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**A Strategy  
Paper for the  
Overseas  
Development  
Information  
Support Project**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to recommend a strategy for the exchange of information between the U.S. Agency for International Development in Washington, its overseas missions, and selected counterpart organizations in developing countries. The type of information to be exchanged is development oriented, and includes geographic, social, and management dimensions. Initially, the primary data base will be the institutional memory of AID contained in its computerized Development Information System (DIS). This report concludes that the recommended strategy can best achieve its objectives through implementation of an Overseas Development Information Support (ODIS) Project, which will be designed to:

- Use AID's institutional memory (lessons learned) and other relevant development information resources to improve USAID mission capacities relating to project design, management, and evaluation;
- Provide access to information that many developing countries cannot afford to produce, buy, or publish, as well as assistance in the development of institutional capacities to access this information; and
- Help prevent duplication of development research.

Several major assumptions underlie the proposed strategy. These include the following:

- There are important differences between the task of developing an archive of AID-related material and the broader task of supporting the effective management and use of appropriate development information. Although the focus of this report is on the requirements of this latter mandate (with specific reference to field application), the key issues are equally pertinent to all information components of AID's development assistance mandate, and especially to existing injunctions that AID make effective use of knowledge gleaned from its own prior experience.
- Given existing and prospective technologies of electronic data transfer, effective use of information in the field does not depend on the presence of hard copy or microfiche library collections, but instead on capacities to identify and obtain the desired relevant materials in timely fashion.

- Effective information management and use in developing countries, whether by USAID missions or by counterpart institutions, are programmatic issues. Access to and use of appropriate information can directly contribute to the quality of program design and implementation, and thus to the quality and direction of development activities. Assistance to developing country counterparts in effective information management and use is a central component of AID's institutional development mandate. Thus, the ODIS project can and should be treated as a substantive AID program activity in fulfillment of stated AID objectives.
- The task of assisting developing country institutions to improve access to and management of information should therefore be a mission-level program concern, assisted and supported by AID/Washington.

Based on these assumptions, the framework for the strategy presented in this report emphasizes the roles of USAID missions in information management and of the Center for Development Information and Evaluation within the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination (PPC/CDIE) in support, assistance, and response to mission programs in information management. This framework, in turn, has implications for staffing, resource expenditures, and technical assistance. The strategy has three major aspects:

- A fundamental orientation toward user services -- that is, reference and outreach;
- Effective collection, cataloguing, and use of locally relevant materials; and
- Automated, easy-to-use index access to a broad range of development information and material from AID sources as well as other relevant development or technical information data bases, plus appropriate capabilities to transmit selected materials to sites requesting them.

These basic criteria could be satisfied in a variety of local settings, ranging from technical information centers that are large, well stocked, and professionally staffed, to a dedicated microcomputer combined with a small collection of materials that are available only locally in a mission program office. The strategy proposed in this report is designed to accommodate the full range of potentially useful and evolving program configurations in various USAID and developing country contexts.

Assistance to counterpart institutions in developing countries should be a matter of programmatic outreach resulting from the enhanced capacity of missions to manage information. These institutional development efforts could range from

providing access to automated mission reference indexes to direct technical assistance to local institutions seeking to improve their own information management capacities.

The primary support roles of PPC/CDIE in this arrangement, exercised largely but not exclusively through its Development Information (DI) Division, include the following:

- Quick and appropriate response to field requests for processed information or documents;
- Arrangements to broaden the range of bibliographic index content accessible through both PPC/CDIE and field terminals;
- Provision of broad, user-oriented, reference services in development and technical information, accessing not only AID's own institutional memory but also other relevant information sources;
- Technical assistance to information management initiatives in missions and, by extension, to host country counterparts; and
- Development or adaptation of improved technologies for automated information access and management.

This framework encompasses a set of issues, analysis of which must undergird the actual development of a strategy. These issues are:

- Defining the ODIS project clientele;
- Understanding the nature of the information resource base and using it effectively;
- Employing appropriate technologies;
- Applying responsive organization and management tools; and
- Marketing DIS services and expanding their use.

Based on discussion of these issues and their implication for what is to be disseminated and how, a plan for implementation is recommended. This plan incorporates the following key features:

- Implementation of the ODIS project should occur within the framework of PPC/CDIE, either directly under the authority of that center's Director or Deputy Director or, more probably, within the context of the Reference Services Division of PPC/CDIE/DI.

- Implementation initially would be conducted as a project, using contracted services, but the intent would be that ODIS activities should become permanent programmatic components of AID's operations by the completion of the project's initial five-year contract period.
- The project should be managed by a project director who would be assisted by two regional coordinators and a modest reference and support staff, all of whom would be based in Washington, D.C. The director and the regional coordinators would travel as required by project needs. In addition to providing project leadership and management, the director would be responsible for AID liaison and information services marketing. Each regional coordinator would be assigned responsibility for activities in two of AID's four geographic regions.
- Project personnel would be expected to be information entrepreneurs -- individuals who could instill enduring enthusiasm for effective use of development information and who possess the technical and organizational skills that would enable the installation and maintenance of effective field capabilities in information management.
- Any Washington, D.C., backstopping (including reference services and provision of documents, classification schemes, and training materials) and technical assistance required for project implementation that could not be furnished by project staff should be provided by other personnel from PPC/CDIE, and especially by both direct-hire and contract staff affiliated with its DI division. Project activities on-site would be implemented by personnel provided by the participating missions and host-country institutions, with technical and partial financial support provided by the project and by PPC/CDIE/DI. Training of field personnel would take place principally in the field using training materials and personnel furnished by the project and DI.
- The project should not have the objective of transferring to overseas sites the archived institutional memory of AID, except selectively in response to expression of justifiable need by participating facilities and only after appropriate information management capabilities had been adequately established. Instead, project activities should focus on enhancing site-specific capacities to access, manage, and use appropriate development information more effectively.

- Project activities should focus initially on a minimum of eight USAID missions, two in each geographic region, and approximately the same number of counterpart institutions in developing countries. Activities should be responsive to field needs and capabilities, and therefore be individually tailored within the context of the overall project philosophy. Project expansion beyond these inaugural activities will be encouraged, but must depend on USAID mission interest and support.

The assumptions, goals, purposes, inputs, anticipated outputs, and proposed means of verification for the ODIS project are summarized in the Logical Framework matrix, which is attached as Annex B to the full report.

SECTION I  
INTRODUCTION

A structured approach to the transfer and exchange of technical and project-related development experience information between the U.S. Agency for International Development in Washington, its overseas missions, and selected counterpart organizations in developing countries constitutes a logical and necessary extension of the current efforts of AID to institutionalize mechanisms for more effective use of its own development experience. AID has had a mixed record with respect to this issue. Various bureaus within the agency have made efforts over the past decade, the most recent attempts arising as an outgrowth of the 1982 General Accounting Office (GAO) report entitled Experience - A Potential Tool for Improving U.S. Assistance Abroad.

This report concluded that serious shortcomings exist in the ability of AID to identify, record, and use the knowledge gained through the projects with which it is involved. Furthermore, the report concluded that the centralized institutional memory system within AID is incomplete and is not used by AID staff. The report recommended that the following steps be taken as a matter of high priority:

- AID management should require that the Development Information System (DIS) be used, that it receive project and related lessons-learned documents, that there be an exchange of constructive feedback between personnel involved with DIS operations and AID staff regarding DIS, and that an information analysis capability be established to assist AID project designers and program managers in making more effective use of AID's institutional memory.
- AID staff should be required to identify, record, use, and forward to DIS lessons learned in project design and implementation, and appropriate incentives should be established to ensure that this is done.

AID's reponse to this challenge has included the reorganization of various AID offices concerned with development information and evaluation, and charging the Development Information Division within the Center for Development Information and Evaluation of the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination (PPC/CDIE/DI) with the responsibility of systematically collecting all project and program documentation, abstracting these documents, and codifying them in ways designed to make them machine retrievable. To date, this effort has been one primarily of working toward the compilation of a comprehensive collection of the written AID institutional memory, and the establishment of means for rapid identification and retrieval of items in that data base.[1] Although this effort has faced a variety of difficulties (which have been documented elsewhere and which, under any circumstances, largely fall outside the purview of this document), it has achieved a notable degree of success and is continuing within the framework of PPC/CDIE/DI's contract to establish and maintain the AID Document and Information Handling Facility (DIHF).

An important component of this effort has been the adoption of the MINISIS information storage and retrieval system, designed by the International Development Research Corporation of Canada. This system enables relatively effective machine access to the growing data base, and thus has provided the foundation for efforts to make the data base available for use by AID personnel and other interested parties, either as an aid to project design or related activities or as a more general source of development-related information. Not surprisingly, as system comprehensiveness has increased as this work has progressed, interest in ensuring more effective use of the resource also has increased correspondingly.

The system's potential value in improving the effectiveness of development assistance in field applications has constituted one area of special attention. Indeed, an explicit expectation of those involved in project implementation has been that an Overseas Development Information Support (ODIS) activity would be inaugurated as early as 1983 or 1984. Until recently, it also was assumed that this activity would be implemented as an integral component of the ongoing DIHF project, and DIHF personnel have given thought to dissemination strategies. The observations and recommendations contained in this report build on that work, but also reflect a broader range of contributions, especially the perceptions of actual and potential system users.

Because of these historical factors, not all of what is contained in the following pages is new. Nor does it need to be. Many of the observations of the GAO report retain their validity, and many of GAO's recommendations remain unimplemented, despite the fact that subsequent reports reiterate comparable observations and recommendations.[2] Similarly, many elements of the earlier attempts to design ODIS strategies are excellent and are retained selectively in the design proposed in this report.

In view of these considerations, this report draws freely from the good ideas and hard work that have preceded it.[3] It also attempts to break new ground in thinking through the various complex and interrelated questions of how AID might best make use of its own institutional memory in particular and, by extension, of other relevant knowledge in general. The hope is that this coalescence of many old and some new ideas may lead to early realization of the objectives of the ODIS project.

