

**An Evaluation of
The Advisory Support, Information Services and
Training Programme - Asia-Pacific Region
(ASIST-AP)**

Final Report

for

**Department for International Development (DFID)
Advisory Support, Information Services and Training (ASIST) Asia-Pacific
Employment Intensive Investment Branch
International Labour Organization (ILO)**

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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1.0 INTRODUCTION	10
• OBJECTIVES	10
• ACTIVITIES, APPROACH, DATA SOURCES	10
• ORGANISATION OF THE REPORT	11
• ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	11
2.0 PERFORMANCE OF ASIST-AP	12
• ASIST-AP SOME BASIC FACTS	12
• PROGRESS AGAINST LOGFRAME OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS	13
• ISSUES NOT INCLUDED IN THE LOGFRAME	17
• ADEQUACY OF FOUR FIELDS OF OPERATION	18
• EFFECTIVENESS OF DELIVERY CHANNELS	21
• DEGREE OF SATISFACTION BY PARTNERS AND IMPACT ON PARTNER PROGRAMMES	21
• CHANGES SINCE 2002 REVIEW	23
3.0 COHERENCE, INTEGRATION AND LESSON LEARNING	24
• THE DESIGN OF ASIST-AP AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO EIIP	24
• INTEGRATION OF ASIST-AP INTO ILO PROGRAMMES	26
• PROMOTION OF LABOUR STANDARDS AND DECENT WORK AGENDA INTO INFRASTRUCTURE	26
• CROSS LEARNING BETWEEN ASIST-AP AND ASIST-AFRICA	27
• ROLE OF SECONDMENTS	28
4.0 MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL ISSUES	30
• ILO MANAGEMENT OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES	30
• TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FROM HQ	31
• DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF RESOURCES	31
• PROGRAMME FUNDING	32
ANNEXES	
Reports on country visits	
I. Philippines	
II. Indonesia	
III. India	
IV. Nepal	
Other annexes	
V. Countries not visited: summary of ongoing work	
VI. Pipeline ASIST-AP Publications	
VII. People met	
VIII. Bibliography	
IX. Terms of Reference	

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APOS	Associate Professional Officer Scheme
BAPPENAS	Central Planning Agency, Indonesia
CERPAD	Centre for Regional Development and Planning
CTRID	Co-ordination team for Rural Infrastructure Development
CODEV	Development Cooperation Department
DA	Department of Agriculture
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DDC	District Development Committee
DoLIDAR	Department of Local Infrastructure and Agricultural Roads
DRILP	Decentralised Rural Infrastructure Livelihoods Project
DTMP	District Transport Master Plans
EIIP	Employment Intensive Investment Programme
EOP	End of Programme
EMP/INVEST	Employment Investment Branch
ENT	East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia
GIS	Geographical Information System
GP	Gram Panchayat
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HABITAT	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
HLURD	Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, Indonesia
HUCT	Hanoi University of Transport and Communications
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organisation
InfRES	Infrastructure for Rural Productivity Enhancement Project
IRAP	Integrated Rural Access Planning
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KIMPRASWIL	Public Works Department, Indonesia
LBES	Labour-Based Equipment Supported
LGUs	Local Government Units
MLD	Ministry of Local Development
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MRD	Ministry of Rural Development
NCRI	National Committee on Rural Infrastructure
ORFRTD	Orissa Regional Forum for Rural Transport & Development
PDR	People's Democratic Republic
PFA	Partnership Framework Agreement
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
PSI	Programme Support Income
PWD	Public Works Department
RAIP	Rural Access Infrastructure Programme
RAP	Rural Access Programme
RBTC	Regular Budget Technical Cooperation
RIP	Rural Infrastructure Programme
RNIP	Road Network Improvement Project
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
SCSPP	Shifting Cultivation Stabilisation Project
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Assistance
SME	Small & Medium Enterprises
SOEs	State Owned Enterprises

SPF	Strategic Policy Framework
SRIDP	Sustainable Rural Infrastructure Development Project
SRO	Sub Regional Office (of the ILO)
TA	Technical Assistance
TAO	Tambon Administrative Offices
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
TTI	Technical Training Institute
WB	World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

ILO ASIST stands for ILO Advisory Support, Information Services and Training. Based in Bangkok, ILO ASIST Asia-Pacific (ASIST-AP) provides support to the development, implementation and maintenance of sustainable rural infrastructure programmes in the region. It does this through what it terms the four ‘pillars’: Local Level Planning, Labour Based Technology, Small Scale Contracting and Rural Infrastructure Maintenance Systems.

