

Education and Research in Agriculture (ERA)

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Progress Update, FY 2011 USAID/ERA Activities.....	4
I. Orientation	4
II. Basic Office Set-up.....	5
III. Advanced Office Set-up	6
IV. Preliminary Program Activities	7
V. Project Launch.....	8

Introduction

In accordance with the reporting requirements in Cooperative Agreement No.685-A-00-10-00194-00 Virginia Tech is pleased to submit to USAID/Senegal Fiscal Year 2011 first quarterly report. This report encompasses the pre-award Tasks and Activities submitted to USAID on August 8, 2010.

Some highlights from the first quarter activities of 2010:

- USAID/Senegal and Virginia Tech sign the USAID/ERA Cooperative Agreement on September 9, 2010
- USAID/ERA acquires an office and negotiates a lease and rent
- USAID/ERA advertises for and recruits most of its personnel
- Virginia Tech held a Coordination Meeting in Blacksburg, VA to orient its US university consortium members
- USAID/ERA acquires most of its office, computer, communication and transportation equipment
- USAID/ERA is set up to conduct business transactions with all of its necessary GoS authorizations (PIL), exonerations and legal status in Senegal
- USAID/ERA staff has met and introduced itself to all of its participating institutions
- USAID/ERA facilitated the establishment of its Dakar level technical working group (Comité de Pilotage) with membership identified and component specific “commissions” identified with their own memberships

In summary USAID/ERA has made a positive and vigorous start in beginning its program activities in Senegal. We have all but two employees engaged in our support and program areas, and they are to come on board in January. In the second quarter of 2011 we will build strong partnerships between government entities at the Dakar level as well as at the regional level with our client institutions. We

will build advisory committees in each region emphasizing representation of small farmer groups, agribusinesses and other actors in the agricultural community who promote economic growth and sound agricultural and natural resource management practices in their respective regions.

VT and its Senegalese and US partners are very optimistic about the direction and the potential impact of the USAID/ERA program. Both the large Universities in Senegal and the small, struggling professional training centers are eager to participate in what they feel is the renewal of agriculture and economic growth in Senegal.

The remainder of this report is a table of three columns indicating planned activities from August, 2010 until December 31, 2010, their relative status/completion, the third column representing work remaining to be done into the next quarter.

Anticipated activities for the January to March quarter are detailed in the USAID/ERA Annual Plan which is currently being reviewed and approved by USAID/Senegal. USAID/ERA anticipates starting its implementation for the next quarter through the following activities:

- Plan and implement its project launch with consortium partners, representative ministries and ERA Steering Committee members along with the appropriate media to introduce the goals and activities of the project which are in harmony with the PNIA and Feed the Future policies set by both the Government of Senegal and US Government agricultural policies
- Conduct planned institutional self-assessments, including curriculum review and institutional competencies needed to run educational institutions
- Conduct a basic introduction and training among its partner AET institutions on the grant process,
- Involve consortium university partners through workshops and presentations on specific themes
- Begin the UCONN-led agricultural labor demand study with ENEA,
- Approve a set of results indicators with USAID and begin collecting base-line data
- Identify consultant team and train staff on self-assessment and grant procedures
- Set up the mechanisms for identifying and sending participant trainees to the US or elsewhere for continued education or exposure training trips
- Establish the grant procedures process to award grants
- Develop partnerships that promote innovation, commercial solutions to nutritional problems, public-private collaborations, and government buy-in from producer groups to adhere to and take advantage of existing agricultural policies.

Progress Update, FY 2011 USAID/ERA Activities

I. Orientation

USAID/ERA Capacity Building for Agricultural Education and Research		
Pre-award Tasks and Activities in Senegal		
FY 2011 Activities	Status 31 December, 2010	2nd Quarter FY 2011
Contact USAID and submit start-up plan	Completed, submitted August 7, 2010	-
Contact and develop relationship with employment consultant	Completed. Provided necessary advice on Code de Travail du Senegal	-
Identify office space and secure PO Box for project	At USAID suggestion to locate at PGP-Senegal building. BP 24690, Ouakam	-
Contact PCE and other COPs	Jim Billings, PCE; Jeff Povolny, Wula Nafaa	Attend USAID Synergy meetings
Write Job Descriptions for local positions	Completed	
Revise start-up plan for USAID/Senegal	Completed	
Locate Consultant(s) to assist with start effort	Completed: obtained pro-forma bids and helped translate the CA into French	This is still in process; working on producing a more detailed document in French
Contact personnel cited in proposal	One key person dropped out, the replacement person is now pending approval with USAID	Hire formally the Grants Management Specialist
Contact lawyer and establish protocol d'Accord with MoFA	Lawyer identified With USAID help PIL document in hand	
Identify bank for accounting and transaction processing	Two banks selected, one chosen	
Review and address questions by USAID re.: USAID/ERA proposal	All issues clarified and accepted	
Identify local housing and office space	Completed	

