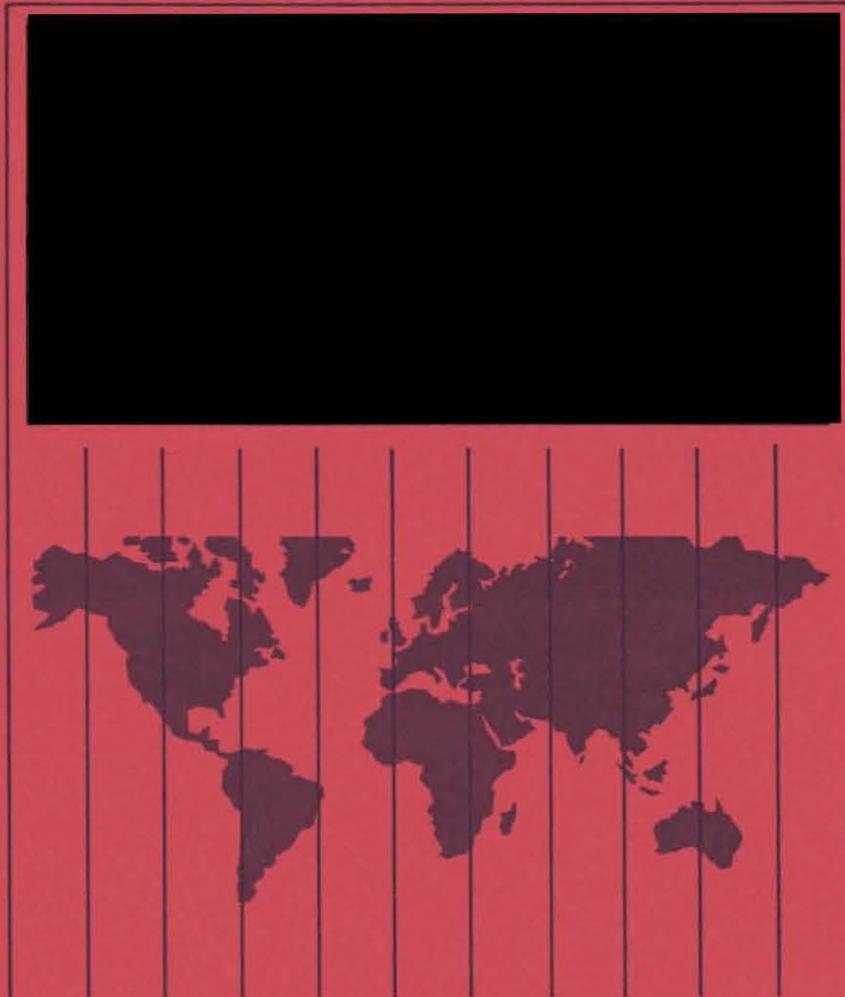


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UNITED STATES  
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM SURVEY REPORT ON  
AID'S RESEARCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES  
AUDIT REPORT No. 0-990-82-39  
JANUARY 28, 1982

Memorandum Survey Report on  
AID's RESEARCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Introduction and Scope

Research is funded in AID by central bureaus, regional bureaus, and field Missions under a variety of arrangements. AID's policy on research was last expressed in September 1972 by PD-47. AID's procedures for development, review, implementation and management of centrally funded research projects were last published in June 1971.<sup>1/</sup> Procedures for Mission and regionally funded research projects are not separately specified in Agency guidance.

There is no central point within the Agency for control or coordination of all research funded by AID; therefore, management information available on research is limited. We were told by the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination, Office of Planning and Budgeting (PPC/PB), that funding for research within AID was as follows:

	<u>FY 1980 Estimate</u>	<u>FY 1981 CP</u>	<u>FY 1982 Proposed</u>
Regional Bureaus	\$ 37,273,000	\$65,935,000	\$ 74,143,000
Central Bureaus	<u>64,490,000</u>	<u>85,580,000</u>	<u>104,905,000</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$101,763,000</u>	<u>\$151,515,000</u>	<u>\$179,048,000</u>

Our survey primarily focused on AID's policies and procedures, but also considered available funding data for research. We reviewed audit and evaluation reports covering the subject. These included the Babb report on the organization and structure of AID in October 1977, an audit by the General Accounting Office (GAO) No. ID-79-13 issued in February 1979, an evaluation by AID-financed consultants (Drs. Hutchinson and Wishik) in December 1979, and the Research Advisory Committee's (RAC) discussion of AID research policy and process in November 1980 and their recommendations to the Administrator in March 1981.

<sup>1/</sup> M.O. No. 1531.1, "Administration of the Centrally Funded Research Programs," dated June 1971.

## Findings and Conclusions

### Action is Required to Update and Improve AID's Research Policies and Procedures

The Agency's current published policies and procedures on research are out of date and do not reflect the present situation. Some degree of central direction and review of research should be required, but current policies regarding coordination are not clearly specified. Responsibility and authority need to be clarified to minimize the potential for overlap and duplication.

Our review of prior reports and other information gained in our survey lead us to the following conclusions:

1. A new formal policy determination (PD) on research is needed;
2. Procedures for research projects should be formalized and appropriately incorporated into the AID Handbook series; and
3. A central focal point is needed for the Agency's research program.

Management officials agree with our conclusions and are already taking specific action to address the problem.