ASIST-AP is an executing arm of ILO’s Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP). The ASIST-AP programme is funded mainly by donors (who provide both core funds and financing for specific country activities). The ILO contributes towards core and country funds.

Since 2000 ASIST-AP has consciously moved away from a predominantly donor-supported operating model based on projects - the hallmark of previous ILO work in the region - to a flexible, opportunistic and market driven advocacy approach. The aim of its new approach is to add value to the infrastructure investments of national and regional governments and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) whilst exploiting opportunities to achieve wider ILO policy goals. A key conclusion from this evaluation is that ASIST-AP is seen by both governments and IFIs to have been successful.

From the outset this evaluation had two objectives. One was to assess the effectiveness of the ASIST-AP programme, i.e. to carry out a mid-term review. The second was to raise, and address where possible, some of the wider, big picture issues. Chief amongst these are questions about the purpose, role, financing and management of ILO technical co-operation in future, taking into account current issues for donors (e.g. harmonisation) and changing aid instruments (moves to budget support type processes).

The wider questions raised by the evaluation are outlined below. The evaluation team do not try to answer them here. This is because one important stakeholder group – donors who have supported ASIST-AP or share ILO’s objectives for infrastructure investments – were not part of the evaluation exercise. It is therefore recommended that these issues become part of the discussions planned for the stakeholder meeting in early 2005, to which a wide group of donors have been invited. The first part of this Executive Summary therefore reflects some of the questions we think the workshop might usefully address.

The second part of the Executive Summary summarises more detailed findings from the review and focuses specifically on the performance of ASIST-AP.

WIDER QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE EVALUATION

1. The Purpose of ILO TC

What is the purpose of ILO technical co-operation – its higher-level objectives? Who is/are its principal client/s? Without clarity on overall purpose there may be different interpretations of the role and function of ILO TC.

2. Role and function of ILO TC

How is the purpose of ILO TC best achieved? Is it achieved mainly through advisory functions – providing policy advice, guidance on technical issues, specific technical advice

on design issues to IFIs? Or is it equally achieved in other ways - implementing specific ILO products, capacity building, contributing to ILO's knowledge products, or linking in to ILO's standard setting functions?

Given the plethora of potential roles for ILO TC, and the fact that some can overlap with those of other development agencies, what is the specific *comparative advantage* of ILO as a provider of TC - in functional and, separately, in technical terms?

3. Financing

What are the financing implications of the role and function of ILO TC? If ILO's comparative advantage is that it both provides specific 'consultancy' type inputs and links these to its normative functions and develops knowledge products in its areas of competence, then how are these to be funded? How can ILO ensure a consistent and adequate stream of funding for these 'core' advocacy activities?

4. Management and administration

How does ILO reconcile the need to restrict its activities to areas of its mandate and HQ priorities with the need to respond opportunistically to demand - either as an entry point and/or a mechanism to secure funding?

ILO TC programmes must respond to different types and levels of demand: to central, regional and country level priorities, to the demands of different bilateral donors and the demands of IFI and government partners. How does ILO manage these conflicting pressures? What could be done differently?

ASIST-AP was set up only in 1998. Because of the lead-in time required to get substantive programmes up and running at country level, and because of the unpredictability of the TC environment (financial, staffing, expertise) the magnitude and sustainability of outputs will only really be seen in the longer term. How can ILO TC systematically manage the unpredictability of the TC environment to ensure its resources are deployed to maximum effect? Could a tool like scenario planning help?

FINDINGS

Overall the evaluation team found that ASIST-AP was an effective and efficient example of technical co-operation. It was the most impressive example of technical cooperation that either consultant had evaluated.

