



Annual Report of the
Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse

October 2002 - September 2003

October 2003

LAG-I-803-99-00014-00, Task Order 09
Submitted by Chemonics International Inc.

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ACRONYMS

CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
EGAT	Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT) Bureau
FAA	Foreign Assistance Act
FY	fiscal year
GCP	Global Conservation Program
LRM	land resources management
LPA	Legislative and Public Affairs Office of USAID
NRIC	Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse
NRM	natural resources management
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
STTA	short-term technical assistance
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

In the first year of operation (October 2002 through September 2003), the Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse (NRIC) provided USAID with quality products and services and made significant progress in helping the Office of Natural Resources Management build a sustainable program for managing and disseminating knowledge about USAID's natural resources programs and successes. This annual report describes NRIC's activities and products over the past year and outlines NRIC activities and products anticipated for FY 2004.

The Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse was established in October 2002 to provide USAID's Office of Natural Resources Management (NRM) with communications and knowledge management support, as well as support for conferences and strategic planning. The NRM Office provides field support in response to requests from USAID Missions and Bureaus and contributes to development of environmental policy of the Agency and the U.S. Government overall.

To further these objectives, NRIC assists the NRM Office in five areas:

- 1) Research, writing and publishing reports;
- 2) Collecting and organizing information about USAID natural resources management activities and expenditures Agency-wide;
- 3) Providing improved access to these information resources – primarily through the design and production of internal and external Web pages – and assisting Agency staff to use the information;
- 4) Strategic planning support; and
- 5) Conference and meeting support.

The Office of Natural Resources Management is comprised of four teams: Biodiversity, Forestry, Land, and Water (Figure 1).

The primary point of contact between the NRM Office and NRIC are two technical specialists each assigned to support two teams (Figure 2).

The NRIC Land and Water Specialist and the Biodiversity and Forestry Specialist interact daily with their respective teams. In addition, NRIC provides staff expertise in the areas of communications products, Web production, and information management. The NRIC Director and the CTO communicate regularly to determine how the NRIC core team can better serve the NRM Office and missions. Furthermore, the NRIC Director provides substantial direct support to the Land Team, periodically attends meetings of other

Figure 1. NRM Office Structure

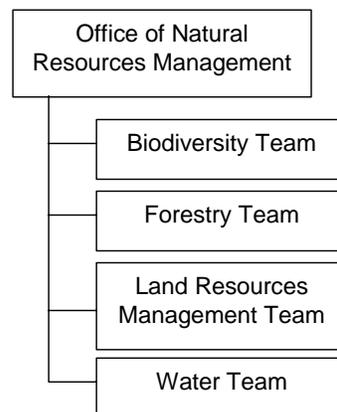
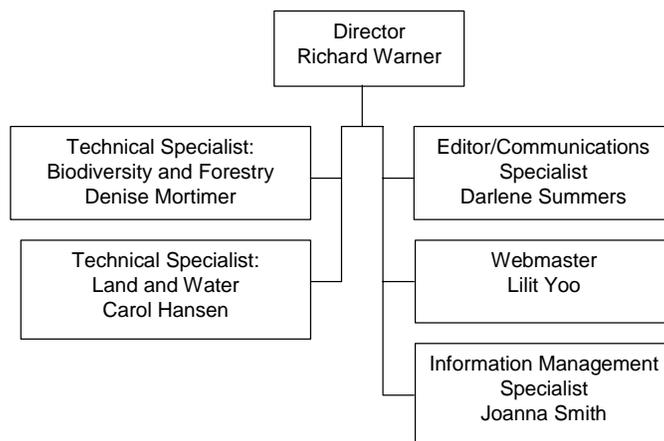


Figure 2. NRIC Project Structure



NRM teams, and contributes to activities elsewhere in the Bureau of Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT).

NRIC employed short-term technical assistance (STTA) during FY 2003 to complement NRIC expertise and to meet product and scheduling objectives. STTA totaling 95 person days was used for design and production of Web pages, design and development of online databases, acquisition and accession of information on NRM activities, and preparation of an initial draft of a white paper addressing USAID's work in combating illegal logging in protected areas.

Highlights of NRIC contributions to the NRM Office and Teams include:

- Assisted with researching and submission of the NRM component of the USAID Annual Report and the Performance and Accountability Report (PAR).
- Helped research, write, and produce four major thematic reports, two on water and one each on the biodiversity and forestry portfolios in USAID.
- Provided extensive and diverse assistance with other research, reports, and outreach.
- Helped write content and designed and produced 67 separate Web pages plus 25 navigation modules for three Web sites, each with different technical requirements.
- Designed and produced a Web-based system for the NRM Office to provide the Agency with access to key information about USAID natural resource projects; the system includes online data entry and an operations manual detailing the data protocols.
- Built the NRM online library to 794 documents and 282 images.
- Prepared a staff directory and skills matrix for the NRM Office.
- Assisted the the Office with planning communications and Web development and assisted the Land and Forestry Teams with strategic planning activities.
- Supported presentation of the Biodiversity display and the World Parks Congress, organization of a workshop on Indegenous peoples, and meetings of the Global Conservation Program.

Throughout the year, NRIC has reacted to many tasks that were not anticipated in the original work plan. These unanticipated activities accounted for perhaps 30 percent of NRIC's work in FY 2003. Three activities in particular supplemented – and in some cases pre-empted – activities scheduled in the NRIC workplan; these were 1) the production of NRM pages for the USAID public Internet site, 2) the Section 119 Biodiversity report, and 3) the Performance and Accountability Report (PAR). Two conferences (Indigenous Peoples and the World Parks Congress) and many smaller tasks were also not specifically scheduled.