Several key assumptions underlie the structure and content of this report. These include the following:

- There are important differences between the task of developing an archive of AID-related material and the broader task of supporting the effective management and use of appropriate development information. Although the focus of this report is on the requirements of this latter mandate (with specific reference to field application), the key issues are equally pertinent to all information components of AID's development assistance mandate, and especially to existing injunctions that AID make effective use of knowledge gleaned from its own prior experience.
- Given existing and prospective technologies of electronic data transfer, effective use of information in the field does not depend on the presence of hard copy or microfiche library collections, but instead on capacities to identify and obtain the desired relevant materials in timely fashion.
- Effective information management and use in developing countries, whether by USAID missions or by counterpart institutions, are programmatic issues. Access to and use of appropriate information can directly contribute to the quality of program design and implementation, and thus to the quality and direction of development activities. Assistance to developing country counterparts in effective information management and use is a central component of AID's institutional development mandate. Thus, the ODIS project can and should be treated as a substantive AID program activity in fulfillment of stated AID objectives.
- The task of assisting developing country institutions to improve access to and management of information should therefore be a mission-level program concern, assisted and supported by AID/Washington.

Within the foregoing context, this report recommends an ODIS project that emphasizes the roles of USAID missions in information management and of PPC/CDIE in support, assistance, and response to related mission programs.

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## NOTES

- 1 Throughout this report, the concept of archiving is employed to describe these various functions. It should be emphasized that the use of the term in this report is not intended to suggest that DI either acts as or aspires to act as AID's official archive. The DI office is charged with seeking means of making effective use of the institutional memory of AID, not with performing its records-management functions.
- 2 See especially the Arthur D. Little, Inc., Improving Utilization of AID Experience and Evaluations, December 1983.
- 3 A paramount hope of the authors of this report is that it will not suffer the fate of its predecessors and remain unimplemented.

## SECTION II

## KEY ISSUES

DEFINING THE CLIENTELE FOR THE  
OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION SUPPORT PROJECT

Both data and their processed form, information, are commodities, not unlike others that can be found in their respective marketplaces.[1] As such, their desirability and utility are a function of their ability to satisfy the needs of their prospective users. If those needs are satisfied, data and information will be used and a future demand will be created; if not, they will be discarded, that is, ignored, and possibly denigrated. Demand for that particular package of data or information will decline.

But since society requires information to sustain itself and to fuel its evolution, demand for some information will remain. Thus, data or information that is judged to be inappropriate or useless will be displaced by other materials with greater relevance to user requirements. The task confronting any information supplier therefore becomes one of identifying data or information of potentially optimal use to defined user clients, and then making it available in timely and usable fashion, so that the search process is shortened and an aversion to the data source or the ways in which those data have been processed into information is not created.

When placed in this context, the information dissemination mandate of the proposed ODIS project can be viewed as requiring, among other things, a clear understanding not only of the clientele it is being created to serve, but also of that clientele's information needs. Failure to reach this understanding and to translate it effectively into information management policies and priorities will detract from the potential of the project to accomplish its objectives.

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### Categories of Users

There are several categories of potential users of the kinds of data or information an ODIS project could logically be expected to provide. These include:

- USAID personnel in field missions who, depending on the mission and their role in it, are charged variously with project identification, design, implementation, or evaluation activities;
- AID contractors (commercial firms or individuals as well as universities) who undertake project identification, design, implementation, and evaluation activities on behalf of AID;
- Host-country governmental agencies, both those currently cooperatively involved with AID in developmental endeavors or those with which AID maintains working relations;
- U.S., developing country, or third country institutions or individuals concerned generally with issues of development, either as researchers or publicists;
- Other groups, both public and private, that are active members of the development community but that may not be directly linked to AID endeavors; and
- Members of the general public who seek general background information about development issues.

Distinguishing among these various groups can help in establishing priorities for the provision of information goods and services; it also provides a useful basis for understanding more clearly their different informational needs and expectations. For example, it is recommended here that the first three of the groups suggested above constitute primary potential users of the ODIS project and that they therefore should receive higher priority attention than the others.

### Different User Needs

Each user group has the potential for requiring different kinds of data or information, either in content or in the sophistication of its presentation. For some, the need would be for general background information; for others, for highly specific technical data. Some users would require information that could assist in conceptualizing a problem; others, in seeking precedents that might provide guidance on how to operationalize a proposed solution. An effective information service system should have the capacity to make those distinctions that will enable it to tailor the services it provides to the needs of its different client categories.

This issue may be approached in various ways. For example, PPC/CDIE experience to date suggests four general categories of use to which AID institutional memory might be put, as well as the preferred packaging for the relevant information:

- As an aid to program and policy planning, requiring syntheses, lessons learned, and other similar information;
- As an aid to project design or evaluation, requiring comparative or illustrative information relating to comparable efforts, preferably in a synthesis or analytic reporting format;
- As an aid to project implementation, requiring either administrative, management, and financial data (which do not currently exist in large quantities in DIS) or specific technical data pertaining to the transfer and application of development technologies; or
- As an aid to applied research, requiring more primary data or source documents than any of the preceding categories.

Different types and levels of data and information, packaged differently, are needed to provide appropriate responses to different categories of need. Inappropriate response can constitute a misapplication of scarce resources; it also contains

the potential for creating frustrated or disgruntled users -- that is, ex-clients. An understanding of potential system users, as well as a set of policies regarding their priorities and a means for dealing with their different needs, must constitute one underpinning of the ODIS project.

The majority of USAID users appear to require brief analytic or synthesis material, prepared topically, that is, information as contrasted to data. Considerable attention should be paid to transforming the considerable and growing body of data that constitutes a significant preponderance of the materials in the AID data base into information of the kinds that the majority of these priority potential users are likely to find most relevant to their needs. Precise definition of needs and of information processing and packaging formats should constitute an early activity of the ODIS project: it has not been possible to do this comprehensively within the confines of this study.

AID's existing system for development information dissemination (PPC/CDIE/DI) does not demonstrate the capacity to make the kinds of distinctions suggested above and to translate them into effective, outreach-oriented, policy and practice. This appears to stem in part from the nature of its primary data base and the way in which that data base is currently organized. It also stems in part from the emphasis that DI's management has placed, largely for justifiable historical reasons, on the development of systems enabling AID to create an accessible archive of its own documents. Because of its focus on these archiving functions, DI has concentrated comparatively less of its attention on issues relating to the packaging and delivery of information -- that is, on the outreach functions, which must constitute the *raison d'etre* of an ODIS project.

Whatever the cause, continuation of this archival focus, although necessary to the maintenance of AID's institutional memory, would represent an inappropriate orientation for the ODIS

project. Project management personnel must be aware of the differentiated needs of different user categories, and focus in the first instance on helping meet the development information needs of priority clients. Just because PPC/CDIE/DI is charged with maintaining AID's institutional memory does not mean that an ODIS project undertaken by the same division should aspire to be all things to all people. The archival tail should not wag the development dog.

### Information for What?

One other important issue must be considered in this context. This relates to the information receptiveness of the ODIS project's key user group, AID personnel in field missions. There is a considerable body of evidence, reinforced indirectly both by earlier reports on AID's use of its institutional memory and by many interviews that were conducted in preparation for this report, that suggests that AID personnel are not inclined to draw heavily on the available developmental information, and in particular on AID's institutional memory, in support of their work. They are, instead, inclined to use their own informal channels to tap AID's largely unwritten conventional wisdoms, primarily through personal contact with other AID personnel who are known to be knowledgeable about the question in hand.

Moreover, there would appear to be considerable skepticism within the agency regarding the relevance or utility of much of the written institutional memory that the system presently can make available. This is partially inherent in the nature of the data base and in the way that data base is organized. This issue is explored in greater depth in the following section of this report. It also, however, would appear to be symptomatic of something far more fundamental.

It may be inherent in the nature of the development business that busy personnel working in complex local environments perceive the problems they face as being largely unique to those

particular circumstances. Socio-historical variables are contextually defined. Personality and politics, almost universally of predominant influence in developmental activities, can be seen as singularly unique to each specific situation. Under these circumstances, it should not be surprising that responsible personnel find it difficult to give credence to the value of prior experience when that experience was gleaned, by definition, from other times, places, circumstances, people, and situations. Even experience stemming from earlier activities in the same geographic or social context may be viewed as having only marginal relevance, because of changes in politics, personalities, or technologies.

Although this represents a pessimistic perspective on the potential for effective use AID's institutional memory, the available evidence suggests that such a perspective prevails among a sufficiently large number of AID staff to merit attention and, to whatever extent possible, alteration. How might this be done? Two possible approaches suggest themselves.

First, the relevance of the concept of information being power needs to be explicitly recognized and incorporated into project design and implementation. People will use information that helps them accomplish their objectives, either personal and career based or professional and development based. Whichever the case, an ODIS project can energize itself and make its product more in demand by recognizing the existence of these circumstances among its users. A useful ODIS motto might well be, "Give 'em what they need and can really use, not whatever you just happen to have."

Second, positive incentives for demonstrable use of information in project and program planning, implementation, and evaluation, backed by strong support from top AID management, could help create an atmosphere of greater receptivity to the use of AID's development experience. These incentives might include enforcement of regulations requiring that use of information be

demonstrated in, for example, project review and approval processes. It might also have positive reinforcement through mechanisms for career advancement for personnel who have demonstrated the interest and ability to make effective use of information.

Participating host-country institutions are likely to be at least partially motivated by other considerations. Among these institutions, for example, there may be a greater tendency to accumulate data for their own sake, because data per se are viewed as being inherently desirable, irrespective of their immediate potential for use. In these instances, transfers of AID's institutional memory to developing country institutions could well be weighted more toward comprehensiveness (even redundancy) than toward succinctness. Quantitative and technical issues revolving around data transfer could predominate over the qualitative and substantive ones concerning information exchange. To the extent that this generalization has validity (and it needs to be carefully scrutinized through field testing), ODIS project support to developing country institutions may find itself faced with more requests for archival transfer than is likely to be the case with USAID missions. As indicated throughout this report, resource limitations and the need to maintain project focus suggest the desirability of exercising considerable care in responding to these requests.