General factors accounting for this include:

- a *clear policy message* that is well understood by its country and regional partners: that infrastructure can be used as a means of reducing poverty and as a window for decent work;
- an *opportunistic approach*, based on being able to respond quickly and flexibly to government and IFI requests for assistance in four well defined areas of competence;
- a *mutually beneficial relationship with ADB* where ADB receive a unique package of services from a reputed international provider and ASIST-AP gains entry to new policy environments and is often sole sourced to provide services as part of the loan;
- *high quality staff or consultants at country* level that have a good understanding of country, technical and institutional issues;

- an *experienced staff group in Bangkok* with an effective and experienced manager;
- an ability to maintain *a long term vision on policy change* in all their countries of operation, despite uncertain financing.

There are several emerging outputs to date. These include: policy influence (on government infrastructure investments), government strategies for increased local resource use, better quality local level planning, improved design of IFI loans, and increased attention to maintenance issues. In addition, the programme is strengthening local institutions through capacity enhancement and through producing a wide range of guidelines and technical manuals. Details on the progress made in achieving the indicators of each output are given in the report.

In its current form this programme has been in effective operation for only five years. There are inevitably areas that require more time to show substantive results and there are some areas that require additional emphasis. The remainder of this section summarises the main findings in the three broad areas investigated in this evaluation: (1) Performance and Progress; (2) Coherence, Integration and Lesson Learning; (3) Management, Administration and Financing. Findings are referenced by paragraph number to the discussion in the main text.

Each main finding is followed by either a comment or a recommendation. The evaluation team recommend a course of action only when they feel the way forward is obvious. Whether recommendations have been made or not the discussion of findings by a wider group of stakeholders is an appropriate next step.

FINDINGS	COMMENTS OR RECOMMENDATION
<p>PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS</p> <p>1. Good work is ongoing on all 4 pillars with high government demand for Local Level Planning (using the IRAP approach). Governments' awareness and willingness to act on other pillars varies: policy statements on local contracting exist in Nepal and Vietnam whilst the development of govt. guidelines favouring local contractors are well progressed in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Nepal. (2.5 – 2.7, 2.11, 2.32)</p>	<p><i>Comment:</i> ASIST-AP aims to bring a poverty and decent work focus to the planning, implementation and monitoring of rural infrastructure and to see this focus translated into government policy and strategies. The IRAP approach to planning should result in infrastructure that reduces poverty. The other pillars provide a window for other ILO priorities: decent work, labour standards, SMEs. We think ASIST-AP is keeping a reasonable balance between responding to demand for IRAP and the other pillars.</p>
<p>2. Although employment creation is an important pillar of ASIST-AP work in some countries it is not the focus of their work. It is seen as one of the four integrated pillars which together make a coherent approach to rural infrastructure. ASIST-AP responds to government priorities and government interest in labour based methods varies: it is least in Indonesia and the Philippines, has potential in Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam and has long been part of govt. social policy in India (2.32).</p>	<p><i>Comment:</i> We see a difference in emphasis between ASIST-AP's programme and the focus of the Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme (EIIP) in Geneva - of which ASIST-AP is a technical arm. EIIP literature, its name and perceptions of others in ILO give the impression that the main focus of EIIP is job creation. (See 8 below.)</p>