While these tasks were not anticipated, it is the nature of the NRIC's work to respond on short notice to tasks within the broad scope of work. To accommodate the added tasks, USAID and NRIC agreed to postpone planned activities. Postponed activities included production of the internal Web pages, production of the online data management and reporting system, and an Office-wide communications package. These activities were subsequently revived and are on track for completion in FY 2004. By taking on the urgent new tasks, NRIC frees the professional staff in USAID to remain focused and responsive to continuing demands from the field.

TASK 1. REPORTS, BROCHURES, OTHER PUBLICATIONS

The fiscal year 2003 NRIC Work Plan identified a number of NRM Office reporting requirements for which NRIC provided support. These reports are described below. A number of additional reports were not identified in the initial work plan and represent changes to NRIC's Annual Work Plan for FY 2003. These include two Water Team reports to Congress, the Section 119 Biodiversity Report, and the NRM Office's contributions to the Agency Performance and Accountability Report.

NRM Annual Report

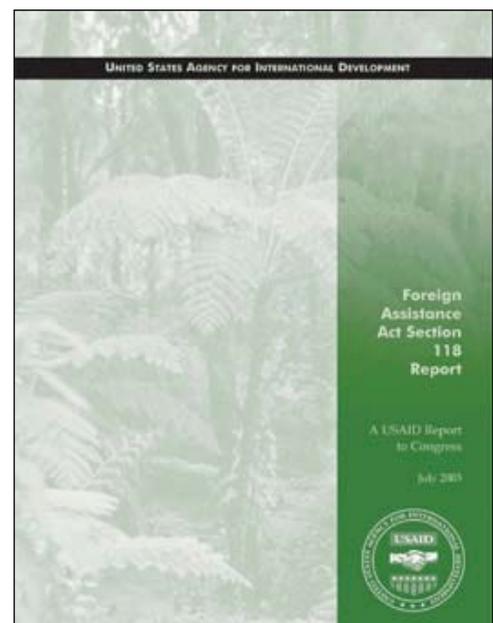
Immediately upon establishment of the NRIC Office, staff began necessary research and analysis to support preparation of the FY 2002 Annual Report for the NRM Office. While in past years, many months of preparation led to production of a final report, the timeline for FY 2002 report production was severely curtailed. The reporting format was altered considerably from previous years, and the reporting process was modified to a system requiring data entry into an online application.

The NRIC CTO, NRIC's Water Specialist, and a key staff of the NRM office provided leadership in preparing the report. NRIC sector specialists collected information and wrote substantial sections of the report in collaboration with the NRM Teams. The Water Specialist worked on the components from the Water Team and compiled the overall NRM Office report. NRIC's Forestry Specialist helped compile components for the Forestry Team. NRIC's Biodiversity Specialist (a position later merged with the Forestry Specialist position) helped compile and organize components for the Biodiversity Team, in addition to gathering and analyzing annual reports from previous years and using this experience to help familiarize the new NRIC team with the annual reporting process. The Biodiversity, Forestry, and Water Resources Specialists collected, processed, and analyzed value-added and performance data. With substantial collaboration between NRM and NRIC, the report was completed on schedule.

Section 118 Forestry Report

The Foreign Assistance Act recognizes the importance of forests, and tropical forests in particular. It states that "in providing assistance to developing countries, the President shall ... place a high priority on conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests." Through Section 118 of the Act, Congress mandates that USAID must produce an annual report on its activities and expenditures in tropical forests. The report covers FY 2002 USAID forestry activities, current priority themes in forestry, funding levels for USAID forestry activities, and an analysis of USAID funding trends in tropical forestry during the past 16 years.

NRIC worked closely with the Forestry Team to write and produce this report. NRIC's Biodiversity and Forestry



Specialist spearheaded the coordination and writing of the report. Forestry Team staff provided information about funding levels and conducted the analysis of funding trends. Several drafts of the report were prepared by NRIC and reviewed by the Forestry Team as well as by NRM Office and EGAT management.

One thousand copies of the report were printed in July. The report was posted on www.usaid.gov, copies were sent to USAID Missions with environmental activities and to key members of Congress, and it was distributed at the World Forestry Congress in September.

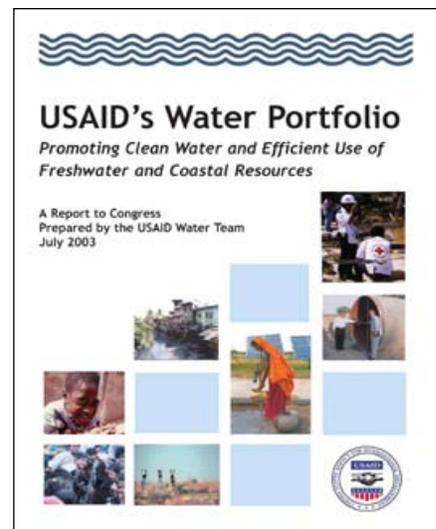
Integrated Water Resources Management Reporting

At the request of Congress, the NRM Office’s Water Team produced two reports on the status of USAID water activities around the world in FY 2003.

The first report, drafted by NRIC’s Land and Water Specialist in collaboration with the Water Team, details how USAID has invested \$100 million earmarked by Congress in FY 2003 for drinking water supply and sanitation-related activities directed toward improving human health across the globe. The report highlights West Africa Water Initiative projects, water supply and distribution projects in Jordan and the Central Asia Republics, a public-private sector urban water management alliance in the Philippines, and an innovative financing program for drinking water in India, among other projects.

