

# ● The Administrator's Evaluation Initiative Progress Update

April 1991

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One of a series of initiatives of  
the U.S. Agency for International Development:

*The Environment Initiative*

*The Democracy Initiative*

*The Partnership for Business and Development*

*Family and Development*

plus

*Toward Strategic Management, and*

*The Administrator's Evaluation Initiative*

## Overview

Strengthening the role of evaluation in the Agency is part of the Administrator's emphasis on management excellence in A.I.D. Because of the importance of a strong and independent evaluation function, PPC's Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CIDE) was assigned the lead role in expanding the Agency's evaluation capacity. In response, CIDE has begun a major reorganization and expansion of responsibilities and a recruitment program within the Agency.

The main elements of CDIE's strengthened and broadened evaluation mandate include:

- o Targeting assessments on strategic issues of performance and impact that will help senior management make critical programming and policy decisions and report more convincingly to Congress, OMB, and the public.
- o Assessing A.I.D.'s operational processes and management systems.
- o Undertaking regular, comprehensive reviews of A.I.D.'s program performance as a basis for performance-based decision making to establish an Agency-wide system for measuring and comparing performance of core programs.
- o Functioning as a center of excellence for the Agency's overall evaluation system.
- o Expanding CIDE's technical assistance, guidance, and training support to Missions in designing and implementing evaluation systems for effective project and program management.

### I. Reorganization of the CDIE

- o Basic agreement has been reached between PPC and PM on key issues concerning the reorganization of CDIE, including:
  - A functional statement for CDIE, the basic organizational structure, and staffing pattern;
  - A senior- and mid-level grade structure necessary to attract the Agency's "best & brightest;" and,

- The mix of FS and GS officers necessary to provide a balance between practical field experience and more continuity in technical and methodological expertise.
- o Remaining issues of the organizational placement of CDIE and the titling of CDIE sub-units (as offices or divisions) was sent, in the form of an action memo, to the Acting Administrator on April 3.
- o While the formal recruitment process must await approval of CDIE's reorganization proposal, the Center's management already has interviewed scores of interested FS and GS candidates and will be ready to move quickly.
- o Full-time employees (FTEs) have been transferred from the Bureaus to PPC to enable the planned expansion of CDIE (13 FTEs in FY 91 and 12 in FY 92).

## II. The Administrator's Evaluation Agenda

- o A draft agenda proposing topics for CDIE's evaluation workplan for FY 91-93 was circulated to Agency senior management, including the Missions, to numerous congressional committee staff, and to the Office of Management and Budget.
- o The review process included meetings between CDIE and the Bureaus, comments from some 25 Missions, and several congressional responses and briefings. The agenda was revised based on this input, approved by the Administrator, and widely distributed.
- o Responses to the agenda have been highly favorable to date.
- o The three-year "rolling plan" agenda includes plans to initiate the following:
  - Eight major field-based assessments of Agency programs and policies;
  - Six assessments of key operational and management systems issues; and,
  - Several "desk studies."

## III. Evaluation Support Services Contracts

- o Contracts prepared by CDIE for approval to provide required contractor services in support of the new evaluation initiative include the following:
  - An Evaluation Technical Services (ETS) contract to provide specialized

technical expertise and evaluation/data collection support for CDIE's workplan of field-based assessments and other evaluation studie; and,

- A Program Performance Information and Evaluation Systems (PRISM) contract to provide professional evaluation and related technical specialists in support of CDIE's plans to strengthen the Agency's decentralized evaluation system and to make it more relevant to management information needs at all levels, including senior managers.
- o Budget and implementation plans have been developed for Program and OE funding needs for FY91, and projections have been developed for FY 92-93.

#### IV. Program Performance Information System Plan

- o A Program Performance Information System (PPIS) Plan was drafted by CDIE and circulated for review within the Agency. Review meeting with Bureaus are now underway.
- o A revised PPIS Plan was submitted to the Administrator on April 5, and a briefing for him and senior staff is scheduled for April 22.

#### V. Major Studies Underway

- o Program and policy assessments on-going or initiated include
  - Export Promotion
  - Democratic Initiatives
  - Child Survival
  - Population/Family Planning
  - Policy Reform
  - Counter-Narcotics
- o An operational and management system assessment has been initiated for:
  - Alternative models for A.I.D. in-country presence; and,
  - Getting A.I.D. management to focus on results.

VI. Critical Next Steps

- o FY 91 recruitment of 13 of the Agency's "best & brightest."
- o Obtaining building space to accommodate increases in staff.
- o Obtaining agreement or developing a proposal for reallocating Agency OE and program funds to CDIE to implement the Administrator's evaluation initiative, as he directed in a September 1990 action memorandum.

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