### Conclusions

Given the inevitable limitations on both personnel and budget to implement any program such as this, it is essential that priorities are set that are designed to maximize the potential for impact on specified target user groups. The setting of these priorities can, in turn, help determine system configuration. Although this is acknowledged in theory within PPC/CDIE/DI, it has not yet been translated into effective policy or practice, and the practical effect has been an apparent dissi-

pation in focus as DI gives the impression of attempting to be all things to all people.[2] Any effective ODIS project will need to deal explicitly with this set of issues by clearly defining its most important user groups, by configuring its activities so that the real needs of these groups can best be served, and by phasing its efforts to begin with a limited set of the key groups.

One major recommendation of this report therefore is that the priority focus of the ODIS project should be on the development and strengthening of capacities to provide discrete units of information that can support USAID mission personnel and contractors to accomplish their assigned responsibilities more efficiently and effectively. A second priority, but one that should be an extension of the first, should be on the provision of appropriate assistance and services to developing country counterparts in connection with mission programs concerning information-related institutional development. Responding to the needs of other users should remain a secondary priority until ODIS activities can effectively service these primary clients.

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF THE  
INFORMATION RESOURCE BASE  
AND MAKING EFFECTIVE USE OF IT

Historically, AID's Development Information Unit was established to function primarily as an archival reference service. Its emphasis was on the collection of factual and historical documents with limited analytic content, and its successor Development Information Division (PPC/CDIE/DI) has retained essentially the same emphasis. Little or no mandate has existed to fill analytic gaps according to any topical taxonomy. Instead, the focus has been on maximizing document capture and on comprehensive bibliographic indexing of the resulting collection of documents.

As a result of this historical development, there has been minimal disaggregating of system contents in terms of lessons learned of particular value and importance to different user categories. Similarly, efforts to process the data in the data base in ways that might more effectively transform them into the kinds of information of greatest potential use to different user groups have been unsystematic, of a largely ad hoc nature usually in response to specific requests, and essentially peripheral to the division's archiving mandate. This places important constraints on what might be expected from the data base in servicing overseas user groups through the ODIS project, and introduces the necessity of focus and selectivity in formulating any implementation strategy.

The potential universe of users of AID's institutional memory includes several distinct categories, each with particular data or information needs, and awareness of these differentiated needs must play a central role in project design. One immediate constraint that must be considered stems from the fact that PPC/CDIE/DI has been geared to archiving AID-specific materials almost exclusively. This suggests that the system's current contents may be of more immediate interest to agency staff than to most developing country counterparts. This, in turn, suggests that a dissemination strategy should begin modestly with an attempt to respond to the needs of users in USAID missions, expanding over time with access to more extensive data bases and with enhanced capacities to transform the available data into needs-responsive information. Expansion under these terms also would enable relevant and targeted response to broader demand generated by programmatic activity with counterpart institutions in developing countries.

Recognition of the needs of particular information clients has direct implications for maintenance and manipulation of the data base itself. This issue has three major components: information capture, information format, and information scope.

## Information Capture

An intensive and, in many ways, creative effort is being made to capture documents for the DI data base. This effort is taking place in a context of relatively poor compliance by AID staff and contractors in voluntarily providing project and other relevant material. (In fact, provision of these materials is required in AID Handbook 18, Sec. IV:6, but this requirement is rarely enforced.) It is generally estimated that the PPC/CDIE/DI system contains about 65 percent of the documentation extant for the projects it attempts to include (essentially all post-1974 activities). DIS inquiries made as part of the investigations for this report suggest that for documents produced in the last two years the percentage of material entered and catalogued in the system may be even lower.

If DIS is to be an information service and not simply a data base, priority will have to be given to acquiring recent material as well as categories of material with the highest potential for utility. It is for this material that demand is greatest, as would be expected on the premise that learning is cumulative.

System documents now focus on project design and evaluation. There is relatively little material captured on management and implementation issues except as these are discussed in evaluations or in technical papers in the Documents data base.[3] There also is relatively little topical material beyond the impact evaluation series produced by PPC/CDIE. In part, this is because AID document production emphasizes project-related materials. But the problem is compounded by the fact that the capture rate for topical reports and state-of-the-art papers, even when they are AID funded, appears to be low.

The focus of document capture and DIS content is on primary or source material. Although summary abstracts are prepared by DIHF, attempts to tailor these to user needs or to draw out

lessons learned have, to date, been relatively limited.[4] Instead, the documents are simply summarized. As a result, the task of distilling relevant memory from this undifferentiated mass of material is left to the user.

This is a nearly impossible task for most users. Among the reasons for this are:

- Direct use of the present system (and especially the MINISIS software) requires training and experience;
- Requests to DI can produce citations and material that are excessive or inapplicable to the potential user;
- Available documents usually are too project specific and do not contain a body of broader lessons;
- Much is perceived as being missing or inaccessible;
- Country or region-specific materials are poorly integrated into the system;
- Abstracts and summaries fail to draw out lessons learned in a useful form;
- Topics covered by non-project evaluations are not systematically chosen to achieve comprehensive subject coverage, reflecting instead the particular interests of agency leadership at the time they were produced; and
- Users, especially those in the field, are too busy or too impatient to filter and winnow citation lists to find what is truly relevant.

### Information Format

Although research-oriented users of DIS may require primary source material, most USAID users require brief analytic or synthesis material, preferably organized topically. In any event, a degree of selectivity is needed that calls for analytic capacity at the response end to identify source items or to prepare syntheses materials that are relevant to the kind of request being made.

Processing the materials available in the data base to produce this relevant information is a crucially important, and as yet inadequately met, challenge to AID and especially to DI. The degree of success achieved in meeting it will have significant impact on the viability of the ODIS project, because the quality of the information available for dissemination will play a large role in attracting and retaining users.

Enabling enhanced field access to development information through the ODIS project has several operational implications. First, the level of coordination between DI and AID technical staff should be considerably heightened so that field user's information needs are more clearly defined and, subsequently, so that summaries, abstracts, and other synthesis material can be prepared with contributions from experienced project designers and managers.

Second, indexes to the material in DIS must be made available, and a simple menu format is needed at the machine access point to direct the user toward an appropriate request. Third, direct bibliographic access to indexes of materials outside of DI should be made available to field users. These materials include the Economic and Social Data Base, project management data in AID's PAIS data base, and other private voluntary organization and relevant commercial data bases (such as VITA and AGRICOLA). Access through bibliographic services such as DIALOG also should be arranged. A part of the ODIS project's support role would then be to assist the field in obtaining material from these data bases, based on the needs and demands of the users to be served in a particular setting.

Depending on which particular user category the project is serving, the bottom line for AID staff use of the institutional memory is to be able to employ that memory for needs such as the following:

- Determination of whether comparable projects have succeeded and why;
- Help for developing analytic methodologies, especially evaluation;
- Improved awareness of relevant scientific and technical advances; and
- Development of improved implementation and problem-solving strategies.

In fulfilling its mandate to help AID do better development, PPC/CDIE/DI must strive to organize its data base and access to it in ways that can best address these issues. With the assistance of other interested parties within AID, continuing efforts must also be made to transform the data in the data base into information of relevance to the needs of priority user groups. Doing so will directly support the primary mandate of the ODIS project, and can furnish the foundation for successful achievement of its objectives.

### Information Scope

The issue of scope has three dimensions: a focus on quality versus quantity, access to centralized data bases other than DI's, and the integration of local data bases into the system.

The ODIS project function has different requirements than the DI's archiving function. For purposes of serving the needs of overseas users, the capacity for targeted and relevant response is more critical than the ability to deliver an archived body of material.

Access to bibliographic index data for data bases beyond DI is of obvious value, especially for researchers or staff of developing country institutions for whom AID document archives may be inappropriate or of limited use. A survey of potential users could help determine demand for various data bases, or this

could evolve as system acceptance and use expand. Ultimately, telecommunications technologies give promise of direct access to many data bases. In the interim, access to indexes only by disk transfer should be possible. In the case of relatively small data bases such as AID's Economic and Social Data Base, transfer of country or regional contents by disk is feasible now. Similar transfer also is already possible for country-specific materials within DIS.

Developing site-specific local data bases represents perhaps the major contribution AID can make to the effective use of its institutional memory in project design and management, especially in the absence of comprehensive and high-quality synthesis materials. Most mission-based AID staff feel that local material is usually of greater relevance to their task than material from other locations. Knowledgable DI staff estimate that local materials constitute 70-80 percent of the relevant data for any field mission. Despite this fact, the state of USAID information centers in the comparatively few missions where they exist is generally acknowledged to be very poor, and these centers are not seen as serving well as reservoirs of even local lessons learned. Thus, physical transfer of AID/Washington archives to these centers is a less appropriate service than a wholistic approach to information collection, dissemination, and utilization at the mission level. This approach can also serve as a model for programmatic assistance to host country counterparts in information management.

For any of this to happen, policy guidance and support from the highest levels within AID will be needed. Technical support to the field in the development of effective information centers should become a major priority of the ODIS project. This should include technical assistance in, for example, appropriate cataloguing systems and in the use of the ODIS information accessing systems, which PPC/CDIE/DI, with assistance from the ODIS project, would be responsible for organizing and managing. Authorization will be needed for missions to hire competent staff

who possess both developmental and informational management skills to manage these local centers, and these individuals will have to receive appropriate training. These staff should also be a resource for programmatic assistance to developing country institutional counterparts with an information dissemination role. Moreover, incentives must be developed to involve mission personnel in development of local collections. Otherwise, too much valuable material remains in individual offices, and these personnel remain inadequately integrated into the evolving information dissemination and utilization system.

#### EMPLOYING APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGIES

PPC/CDIE can contemplate a wide range of technical options in planning its activities for development information dissemination through the ODIS project. These options revolve primarily around choices of computer software, computer hardware, transfer media, and related future technologies. In making decisions regarding choices of technologies, those concerned should keep in mind that the effective use of information in the field does not depend on the presence of hard copy or microfiche library collections, but instead on capacities to identify, obtain, and transfer relevant materials in timely and cost-effective fashion.

#### Software

The basic AID archive is linked to the MINISIS bibliographic index software developed by the International Development Research Corporation of Canada. Although questions have been raised about the appropriateness of this choice, it is beyond the scope of this report to recommend changes in the software and related systems used for system access in Washington. Field access is another issue, however, for which there are several options.