A larger report, *USAID’s Water Portfolio: Promoting Clean Water and Efficient Use of Freshwater and Coastal Resources*, highlights all USAID activities in the water sector for FY 2003, including Mission, Regional, and Pillar Bureau projects and programs in water supply, sanitation, and wastewater management; natural resources management; economic growth and food security; and disaster preparedness.

NRIC oversaw formatting and production of both of the water reports. One thousand copies of each report were reproduced, and PDFs were posted on USAID’s public Web site in September 2003.



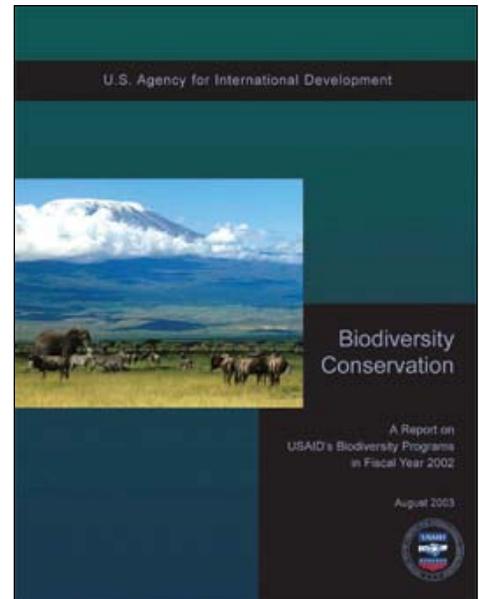
Re-issuing of Report and CD-ROM on Implications for Coral Reef Management and Policy

This report was a reprinting of the proceedings from the 9th International Coral Reef Symposium held in Bali, Indonesia in October 2000. NRIC reprinted 500 copies of the report and produced 1,000 copies of the accompanying CD-ROM for the Water Team. Modifications to the CD-ROM, including the addition of Navigation and Web Links pages, resulted in a more user-friendly product that has been distributed widely since reproduction and is posted on USAID’s public Web site.

Section 119 Biodiversity Report

This report was a new product added to NRIC's work plan in January 2003. The Biodiversity Team's AAAS Fellow and NRIC's Biodiversity Specialist gathered information, wrote descriptions of USAID biodiversity programs, and edited preliminary drafts of the report. NRIC's editor designed the layout. The 65-page report includes program highlights of current biodiversity activities, a funding overview, and annexes.

The report was published in August and posted on USAID's public Web site. It was disseminated at the World Parks Congress in South Africa in September 2003, and copies were sent to USAID missions with environment activities and to key members of Congress.



USAID/EGAT Performance and Accountability Report

In August, NRIC helped coordinate and write the natural resources and other environmental sections of the Performance and Accountability Report. This unscheduled task demanded nearly full-time attention from two NRIC senior staff members for nearly three weeks.

In collaboration with the NRIC CTO, NRIC researched and wrote accounts for the natural resources sectors (water, land, forestry, and biodiversity) and documented natural resources performance indicators. NRIC staff also drafted sections on climate change, Tropical Forest Conservation Act, biosafety, invasive species, and international research supported by USAID.

Under very tight deadlines, NRIC and perhaps a dozen USAID staff members collaborated in review and revision of the draft documents. The multiple parts were integrated into a single submission, and the NRM Office submitted the piece to LPA.

Other Communications / Outreach Products and Activities

NRIC helped produce two NRM planning tools in FY 2003: a communications strategy for the NRM Office and a Web strategy, both prepared with input from representatives of the NRM teams. Both strategies continue to evolve and will be significantly updated in FY 2004.

In November 2002, NRIC's Biodiversity Specialist updated and published two brochures for the Biodiversity Team. These brochures were reprinted in March 2003.

At the request of the NRM Office, the NRIC Director has participated on the EGAT-wide Knowledge Management and Communications Team where communication planning and Web development are discussed and the exchange of information contributes to the integration of NRM initiatives with those of the Bureau.

Throughout the year, NRIC's technical specialists produced several unscheduled quick-response products for the NRM Office and Teams, including the following:

Administration

- Table describing contract mechanisms and related projects of the LRM Team;
- List of working groups and Communities of Practice supported by NRM Office or in which NRM staff members participate;
- Spreadsheet describing contact information, education, technical expertise, and field experience of the NRM staff members;
- Systematic outreach to expand Extended Water Team membership and document information about new members;
- An assessment of the work needed to update and produce new Web pages for the Tropical Forest Conservation Act on USAID's Internet site;
- A concept paper for potential activities using geo-referenced data for the LRM team; and
- Draft budget justification memo for the Biodiversity and Forestry Teams that included a description of activities in Bolivia, Indonesia, Madagascar, and Peru.

Outreach

- Design and printing of poster series for USAID's participation in the World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa;
- Two-page descriptions of the NRM Office and LRM team, included in an Office-wide communications package for USAID Mission Director's meeting; and
- Short news articles for EGAT's Intranet home page; the first article posted described USAID's participation at the World Parks Congress in September.

Technical Reporting

- Forestry Team submission to the Global Climate Change Annual Report;
- Report to Congress summarizing USAID investments in drinking water supply and related activities under a \$100 million earmark within the FY2003 Appropriations Act;
- Summary table of GCP I funding; and
- Summaries of tropical forestry activities in Guinea, Nepal, Paraguay, and Uganda.

The following reports identified in NRIC's initial work plan were not undertaken in FY 2003:

Ocean and Coastal Activities Report

The biennial report to Congress is produced by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. USAID's contribution, a summary table/text on current and projected expenditures for FY 2003, was submitted by the Water Team's Coastal Resource and Policy Advisor.

