PD-ABH-923

A.I.D. EVALUATION SUMMARY - PART I

1. BEFORE FILLING OUT THIS FORM, READ THE ATTACHED INSTRUCTIONS.
2. USE LETTER QUALITY TYPE, NOT "DOT MATRIX" TYPE.

IDENTIFICATION DATA

A. Reporting A.I.D. Unit:

Mission or AID/W Office USAID/Honduras
(ES# FY94 - 3)

B. Was Evaluation Scheduled In Current FY Annual Evaluation Plan?
Yes [ ] Slipped [X] Ad Hoc [ ]
Evaluation Plan Submission Date: FY 93 Q 3

C. Evaluation Timing
Interim [X] 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 No.	Project /Program Title	First PROAG or Equivalent (FY)	Most Recent PACD (Mo/Yr)	Planned LOP Cost (000)	Amount Obligated to Date (000)
522-0292	Land Use and Productivity Enhancement (LUPE)	FY89	Feb 97	$18,000	$13,990

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. Reconvene Project Implementation Committee	Jorge Quiñonez Peter Hearne	Completed
2. Sign Coop. Agreement with CARE for NGO outreach program.	Michael Snyder Peter Hearne	Completed
3. Amend original Project Agreement	Marcela Moya Peter Hearne	Completed
4. Begin implementing baseline and impact-monitoring studies	Jorge Quiñonez	04/30/94
5. Improve project administration a. Implement vehicle management manual b. Carry out decentralization of selected administrative procedures	Jorge Quiñonez	Completed
6. Revise technical outreach (redefine gender approach, utilize a systems approach, fine-tune technologies, conduct cost-benefit studies, and increase emphasis on basic grain storage).	Jorge Quiñonez Peter Hearne	06/30/94

(Attach extra sheet if necessary)

APPROVALS

F. Date Of Mission Or AID/W Office Review Of Evaluation: (Month) 03 (Day) 01 (Year) 94

G. Approvals of Evaluation Summary And Action Decisions:

	Project/Program Officer	Representative of Borrower/Grantee	Evaluation Officer	Mission or AID/W Office Director
Name (Typed)	Peter Hearne, ORD	Jorge Quiñonez	Donald Soules, ODP Carmen Zambrana, ODP	Marshall Brown, MD
Signature				
Date	Feb 14 1994	2-16-94		

ABSTRACT

H. Evaluation Abstract (Do not exceed the space provided)

The purpose of the Land Use and Productivity Enhancement (LUPE - 522-0292) Project, is to increase hillside agricultural production and productivity on a sustainable basis in central and southern Honduras, including improved management of natural resources on which productivity depends. The project is being implemented by the Government of Honduras' (GOH) Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). The purpose of this midterm evaluation, conducted by Chemonics International, was to examine LUPE's natural resource management and extension activities, and management systems, to assess the effects of project activities and progress toward expected outputs and objectives. Among the major findings and conclusions are:

* Conservation and production technologies are well integrated to improve the sustainability of hillside agriculture. The project should continue to refine the technologies to increase efficiency and cost effectiveness.

* The methodology for technology transfer is among the most advanced in the region of any similar-type project, and could be further improved with greater integration of the technical disciplines and with more attention to the production system as a whole.

* Although project women extensionists are reaching large numbers of rural women beneficiaries, the project should refine its gender approach by engaging extensionists, both men and women, who can reach out to the participating farm families in an integrated, less segregated way.

* It is strongly believed that the project will meet recently scaled back output indicators.

* The project has leadership and a high proportion of dedicated, capable and motivated staff at all levels. The expatriate technical assistance and USAID project management have both been very effective.

The most noteworthy lessons learned are:

* A successful extension project can function within the public sector, provided autonomy can be achieved in technical, methodological, personnel and financial aspects, although the question remains whether such a project can be sustainable when not financed by an influential donor.

* Technology can successfully be transferred by a project without a specific research component, provided suitable technologies are available and as long as validation is considered, and new technologies are incorporated.