One option is to transfer the basic MINISIS system in its entirety to selected sites in the field. This option has several disadvantages: MINISIS is relatively difficult to use; it runs only on Hewlett-Packard computers; and it is incompatible with the UNIX operating system, a probable future standard for microcomputers of the capacity AID and its counterparts will increasingly have access to in the field. At present, DIS does not possess acceptable software to permit effective transfer and use of MINISIS in USAID missions. MINISIS transfer directly to some developing country institutions is possible, but focusing DIS resources on this direct transfer, and in the process bypassing mission programmatic involvement, would be inconsistent with the strategy priorities recommended in this report and could divert the project from the primary objectives that are defined here.

A better option may be to use bibliographic software available for use on IBM PC-compatible microcomputers. Although others are likely to emerge in the future, two of these programs are available now and also permit direct downloading of records from MINISIS and DIS. These are PCISIS and SCIMATE. Of the two, SCIMATE appears to be the better current choice because it is easy to use. In Niger, for example, DI staff have successfully created a catalogue of local USAID material on SCIMATE for use with IBM PCs. Catalogue data for items in the local collection that were also in the Washington DIS data base were downloaded from MINISIS to disk in SCIMATE format and sent to Niger. This eliminated the need for re-entry of catalogue data for these items in Niger. This kind of transfer recently has been further tested successfully at DIHF.

Although some work already has been done in this area, a software feasibility study should be performed to determine the most appropriate bibliographic software for use in the field. Minimal criteria should include ease of use, portability among IBM PC-type microcomputers, and direct data transfer capability

from MINISIS. Appropriate software would also provide up-front menu and other assistance to assist the users in placing reasonable limits of specificity around their search.

### Hardware

The dependence of MINISIS on Hewlett-Packard computers creates somewhat of an anomaly in that Hewlett-Packard equipment is not on the AID-approved list for field acquisition of microcomputer equipment. Although this situation could change, the fact remains that there already exists a substantial and growing inventory of IBM PC-compatible microcomputers in USAID missions, primarily Wang and IBM machines. Any successful ODIS project dissemination strategy must recognize this reality. Since software is available for bibliographic index access with these machines, albeit not as sophisticated as MINISIS, the wisdom of basing a hardware strategy on the IBM-compatibles is clear.

### Transfer Media

The operating assumption to date has been that dissemination of archival material to the field would take place by means of microfiche transfer. There is ample evidence, however, that microfiche represents a major constraint to the use of data base material by the great majority of AID staff. In fact, the typical project officer will do without information before using microfiche. A major effort to place microfiche archives in the field would virtually ensure continued underutilization of this information resource. Furthermore, technologies are at hand that are likely to make microfiche obsolete for these purposes. Use of microfiche could lock the ODIS project into a technological dead end, while diverting its focus from information services to archival transfer. As suggested throughout this report, an archival focus does not represent an effective strategy for enhancing the development of USAID and counterpart information resources.

A more cost-effective strategy will be to limit the quantity of central archive material to be transferred to field locations. The emphasis should be, first, on upgrading the capacities of local information centers and, second, on transfer to the field of the bibliographic index of DIS and other data bases, plus a selected set of synthesis and topical material consistent with actual demand and use. This limited transfer strategy would permit use of existing computer disks (or tape in support of hard disks) as the initial transfer medium. As capacities for disk or telecommunications transfer capacity increase, the quantity of material disseminated could grow correspondingly, provided that this transfer was supported by local demand and information management capabilities.

### Future Technologies

Information transfer technologies are growing rapidly. The ODIS project will require a system that can remain responsive to both anticipated and unanticipated technological developments but that is not locked into or driven by any particular available technology.

One of these technologies, the optical disk, is presently available. These laser-etched disks (similar technically to the new compact audio disks) can hold the equivalent of 1 million typewritten pages and, with an appropriate drive system, can be used with microcomputers. One drive can support up to 25 users, each on a separate microcomputer acting as a terminal to a multi-user system. These disks are already replacing library microfiche subscription services that currently use microfilm. This technology also has been used commercially for data-base purposes, including library card catalogue indexes. The costs of producing disks and microfilm are about the same. The disks, however, are capable of storing a combination of digital, audio, and motion- or still-video data. These capabilities suggest interesting and creative future options for dissemination of lessons learned.

One optical disk, updated periodically, could provide a field location with the entire DI bibliographic index plus indexes to other relevant data bases. Optical disks could also be used as a transfer medium for a selected set of topical, summary, and statistical information for general dissemination to the field. This material would then be supplemented by central response to field requests with hard copy or, in time, telecommunications. Ultimately, technologies should permit optical reading of hard-copy material for writing to disks that would be sent in response to requests for information not available in the field information centers.

Another relevant technology on the horizon is telecommunications. AID already is seriously studying the use of this technology for general communication needs. As telecommunications capacity is developed, the ODIS project should remain aware of its potential as a resource for information dissemination, particularly for information already magnetically encoded on disk or tape. Ultimately, satellite communication will permit full document delivery worldwide by broad band communications technology. The ODIS project should position itself so that it can easily take advantage of any of these, or other, evolving technologies.

#### APPLYING RESPONSIVE ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT TOOLS

A recurring theme of this report is that the ODIS project should emphasize decentralization, demand-driven operation, and use of the data bases and technologies currently available through PPC/CDIE as springboards for tailored response. This approach has important implications for the organization and management of the overseas support strategy. These implications may be addressed from three separate perspectives: Washington, D.C.; the field; and personnel requirements.

### The Washington Perspective

There is great diversity among USAID missions with respect to their interest in information management issues and their capacity to utilize effectively the opportunities that the ODIS project might make available. Any standardized approach is likely to fail simply because its uniformity would be unable to accommodate the wide range of needs, available resources, and interest.

One operational implication of this finding is that project management will need to be capable of flexible and individually tailored responses. Another is that the challenges and demands of the project will be too broad to allow effective support for the ODIS project from PPC/CDIE under existing staff and management configurations. Moreover, as indicated above, it will be important for ODIS activities to take on a life and a dynamic of their own, so that their distinctiveness from PPC/CDIE/DI's archival functions can be demonstrated and the project's outreach, reference, and service orientation can be emphasized. It therefore will be necessary to create new capacities specifically charged with ODIS project implementation. These new capacities can be delineated in terms of their general characteristics, their relationships with other components of AID and other interested parties, and the resulting specific staff configuration.

Required ODIS project capabilities include:

- A basic orientation toward information brokering, which in this context means an informed awareness of the potential power of good information made available in timely fashion to clients who can make good use of it. In addition to an outreach or service orientation and good knowledge regarding locations of information and the means for accessing it, this orientation also requires a healthy element of information entrepreneurship, that is, an inclination and a willingness to seek markets for information and then provide relevant services; and

- The capacity to undertake effective liaison with all AID departments and personnel who deal with information to work toward an increasingly coordinated approach to the creation, collection, processing, and dissemination of information relevant to the provision of ODIS services. Also, the capacity and willingness to serve as liaison as appropriate with non-AID development information resources, both to increase AID's access to this information and to promote integration of AID's resources into the emerging automated data-base systems.

One additional general characteristic of the ODIS project is that it need not be a large operation. Abundant information resources and staff capabilities already exist within PPC/CDIE and in other AID divisions. The requirement is not to attempt the creation of additional data, but instead to work toward more effective use of what already exists through improved collection, packaging, and delivery. An ODIS project will best achieve its objectives by helping define needs and chart ways in which others might meet them. This approach also gives greatest promise of ensuring that the resulting processes will be internalized within AID in reasonably short order, thus accelerating the process by which project activities can be folded into ongoing AID program operations and thereby sustained.

To be ensured of having the necessary flexibility and responsiveness, ODIS project management should not be wedded to any concept of the right system that can make everything work. Differentiation between PPC/CDIE/DI's archive operations and the outreach orientation of ODIS activities will be necessary. This should not denigrate DI's archiving activities, however, as these will continue to be important to AID and the data base will constitute the project's most important resource. Because of this, the ODIS project will be dependent in innumerable ways on both the DI data base and the operating systems that have been developed to facilitate the archival functions. The point needs to be reinforced, however, that the DI's archiving activities have emphasized systems development for document indexing, abstracting, cataloguing, microfilming, storage, and retrieval.

The technical skills required for undertaking these DIHF functions are necessary for a successful ODIS project, but in and of themselves they are not sufficient to ensure that success.

Thus, the ODIS project ought not be expected to function as a subordinate of or appendage to PPC/CDIE/DI's ongoing systems development and archival activities. Instead, it will require the capacity to function as a separate and equal entity, working in a cooperative and collaborative mode, while actively interacting with all other relevant information sources, both within PPC/CDIE and elsewhere. Thus, the ODIS project will need the freedom to evolve somewhat independently, in response to the needs it will serve.

Within this context, it would be desirable for the ODIS project to be placed as prominently within CDIE as administrative procedures and regulations will allow. This might be where it is currently envisioned, as part of PPC/CDIE/DI. Preferably, to emphasize the desirability and legitimacy of making more effective use of AID's institutional memory, the project might be placed directly under the Director of CDIE or, alternatively, the Deputy Director. If this placement is impossible, then it is strongly recommended that the project be affiliated with the Reference Services Division of DI rather than placed under the Systems Division as reportedly is currently being contemplated by DI leadership. Whatever the structure, it remains crucial that the ODIS project be closely integrated with the operations of DI's Reference Services Division.

The specific staffing configuration of the ODIS project should be determined through consideration of the desirability to keep the operation fairly small, the need for it to have sufficient capacity to accomplish its objectives, and budgetary limitations.

Within this context, it is proposed that the ODIS project staff consist of a project director and two regional coordinators, all based in Washington, D.C., and traveling regularly. These project management staff would be assisted by a small research and reference staff (assigned to provide services that supplement those that should continue to be provided by existing PPC/CDIE/DI staff), plus an administrative assistant. Details of this staffing configuration are provided in the project implementation plan, Section III, of this report.

The project director would be charged with, among other things, overall project management, including substantive liaison with regional bureaus and others in Washington, to determine needs, lobby for local mission support, coordinate technical assistance, and ensure effective feedback loops on project evaluation. The two regional coordinators would assist the project director in all aspects of the project, but would have particular responsibility for outreach and program support in designated regions. They would help identify sites for initial ODIS implementation, provide a means of communication and feedback to and from the field, and provide technical assistance to information-related activities and projects at the mission level. Other project staff would work under the guidance and coordination of the project director. Preliminary position descriptions for all recommended project staff are attached as Annex A to this report.