Annual Report of the US Coral Reef Task Force

This report is produced by the multi-agency U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, chaired by NOAA and the Department of the Interior. USAID reporting on related activities was completed for FY 2002 by the Water Team's Coastal Resource and Policy Advisor before the NRIC office was established in October 2002.

Report on International Trade in Coral Reef Species

This previously-produced report was identified by the Water Team as one that might be updated and reproduced by NRIC in FY 2003; this has not been a priority for the team, and action has been deferred.

TASK 2. COLLECT AND MANAGE INFORMATION FOR THE NRM OFFICE AND COMPONENT TEAMS

To assist the NRM Office and teams with strategic planning and with reporting requirements, NRIC collects and organizes information about natural resources activities and expenditures Agency-wide, and about NRM staff activities in support of these activities. Research by NRIC provides the Teams with information needed for specific applications.

Tracking Activities and Expenditures

A principal service that NRIC provides to the NRM Office and the four teams is the collection and management of information on natural resources activities and expenditures across the Agency. To facilitate reporting to Congress on USAID's NRM-sector activities, compile the NRM Office's input to USAID's Annual Report, and meet various other reporting and documentation needs, NRIC helped design and test procedures for tracking of NRM expenditures across the Agency.

NRIC staff specialists worked with a member of the Water Team, who has been tracking this sort of information for four years, to review procedures for tracking water-related expenditures and activities. Based on that collaboration, NRIC prepared a strategy for systematically collecting information on USAID activities and expenditures in all NRM sectors.

Subsequent evaluation of sample data sets collected for all NRM sectors for three countries showed a need to revise the data management system. That work will carry into the next year.

NRM Staff Activity Logs

In the second quarter, NRIC's Biodiversity and Forestry Specialist began tracking Forestry Team member activities. The activity log tracks conferences attended, services provided to Missions and/or other Bureaus within USAID, and other important accomplishments.

Research Reports

NRIC prepared two research reports on specific topics of interest to the NRM Office and Teams.

NRIC's Land and Water Specialist researched and documented opportunities and mechanisms to access volunteer support for field-based Water activities through NGO and other-agency programs. This was done in response to the expressed objectives of the Presidential Volunteers for Prosperity initiative regarding increased use of volunteer labor to support government-funded activities.

At the request of the Forestry Team, NRIC contracted a senior NRM specialist to conduct research on USAID's activities in protected areas as they relate to issues associated with the problems of illegal logging. Research on this topic was largely completed and the report drafted in September. The report will be reviewed and completed in FY 2004.

TASK 3. DESIGN, PRODUCE, AND MAINTAIN WEB SITES

Access to natural resources information via internal and public Web pages is a critical component of effective NRM operations across the Agency, and a key element of the services NRIC provides to the NRM Office and the four teams.

Web Strategy

In early 2003, NRIC gathered information about NRM Office needs for Web-based services, including knowledge management and communications requirements. In consultation with the NRM Office, NRIC prepared a plan recognizing three Web components:

- 1) Internet pages for the NRM Office and each Team (public sites accessible to partners, but not publicized),
- 2) Intranet pages (USAID staff access only) for the NRM Office and each Team, and
- 3) Public (www.usaid.gov) pages describing USAID programs in NRM sectors.

The work of NRIC was to focus on the first two components.

Internet Sites (quasi-public) for the NRM Office and Four Teams

NRIC's Webmaster designed and produced NRM's initial non-publicized Internet Web site for the Water Team (www.usaidwater.org), with NRIC's Water Specialist writing content in collaboration with the Water Team, and consulting with USAID's IT Department and LPA members throughout the process. The Water site, with 20 separate pages, went live on March 15, 2003 so that it could be accessed by participants at the World Water Forum in Kyoto. NRIC then began collecting content for Web pages of the Forestry, Biodiversity, and LRM Teams.

However, further work on producing independent Internet pages for the NRM Teams was placed on hold when NRIC was given responsibility for producing and maintaining NRM sector pages on the Agency's new public Internet site (see below).

Public Internet pages (www.usaid.gov) for USAID's NRM Sector

In May 2003, LPA announced that www.usaid.gov would be revamped using a new template and requiring that new content be developed. Work was to be completed by June 13.

NRIC worked with the NRM Office and Teams to meet this deadline in less than one month. Activities included: writing content, obtaining photographs, designing pages while working through multiple versions of the template as LPA released new updates, and producing the final product. USAID's new Web pages are centered on themes or sectors, rather than teams; with NRIC's support, the Teams developed new text for Biodiversity, Forestry, Land Management, and Water.

In addition, NRIC helped provide content for various partnerships and initiatives that USAID wanted to highlight, including Forestry Partnerships, Water Partnerships, and Potable Water

Activities. For each sector, NRIC produced a “lobby” page as an introduction to the theme and inserted photographs to add visual interest. NRIC worked with the Water Team to provide robust additional content for the water sector. The NRM Office successfully met the LPA’s deadline, and NRIC has received considerable positive feedback for assisting with the NRM sector contributions to the new Web site. By year’s end, the site included one biodiversity page, four forestry pages (and five navigation modules), one land page (and three navigation modules), and 12 water pages (with three navigation modules).

This intensive, quick-turnaround effort resulted in deferral of several other scheduled tasks. The most significant were delays in production of internal Web pages and the system to track and report on Agency natural resource activities and expenses.

Converting Other Existing Web Pages

At EGAT’s request, NRIC wrote an analysis of the work required to convert existing Web pages for the Tropical Forest Conservation Act to the new design of www.usaid.gov.