<p>3. ASIST-AP provide ADB with a unique package of services; they are also increasing their work with the World Bank. ADB in turn provide entry points for ASIST work in several countries. However, ASIST-AP relates mainly to project design teams not to policy makers so they have limited influence over ADB policy in their areas of special competence (e.g. procurement). (2.8, 2.46 – 2.48)</p>	<p><i>Recommendation:</i> ASIST-AP aim to increase its policy influence with ADB Manila. A strategy for this is discussed with ILO Regional and Sub-Regional offices whose contacts with ADB are at a high level.</p>
<p>4. ASIST-AP's ability to sensitize target groups is good at local level. It is also good with high level politicians and sector ministries in some countries. It could be even greater if Bangkok staff spent longer on each visit. The number of countries each staff member covers precludes this. There are some excellent national staff but they are not all at a level to dialogue with policy makers. This situation will be exacerbated from 2005 when increased funding for country level activities will not be backed with equivalent increases in backstopping capacity in Bangkok. (2.11, 2.42, 4.18)</p>	<p><i>Comment:</i> Despite heeding 2002 review recommendations to reduce the scope of the programme, and despite increasing the capacity of country teams, Bangkok staff are still too stretched to dialogue with all target groups or fully backstop country teams. An increase in core funding is required to balance the programme.</p> <p>(See 14 below)</p>
<p>5. ASIST-AP teams in country are under great pressure by governments to become implementers, particularly of IRAP (because they do such a good job). There is a line to be drawn between <i>testing</i> guidelines with local governments in order to influence decision makers and becoming an implementation agency. (2.14)</p>	<p><i>Comment:</i> It would be easy to say 'ASIST-AP should stick to policy' here but it is not as simple as that. Implementing policy guidelines in the field is crucial in convincing governments that they should endorse them nationally. ASIST-AP are aware of the need not to get pulled too far into implementation (e.g. in Indonesia).</p>
<p>6. ASIST's publications work is impressive (much already published; 19 works in progress.) Rightly, these concentrate on technical manuals (their core competence) but much of their wider knowledge - on decentralisation, the political context, working with partners) that could contribute to ILO as a knowledge organisation is not being captured, debated or shared. (2.15 – 2.18 and 2.26 – 2.28)</p>	<p><i>Recommendation:</i> (a) ASIST-AP discuss this within the ILO Sub-Regional Offices with a view to eliciting the demand that <i>they</i> have for wider knowledge sharing on these issues; (b) Exactly the same strategy is adopted with EMP/INVEST; (c) ASIST-AP respond if and when they can avail resources for a staff member or consultant with good <i>analytical</i> skills and wide development experience.</p>
<p>7. ASIST-AP is weak in terms of the gender focus of the programme and in understanding the characteristics of poverty in the areas in which they work. Mechanisms to measure the poverty impact of IRAP have not been developed. (2.21 – 2.25)</p>	<p><i>Recommendation:</i> ASIST-AP do <i>not</i> hire a generic gender consultant (they have done this previously). Rather they look to a poverty planning and gender specialist <i>who understands infrastructure</i> for hands-on, practical advice about how to make the programme more gender sensitive and to develop a way of assessing the poverty impacts of the programme.</p>

<p>ISSUES ON COHERENCE, INTEGRATION AND LESSON LEARNING</p> <p>8. As mentioned in 2 above, job creation through infrastructure is the main focus of EMP/INVEST in Geneva as perceived by ILO staff interviewed for this evaluation. This is not a policy priority of AP country governments (although recent developments may make India an exception.) The difference in emphasis has lessened collaboration, including ideas on future strategy for the programme as a whole.</p>	<p><i>Comment:</i> This is a good time for EMP/INVEST and ASIST-AP to develop a strategy for closer collaboration. ASIST-AP need to take account of the EIIP mandate; EMP/INVEST need to see the work of ASIST-AP as making a valuable contribution to poverty and decent work objectives – albeit not through large scale job creation.</p> <p><i>Recommendation:</i> EMP/INVEST and ASIST-AP convene around this issue.</p>
<p>9. The integration of ASIST-AP into Regional, Sub-Regional and country programmes of the ILO varies. In some countries ASIST-AP is seen as an integral part of the ILO effort, in other countries the relationship is more distant. (3.10 – 3.11)</p>	<p><i>Comment:</i> There are enormous benefits in close co-operation. Basing the relationship around areas of joint work (e.g. the PRSP) provides a good focus.</p> <p><i>Recommendation:</i> ASIST-AP and the relevant ILO offices discuss how to increase their substantive engagement around areas of work where they share a common interest. This happens in all countries where the relationship is not optimal at present. ASIST-AP allocate time for this.</p>
<p>10. There is little formal cross learning between ASIST-AP and ASIST-Africa. Yet each region has unique experiences, approaches and products from which the other could benefit. (3.15 – 3.23)</p>	<p><i>Recommendation:</i> EMP/INVEST, ASIST-AP and ASIST-Africa first discuss whether they all agree there would be real benefits in increasing contact and identify the outcomes expected from this. If relevant, they then look for an institutional mechanism and for a source of financing to make such exchanges possible.</p>
<p>11. ASIST-AP's experience with secondments have been variable but the current (DFID) complement is valued. However, a more strategic approach to secondments is required on the part of both ASIST-AP and donors. (3.24 – 3.28)</p>	<p><i>Recommendations:</i> (a) Secondees who are professionals/APOS are placed with ASIST-AP country programmes rather than in the regional office Bangkok; (b) ASIST-AP are more proactive in identifying the skills sets that they require for the regional office; (c) donors are aware of the contribution that a person with good analytical skills could make to ASIST-AP and take this into account in identifying future secondees.</p>
<p>ISSUES ON MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE</p> <p>12. ASIST-AP has performed successfully partly because of the autonomy it has been allowed to manage itself; this has enabled it to respond flexibly and quickly to client demands. (4.6)</p>	<p><i>Comment:</i> We see no reason to change the present management arrangement other than agreeing measures to improve the flow of information between ASIST-AP and both ILO regional and country offices, and with EMP/INVEST.</p>

