

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Ronald Rogers, AD/DP

DATE: April 19, 1978

FROM : Richard B. Scott, Program Analyst

SUBJECT: Involving the Socio-Economic Research and Evaluation Unit and HAVA Extension Service in the Helmand Drainage Project: Getting the Show on the Road

Over the past and next few days I will have prepared a series of memos that relate to the findings of my recent trip (11 April - 14 April 78) to the Valley and my interpretation of those findings. This memo will outline the status of the Socio-Economic Research and Evaluation Unit (SEREU), the problems to overcome and my suggestions for recommended actions. It will also point out the patterns of Phase I that relate to the non-involvement of all but the Technical Division remain with the project and will require action.

The SEREU sits on Ground Zero. It has not been involved in project activities over the past few months, while planning, site selection and design work has moved forward into Phase II. Like the need to have the Social Analysis aspects of project design to aid in project focus from the earliest stage of new project thinking rather than as an after-thought addition (appendix) to a project paper to socially justify a project to Washington and meet paper-work requirements, (note Cummings recent memo on this subject), the SEREU should be involved in the earliest stages of planning and site selection. In the general meeting held 12 April 78 with Helmand Project staff, it was tentatively agreed that a person from the SEREU would, in the future, be included with the selection team's initial site selection visits. But this is simply an after-thought reaction to an AID objection and does not get at the real problem outlined below.

To date no SEREU field work has been accomplished and one reason given was that a vehicle was not available, but the real reasons go deeper than this statement and require project action on the part of USAID. In the meantime, attempts are being made to get vehicles for this and other project activities via excess property until Phase II vehicles arrive.

I was told that the Technical Division had 13 vehicles assigned and that the Planning and Statistics Department (PSD), under which the SEREU is located, had one Russian jeep and two motor cycles. Perhaps the SEREU could and should have been operational with the use of this vehicle but I hasten to add that PSD has broader responsibilities than the Drainage Project, as does the



Technical Divisions. Transport is not likely the real reason for SEREU non-involvement.

If I am reading the situation correctly, there has been no attempt to include this department in project activities. Mr. Farouq was invited to the general meeting noted above after I had appeared in the room for the meeting. Mr. Farouq was the only Afghan present from other than the Technical Division with the exception of Mr. Aziz Gul, to be noted below. The head of the Extension Service, Mr. Hesamudin, was not present although his department is, in theory, to be involved in the project or certainly should be. At present, farmer information aspects of the project are being handled by one man, Mr. Ghaznavi, of the Technical Division. The work and experience of farmer information, however, is that of the HAVA Extension Service, as yet uninvolved in the project in any truly active way.

Mr. Aziz Gul has been assigned as Mr. Harrison's counterpart as long-range planner. Presently Mr. Gul is attached to the Agriculture Division as head of Plant Protection but he is not an agricultural technician. Mr. Gul had been unemployed within HAVA until very recently. In the past he was head of PSD before being replaced by Mr. Farouq under the direction of Governor Sherzai. Apparently, Mr. Harrison has been located within PSD office space but not bureaucratically. Most of the data base upon which he depends is being drawn from PSD files. There had been some informal discussions involving Messrs. Sligh, Barbour and Farouq, some of which I attended, where at least in principle there was agreement that the logical location for the SCS planner would be in the HAVA planning office, i.e., PSD. Needless to say, the non-assignment of Mr. Harrison to PSD and Mr. Gul as his counterpart, is not acceptable to Mr. Farouq, nor does it appear functionally logical. Certainly Mr. Farouq is not the easiest person to work with but he is the most qualified, he is the head of the HAVA planning office, and he is in charge of the data (and its collection) necessary for long range planning. Given the opportunity to participate, perhaps he would not be so difficult? Throughout Phase I the Technical Division has not allowed outside participation, explainable in terms of GOA bureaucratic paranoia.

If it is possible to digest this complex of what amounts to HAVA political in-fighting, the following conclusions can be drawn:

As in Phase I, the pattern is for all aspects of the Drainage Project to be located in and controlled by the Technical Division. This is certainly an understandable position in any bureaucracy since it allows complete control of all aspects of the project under one head, Mr. Reyak, and reduces the likelihood of outside criticism of activities. The Technical Division, however, does not have all the skills nor personnel necessary to carry out the

project as designed. And the project was designed to involve HAVA as a total organization, not just the Technical Division. That was the reason for USAID insisting on having the HAVA Vice President as the project officer on the GOA side rather than having the head of the Technical Division; the result of lessons learned in Phase I.

The only way to change this situation is to have specific SCS personnel assigned the responsibility to work with and to involve the other HAVA departments in the project activities. Whoever is responsible for farmer information in SCS should be working with the head of the Extension Service, as well as Mr. Ghanzivi, on a daily basis. The logical office location for this SCS person is with the Extension Service.

Mr. Harrison, the planner, should be located in PSD and his counterpart, logically, perhaps not politically, should be Mr. Farouq, not Mr. Gul the head of Plant Protection. Until someone begins to work with Mr. Farouq in SEREU, we should expect the activity to remain dormant or ineffective. If USAID does not define the activity as important in terms of personnel assignment, HAVA personnel, none of whom likely understand this office function, are not likely to support it, including the top ranks. It is not clear that there is an understanding of the function or importance within USAID/SCS of these activities, although they have been defined numerous times orally and in writing.

At the time of project design, it was understood, I thought, that the combination of the SCS planner and personnel from USAID/Kabul Program Office would support and closely work with the SEREU during Phase II. With USAID/Kabul reorganization and different SCS assignments of personnel, this plan is not likely to materialize. As long as USAID/SCS follows the present course of action, divisions of HAVA other than the Technical Division will not likely become deeply involved and project implementation as designed will suffer. Our project for the most part will remain a construction project. This makes for a simple project but does not get at the basic problems of systems use or the beneficiaries.

As a side note, the suggestion of involving some university in the socio-economic research aspects of the project has some merit assuming careful selection and strict monitoring, neither of which commonly occur in implementation. The objections to university involvement have been outlined in detail in previous communications, i.e., they rarely meet project needs. Mr. Farouq considered the idea in a positive way but this should be accepted with reservation, though not rejected, since he has been attempting for some time to establish such contact for further education.

Immediate action to re-orient these aspects of project direction is important. The longer the necessary action is delayed, the more difficult the change will be. USAID/SCS should make this major attempt to move out of this limited Phase I focus.

Mr. Rogers

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Summary of required actions:

1. Assign specific SCS personnel to work with both the SEREU and the HAVA Extension Service to insure their involvement in those aspects of the project in which they have the personnel and experience.
2. Carefully reconsider the present bureaucratic location of Mr. Harrison who at present is misplaced, in my opinion.
3. Carefully consider the use of a university contact in the technical support, on a part-time basis, of the SEREU. But with out No. 1 above to act as on-the-spot monitor, I advise against such action.

cc: Mr. Bruno Kosheleff, RD
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Mr. John Standish, CDE