Making 508-Compliant Documents

In August 2003, USAID’s LPA Review Board notified NRIC that the NRM Office’s documents posted on USAID’s Internet site in PDF format must be compliant with Section 508 requirements to make the site Web-accessible for visually-impaired users and others with disabilities.

NRIC researched the issues involved with making the NRM Office’s PDFs accessible, meeting with a staff member at the National Federation of the Blind to better understand the process and technology involved with bringing documents and Web sites into compliance.

Using Adobe Acrobat 6.0, several documents have been made fully Web-accessible, including the Section 118 Forestry Report, the Section 119 Biodiversity Report, the Biodiversity Primer, the 2003 Congressional Report on USAID’s Water Portfolio, and the report to Congress on the FY 2003 Drinking Water Earmark. NRIC’s Webmaster is currently coordinating work to make other NRM Office PDF documents, which are posted on the Internet, Section 508-compliant as well.

Intranet Sites (Internal) for the NRM Office and Four Teams

Work on the internal Web site began in April, but was temporarily halted in May by the unanticipated need to shift the focus of the NRM Office’s web development activities, and NRIC’s support to these activities, toward developing content for USAID’s public Web site. Work on Intranet site development resumed late in the third quarter.

NRIC’s technical specialists, with the Land and Water Specialist taking the lead, acquired and wrote content for the internal Web sites for the NRM Office and four teams.

With a primary objective of supporting field operations, the pages describe the technical expertise accessible from the NRM staff and contract mechanisms and other agreements available to support delivery of services to the field. The pages provide essential information

about USAID natural resources programs and policy, often supported by links to other Web pages and online documents. Links are also provided to contractors and partners collaborating with the Agency to implement natural resources programs. Online databases will provide access to a growing body of information on the Agency's natural resources projects (described below).

The NRIC Webmaster designed and produced for the NRM Office 29 distinct Web pages plus 14 navigation modules that display in combination with these pages based on templates used by the EGAT Bureau. The pages will be reviewed by the NRM staff early in the next quarter, revised and (with the exception of the databases) should be online in December.

Simultaneously, NRIC provided new and expanded content on contracts and other service delivery mechanisms for the EGAT Users' Guide. NRIC's Webmaster assisted the EGAT Webmaster with production of these Web pages.

TASK 4. ACQUIRE, ORGANIZE, AND ARCHIVE INFORMATION RESOURCES

Acquiring and managing NRM information, and providing easy access to it by USAID staff working in the NRM sector, is the fundamental charge of the Information Clearinghouse.

Extensive efforts have been made over this first year of operation to gather and make accessible information on USAID NRM projects and reports generated by USAID and its partners and cooperators, and to develop photo archives. Most significantly, NRIC has assisted the NRM Office with creating a permanent and evolving program that will keep the NRM Office's information up-to-date and accessible to the widest possible audience.

Three key components combine to build the foundation of the Information Clearinghouse:

- 1) Documented procedures for data management,
- 2) An information acquisition strategy, and
- 3) Web-based tools for delivery of the information to stakeholders.

Each of these components will evolve as the NRM Office and NRIC identify additional informational needs.

Manual for Data Management

To help the NRM Office preserve data on USAID's NRM projects for the long term, NRIC drafted a manual describing the Clearinghouse's growing information base of digital files and library, including how the NRM library is managed and how the accessions are documented. The manual has changed substantially over the year, with frequent updates and the inclusion of several important new sections. New sections were added, describing how photos are to be scanned and archived and how projects are defined. The information acquisition strategy (described below) provided new content for the manual as well. Most importantly, major sections were added describing how each of the database fields are to be completed. Finally, the most recent section of the manual describes the process for quality control of the database contents.

Information Acquisition Strategy

In the third quarter, to guide development of the library, image collection, and their management, NRIC's Director and technical staff prepared an Information Acquisition Strategy. This Strategy focused on acquisition of information on USAID natural resources projects over the past three years and on selected themes of special interest to the NRM Office and teams (e.g., sustainable tourism).

The Strategy was implemented in the third and fourth quarters, with baseline information systematically collected region by region, country by country, and project by project. NRIC focused first on collecting information from three countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to evaluate the information acquisition process, refine the database structures, and test the online application and report formats. NRIC expanded data collection to the rest of Latin

America, and late in fourth quarter began gathering information about USAID's natural resources work in Africa.

The information acquisition strategy will evolve as the project acquires the easy-to-find information and looks toward acquiring more elusive documents and more detailed information about lessons learned from USAID natural resources projects.

Web-based Tools

Providing essential stakeholders with tools for accessing, searching, and reporting from the NRIC archives is critical to the success of the Information Clearinghouse.

In the fourth quarter, NRIC's Information Management Specialist used ColdFusion software to develop Web pages so NRM Teams and USAID missions can search and report from the online databases: projects, documents, images, and a staff directory and skills matrix. Information in the databases will be available online for USAID staff members who wish to obtain project information summarized by topics or geography, and to make links to the associated reports and images, or to locate staff with specific background and experience. These tools are currently operational on the development version of the Internal Web site for the NRM Office.

A separate set of Web pages was produced for data entry. All new information and edits to existing records in the NRM archives are now handled over the Internet. To facilitate this process, the appropriate sections of the operations manual are available online for consultation as technicians are creating or editing the databases.

The Projects Catalogue

The central component of the NRM information resources is the catalogue of USAID natural resources projects. This online database contains information about USAID projects related to natural resources, including project name, region and country, strategic objective, costs, duration, contacts in USAID and contractors, a description of the project, outcomes, and lessons learned. The project record also provides links to project documents and images.