COSTS

I. Evaluation Costs

1. Evaluation Team

Name	Affiliation	Contract Number OR TDY Person Days	Contract Cost OR TDY Cost (U.S. $)	Source of Funds
Gerald Owens	Nat. res. mgmt. (Team leader)	45 days	$23,040	Project Grant
Francisco Rodriguez	Agric. extension	32 days	$10,240	
Robert Nelson	Forest ecology	20 days	$10,240	
Ivo Kraljevic	WID and sociology	15 days	$ 6,480	
Charles Atlee	Postharvest and marketing	8 days	$ 4,100	
Leslie Brandt T.	Organizational management	16 days	$ 5,120	
Stephen Rosholt	Data management	25 days	$ 8,400	

2. Mission/Office Professional Staff Person-Days (Estimate) 25 person-days

3. Borrower/Grantee Professional Staff Person-Days (Estimate) 140 person-days

A.I.D. EVALUATION SUMMARY - PART II

SUMMARY

J. Summary of Evaluation Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations (Try not to exceed the three (3) pages provided)
Address the following items:

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

Mission or Office:	Date This Summary Prepared:	Title And Date Of Full Evaluation Report:
Honduras	January 31, 1994	Midterm Evaluation - Land Use Productivity Enhancement Project / May 1993

Purpose of the LUPE Project: Traditional agricultural practices among the target population cause intense soil erosion, decreased soil fertility and accelerated deforestation, while the lack of stable income renders them powerless to diversify production or even satisfy the family's basic nutritional needs. Shifting agriculture, further destruction of the surrounding natural resources, and often times urban migration are the eventual end result of this vicious cycle. The LUPE Project offers technical assistance (TA) in hillside agricultural practices to 25,000 hillside farm families, with the objective of converting each farm into a sustainable production unit. The goal of the project, which is the Mission strategic objective No. 3, is to improve management toward long-term sustainability of selected natural resources. The project purpose is to increase hillside agricultural production and productivity on a sustainable basis in central and southern Honduras, including improved management of natural resources on which productivity depends.

Purpose of the Evaluation and Methodology Used: The mission of the evaluation team was to: (1) examine LUPE's natural resource management and extension activities, and management systems; (2) assess the effects of project activities and progress toward expected outputs and objectives; and (3) make recommendations for project improvement. The methodology used by the team of seven specialists from Chemonics International, included the following activities: (1) field observations at extension agencies and beneficiary farms; (2) review of documents; (3) interviews; and (4) sitting in on project conferences and workshops.

Major Findings and Conclusions:

1. Natural Resources Management and Sustainable Agricultural Technologies
   * The project is promoting appropriate, compatible, tested technologies for conservation and productivity in a well-integrated manner.
   * The technologies are highly accepted by beneficiary farm families, but financial and economic factors have not been studied by the project. If technology package is not profitable or economical, overall acceptance will be low.
   * The project has not given enough priority to certain environmental activities and corresponding goal achievement (microwatershed management, environmental education and integrated pest management).
   * There are some geographic areas that no longer benefit significantly from project services, and strategies and plans for withdrawal should be developed.

2. Extension Methodologies and Strategies
   * The project's methodology for technology transfer is a well-conceived process, perhaps the most advanced in Central America.
   * The modular training approach being used in the project is appropriate, although integration of the farm production system has been somewhat overlooked, and internal communication linkages between extension and hillside agriculture components need to be incorporated.
   * The plan of using (community-based) contact farmer/trainers is conceptually sound and has been proven in the field, but it has been slow to be implemented. The use of contact farmer/trainers as promoters effectively addresses the problem of project extension agents being incapable of making the necessary number of farm visits.
   * The proposed outreach program will create a significant multiplier effect, provided that the local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) effectively establish leadership in the communities.
   * Community characterizations and selection processes have been key elements for extension agency field work, although the information collected is too general and needs to include resource management practices by farm families.

3. Gender Considerations

* The outreach capacity of the "assistance to rural women" subcomponent was slow to develop, but is now reaching more beneficiary families than any other project component, which is laying a solid foundation for rapid growth in diffusion and adoption of agricultural technologies.
* Technology transfer has become a gender-segregated approach, in which women extension agents promote and offer assistance nearly exclusively in women-related activities, and technical extension agents (mostly men) in production/conservation technologies. The potential impact among women beneficiaries is severely limited by the project only offering technologies and services in home improvement and family garden activities.

4. Postharvest Interventions

* The postharvest component has concentrated on basic grain storage, and the interventions promoted are appropriate for the target population.
* The adoption of fruit and vegetable processing by beneficiaries is lower than anticipated because it is expensive, nontraditional and labor intensive, and marketing is risky.