It is not recommended that the ODIS project attempt to establish regional offices during its inaugural phase. These offices could easily overtax current system capabilities to be responsive, and concurrently would introduce too high a risk of project dispersal and dissipation of effort. As system capacities mature and the project begins achieving its objectives, the demand for technical assistance and other support will likely increase to the point at which field placement of regional coordinators might constitute a cost-effective supplement to the project. Nonetheless, given the substantial

challenge that both PPC/CDIE/DI and the ODIS project will first face meeting more limited objectives, it seems appropriate to defer detailed consideration of this option until an emerging demand from the field for these services becomes clear.

### The Field Perspective

Since the creation or strengthening of effective development information resource centers in selected USAID missions and developing country institutions is the most crucial institutional product of the ODIS project, great care will need to be exercised in the organization and management of local information resource centers. It is through these centers that patterns of effective field use of lessons learned and of programmatic outreach to developing country institutions concerned with effective information use will be developed and maintained.

The priority function of these centers should be to serve as a source of bibliographic access to a wider range of information, including both the central DIS data base and other information sources. Concurrently, these centers should function as access facilities for pertinent information that has been identified and as repositories for documentation provided in response to mission requests to the central DIS facility or to other information sources. In addition, depending on their capacities and the degree of mission support, they could serve as repositories for well-organized and catalogued country and regional project archives, statistical data, and technical reports. Furthermore, wherever appropriate, they should be set up so that they might stimulate, and serve as a model for, the creation or strengthening of host-country information centers (as a programmatic extension of other AID activities, for example). One additional possible function of a local center could be to serve as a work place for contractors and temporary duty staff.

In fulfilling these functions, local information resource centers will serve long-term ODIS project objectives: they will define the possibilities for information use for potential users, and then demonstrate the system's ability to provide timely and pertinent service.

It will be important that local information resource centers be mission funded to the fullest possible extent. A willingness to provide such support should be one key criterion for selection of test sites for project implementation. (Another key criterion is the degree of mission commitment to effective and increased use of development information.) This mission support for personnel and facilities will help ensure a higher level of vested interest in the success of the undertaking and is a key factor in sustainability of project initiatives. Mission support will also help integrate project personnel and activities more fully into the ongoing mission life, thus facilitating the project's capacity to interact with staff regarding their information needs and expectations. And finally, it will accelerate the process of moving the project toward self-supporting programmatic internalization within AID's operations.

Actual physical and administrative placement of local information resource centers within USAID missions is likely to be crucial to the success of the project, as the way in which this is done will critically affect the extent to which an enhanced role for development information can be legitimated within each mission context. Since circumstances differ among missions (and, to a far greater extent, among potential developing country participants), different formula may have to be applied in different countries. Nonetheless, some uniform objectives and standards can be applied. These include requirements that all placements be designed to:

- Ensure continuing active interest and support from mission top management;

- Provide sufficiently high visibility of the information resource center and especially of its services within the life of the mission; and
- Facilitate a high degree of interaction between information resource center staff and other mission personnel.

An important unifying concept in the above discussion is the need to ensure continuity. Career American AID staff in missions rotate frequently, and numerous examples can be cited -- for example, Indonesia -- where a dynamic mission information program has retreated following the departure of its one or two key supporters (frequently mission directors, heads of program offices, or, in some instances, dynamic outreach-oriented heads of these information centers).[5] No easy formula is currently known that can ensure that this will not happen, and all that can be suggested is that all reasonable precautions need to be taken.

One precaution would be to locate an information resource center bureaucratically so that it will be less vulnerable to manipulation by interests that are comparatively unconcerned about information use (for example, in a program office rather than under the control of a controller or management office). Another would be to work to ensure that such a center remains the shared property of all actual or potential users, not the proprietary facility or one (or a few) high-volume users.

Perhaps the key consideration is that continuity can best result from the evolution of an institutionalized awareness of the utility of information and a commitment to its shared use. However this is accomplished, it needs to remain the touchstone against which decisions regarding field placement of information resource centers should be weighed.

To the extent that information resource centers currently exist in missions, they generally are part and parcel of other mission library operations. The research that preceded the writing of this report suggests that some of those AID officials

who may have oversight responsibility for the ODIS project feel that it should scrupulously avoid any close relationship with these libraries. To attempt such a separation, however, could be detrimental to the project, as it contains the potential for denying important resources to any mission-based information center. Moreover, provided that the ODIS project is properly structured and managed, the risks that it would degenerate into just another library operation seem relatively inconsequential.

There is nothing inherently objectionable in the overlap of traditional library activities and the types of activities proposed for the ODIS project, provided that a clear distinction between the two can be drawn and effectively communicated to all concerned parties. The distinction should be between commonly understood traditional library functions (books on shelves, reading rooms, etc.) and interactive information networking that characterizes the ODIS project orientation. An ODIS information resource center does not need to have any books in it, as long as it retains the capacity to identify required information, and locate and expeditiously retrieve it. Whether or not an ODIS information resource center performs these functions from a library setting is irrelevant. However, whether any specific existing library facility in a mission or host-country institution might assist or detract from the operations of an information resource center is highly relevant, and decisions regarding placement of local information resource centers should recognize that criterion.

### Personnel

In addition to having good capacities to access useful development information resources, one of the most important keys to the success or sustainability of the project will be the personnel who make it work. This refers both to the central project staff and to the USAID mission-funded people who manage or work in information resource facilities overseas.

Appropriate orientations toward the management and use of information, plus an informed interest in development issues, are likely to be as important qualifications for project staff as are technical skills. Although various technical skills will, of course, be required, the project's orientation toward facilitating ease of use and access can be expected to ensure that most required technical skills will be easily learned, usually in the field setting through use of project-provided training materials. In this context, what will assume greater importance will be a belief in the value of appropriate information, and a service orientation toward assisting potential information users in defining what will be most useful to them and then helping them obtain it. Moreover, since a majority of the holdings in local information resource centers can be expected to be local in origin, an important additional skill will be the ability to handle these materials (cataloguing and indexing, for example). In some instances, good knowledge of local languages will be essential.

The thrust of these observations is that outreach-oriented ODIS project personnel should be expected to function as information brokers, creating demands for information and then ensuring that the demands are met. They would not be keepers of the keys to the bookshelves, but instead would be concerned primarily with an activist orientation toward effective information dissemination. Since, however, they will necessarily be involved with issues of information management, storage, and retrieval, these people occasionally may also require technical assistance in dealing with, for example, information transfer problems. When these circumstances arise, help should be available through the project from appropriately qualified PPC/CDIE/DI personnel, primarily personnel from the Operations System Services Division and the Reference Services Division.

ODIS project management thus will require a Washington-based project staff who can stimulate a dynamic and outreach-oriented approach to more effective use of information. Concurrently, the key to effective local information management and outreach will be field-based personnel capable of helping define what is needed and of fully using available systems to get it. Among the various services that could be performed by these field personnel are:

- Actively working to learn information needs of current or potential users, and then taking appropriate initiatives in linking users with relevant information;
- Linking mission information users with the information sources that are capable of being accessed through the ODIS project;
- Organizing and managing local collections; and
- Directing local awareness programs regarding information services and resources.

The staff to support these activities would vary by location but could be expected to comprise a mix of direct-hire professional staff who have time allocated for these activities, expatriate personal services contractors, and local-hire foreign service national staff. One attractive option might be training and then making use of AID dependents to work in collaboration with local-hire foreign service nationals. In staffing these centers, those concerned should ensure both the capacity for effective dialogue regarding information needs of USAID staff (both American and national) and the knowledge of the workings of the system that can come from continuity of staff. Efficient provision of these services will be the project's best advertisement, and can be expected to generate increasing user demand.

## MARKETING DIS SERVICES AND EXPANDING THEIR USE

Current use of AID's institutional memory is below potential, especially by project planners and managers in the field. The reasons for this situation may be summarized in terms of six basic problems:

- Insufficient DIS service orientation;
- Lack of awareness of DIS among AID management and project staff;
- Lack of user feedback to DI, resulting in the perpetuation of misunderstandings about DIS;
- Widespread perceptions of serious gaps in system contents;
- Generally poor reaction to system use by users: experience that, when informally reported, becomes a constraint to others; and
- Inadequate analytic content or capacity in DIS.

What is most needed, aside from demonstrable capacity for appropriate and timely response, is greater commitment by top management to effective use of AID's institutional memory and of other sources of accumulated development knowledge. Only with this commitment, buttressed by supportive policies and incentives, can the structural and procedural changes be made that will facilitate effective system use. At present, as reported by GAO in 1982, AID operational staff do not appear to consider the identification, recording, and use of lessons learned to be a high priority, nor has DI been given a clearly understood role in promoting effective information use. Indeed, AID has never offered clear definition or guidelines regarding the meaning of lessons learned and, in fact, in many instances has not implemented existing regulations that could enhance DIS effectiveness.

Given current flaws in the system, aggressive marketing of DIS would probably not yield significant improvement in its use. In fact, this marketing might well be counterproductive: until system improvement occurs, aggressive marketing could have the adverse effect of compounding existing negative perceptions, in the process undermining long-term efforts to institutionalize more effective use of the resource. But as improvements are made in system contents, responsiveness, and ease of use, outreach efforts will be important elements of DI's role. Outreach is as important in Washington as it is in the field, since converted and productive Washington-based users will carry effective use and demand with them when transferred to field assignments. The key point is that a more effective and more responsive DIS must be an integral part of the ODIS project.

Outreach must have two complementary components: structural change and user service.

### Structural Change

There are three broad categories of policy and management action in AID that are essential prerequisites to broadening the effective use of the institutional memory and other development information. First is the need for appropriate requirements and incentives to encourage document submission by both project staff and contractors. Current compliance with this need is poor, leaving DI with a virtually impossible task with regard to the capture of materials. Existing gaps are serious, despite aggressive acquisition strategies currently employed by DI. No capture strategy can replace improved initiative from document suppliers. It is unlikely that many of these suppliers will take this initiative until they are persuaded that this action can really benefit the system -- and hence, by extension, themselves.