As noted above, initial work has focused on creating project records (and acquiring related documents and images) for countries in Latin America; late in the last quarter, this work expanded to Africa.

Digital and Manual Library

Over the course of the year, 794 documents and digital files have been incorporated into the library. As the year progressed, additions to the library became more focused on specific USAID natural resources projects and associated activities. Also, since the databases were made accessible over the Internet, the vast majority of the documents added to the system are in CDIE (specifically in the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC)); rather than duplicate these reports, the NRM database points to the document where it is maintained by CDIE.

In the transition from the previous contractor, NRIC received two CDs of information, including 16 documents related to case studies and/or lessons learned, brochures for the Forestry and Biodiversity Teams, Forest Service Partnership documents, and nearly 100 images. NRIC also received digital and printed documents of Water Team newsletters, brochures, reports, graphics, photographs, and PowerPoint presentations. This information has been catalogued and merged into the NRM information base.

Case Studies

To help build up the library, NRIC's technical specialists acquired and accessioned previously compiled case studies of USAID NRM activities.

The Biodiversity and Forestry Specialist acquired four forestry case studies describing activities in Albania, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Indonesia.

The Land and Water Specialist acquired eight case studies/fact sheets developed for the World Water Forum in Kyoto to highlight USAID's participation in various global water initiatives, including Clean Water for People, Water for the Poor, and Transboundary Water Issues. In addition, the Land and Water Specialist acquired 11 case studies developed for the World Summit for Sustainable Development describing USAID successes in sustainable water use and development, and a compilation of 25 case studies on Marine and Coastal Protected Area management.

Production of case studies by NRIC did not emerge as a priority for the NRM Office in the past year. In the first half of the year, NRIC compared procedures for preparing case studies across teams to identify common components that could be used in the library database to facilitate sorting and accessing case studies and lessons learned. The experience gained through this analysis is being applied toward the design of the overall information management system.

Preserving NRM Resources in the Bureaus

A number of Regional Bureaus have collected materials on natural resources management over the years. To help ensure that these resources are not lost because of personnel shifts following USAID's reorganization, NRIC's Director and Technical Specialists contacted staff in three of the Regional Bureaus (Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Near East, and Africa) to determine whether the Bureaus will maintain their NRM library holdings or whether NRIC should collect or catalogue this information.

Preliminary indications are that the Africa Bureau will continue to manage its substantial library housed at USAID's G Street Offices for the foreseeable future. Asia and the Near East and Latin America and the Caribbean Bureaus expect no change in their much smaller centralized library holdings. NRIC continues to pursue information about the status of Europe and Eurasia library holdings.

Substantial materials in all regions are scattered among files and bookshelves in individual offices; the fate of these documents is constantly at risk of being lost. In the coming year, NRIC

will work with the NRM Office and Regional Bureaus to preserve the most important natural resources documents from these many libraries.

Image, Video, and Audio Archives

NRIC is actively helping the NRM Office build an images library as a resource for publications, presentations, and Web site development. To date, the project has acquired 282 images. However, many of the images acquired thus far lack critical documentation. Additional research will be needed to ensure proper labeling and crediting when adding images in the future. To expand the collection, NRIC is working with NRM Team members and USAID projects to acquire additional photos.

Archive of Maps and Geo-information Capacity

Geospatial information is an essential component of the information needed by natural resources practitioners and program managers in USAID. Hence, NRIC is helping to develop the capacity of the NRM Office to support the geospatial information needs in the Agency. In the fourth quarter, NRIC drafted a paper identifying options for the LRM team to support the use of GIS technology and geo-referenced data for natural resources applications within the Agency.

NRM Staff Directory and Skills Matrix

In addition to the above information resources, early in the year NRIC helped prepare a directory of NRM staff, including data on contact information, areas of geographic and technical expertise, educational background, and language skills. This spreadsheet-based directory was updated during the ensuing months, and was shared with EGAT as it began a similar Bureau-wide effort. The directory provided the foundation for a Web-based staff directory and skills matrix that is accessible in the draft version of the NRM internal Web pages. NRIC is exploring with EGAT the possible integration of this skills matrix and directory with the EGAT-wide staff directory.

TASK 5. PLANNING

NRIC has participated in a number of planning activities to help the NRM Office adjust to the Agency reorganization and map out future activities that promote the Agency's use of the expertise contained within the NRM Office.

Strategic Planning for the LRM Team

To help the LRM Team with an evaluation of its role and function and support to the field, NRIC compiled a matrix of LRM contract mechanisms and programs containing information management and communications components in the first quarter. In the third quarter, NRIC's Director and the Land and Water Specialist participated in a strategic planning retreat to help the LRM Team develop an operational framework, as well as a strategy for implementing that framework.

Communications Strategy

At the December 2002 NRM Office retreat, the topic of effectively engaging constituents and customers was discussed. Recommendations from the retreat included developing a NRM Office-wide strategy for improving communications with the Missions and other constituents, marketing the entire NRM Office, and strengthening the Offices' Web presence. In the second quarter, NRIC worked with members of the NRM Office to draft the initial Communications Strategy.

In the fourth quarter, the NRM Office requested that NRIC develop an "Ambassador Package" of material describing the NRM Office and four teams, their technical expertise, contracts, and other mechanisms available to support field operations. NRIC has drafted two-page descriptions of the NRM Office and each of the four teams as part of this office-wide communications package for USAID Missions; two of these were completed late in the year and distributed at the Mission Director's meeting.

NRIC assisted the NRM Office in the development of its Web presence on the public Internet and the USAID Intranet, two critical components of the Office's communication program.