<p>13. More time needs to be devoted to regional activities, especially by the programme coordinator of ASIST-AP, and for this to happen extra resources have to be found. (4.8 – 4.9)</p>	<p><i>Comment:</i> This aim will only be realised if the imminent shortage in core funding is overcome.</p>
<p>14. ASIST-AP faces an imbalance in the next few years caused by the expected increase in country project funds and decline in its core funding. Success in a major area of influence could be threatened by a decline in the funds necessary to provide adequate technical support. This would undermine ASIST-AP's reputation for delivery. (4.15, 4.18, 4.33)</p>	<p><i>Comment:</i> Under present arrangements there is no immediate solution to the current funding dilemma other than more core support. <i>Recommendation:</i> ILO reconsider its policy of de-linking the acquisition of PSI from some sort of reward for doing so. (It seems fundamental to good management that successful efforts in fund raising, especially from influential IFIs, should be financially recognised. This would go some way to keeping core funding in line with increasing country project funds.)</p>
<p>15. The uncertainty of current funding arrangements requires careful management to optimise the quality of Bangkok staff inputs to country programmes and ensure national staff and government colleagues are appraised of the situation and involved in strategy discussions about funding and programming options. (4.27 – 4.31)</p>	<p><i>Recommendations:</i> (a) ASIST-AP Bangkok staff, with ILO regional colleagues, develop a strategy to reduce the number of countries they each work in from 7 (current average) to 3-4 (this is ideal; it may be logistically impossible). (b) ASIST-AP experiment with scenario planning as a means of dealing more systematically with the problem of funding uncertainty.</p>
<p>16. While core funding is essential to the way ASIST-AP operates, it is at too low a level for efficient operation and likely to decline with a corresponding reduction in staff and activity levels. (4.32 – 4.35)</p>	<p><i>Comment:</i> There is no avoiding ASIST-AP's current dependence on ILO regional sources and donors for its crucial core funding. The recommendation discussed in 14 above would help, but it will continue to need directly pledged donor funds or earmarking of those directed to ILO under framework agreements. Only by increasing core funding will ASIST-AP be able to maintain an active involvement in country programmes and retain its flexible response capability.</p>

1.0 INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES

1.1 The main objective of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of ASIST-Asia Pacific, a regional delivery mechanism for the ILO's second largest programme of technical assistance (TA), the Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP), which is technically supported by the Employment Intensive Investment Branch (EMP/INVEST) in Geneva. For DFID this is an opportunity to learn lessons about the effectiveness and impact of ILO TA programmes by focusing on a programme it has supported financially.¹ For the ILO it is an opportunity to assess the extent to which ASIST-AP has been able to influence governments and funding agencies towards a more pro-poor and decent work approach to rural infrastructure. This evaluation is therefore both a mid-term review of ASIST-AP and a chance to discuss how ILO TA engages with current policy concerns. The TOR set the context for the evaluation and defines specific tasks (see final annex).