The second need is for increased efforts to package the available information in ways that can make it more useful to various user groups. Since raw, or unprocessed, data frequently will not provide the optimal response to user needs, synthesis or lessons-learned materials can be an important component of meeting this need. So can the packaging, and continual refinement, of data-base searches in high-interest areas. Continual efforts to upgrade abstracting and indexing capabilities among the responsible PPC/CDIE/DI staff could also play an important role.

The third need is to enforce requirements that project officers and contractors use and document their use of lessons learned when considering and selecting alternative solutions to development problems. This is true for both design and implementation strategies. Specific strategies related to these procedural changes are discussed in the implementation section of this report.

### User Service

If structural change is the stick, then user service is the carrot to be employed in the effort to improve DIS use in the field. A user-service concept primarily means attention to effective interaction between users and the system, and effective responses to user inquiries and requests. In both cases, it is a matter of both technology and human factors. For example, effective field outreach must include a combination of appropriate and user-friendly software with resource information center personnel who are competent and outreach oriented.

Key elements of an outreach strategy include:

- Conveying information about DIS and other services of DI to potential and actual users;

- Improving user service and responsiveness to system users;
- Taking a reductionist approach to information dissemination, that is, a focus on quality and relevance as distinct from quantity;
- Developing information exchange strategies that go beyond DIS itself in improving use of institutional memory and other information resources; and
- Transferring appropriate technologies to the field to optimize access to what is needed for effective use of information.

Implementation of these strategies will require greatly increased contact between DI staff and field users (as well as between DI staff and other Washington-based AID personnel). The level of this contact should be increased by structured programs (such as training), procedural innovations (such as the use of specific liaison personnel to improve interaction with AID regional bureaus), and greater use of travel opportunities (to engage in direct outreach activities with field personnel and to increase the familiarity of DI personnel with field operations and problems, both within USAID missions and among relevant developing country institutions).

These objectives could also be served by assigning geographic regions to DI staff to track temporary duty Washington visitors and brief them on DIS developments. Within this context, the ad hoc outreach committee of the recently convened PPC/CDIE/DI Retreat has noted that if 8-9 staff were each assigned 6-8 missions PPC/CDIE/DI could effectively cover all 63 missions worldwide.

It is clear that DI does have the potential to provide valuable information services that, if used, could produce significant programmatic benefits to AID. Significant progress has been made in establishing structures for data collection, archiving, cataloguing, and access. The effort to supplement this progress with the steps needed for effective information

processing and dissemination should receive high priority. The following section on implementation suggests ways of taking these next steps.

#### NOTES

- 1 The distinction between data and information is discussed below and in the section on "Understanding the Nature of the Information Resource Base and Making Effective Use of It".
- 2 DI is not unaware of this situation, however, and has recently funded a study designed to analyze DIS clientele and to develop guidelines for the provision of services. That study was being conducted (by King Research Associates) concurrent with the preparation of this report, and its conclusions and recommendations therefore were not available for consideration.
- 3 In fairness, however, it should be acknowledged that comparatively little of this information seems to exist. The issue may well relate more to the nature of the written record being produced than to document capture.
- 4 Similar materials produced by other AID bureaus (for example, the project summaries and abstracts prepared by the Asia Bureau) are not captured and catalogued in ways that facilitate ease of retrieval through DIS.
- 5 There is, of course, considerably greater continuity in the host-country national staff of missions, and it must be kept in mind that these staff members constitute a crucially important constituency for the ODIS project and the services of the local information resource center.

SECTION III  
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

The ODIS project should not be separated, either functionally or substantively, from the operations of the PPC/CDIE/DI, given the recommendation that ODIS activities ultimately be folded into ongoing AID operations as a self-sustaining program. Thus, the future of ODIS activities will be inextricably linked with the general effectiveness of PPC/CDIE/DI in fulfilling its non-overseas support mandate.

Because of this, it is neither appropriate nor adequate in this report to limit discussion solely to matters pertaining to the conceptualization and implementation of the ODIS project. The current and potential effectiveness of DI, both in undertaking its ongoing archival and reference programs and in adequately supporting an overseas support program, must be considered together. In the final analysis, the ODIS project can be only as good as its organizational backstopping. To whatever extent PPC/CDIE/DI remains unable to achieve its objectives for effective, timely, and relevant service to its non-overseas clients, it also will be unable to achieve roughly comparable objectives through its overseas support program.

Within this context, the remainder of this report is divided into two sub-sections. The first presents a phased strategy for implementing the ODIS project. If adopted, these recommendations should lead to a set of mission-responsive activities designed to facilitate greatly enhanced capacities for transfer and exchange of technical and project-related development experience between AID/Washington, USAID missions, and selected counterpart organizations in developing countries. However, neither these recommendations nor the project activities that flow from them

adequately address a variety of fundamental questions on which the long-term vitality and self-sustainment of the program ultimately will depend.

The final part of this report therefore attempts to address these larger issues through observations and recommendations transcending the originally defined scope of work. But these points are nonetheless fundamental to the long-term success or failure of ODIS activities. These are issues of legitimating effective use of the AID institutional memory as well as other pertinent development information, and of consolidating mechanisms for its collection, processing, and dissemination. These issues are divided into two components: AID policy and management steps, and PPC/CDIE/DI management and procedural issues.

#### ODIS PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This report recommends that the ODIS project be implemented in three phases, over a five-year period. Implementation should be undertaken using contracted services, with the expectation that the project will be folded into ongoing AID program operations by the conclusion of its initial five years. The project will be under the supervision of PPC/CDIE/DI, and will work cooperatively with, but separate from, DIHF.

It is further recommended that the ODIS project not be implemented as if it were basically a dissemination activity. It should instead focus its energies and resources on developing and improving local capacities to manage information in USAID missions and counterpart institutions. However, an essential component of any such orientation must be continuing efforts to ensure the best possible system responsiveness to existing and future dissemination needs. Thus, the ODIS project must necessarily be involved in efforts to improve DIS relevance and responsiveness.

It probably will be able to perform this function best through the identification of field needs and the development of means for best meeting those needs. At the same time, however, it ought not be restricted by whatever procedural or substantive limitations remain in the AID data base, and therefore must be concerned with access to other relevant information sources. Within that context, it is recommended that the project's principal activities during each of its three phases be as outlined below.

### Phase One

This phase will last for approximately six months from the time of contract signing. During this period, all activities that will form the basis for subsequent project implementation should be inaugurated. These include:

- Hiring Washington-based project staff, consisting of a project director, two regional coordinators, two research and reference staff, and an administrative assistant. Recommended provisional job descriptions for these positions are enclosed as Annex A to this report.
- Acquiring and occupying project office space, preferably within the existing PPC/CDIE/DI offices and provided without cost by that unit. Terminal access to DIS should also be provided.
- Purchasing with project funds and installing the automated terminal hardware and software that will be required for effective project implementation. This new equipment should minimally include a Wang basic work station, an archiving work station, and a printer, plus the required communication equipment and software. One or more separate telephone lines also will be needed. It is not anticipated that additional terminals will be initially required for accessing DIS from DI office space. Any greatly increased use of DIS, which is likely to occur as a consequence of successful implementation of the ODIS project, will require additional terminals, but these should be furnished using non-project funds.

- Inaugurating with PPC/CDIE and other pertinent AID bureaus the necessary dialogue regarding how best to organize the collection, management, and processing of the full range of AID's institutional memory so that it can best service the needs of AID-connected overseas users. This agency-wide dialogue should continue throughout the life of the project and beyond.
- Undertaking a concerted effort to treat the DI branch office-cum-library in the New State building in Washington, D.C., as a test site for ODIS-type project activities. Although that facility currently is badly underutilized relative to its potential, it represents a potential microcosm of opportunities and problems likely to be faced by the project, and should be used to test outreach strategies, obtain user feedback, experiment with service improvements, and build constituencies of new or more-committed information users.
- Selecting a minimum of two mission sites in each of AID's geographic regions for ODIS project Phase Two implementation. No recommendations are made here regarding specific possible sites, as it would be better for these decisions to be made by project staff in conjunction with CDIE. For experimental purposes, it would be preferable to have one information-rich site and one information-poor site in each geographic region, although other configurations may also prove, for other reasons, to be more desirable. Whatever the case, the selection criteria for the test sites should be based on:
  - A demonstrable degree of mission interest in information management (both internally and programmatically);
  - Established relations with counterpart institutions appropriate to information management technical assistance; and
  - A willingness to provide financial and administrative support to the establishment or strengthening of a local information resource center in the form of space and facilities as well as staff.

In selecting project test sites, it should be kept in mind that USAID-based resource information centers may or may not be linked to existing libraries. Information center configurations will depend on situation-specific variables, and could range from a single dedicated micro-computer in a mission program office to integration into an ongoing mission library facility.

- Nominating, by missions, counterpart institutions for participation in Phase Two implementation. Two developing country institutions will be selected by the ODIS project director and regional coordinators, in cooperation with the interested USAID missions, for participation in Phase Two implementation. These institutions would probably, but not necessarily, be located in countries where the project was assisting a USAID-mission information resource center.

Selection criteria would include:

- The degree of interest expressed by the institution, and its potential for meaningful utilization of the enhanced capabilities that the ODIS project would help it acquire;
  - The nature of the established relations between the institution and the USAID mission in its country; and
  - The potential value of improved information services to the institution and to its clientele.
- Establishing the evaluation criteria by which Phase Two implementation will be assessed. Based on mission Programmatic objectives and the information programs of the selected developing country institutions, the establishment of these criteria would include measures of:
    - Client use;
    - User satisfaction; and
    - Effectiveness of PPC/CDIE/DI and ODIS project support and technical assistance.
  - Testing and selection of technologies (especially software) for dissemination to missions and participating institutions and information retrieval services in developing countries.
  - Development and expansion of arrangements for access to other pertinent data bases.