5. Organizational Management

* The organizational structure appears to be working effectively, and managers have sufficient decision-making authority, although communication is somewhat lacking, and information feedback to the field needs to be improved.
* The trend toward decentralization of administrative support staff to the regional and area offices is contributing to increased efficiency of project activities.
* Administrative and logistical support has improved considerably, but certain areas, such as vehicle management, require additional attention.
* Senior project management could possibly be replaced next year as a result of GOH elections, and this change would be extremely disruptive.
* USAID project monitoring has been very effective on an informal basis, but formal meetings of the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) have virtually ceased, and need to be reconvened.
* Little coordination, outlined in project design in order to complement technological delivery, has taken place with other governmental and private institutions and organizations.

6. Data Management

* The project's Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PMEU) verifies project-generated field data but needs to process this information in a timely and useful manner.
* The methodology proposed by the ARD-contracted survey specialist to carry out the baseline study and impact evaluations is appropriate.
* A geographic information system (GIS) is not needed in the project.

General

* The life of project (LOP) targets will be reached provided the technologies prove to be economically viable.
* The project has good leadership and a high proportion of dedicated, capable and motivated staff at all levels.
* The expatriate technical assistance team is task-oriented and have been very effective in training, advising and interacting with project counterparts.

Principal Recommendations:

1.1 Conduct benefit/cost studies on the various technologies and combinations thereof.
1.2 Currently-promoted technologies should be fine-tuned, and new "cutting-edge" technologies considered.
1.3 Withdraw from "mature" areas that no longer benefit significantly from its services.

2.1 Redefine training strategies to support internal flow of technologies and incorporate a systems concept to integrate disciplines and enhance component interaction.
2.2 Increase and accelerate logistical support to the contact farmer component.
2.3 Include a more detailed analysis of production technology of target crops and community potentials and limitations in community characterizations.

3.1 Redefine the roles and responsibilities of the extension agents to emphasize team work and to focus on the hillside farm family, rather than on men and women separately, and integrate men and women technicians in all activities.
3.2 Make family garden and small animal production the responsibility of the agency chief.
3.3 Involve participating women in income-producing, community improvement and environmental activities.

4.1 Increase emphasis on postharvest technologies, particularly for storage of basic grains.
4.2 Concentrate on postharvest technologies of farm products that can be marketed by participating women.

5.1 Improve information dissemination at all levels.
5.2 Expand and formalize the decentralization of procurement of materials and supplies, and administrative support, to the area level.
5.3 Vehicle management needs to be improved.
5.4 Aggressively seek to ensure the continuity of project senior staff.
5.5 Reconvene the meetings of the PIC, and consider coordination activities envisioned in project design.

6.1 Improve data-processing by developing a computer program for direct data-input from quarterly planning format.
6.2 Implement the proposed baseline and impact monitoring studies.

Please refer to Attachment A for a complete list of recommendations and corresponding Mission response.

Lessons Learned:

* A successful extension project can function within the public sector, provided autonomy can be achieved in technical, methodological, personnel and financial aspects, although the question remains whether such a project can be sustainable when not financed by an influential donor.

* Technology can successfully be transferred by a project without a specific research component, provided suitable technologies are available and as long as validation is considered and new technologies are incorporated.

ATTACHMENTS

K. Attachments (List attachments submitted with this Evaluation Summary; always attach copy of full evaluation report, even if one was submitted earlier; attach studies, surveys, etc., from "on-going" evaluation, if relevant to the evaluation report.)

Attachment A: Complete List of Recommendations

Attachment B: Full Evaluation Report Titled "Midterm Evaluation - Land Use (and) Productivity Enhancement Project"

NOTE: The final evaluation report was forwarded to AID/W on June 23, 1993.

COMMENTS

L. Comments By Mission, AID/W Office and Borrower/Grantee On Full Report

Mission and LUPE Project management staff feel that the evaluation report more than adequately fulfilled the requirements in the scope of work (SOW). We are particularly satisfied with the high qualifications and professionalism of every member of the evaluation team, and of the efforts made by them to make extensive visits to field operations and to interview people involved with the project at all levels. The team also provided an extra section not required in the SOW of "suggestions" to further assist USAID and the project in implementation.

It is important to mention that an amendment to the LUPE Project Agreement was signed on January 26, 1994, which significantly scaled back the total amount of the LOP Grant and the LOP output indicators.