Strategic Planning for Forestry Team

NRIC's Biodiversity and Forestry Specialist participated in a working group focused on developing new Intermediate Results and indicators for the Forestry Team.

TASK 6. ASSISTING WITH CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND MEETINGS

Conferences and workshops are an important mechanism for information exchange and enhanced communication among NRM practitioners within the Agency and among USAID's partners and cooperators. Over the course of the year, NRIC helped NRM Teams organize and facilitate workshops, and supported Team member participation in conferences.

Global Conservation Program Meetings

NRIC's sector specialists supported meetings of the Global Conservation Program. The specialists assisted the Biodiversity Team with planning and coordinating the Global Conservation Program Annual Meeting, held in February 2003. NRIC's Biodiversity and Forestry Specialist wrote up meeting results. In the third quarter, NRIC's Biodiversity and Forestry Specialist attended the Global Conservation Program Quarterly Meeting and prepared the meeting notes.

Conference on Indigenous Peoples

NRIC's Land and Water Specialist provided organizational support to a conference on Indigenous Peoples, Conservation, and Development that was held in Washington in May 2003.

World Parks Congress

The Biodiversity and Forestry Specialist attended the World Parks Congress in South Africa in September 2003 to staff a Biodiversity Team booth for the 10-day event. In preparation for the meeting, the Biodiversity and Forestry Specialist worked with USAID's AAAS Fellow and NRIC's Editor to design and produce a ten-poster series to display at the booth. The Biodiversity and Forestry Specialist coordinated delivery of all information, booklets, reports, and CD-ROMs to Durban for the Biodiversity Team. Interest in the booth was high, and all materials taken to the conference were distributed at the event.

TASK 7. NRIC PROJECT PLANNING, MONITORING, AND REPORTING

Planning, monitoring, and reporting on NRIC operations is a continuous process, with each phase of evaluation leading to improvements in the levels of assistance provided to the NRM Office and its four teams.

NRIC submitted its first Annual Work Plan to USAID in November 2002. The plan detailed, to the extent known, NRIC's anticipated schedule of products and activities on behalf of the NRM Office. The Annual Work Plan provided the basis for quarterly reports describing activities and work performed by NRIC. Quarterly reports were submitted to USAID at the end of each quarter.

Several meetings were held between Chemonics staff and USAID staff to discuss contract issues. Per contract requirements, NRIC's Director wrote and sent a letter outlining potential conflict-of-interest issues to the project's Contracting Officer, with a copy sent to the project's Cognizant Technical Officer. The letter identified possible conflicts and identified specific actions that NRIC and Chemonics are taking to prevent such conflicts of interest.

By the end of the first quarter, NRIC's Director and sector specialists were regular participants in the routinely scheduled meetings of the NRM Office and Teams. In addition, NRIC participated at the NRM planning retreat in December 2002, and has participated in numerous *ad hoc* meetings regarding the Annual Report and production of Web sites.

NRIC staff attended NRM Team retreats throughout the year, including a two-day retreat with the Water Team, a one-day retreat with the LRM Team, a one-day retreat with the Biodiversity Team, and a half-day retreat with the Forestry Team. In addition, NRIC participated in EGAT Communications Task Force meetings.

Fiscal Year 2004 Work Plan

In Year Two (FY 2004), the Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse (NRIC) will support the NRM Office in making significant advances in knowledge management and communications regarding natural resources management in USAID. NRIC will help the NRM Office and Teams with the following:

1. Collect information and draft sections for the USAID Annual Report and the Performance and Accountability Report.
2. Publish reports on USAID Biodiversity, Forestry and Water portfolios, possibly a Forest Guide, and other reports to be identified.
3. Produce an NRM Ambassador's Package in print and CD.
4. Produce Web-accessible (Intranet) information on USAID natural resources projects worldwide, including documents related to these projects.
5. Maintain NRM content on www.usaid.gov.
6. Produce internal Web pages providing NRM information and services to USAID field operations.
7. Track NRM activities and expenditures Agency-wide and report these by themes relevant to each team.
8. Track NRM staff contributions to field operations and global activities.
9. Support planning by the NRM Office and teams and contribute to EGAT-wide planning related to knowledge management and communications, including Web production; update the Communications Strategy and the Web Strategy for the NRM Office.
10. Support two or more GCP meetings and other conferences and meetings to be identified.

NRIC will complete scores of smaller tasks as well. The more prominent of these are discussed below. However, we anticipate that NRIC will work with the NRM Office and Teams on many tasks during the coming year that have yet to be identified. Additional publications will be written and produced, conferences will undoubtedly be added to the work plan, and the USAID extranet may emerge as an important component of the Office's Web presence. The flexibility to integrate these changes is a key feature of NRIC's services to the NRM Office and Teams.

A technical specialist dedicated to the water sector and the Water Team will be hired late in the first quarter, bringing the NRIC core staff to seven. Additionally, 320 days of short-term technical assistance are budgeted for use throughout the year to support ongoing collection of baseline data, Internet production and maintenance, and new activities that may be requested by the NRM Office.

A summary of the anticipated work in NRIC for fiscal year 2004 is presented below and the projected scheduling of major activities is displayed in Figure 3 below.

Other Major Thematic Reports

Several other major reports will be prepared by the NRM Office with support from NRIC this year. A "Forest Guide," perhaps including a CD-ROM, has been identified as a potential report. Reports on other topics of interest to the NRM Office will likely be requested during the year. Possible topics include reports on USAID programs related to sustainable tourism, indigenous peoples, and applications of geo-spatial data and GIS systems to support natural resources programs. With all of the reports, NRIC will likely assist with information gathering and analysis, writing, and report production.