### Phase Two

Phase Two of the project will last for approximately two years. During this period, implementation should proceed on the basis of groundwork laid during Phase One, and many of the activities begun then will continue. The most important new project activities in this phase will include:

- Implementing the ODIS project in the selected USAID missions and participating institutions in developing countries. Although eight test sites in each category are specified above, more might be approved for participation at the discretion of the project director if field interest is sufficiently high, if the project director believes the project is capable of properly supporting an increased level of effort, and if PPC/CDIE/DI is also deemed generally capable of effective backstop support. Implementation during this phase will include provision by the project of the required technical assistance and, on a cost-share basis with participating USAID missions, of appropriate microcomputer equipment and software. Missions would be expected to provide space, personnel, and the necessary management commitment to the project objectives of outreach-oriented mission-based resource information centers, as well as for appropriate levels of program support to participating counterpart institutions in developing countries.
- Monitoring evolving information management techniques and information technologies for potential application in ODIS project activities.
- Engaging in appropriate outreach activities, both at project sites and in other locations, to facilitate project expansion as rapidly as system capabilities will allow.
- Evaluating the project and modifying strategies accordingly, including the establishment of guidelines for evaluating mission-level programs and determining levels of continuing support.
- Preparing for general replication of field sites, according to established criteria that would include the following:
  - The level of USAID mission and developing country institutional interest, as indicated by current information-related programming and by a willingness to cost-share local inputs; and
  - The capacity of PPC/CDIE/DI and the ODIS project to support an expanding level of effort.

### Phase Three

The third and final phase of the ODIS project should last for approximately 2.5 years until the end of the project's

planned 5-year contract period. Project activities from the earlier two phases will be continued, with special attention focused on the capacities of field sites to manage their own information systems and to access the information networks (both AID and non-AID) with which they will have been linked. Attention also should continue to focus on project contributions to the ongoing effort to enhance the relevance and accessibility of AID's own institutional memory.

Specific new activities during Phase Three will include general replication of the system among as many USAID missions as DIS and ODIS project capabilities will allow. It should secondarily include as many participating institutions in developing countries as USAID missions are prepared to support programmatically.

Within this context of project expansion, the primary focus during Phase Three must be on institutionalizing and internalizing the system as a continuing part of AID's program operations, that is, on ensuring sustainability of the effort following termination of special project-funded status. This will require attention to providing for continuity in management and resource commitments, and thus to ensuring integration of effort within PPC/CDIE, at the AID/Washington bureau level, and among the individual participating USAID missions. The exact nature of this effort will depend on the way the program has evolved during its first two phases, and should be a major focus of project management.

### Budget

The following budget summary is premised on the recommendations presented in this report. Many of these recommendations concern the integration of the ODIS project into ongoing PPC/CDIE/DI activities, and assume the availability of financial and other resources that might be applied, outside of the project budget, to contribute to the accomplishment of project objec-

tives. As such, the following budget is intended only to be generally indicative of the level of new funding that is likely to be required to enable the project to achieve those objectives. Considerable refinement will be required in light of AID reactions to these strategy recommendations before final budget figures can be established.

This illustrative budget suggests general funding levels for each of the project's five years, broken down broadly by categories of expenditure. Some important assumptions underlying compilation of this budget are as follows:

- Positions for Washington-based project staff will be filled for the entire five-year term of the project. Initial salaries, including benefit packages, will be: project director, \$50,000; regional coordinators, \$35,000; research and reference staff, \$20,000; and administrative assistant, \$15,000. Ideally, some of these positions could be integrated into AID's own structure prior to project completion, in which case budget savings might be affected. For planning purposes, it is estimated that fringe benefits will load those base salaries by an average of approximately 30 percent, and that contractor overhead and fees will add an additional 90 percent of salaries plus fringe benefits. It also is projected that salaries plus benefits will increase annually at an average of 7 percent.
- An average of 12 international project-related trips will be made annually, some by project staff, others by DI/DIHF staff, and still others possibly by personnel working in project-assisted field resource information centers. This travel is budgeted at an average first-year cost of \$3,000 per trip for travel costs. This travel will also involve a total of 360 days of per-diem travel per year, at an average first-year cost of \$100 per day. A 5-percent inflation factor is assumed for the second through the fifth years of the project.

It is anticipated that other travel in support of ODIS project objectives also will be made, funded from non-project budgets, and especially from DI operational funds and/or DIHF contract funds.

- Significant financial and other support will be provided to the project from outside the project itself. This includes office space and facilities from PPC/CDIE/DI, technical assistance and support personnel from DI and DIHF, access to DIS, and mission support. Thus, project funds included in this budget are largely supplemental, and are intended to support unique project needs, especially for communications; supplies; and public relations, outreach, and training materials.
- The project in Washington, D.C., will require regular access to word processing, archiving, and printing capabilities that exceed DI's current capacities, and therefore project funds are allocated to purchase a new Wang work station specifically for project use. In addition, microcomputers for field use will be required, although whenever possible it will be preferable for USAID missions to provide these using their own funds as part of their project contribution. Equipment to be purchased for mission-supported programs with developing country institutions should be included in individual project budgets. Equipment for Phase Three activities should be purchased by participating missions.
- Funds are allocated in this budget to provide discretionary project support to participating USAID missions, particularly to assist missions in dealing with whatever unique problems that may arise in project implementation. These funds might be used, for example, for enhancement of especially important local materials or for introducing cataloguing systems: the funds would not be available to underwrite ongoing costs, which should remain the responsibility of the individual missions.

Other items within the illustrative budget, Table 1, should be self-explanatory.

#### THE LARGER CONTEXT

The implementation of the ODIS project will take place within a larger context over which it will have relatively little control. Nonetheless, that context is absolutely crucial to the project's prospects of success or failure, as well as to the broader issues in information use within AID. Consequently, the following observations and recommendations are offered in the hope that they might assist AID in its continuing effort to systematize more effective use of its own institutional memory.

TABLE 1  
ILLUSTRATIVE (ORDER-OF-MAGNITUDE) BUDGET  
(in Thousands of dollars)

Line Items	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
<b>A. <u>Personnel</u></b>						
1. Base Salaries	175.0	187.3	200.4	214.4	229.4	1,006.5
2. Fringe Benefits (@ 30%)	52.5	56.2	60.1	64.3	68.8	301.9
<b>B. <u>Travel</u></b>						
	72.0	75.6	79.4	83.3	85.5	395.8
<b>C. <u>Prospect Support</u></b>						
1. Communications	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	11.0
2. Supplies	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	11.0
3. PR/Outreach	5.0	7.0	6.0	9.0	8.0	35.0
4. Training	5.0	20.0	10.0	20.0	10.0	65.0
<b>D. <u>System Development</u></b>						
1. Purchase of Software for Testing	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	6.0
2. Systems Analysis/ Development	10.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	30.0
3. Equipment Purchase	30.0	24.0	6.0	24.0	6.0	90.0
<b>E. <u>O/H and Fee (90% of A)</u></b>						
	204.8	219.2	234.5	250.8	268.38	1,177.56
<b>F. <u>Totals</u></b>						
	560.3	599.5	606.8	676.4	686.9	3,129.8

These recommendations are organized topically and are presented in summary form only. They derive directly from the research done in the preparation of this report, and relate to points discussed in the body of the report.

### Aid Policy and Management Steps

An unequivocal commitment by top AID management to make more effective use of AID's institutional memory and other relevant development information would do more than anything else to ensure the success of DIOS project activities, provided that the commitment was buttressed by regulations and procedures that would be required to make it stick. If this commitment were made, the following are some of the specific manifestations that should be considered:

#### AID/Washington

- Issue a policy statement dealing with the use of development experience that establishes the parameters of AID's role and interest in the subject. This statement should stress the potential importance of AID's development information system as both an information resource and a management tool.
- Improve the lessons-learned focus of synthesis and other materials by involving experienced AID/Washington technical staff in their preparation (according to formats jointly defined with DI) and emphasizing critical elements of interest to policy makers as well as project designers and managers. One option is to require abstracts to be produced by the authors of the original document according to a standard set of AID guidelines.
- Require staff responsible for proceedings of sector workshops or other topical discussions involving AID staff or outside experts to prepare short summaries similar to evaluation syntheses.
- Provide clear career incentives for demonstrated use of lessons learned in program and policy design and management.

- Take steps to require strategy and project approval processes at all levels to take incorporation of lessons learned more seriously. This is a major missing incentive at present. For example, inclusion of a serious bibliography could be required in project papers and other documents that should be informed by the institutional memory. AID program and budget officers should be charged with favoring projects that have been proven effective as evidenced by evaluation and other analyses.
- Issue guidelines requiring that all authors of project papers, evaluations, and other project-related reports include a standardized abstract on the first page of the document. These abstracts should be promptly entered into the data bank and made part of the limited set of material disseminated to the field, on request, in hard copy or disk form.
- Adapt project completion reports, project implementation reports, and USAID comments on evaluation reports to make them more useful in terms of lessons learned.
- Establish procedures to encourage better document capture by DIS. These would include building incentives for AID staff submission of documents and structuring contract requirements to ensure that contractors submit documents they produce.
- Issue guidelines supporting and assisting the development of effective mission information centers. These guidelines should include modifying regulations to facilitate hiring of qualified information center leadership in the field. This will be a critical need to ensure proper staffing of local information resource centers.
- Prepare summaries of DIS information prior to major policy decisions or project review.
- Require project and desk officers to forward copies of all project-related documents to DIS, and enforce this requirement.

#### USAID Missions

- Increase emphasis on documented use of lessons learned in project development, design, and approval processes.
- In conjunction with the ODIS project, strengthen or create mission information centers in program offices to oversee and manage information collection, cataloguing, and use.

- Require project officers to forward all project-related documents to DIS, through mission information centers wherever these exist.

### Contractors

- Structure contracts for consultants to require and facilitate investment of time (up-front in Washington when possible) for review of the DIS data base.
- Require contractors to perform a DIS search prior to preparation of project identification documents, project papers, policy analyses, and other studies.

### PPC/CDIE/DI Management and Procedural Issues

The following summary of observations and recommendations appears to be largely within the authority of PPC/CDIE/DI, or at least PPC/CDIE, and therefore are closer to the ODIS project. As a consequence, it is anticipated that ODIS project personnel, and especially the project director, would be in positions to contribute to the implementation of some of the recommendations. They therefore have been incorporated into the scopes of work and job descriptions.

