** Conduct a policy inventory at the beginning of the project which summarizes policies impacting the agricultural sector. This would set the stage for policy studies and provide useful documentation as background.

## 7. CONCLUSION

APIP has contributed considerably to the agricultural structural adjustment program in Tunisia. It has been an innovative project that has provided support to the Government of Tunisia through a multitude of studies, exchange of ideas with experts in various fields, training both in the U.S. and in Tunisia, formal and hands-on. It is a project that will leave behind not only a wealth of information on various segments of the agricultural sector, but more importantly changes in policies that allow reduction in the State's budget, divestiture of parastatal activities, active participation by the private sector, and an increase in potential foreign exchange earnings. For the DGPDIA within the Ministry of Agriculture, the ability to write scopes of work, set priorities, field consultants, contract for local technical assistance, participate in the analysis and review of technical assistance will make them a more efficient and useful entity.

Abt Associates and its subcontractors have met contract terms while retaining sufficient flexibility to respond to the technical assistance needs of bonafide implementation of economic policy reform. Many elements of ASAP are now getting put in place with APIP analyses. Future success in fine tuning policies in the course of implementation will require further analytical support. With the end of APIP, the Government of Tunisia will need to find other vehicles to obtain such vital assistance.

## ANNEX A

## TIME LINE

## CODE:

T = TOR

R = Review &amp; Approval

S = Selection of Team

C = Team in-Country

D = Draft

F = Final

## APIP CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES - 1991

1991 ACTIVITIES	CHEF DE FILE	1991												
		Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
<b>ONGOING:</b>														
1. Elimination of Animal Feed Subs. (Abt Contract - Final)	Rezgui, OC	F												
2. Export Promotion - Cut Flowers (Abt - draft in December)	CEPEX, Yahia	D	F											
3. Elimination of Water Subsidies (Wisconsin/CNEA - draft Dec.)	DGPDIA, Larbi	D	F											
4. Modeling Activities (U. of Wisconsin/DGPDIA)	DGPDIA, Larbi				F									
<b>NEW - YEAR IV:</b>														
1. Export Promotion - Fish products (TOR waiting for review)	CGP	S	CCCCCCCC		D								F	
2. Ag. Taxation & Invest. Incentives (TOR waiting for review - Abt)	APIA	R	S CCCCCC		D								F	
3. Action Plan - Oils (Waiting for USAID - local contract)	DGPDIA	S	CCCCCCCC		D								F	
4. Subsidy System - Soft Wheat (TOR waiting review)	DPCE, Touiti	R	S CCCCCC										D	F
5. Process of Liberalizing Meat Imp. (TOR needs revisions)	DG/PA		S CCCCCCC										D	F
<b>FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:</b>														
6. APIP Seminar (Waiting for confirm. of date)	DGPDIA, Rassas													C
7. Follow-up to Flower Study (possible study tour)	CEPEX, Rassas				CC									
8. Follow-up Dates Seminar - Tozeur (Abt contract)	GID, Rassas				CC									
9. ASAL Follow-up (Check needs w/DGPDIA)	DGPDIA													
<b>OTHER ACTIVITIES:</b>														
1. Crop Forecasting (self-help)	DGPDIA													
2. Cereals Grading (self-help)	OC													
3. Alt. Soil Use (self-help)	DGPDIA													
4. Customs - Tuna & Sardines														
5. Floor Price - Dates	GID													

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## CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF A SCOPE OF WORK

## I. Background

- What is project purpose?
- Studies, data, reports
- How did you know the present need exists?
- How does it relate to whole project or future projects?

## II. Objective

- What is the intended outcome of this contract?

## III. Tasks

- What are the required steps to accomplish objective? (May let contractors propose.)
- What management controls (milestones) do you require?
  - briefings
  - draft document reviews
  - Analyses/reports
  - review meetings
  - pilot tests

## IV. Reports and Deliverables

- summarize report and deliverable requirements
- number of copies, to whom
- due dates

## V. Personnel

- What are the requirements for team members?
- Language requirements?
- Length of time for each?

## VI. Roles and Responsibilities

- Who reports to whom?
- What is role of AID?
- What is role of Host Country?
- What are relationships with other donors?

## VII. Logistics

- What logistics will be supplied?
- What logistics will contractor be responsible for?
- What is the nature of the duty post(s)?

## VIII. Level of Effort

- How many persondays/months/years is the contractor expected to provide?

## IX. Evaluation Criteria

# Agricultural Policy Implementation Project

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# Agricultural Policy Implementation Project

Ministry of Agriculture, General Directorate for Development Planning and Agricultural Investments (DGPDI)  
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