NRM Communications Package

In the first quarter, NRIC will complete the first edition of the NRM Ambassador's package, including communications pieces describing the NRM Office and four teams and the services they can provide in support of field operations. The material will mostly be printed in-house by NRIC, including a CD-ROM version that will include key reports from the NRM Office and sample presentations that can be adapted for use in the field. Because the material will be produced in-house on an as-needed basis, it can easily be kept current and occasionally modified to meet special needs.

Brochures, PowerPoint and other Presentations, News Flashes

On an as-needed basis, NRIC will assist the NRM Office and Teams with research, writing, and producing a variety of communications pieces, including printed products, PowerPoint presentations, drafting of speeches, and presentation-related handouts. NRIC will also continue to prepare and submit new flashes for inclusion on USAID Web sites.

TASK 2. ACQUIRE, ORGANIZE, AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO INFORMATION RESOURCES

Expand content of online information systems to all regions

By June 2004, NRIC anticipates having compiled baseline information for all USAID natural resource projects active from 2000 through 2002 and making this resource accessible throughout the Agency over the Intranet. An ongoing process will be instituted to consult with the NRM Office staff, environment staff in the Regional Bureaus, and Missions on review and quality control of the data. During the year, the data collection process will merge with various NRM activities to systematically capture more recent information. This year, in at least the Latin America & the Caribbean and Africa regions, the information base will be sufficiently robust to help direct inquiries related to the forestry and biodiversity reports and information acquired for those reports will be incorporated into the system. By the end of FY 2004, the system should include some results from the current year to support the PAR and other reports.

Improve programming for information searches and reporting

The NRIC Director, Technical Specialists, and the Information Management Specialist will participate in outreach to USAID natural resources staff across the Agency to learn what other

information should be added to the information systems and what additional search and reporting functions are wanted. Based on what is learned and in consultation with the NRM Office, NRIC will revise the data acquisition strategy and the NRIC Information Management Specialist will refine the online tools for searching and reporting from the databases. As a part of the outreach effort, training will be provided to USAID staff on how to use the information resources.

Collaborate with CDIE to increase NRM holdings in DEC

NRIC will continue exploring ways to increase the percentage of USAID natural resources project reports in the Development Experience Clearinghouse. (Current estimate by CDIE is that 30 percent of all documents are submitted to DEC.)

TASK 3. DESIGN, PRODUCE, AND MAINTAIN WEB PAGES

Update and maintain NRM content on www.usaid.gov

NRIC will collaborate with the NRM Office to produce additional content and periodically update the natural resource pages on USAID's public Internet site.

Produce and maintain NRM content on USAID internal Web pages

Producing the Intranet pages needed to support field operations is among the highest priorities activities for NRIC this year. The initial set of pages will be produced and posted to the live site in the first quarter, with priority given to pages describing the NRM Office and four teams, their staff expertise, and the available contract mechanisms and other services supporting natural resources field operations. Completing production of the staff skills matrix and details about contract mechanisms will require integration of these tools with similar EGAT-wide initiatives. Anticipated redesign of the EGAT Intranet pages will likely produce other hurdles to be addressed as well as new opportunities to pursue.

Produce and maintain NRM content on USAID extranet

Although few details are known about the USAID extranet, NRIC anticipates investing time late in the year to assess the opportunities for developing extranet pages and tools that can be accessed by key partners of the NRM Office and four teams.

TASK 4. COLLECT AND MANAGE INFORMATION FOR THE NRM OFFICE

Activities and expense information acquisition, analysis, and reporting

In the second quarter, NRIC will begin assisting the Water Team to maintain their information base on USAID projects in the water sector. Late last year in consultation with the Water Team, a process was designed to expand data collection and reporting on similar information for the biodiversity, forest and land sectors. In the second quarter, the requirements for this system will

be evaluated with the participation of the NRM Teams. Refining the design and testing will extend through the third quarter even as initial data sets are collected for all sectors.

Tracking and reporting on NRM staff support to field operations

NRIC proposes to expand to all four teams the process of collecting and managing information on NRM Office services provided to the field and other Agency initiatives. This system should be operational in the second quarter with information updated at least quarterly for all NRM Office staff.

TASK 5. SUPPORT PLANNING IN THE NRM OFFICE

In the first and second quarters, NRIC will collaborate with NRM staff to update the NRM Communications Strategy to reflect current activities and provide a fresh analysis of the audiences, messages and possible tools for communicating the messages. Likewise, over the same period, the Web Strategy will be updated to reflect current activities and new opportunities.

The NRIC Land and Water Specialist and the Director will continue to assist LRM with strategic planning. Planning support will be provided to other NRM teams as needed throughout the year.

NRIC will continue to contribute expertise and help to integrate NRM components with the EGAT-wide planning efforts related to knowledge management and communications and, in particular to the evolution of the EGAT Web design.

TASK 6. ASSIST WITH CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND MEETINGS

NRIC anticipates supporting two or more meetings of the Global Conservation Program and two or more conferences or workshops that are not yet identified.

TASK 7. NRIC PROJECT PLANNING, MONITORING, AND REPORTING

NRIC will submit quarterly reports on our progress and updates to this NRIC workplan. The NRIC Technical Specialists will attend the regularly meetings of the NRM Office and teams where ongoing work of NRIC can be discussed and possible new tasks identified. The NRIC Director and CTO will meet approximately weekly to monitor progress and assess emerging opportunities for NRIC to further assist the NRM Office and teams. Periodic meetings with the NRM Office leadership and NRIC Director will serve to provide NRIC with additional feedback and to discuss changes to the workplan in the course of the year.