II. Basic Office Set-up

USAID/ERA Capacity Building for Agricultural Education and Research		
Pre-award Tasks and Activities in Senegal		
FY 2011 Activities	Status 31 December, 2010	2nd Quarter FY 2011
Negotiate Dakar Office space	Office rental agreement signed by Virginia Tech and the landlord	
Screen local personnel: Business mgr, accountant, receptionist, etc.	All completed except for one Regional Site Associate	Anticipated hire in January 2011
Follow up USAID/Senegal regarding any remaining proposal questions or start-up issues	All resolved; establishing office and start-up is proceeding normally	
Develop requests for pro-forma invoices for vehicles, office furniture, office equipment and system installation	Completed	
Obtain certificate from Customs to exempt the project from tax and customs	NINEA and other exoneration numbers and documentation secured and accepted	
Cooperative Agreement finalized with USAID	Completed	
Secure Program Implementation Letter and NINEA authorizations	Completed	
Hold US partners coordination meeting in Blacksburg with all consortium members (US Partners meeting to be led by ME)	Completed Sept. 22-23, 2010	

III. Advanced Office Set-up

USAID/ERA Capacity Building for Agricultural Education and Research		
Pre-award Tasks and Activities in Senegal		
FY 2011 Activities	Status 31 December, 2010	2nd Quarter FY 2011
Select local candidates and make suitable offers (start-up dates within one month)	Completed except for one Regional Site Associate for Ziguinchor and Grants Management Coordinator	To be approved and hired in January
Secure agreement for office	Lease agreement signed	
Purchase office furniture	Completed; final payment for furniture is in transit	
Purchase vehicles (following VT procedures)	Completed	
Develop preliminary USAID/ERA communications plan	In process now for use in project launch to be held sometime in January	
Develop personnel policies handbook – draft personnel contracts with features of USAID handbook	USAID/ERA personnel policies handbook to be completed by end of December.	Approval pending from VT
Develop Office Procedures Manual Financial Handbook	Currently in progress Currently operating under an MOU from Blacksburg on key financial functions	Approval pending from VT
Develop initial training plan for staff orientation	Incomplete	Plan to be finalized in January and complete orientation will take place when key personnel are in place
Conduct partial and full dry-run of office operations and procedures	Being conducted in December 2010	January and following quarters will assure perfection of office procedures

IV. Preliminary Program Activities

USAID/ERA Capacity Building for Agricultural Education and Research		
Pre-award Tasks and Activities in Senegal		
FY 2011 Activities	Status 31 December, 2010	2nd Quarter FY 2011
Set-up and establish project framework to assist and support Oversight USAID and GoS management committee	Presented program to Dakar level Steering Committee (Comité de Pilotage): established the formation of one Commission for each component area	Document on Project Framework scheduled to be approved by USAID in January 2011 Steering Committee decided not to pursue the formation of commissions for each component area of the project.
Identify members of the local implementing committees	At least 4 AET institutions have identified their members	The others will be forthcoming in January 2011
Contact all PSAETs and conduct meetings	Completed, contact lists with all AETs	To conduct follow-up meetings
Conduct USAID/ERA information sessions in Dakar and at select locations in Senegal	Completed, contact lists with all AETs	To conduct follow-up meetings
Meet with appropriate GoS officials regarding USAID/ERA	Met with Minister of Higher Education, the Secretary General and other officials of the same ministry; met with all the Rectors of the Universities and all directors of professional training institutions, ISRA and with ITA	To conduct follow-up meetings
Put out PR regarding USAID/ERA	In process on developing publicity now. Attended USAID training on branding and dealing with the press	Publicity will be produced in time for project launch activity
Assist AOTR in establishing protocols for operations for oversight USAID-GoS management committee	AOTR and Assistant AOTR have been doing most of this	Work closely with USAID on maintaining and encouraging participation of this structure
Determine list of indicators and reporting mechanisms	AOTR sent FtF indicators and have been introduced into the Annual Plan for 2011	In January to work with USAID and AOTR to develop USAID/ERA result indicators

V. Project Launch

USAID/ERA Capacity Building for Agricultural Education and Research		
Pre-award Tasks and Activities in Senegal		
FY 2011 Activities	Status 31 December, 2010	2nd Quarter FY 2011
Begin development of program work plan	Submitted first draft 28 October, 2010 Second submission due on 22 December 2010	
Start of the USAID/ERA assessments (Labor Market and Curriculum Assessment of each AET institution – Phase I	Not begun yet	Uconn’s Professor Boris E. Bravo-Ureta to come to Senegal in January to begin the study; Institutional self-assessment exercise to begin in January and February of 2010
Begin process to award non-competitive grants to AETs	Not begun yet	USAID/ERA developing its Grants Manual and planning its program of approach with each AET
Begin to develop training plans	Not begun yet	USAID/ERA will develop training plans and begin implementing them in New Year
Orient PMU staff on US Visas and J-1 procedures	Not begun yet	Anticipated activity for New Year
Consult and hold regular meetings with AOTR regarding priorities	Met, but not regularly	Expect to meet regularly and as need presents
Complete all relocation issues pertaining COP and DCOP	DCOP has personal effects and vehicle shipped COP has yet to receive shipment	
Hold Project Launch Event	Not happened yet; expected date will be around January 25, 2011	Awaiting word from Ministry of Higher Education and the Steering Committee (Comite de Pilotage) of the appropriate date.