1.2 The primary audience for this evaluation is DFID and ILO. However, it is anticipated that other bilateral and multilateral donors will be interested in its findings. A wider group of donors are therefore invited to the final workshop to participate in discussions.

ACTIVITIES, APPROACH, DATA SOURCES

1.3 The work involved four main activities and a number of data sources:²

- Meetings with ILO staff in Geneva to understand the *ILO policy context* and the way that ASIST-AP fits in and contributes to this. Perceptions of integration, coherence and message were discussed with individuals within and outside EMP/INVEST. The implication of ILO's Strategic Policy Framework (2006-9) for technical cooperation programmes was also covered.³
- Meetings in Bangkok to investigate *policy directions and programme effectiveness* from the point of view of a cross section of staff in the ILO Bangkok office including ASIST-AP regional staff. Comprehensive briefings on all aspects of the country programmes were received.
- Visits to four country programmes to investigate *programme effectiveness and impact* from the point of view of ASIST-AP's main partners, in particular, country governments, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB). Visits were made to the Philippines, Indonesia, India and Nepal.⁴
- Discussions *on findings and lessons learned with ILO, DFID and other interested stakeholders*. This activity took place in stages. An initial round-up meeting was held with ASIST-AP staff in Bangkok following the country visits in October 2004. The circulation of this draft report in November provided an opportunity for comments from ILO and DFID and

¹ DFID has been a major contributor to both the Africa and Asia-Pacific ASIST programmes. It has supported ASIST Asia-Pacific since 1999 (DANIDA funding set up the programme in 1998). DFID has a separate Partnership Framework Agreement (PFA) with the ILO that runs until March 2006, but the present support to ASIST AP does not come out of that framework agreement. The TOR note that no decisions have yet been made on future DFID support to ILO.

² See the Inception Report for this evaluation, Ladbury and Howe September 2004, for a more detailed breakdown of activities, methods and approach.

³ See 'Strategic Policy Framework (2006-09) and Preview of the Programme and Budget 2006-07'. The SPF is based around the concept of decent work – as it was for the 2002-05 period. However, the log frame for the SPF includes an additional level – operational outcomes - each of which is complemented by a set of indicators and targets. One of these is 'Employment creation through employment-intensive investment approach'.

⁴ Meetings with country partners were undertaken by the consultants alone, i.e. not in the company of ASIST-AP staff.

allowed for revisions. A workshop to discuss findings with a wider group of stakeholders is scheduled for January 2005.

1.4 The consultants had access to a wide range of EIIP, ASIST and ILO country documentation. A list of people met and a bibliography are attached as annexes.

ORGANISATION OF REPORT

1.5 The main report is organised into three sections. The first focuses on programme performance; it includes an assessment of progress against each output of the logframe as well as wider performance issues. The second section focuses on issues of coherence, integration and lesson learning – broadly, how lessons learned by ASIST-AP are feeding into wider ILO priorities. The third section considers management, administration and resource issues, i.e. the systems that need to be in place for technical cooperation programmes to run effectively and efficiently.

1.6 The four country annexes summarise findings from the country visits (the Philippines, India, Nepal and Indonesia). The countries were chosen by ASIST-AP to give a representative picture of the programme as a whole. Although we discuss examples of ASIST-AP's activities elsewhere in the region our assessment of country level performance is based primarily on what is happening in the four countries visited.

1.7 The Executive Summary summarises main findings and conclusions; each point is referenced by paragraph number to the main text.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1.8 The consultants are grateful to all those who contributed to this consultancy. In particular, our thanks to government partners in the countries visited and to staff of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) for their views on ASIST-AP performance. We are grateful to ILO staff, both in Geneva and in the regional and country offices, for views on how the programme fits in to their work and the extent to which helps achieve wider ILO – and therefore country - objectives. Finally our thanks to the entire ASIST-AP staff group, in Bangkok and in the countries visited, for their own insightful and frank discussions of strengths and weaknesses.

1.9 The overall conclusions of the consultancy have been widely discussed; however, they remain those of the consultants.