Similarly, Mission and project staff are in agreement with all recommendations included in the evaluation report, with the exception of the following:

Extension Methodologies and Strategies

"A training coordinator may be needed to integrate the flow of technology to the field and improve the interaction of the component specialists and the team." We disagree because the technology integration and interaction mentioned in this recommendation, which is currently working well, should continue to be the responsibility of the three technical component coordinators, with oversight by the subdirector of operations.

"LUPE should rethink its incentives policy ..." It has taken a long time for the project to begin implementing the new incentive policy, which contemplates a greatly-reduced package of incentives, and we think this current policy should be continued and subsequently evaluated before attempting to introduce a modified or more complicated scheme.

Organizational Management

"USAID should hold discussions with the MNR and the Ministry of Finance regarding the possibility of giving LUPE more direct control over payments of salaries and per diem." Although there have been serious delays in project salary and per diem payments, we do not think further actions are necessary because the situation has improved significantly.

ATTACHMENT A: COMPLETE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations	Closure Date
A. Natural Resources Management and Sustainable Agricultural Technologies	
Conduct benefit/cost studies on the various technologies and combinations of technologies.	03/31/94
Encourage more interest and involvement on the part of LUPE technical personnel in discovering and evaluating "cutting edge" technologies for hillside agriculture.	DONE (Technologies improved, Dec. 1993)
Continue to fine-tune technologies as the project reaches out to smaller farmers who have no prior connections with the project.	06/30/94
LUPE should establish phaseout thresholds to withdraw from communities where it has achieved a certain stage of technology adoption, and where continuing efforts are unlikely to produce further gains.	06/30/94
B. Extension Methodologies and Strategies	
B1. Internal Flow of Technology	
The project should redefine its training strategies to support the internal flow of technologies and incorporate within the training modules a systems concept that integrates disciplines and improves interactions within project components.	DONE (1994 internal training plan prepared, Jan. 1994)
A training coordinator may be needed to integrate the flow of technology to the field and improve the interaction of the component specialists and the technical assistance team.	Recommendation not accepted (see Section L of this ES)
At the agency level, develop training materials that allow everyone to do everything at the farm level, thus avoiding the men/women dichotomy, promote more efficient use of time, transport, and human resources, and increase the importance of the *huerta* as a sustainable production unit at the family level.	DONE (Extension methodology for family gardens in place, Jan. 1994)
B2. Work Schedules and Visits	
Install a schedule of ten working days and four days free to improve the time use efficiency of the field extensionist.	DONE (Established in selected agencies, Dec. 1993)

Recommendations	Closure Date
The visits as part of the extension component should be enhanced by the NGOs and by mass media technology transfer means.	DONE (LUPE-CARE/NGO Extension Program and radio programs being implemented, Dec. 1993)
B3. Incentives	
LUPE needs to rethink its incentives policy to consider not only vegetative materials and agricultural inputs.	Recommendation not accepted (see Section L of this ES).
* Define incentives not as a condition to participate, but as a reward to what has been done.	
* Define incentives as a strategy to develop community/group productive activities that enhance and protect the resource base.	
* Provide incentives through NGOs to speed up payment to contact farmers and for other productive activities.	
* Integrate incentives, NGO agreements, and specialized communities into an organization capable of sustaining the process of technology adoption.	
B4. *Diagnóstico*	
Community *diagnósticos* should include a more detailed analysis of production technology of the target crops and practices plus an analysis of community potentials and limitations as they relate to soil conservation practices and market potential for crops and vegetables.	DONE (Diagnosticos updated to include analysis, Dec. 1993)
Use *diagnósticos* as the main tool during the agency induction process - and have the new technician do a production technology characterizations and analyses. Technicians should have an understanding of the farm as a system.	DONE (Part of 1994 work plan, Jan. 1994)
Identify and incorporate communities that will support farmer organizations with the potential to develop linkages with NGOs in the area.	12/31/94
B5. Contact Farmers and the NGO Agreement	
Increase and accelerate logistical support to the contact farmer component.	DONE (Logistical support channeled through CARE since Dec. 1993)