### A New Formal Policy Determination (PD) on Research is Needed

The Agency has not formulated a clear definition of research, and the current PD no longer reflects Agency organizational responsibilities or policy. PD-47, issued in September 1972, formalized the Agency's guidelines on strengthening the innovativeness and thrust of the research program at that time. Although many changes have occurred in the program and within the Agency's organization, PD-47 has neither been updated nor a new policy issued to define research and specify AID's research objectives and how they are to be pursued. For example, PD-47 specified that the Technical Assistance Bureau (now defunct) will be responsible for keeping the Administrator informed on all research progress and problems whether central office-funded or regionally or country-funded. No organization is now fulfilling that central role. It also does not take into account the responsibilities of the Office of Science Advisor established last year.

Research is funded by Missions, Regional Bureaus, BIFAD, the Office of the Science Advisor, the Bureau for Science and Technology, and sometimes other central bureaus. AID's research policy should clarify the purposes and roles of research funded by these various organizations. Without such guidance, there is significant potential for duplication, overlap, and misunderstanding among these organizations.

### Procedures for Research Projects Should be Incorporated into AID Handbooks

M.O. No. 1531.1 issued in June 1971 entitled "Administration of the Centrally Funded Research Programs" provided procedures for development, review, implementation and management of centrally funded research projects. While this M.O. is still in effect, it is no longer current and no guidance has been provided for research projects in the Agency's handbooks. For example, the M.O. provides for a Research and Institutional Grants Council (RIGC) which no longer exists and organizational references are to defunct organizations.

The procedures need to be updated to reflect the Agency's current thinking and organizational system and appropriately incorporated into the new AID Handbook series. M.O. 1531.1 addressed only the administration of "centrally" funded research. Revised guidance should include procedures for regional- and mission-funded research as well.

### A Central Focal Point is Needed for the Agency's Research Program

Improvements in research quality, appropriateness, and utilization should result by having a central focal point for research within the Agency. The Bureau for Science and Technology appears to be the appropriate place for the central focal point to be located. While that office currently performs some coordination functions, current policies as to the extent of its responsibilities and authority are not clear.

Some of the problems noted in several studies of AID research have indicated that there is no consistent classification of research and research components of projects. For example, the AID consultant report dated December 1979 commented that AID may be funding more research mislabeled as something else than is classified as research. This problem has also been identified by the RAC and the Babb report. Another problem noted is that generally only the centrally funded projects classified as research projects are normally channeled to the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) for review. Regional and mission-funded research and project components are not being reviewed centrally except by request. The Agency should consider whether these should also be reviewed to ensure quality control, avoid duplication and increase utilization.

The Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination, Office of Planning and Budgeting (PPC/PB), provided information prepared in September 1980 as to the cost of research funded by AID. This information was specifically prepared and is not routinely available. It is clear from this data that the research program is increasing and that a substantial portion is being funded by the Regional Bureaus. It is not clear whether these figures include Mission-funded research or research components of other projects.

<u>Bureau</u>	<u>FY 1980 Estimate</u>	<u>FY 1981 CP</u>	<u>FY 1982 Proposed</u>
Africa	\$ 24,726	\$ 40,934	\$ 35,333
Asia	7,850	3,700	21,975
Latin America/ Caribbean	2,675	16,251	12,478
Near East	2,022	5,050	4,357
Central	<u>64,490</u>	<u>85,580</u>	<u>104,905</u>
Total	<u>\$101,763</u>	<u>\$151,515</u>	<u>\$179,048</u>

We believe a central focal point would strengthen the research program and provide AID management with program data as needed. Moreover, the central focal point could ensure that research is properly screened, classified, and reviewed by the RAC. It could also ensure that results are stored in AID's memory bank and appropriately disseminated to users. While no recommendation is made specifically on this point as a result of our survey, such a recommendation has been made by others including the RAC.

### Conclusions

We believe appropriate AID management actions are needed now to improve control of the Agency's research program. Such actions can best be addressed by revising the policies and procedures of the Agency to reflect current management decisions on this vital subject. In revising Agency guidance, the responsibilities of all organizational elements funding research should be clarified. Central direction on policies and procedures for AID-funded research and some degree of coordination are required.

The Bureau for Science and Technology agrees with these conclusions and has initiated action to address this complex but vital responsibility. The Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination agrees that a comprehensive review of this activity is long overdue, and wishes to be involved in the policy and decision-making phases of the research process. The Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean concurs with the conclusions, but emphasizes that regional bureaus and Missions should continue to be able to exercise initiative in designing and funding research proposals for their needs.

In view of the actions already taken and planned, we make no specific recommendation at this time. However, we plan to include the Agency's research program as a proposed future review. We would, therefore, like the Bureau for Science and Technology to keep us informed of progress in developing the required policies and procedures.

AID's RESEARCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

LIST OF REPORT RECIPIENTS

Deputy Administrator	1
Bureau for Science and Technology	5
Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination	2
Bureau for Latin American and the Caribbean	2
Bureau for Near East	2
Bureau for Africa	2
Bureau for Asia	2
Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance	2
Bureau for Program and Management Services	1
Bureau for Private Enterprise	1
General Counsel	1
Office of Public Affairs	1
S&T/DIU	4
S&T/PO	1
Inspector General	1
IG/PPP	1
IG/II	1