2.0 PERFORMANCE OF ASIST-AP

ASIST-AP: SOME BASIC FACTS

2.1 ASIST-AP is one of the two main regional executing arms of the EIIP, set up in 1998 as a sister technical cooperation programme to the longer established ASIST Africa. For those unfamiliar with the programme some basic details are given below.

ASIST AP - Basic Facts

Start up – and Reporting

Start up in 1998. Core ILO ASIST team of four people based in the ILO Regional Office, Bangkok and (currently) two DFID secondments. ASIST-AP is considered as a regional programme and reports administratively to the Regional Director of the ILO in Bangkok.

Funding

The ILO contributes to the overall budget of ASIST. However, the majority of *core* funding has come from donors, particularly DFID. Funds for ASIST-AP activities at country level have come from the IFIs, governments, bilateral donors and the various ILO country offices. Thus, in the Philippines staff costs are covered by an ADB loan; in Sri Lanka staff costs are split between ASIST and the ILO office; in Delhi they are split between ASIST and the ILO Sub-Regional Office; in Indonesia consultants are partly paid by government, partly by left-over WB funds and partly by ASIST core funding (and next year by SIDA).

Focus of work

Policy and implementation advice to governments and IFIs for poverty focused, sustainable rural infrastructure programmes. Focus on 4 'pillars' – Local Level Planning (the Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning approach – IRAP); Labour Based Technology, Small Scale Contracting and Rural Infrastructure Maintenance systems.

Country coverage

11 countries. *South East Asia*: the Philippines, Indonesia, East Timor, Solomon Islands; *East Asia*: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam; *South Asia*: India, Nepal, Sri Lanka. (Although ASIST-AP have provided inputs there Afghanistan is not included as coordination is currently provided by a separate support unit based in New Delhi.)

Staffing- in Bangkok and in countries of operation

3 full-time technical staff and two administrators. Two secondments from DFID, one senior adviser, one Associate Professional Officer. Staffing in each country varies. For example, one full-time person in the Philippines and in Sri Lanka; a half-time person in India; a part-time, university-based consultancy team of 8 in Indonesia.

Counterparts

The main ILO counterpart is normally the Ministry of Labour. However, ASIST's counterpart is either an umbrella co-ordinating ministry (e.g. the Ministry of Economic Affairs or Planning) or the department implementing the programme to which ASIST is contributing e.g., Ministry of Local Government, Agriculture, Transport, Rural Development.

Delivery mechanisms

Through government as a component of a larger government programme using government funds, an ADB or WB loan, or bilateral agency grant funds; never as a stand alone, donor funded ILO project. This is an important point of difference with ASIST Africa.

Gender and national breakdown of staff

About one quarter of all staff/consultants in the country programmes are women. National teams comprise both national and international staff.

2.2 Throughout this report, and unless otherwise specified, ‘ASIST-AP’ refers both to the Bangkok team *and* to ASIST-AP staff and consultants in country.

PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS IN THE LOGFRAME

2.3 This section provides an overall summary of project progress based primarily on the output to purpose reviews undertaken for each of the four countries visited.⁵ (See annexes 1-4 for details, including the ASIST log frame matrix for each country.) This section makes a general summary statement of progress against each output.

2.4 The issue of attribution needs mentioning. When ASIST-AP began to implement its four pillar focus in 2000 it encountered different starting points. In some countries, like the Philippines, local resource based strategies for rural infrastructure, particularly in local level planning, had been in use by various ministries for 10 years. Others, primarily India, had a long tradition of using labour-based works to create employment. In still others, Vietnam for example, the idea of using local resource based strategies was new and had never been a policy issue. In these countries ASIST-AP was starting more or less from scratch. Given this situation it has been difficult to be precise about attribution: in some cases a great deal has been achieved partly because one or more of the four pillars has had a long gestation period – in which case the role of ASIST-AP has been to extend its reach, raise its policy profile and/or introduce other pillars. In other countries it seems that the programme is still at the groundwork stage simply because there was so little to build on and good relationships at policy level are still being developed. Given this we try to confine our comments to concrete progress for which we feel ASIST can definitely take credit over the last four years.

