

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Methodology

This handbook is a synthesis of some of the things we have learned over more than a quarter of a century in working with technical assistance projects in research and extension. The synthesizing methodology is simple. A draft is prepared, reviewed by experienced persons, revised, circulated for use (tested) and then reviewed and revised again. Working draft #3 has resulted from one workshop review. The plan is to conduct a workshop at least once a year for a comprehensive review. In addition, reactions are being sought, actively and continuously, between the review workshops. You are invited, even urged, to let us have your reactions and comments, if you have had any experience in research and extension projects. Send them to the Farming Systems Support Project, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

B. Audience

The handbook is intended for the several groups of personnel who are involved in donor projects--from project development through design, implementation, and evaluation. These audiences include donor personnel, both those involved in program and project review as well as those responsible for project development and implementation. Others who will work on a project include design, implementation, and evaluation teams, all of which will include members with varying levels of experience in technical assistance and work with international donors. Each chapter is more relevant to one group than to others, but every group will have some interest in what is being said for others, and is encouraged to become familiar with other chapters.

The handbook is oriented to the donor project and donor personnel and contractors, both long and short term. However, it is held explicitly and strongly that the project, in turn, must be oriented to and must serve the needs and interests of the Host Institution and Host Country. It is assumed that one objective of all projects will be to help the Host Country strengthen its research and extension institutions. The need for institutional development is a continuing theme throughout the handbook, which in effect assumes a project-oriented approach to Host Institution development.