Recommendations	Closure Date
Clearly define the women contact farmer role at the family level with the garden as linkage of the production technology and nutritional aspects of the family. Make sure there are no women-men roles influencing the activity.	DONE (Roles defined during contact farmer encounters, Jan. 1994)
Increase the sustainability of the technologies through the NGO involvement by helping organize community groups that have reached the point where a collective effort to solve problems is possible.	05/31/94
C. Gender Considerations	
Dismantle the gender wall within LUPE:	
* Integrate *incorporación femenina* activities and technologies into LUPE's extension component by redefining the roles and responsibilities of the extensionists at the agency level. Emphasize field agency team work and complementarily of skills and backgrounds rather than gender.	DONE (Roles redefined in agencies, Jan. 1994)
* Make family garden technology transfer and small livestock production the responsibility of the head of the agency. Women extensionists' role, while continuing to include current activities, should emphasize community liaison, organization, and training.	02/28/94
* Intensify the training of women extensionists in hillside farming and natural resource conservation technologies, and include women extensionist in activities with men farmers. Include men extensionists in women activities. Goal should be to hire/train women or men extensionists who can work with women and men clients indistinctly.	04/30/94
* Broaden the scope of women contact farmers to include technologies offered in all LUPE components.	02/28/94
Use home improvement technologies as a means to contact, establish rapport with, and recruit farm families as LUPE's clients.	DONE (Part of project extension methodology, May 1993)
Seek income producing, community improvement, and environmental activities that can be undertaken by women's groups.	06/30/94

9

Recommendations	Closure Date
Seek out NGOs or other government projects to continue working with the communities where LUPE has delivered all it is designed to deliver.	DONE (LUPE-CARE/NGO Extension Program began, Dec. 1994)
D. Postharvest Intervention	
More emphasis and resources need to be placed in postharvest technologies for storing basic grains.	06/30/94
Concentrate on postharvest technologies of farm products that can be sold by women such as edible fruits, vegetables, medicinal plants, and spices.	06/30/94
Offer fruits and vegetable processing technologies only if requested by LUPE beneficiaries.	DONE (Part of promotion methodology, June 1993)
E. Organizational Management	
Vehicle management must be improved.	DONE (Procedures implemented in Nov. 1993)
There should be an annual training session established for field staff (especially heads of agencies) in administrative procedures, with emphasis on how to specify their purchase requests so as to ensure receiving the necessary quality.	04/30/94
The USAID project office should seek Development Finance Office concurrence to increase the internal revolving fund to the original Lps.300,000.	DONE (GOH inter-institutional request for L200,000, sent Aug. 1993)
LUPE should set up a revolving fund of Lps.5,000 in each regional office for small expenditures and increase to Lps.10,000 after review.	Not feasible - GOH regulations do not permit
USAID should hold discussions with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Finance regarding giving LUPE more control over payments of salary and per diem.	Recommendation not accepted (see Section L of this ES).

10

Recommendations	Closure Date
LUPE should expand and formalize the decentralization of materials and supplies to the area level, and should continue to decentralize administrative support to each area office.	DONE (Area assistants responsible for admins. in each area, Sep. 1993)
It is strongly urged that USAID aggressively seek to ensure the stability and continuity of the senior staff of LUPE.	DONE (PIL 40A issued to ensure Senior staff stability, Jan. 1994)
The Project Implementation Committee should begin to meet again, biannually.	DONE (First new meeting held, August 1993)
LUPE should begin to implement the coordination activities envisioned in the Project Paper, with NGOs, GOH agencies and projects, and other USAID projects.	DONE (ample coordination w/ other institutions, Dec. 1993)
F. Data Management	
A computer program should be developed with a data entry screen that allows PMEU staff to input data directly from the *Formulario de Ejecución/Programación Trimestral*.	DONE (Program being utilized, Jan. 1994)
To improve PMEU verification of field data, a random sample of beneficiaries for each agency should be selected and their *fichas* taken along on field inspections. This should be a standard procedure in both the Central and the Southern regions. PMEU regional supervisors should make arrangements to accompany area supervisors on field inspections.	DONE (PMEU staff adopted procedure, June 1993)
PMEU should continue being responsible for project information management. Additional support is needed in the areas of updating software (specifically the latest version of Foxpro) and training PMEU personnel in its use.	04/30/94
The methodology proposed by the survey specialist is appropriate. Ways to reduce the costs associated with the survey specialist's proposal should be examined, such as hiring a local agricultural economist instead of an expatriate.	DONE (Two local specialists hired, July 1993)