Some items listed here already are being addressed to a greater or lesser degree by PPC/CDIE and PPC/CDIE/DI. They are included here partially to re-emphasize their importance and partially in the conviction that more should, and can, be done.

### Improve System Responsiveness

- Recognize the important differences between archival and reference functions, and strive to ensure that equal weight be assigned to each in systems development, processing methodologies, and personnel assignments.
- Incorporate in DI operations a recognition that there are differentiated clients requiring different types of information packaged differently.

- Establish and maintain policies determining priorities among potential user groups and related procedures for servicing these different groups.
- Prepare brief summaries of key lessons learned from material on projects of a particular type in the DIS data bank.
- Develop search and sort capabilities to emphasize analysis and selectivity in responses, so as to narrow and target the amount of information provided in response to a request.
- Related to above, develop structured DIS request forms that would narrow a search request and reduce the amount of material demanded.
- Simplify procedures for contractor access to AID's information systems.
- Arrange DI bibliographical access to other developmentally related data bases.
- Arrange effective interaction between DIS and PBAR (Project Accounting) and other AID data bases and information services.
- Make more effective use of PPC/CDIE/DI's information center in the New State building in Washington. This facility should be taken more seriously as an experimental prototype for DI's outreach services and overseas operations.
- Assign DI staff as liaison with bureaus for outreach and feedback.
- Use more printed informational and promotional material to increase system awareness.
- Develop a users' manual for the system that is readable, compact, and complete, and distribute it widely.
- Consider using videotapes to advertise DI/ODIS services and capabilities to AID and to communicate with missions.

#### Continue Technology Assessments and Systems Development

- Address issue of MINISIS incompatibility with hardware systems that are likely to predominate in USAID missions. Tailor hardware for use on IBM PC-compatible micro-computer equipment. Move toward use of bibliographic

index software (SCIMATE?) for field applications. Ensure that whatever is used is capable of download and upload interfacing with MINISIS. Software should be portable among microcomputers authorized by AID's Office of Information Resources Management (M/SER/IRM) for field use.

- Evaluate and select IBM PC-compatible software for dissemination to field for bibliographic index access. This software should accommodate front-end menus and user prompts to simplify access to and operation of the information system, and to improve its effectiveness. This software ideally should also support two-way data-base transfer in MINISIS-compatible format.

NOTE: A laboratory of prototype systems that will interface with existing and planned computer installations in USAID missions and developing country institutions is being developed at DIHF. A Hewlett-Packard 3000/model 48 minicomputer, IBM/XT, and WANG PC with hard disk are now in place. This laboratory will also be used to test, demonstrate, and provide training in software for information access and transfer.

- Conduct one or more surveys of potential users to determine, among other things, data-bases for which index access is most desired.
- Consider expansion of the DIS display format to include references to and, in some cases, abstracts of project implementation documents, contracts, and key AID and developing country personnel.
- Establish relationships to enable capture of selected non-AID development information through exchange or other arrangements, such as IDRC, UNDP, World Bank, FAO, and CIDA.
- Use menu interfaces providing simple directory access to entries for various data bases and other system contents. These should be directly usable by staff with minimal training.
- Assume future use of optical disks to transfer increasing volumes of text material from Washington to field collections. Because of the availability of optical disks and poor receptivity to microfiche, the latter medium should not be a part of the dissemination strategy.

ANNEX A  
JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR PROJECT STAFF

ANNEX A:

JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR PROJECT STAFF

PROJECT DIRECTOR

The project director will be responsible for overall project implementation. His or her principal duties will include:

- Advising and assisting PPC/CDIE/DI in organizing and maintaining its support structures for the ODIS project;
- Supervising, directing, and evaluating Project staff, including assigning responsibilities for geographic coverage for Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the New East;
- Establishing and maintaining linkages with AID regional bureaus and other divisions regarding effective use of AID's institutional memory and other development information;
- Supervising the provision of project services and assistance overseas, including technical assistance to the development or strengthening of local information management facilities and the transfer of relevant and timely responses to requests received from the field;
- Advising and advocating regarding information needs of the field;
- Developing project evaluation instruments and managing evaluation activities pertaining to project activities;
- Arranging and maintaining links with other relevant data bases;
- Advising on the appropriateness of proposed technologies for use in field settings; and
- Managing the project budget and ensuring application of appropriate fiscal management control mechanisms.

To help ensure that the project director will have the skills and experience necessary to fulfill these responsibilities professionally, it is suggested that the following minimum requirements be established:

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- Have training and experience in the field of the science of information management;
- Give evidence of interest in, and abilities to, undertake informational entrepreneurship -- that is, to help generate interest in, and demand for, ODIS project resources and services;
- Have field experience and/or training relating broadly to issues of Third World development; and
- Have demonstrated project and personnel management skills.

#### REGIONAL COORDINATORS

The two regional coordinators will assist the project director in the conduct of his or her duties. In addition, they will have specific responsibility for:

- Identifying potential project field sites for project activities;
- Ensuring provision of appropriate administrative and substantive support to projects in the field, including technical assistance and backstopping to field programs with participating institutions in developing countries;
- Evaluating field effectiveness of project operations and making recommendations for improvements;
- Generating demand for DI/ODIS project services in both project and non-project sites, as a key element in measured expansion of the project; and
- Acting as liaison, through the project director, with appropriate agencies and individuals within and outside of AID concerned with improved field use of information.

Qualifications for regional coordinators should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- Have the skills and training to organize the management of reference collection services in field settings, including the training of personnel to operate these services;

- Be demonstrably oriented toward information management and outreach services rather than toward archival services and collection maintenance, and in particular focused on the management and retrieval of automated reference information; and
- Be experienced in dealing with information management issues in the development context, and be knowledgeable about and interested in development as a substantive field.

#### REFERENCE AND RESEARCH STAFF

These two individuals will supplement the ongoing reference and research work of personnel in DI's Reference Services Division, with special focus on servicing requests received from overseas, and especially from ODIS project activities. It is not anticipated that these individuals will take over all this work from existing staff; instead, they will work cooperatively with that staff to help ensure timely and effective service that is uniquely responsive to field needs.

Special responsibilities will include:

- Acting as liaison with regional bureaus on specific requests from the field to ensure appropriate response, and to help get the bureaus more substantively concerned with quality control on DI output;
- Developing lists of especially interesting or important data-base searches for circulation to field settings; and
- Developing instructional materials on information management to assist personnel in field resource information centers in knowing how most easily and effectively to access all available data bases, or to organize their own collections for easy retrieval and, if appropriate, automation.

Most qualifications for these positions would be identical to those currently in use by PPC/CDIE/DI for recruitment of its own research and reference staff. The one necessary additional qualification is an informed understanding of field circumstances and needs, and training or experience relating to development.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

This person will be responsible for all normal administrative matters, including maintenance of project files, correspondence, accounting, and logistical arrangements. He or she will report directly to the project director, who will assign specific duties.

ANNEX B  
OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION SUPPORT

## ANNEX B

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION SUPPORT

Logical Framework  
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Narrative Summary -----	Indicators -----	Means of Verification -----	Important Assumptions -----
<p><b>Goal:</b> To improve the exchange of development related information between AID Washington, USAID missions, and selected counterpart institutions in developing countries.</p>	<p>Improved access to and use of development related information in program and project design, implementation, and evaluation by AID, USAID missions, and their counterparts</p>	<p>Existence of established and accepted means of information transfer</p> <p>Evidence in project related documents that relevant information has been used as a resource</p>	<p>A. There are important differences between the task of developing an information archive and the task of supporting effective information management and use.</p>
<b>Purposes:</b>			
<p>A. To utilize AID's institutional memory (lessons learned) and other development information resources to improve USAID mission capacities for project design, management, and evaluation.</p>	<p>Evidence that the lessons of experience are incorporated in project planning and implementation</p>	<p>-Project documents -Project evaluations</p>	<p>B. Effective information use in the field is not dependent on the presence of hard-copy or microfiche library collections.</p>
<p>B. To provide access to information that many developing countries cannot afford to produce, buy, or publish.</p>	<p>Programmatic outreach from USAID missions to counterparts to provide information not previously available to them</p>	<p>-Mission CDSS statements -Annual budget submissions -PIDs, PPs, and other planning documents</p>	<p>C. Effective information management and use in the field is a programmatic issue with a direct link to the quality of program design and implementation.</p>
<p>C. To provide assistance in the development of LDC institutional capacities to access and use information.</p>	<p>Mission programs to build local capacities for information management and use</p>	<p>-CDSS statements -PIDs, PPs, and other planning documents</p>	<p>D. Assisting LDC institutions improve access to and management of information is primarily a mission-level programmatic concern.</p>
<p>D. To improve links between development research and program/project implementation.</p>	<p>Established mechanisms for incorporating information into project management</p>	<p>-AID policy guidance -OI procedures -Mission capacity and procedures for information use</p>	<p>E. The effectiveness of CDIE field support is directly related to the environment of management, policy, and incentives from AID management.</p>

Narrative Summary	Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
<b>Outputs:</b>			
A. Timely and appropriate response to field requests for processed information or documents	-Shortened time between requests and fulfillment -Better quality and targeting of responses	-DI records -user feedback	
B. Arrangements that broaden the range of bibliographic index content accessible through both CDIE and field terminals	Incorporation of other bibliographic indexes into DI system (with terminal access)	DI system	
C. Provision of broad, user-oriented development information reference services, accessing AID's institutional memory and other relevant information sources	Improved synthesis material, topical summaries, and customized responses to field requests	DI system outputs	
D. Technical assistance to mission information management initiatives and to their host country counterparts	-Project activities in mission support -Effective performance by project Regional coordinators	-mission feedback -project records -mission support to local information centers	
E. Development or adaptation of improved technologies for automated information access and management	-existence of systems appropriate for mission and local counterpart use -DI programs in technology assessment	-systems installed and used -technical reports -mission-level terminals and system use	
<hr/>			
<b>Inputs:</b>			
A. Project staff	Six staff as per implementation plan	Project documents	F. CDIE will provide effective guidance, backstopping, and technical support to project staff and activities.
B. Project funding	\$3.130 million as per budget	Project documents	
C. DI and mission technical and financial support			G. Project funding will be available