<p><i>OUTPUT 1.</i> <i>Local resource-based strategies for pro-poor rural infrastructure provision integrated into country investment programmes.</i></p>	<p><i>INDICATORS</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Policy instruments for local resource based strategies (Executive orders, laws, PRSPs, 5 year plans) enacted and endorsed in 10 countries⁶</i> • <i>ADB and WB incorporate local resource based strategies into country investment projects in 8 countries by EOP</i> </p>
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2.5 The need to get central government endorsement for each of its four pillars is a primary objective in all countries. However, decentralisation throughout the region and subsequent demand for local level planning appears to have made it easier to get the IRAP approach recognised and institutionalised than the other three pillars. Even though the team attempt to put equal emphasis on the four pillars, IRAP is new and innovative, facilitates local government investment, and has an understandable attraction over the familiar and difficult problems of maintenance and contracting. ASIST-AP work on labour-based technology has also been easier in countries where it is already the technology of choice for rural infrastructure: it has long been a component of social policy in India, it is a technical necessity in Nepal, and in other countries governments have been influenced by ILO’s long term presence and advocacy on this issue (Indonesia).

⁵ ASIST-AP staff in Bangkok revised the log frame on our arrival in Bangkok. There were no changes in overall content but greater clarity was achieved between levels of objective and between outputs and indicators. In addition the point made in our Inception Report – that ‘government commitment’ could not be relegated to an external risk but should be a fundamental objective – was taken on board and changes made to reflect this.

⁶ It shouldn’t be assumed that the existence of an Executive Order necessarily change the way things are done on the ground – particularly by sector ministries who still hold the major part of the budget for rural infrastructure and have few incentives to change the way they operate. Nonetheless, having a clear channel for policy influence is an indicator of success particularly where ASIST can legitimately claim to have helped put the policy instrument in place (as is the case in Indonesia).

2.6 Government endorsement for IRAP is clearest in Indonesia where there is an Executive Order establishing the Coordination Team for Rural Infrastructure Development (CTRID), which promotes the sustainable rural infrastructure development strategy which includes IRAP. ASIST-AP is largely responsible for this. In the Philippines government endorsement for IRAP now seems likely (ASIST spent a long time canvassing the wrong ministry, but is now working with the right one). In Nepal IRAP is being used to update the District Transport Masterplans and there is endorsement for local resource based approaches in the Revised National Strategy for Rural Infrastructure Development. In India ASIST-AP has introduced the IRAP tool to DFID in Orissa. DFID is considering the use of IRAP on a state-wide level as a planning tool and for specific targeting of investments in the health sector.⁷

2.7 Changing the mindset of governments about maintenance is hard work, and their awareness of the pressing need to build their own capacity to contract and supervise the private sector (small scale contractors) is limited. ASIST-AP is thus unlikely to get dramatic formal government endorsement in any country for its approach to either *Maintenance* or *Small Scale Contracting*. The process is more one of attrition involving many small changes. For example, encouraging policy statements on local contracting (Nepal, Vietnam); and developing procurement guidelines and other government procedures that favour local contractors (Cambodia, Laos, Nepal). Although attitudes are changing slowly both among governments as well as donors, there is still a reluctance to allocate sufficient funding to maintenance.

2.8 The second indicator – on *influencing ADB and WB projects* – is very likely to be achieved. ASIST is already providing design or implementation advice on rural infrastructure projects in seven countries.⁸ This is a success. However, the evaluation team were also interested in whether ASIST is having any wider policy influence over these institutions beyond individual projects. (Although this is not a formal indicator in the logframe we think this is a reasonable question to ask.) So far, any wider influence is limited to the ADB. Obviously this has a lot to do with the fact that ADB headquarters are much closer to Bangkok than that of the WB. However, even in providing technical services to ADB ASIST has limited impact on wider ADB practice because liaison is with country programme staff not policy makers. The issue of policy influence on the IFIs is taken up later in this report.

<p>OUTPUT 2. <i>Country operational strategies defined and developed</i></p>	<p>INDICATORS • <i>Strategy documents designed and in use in 12 countries</i></p>
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2.9 ASIST-AP staff in Bangkok estimate that strategy documents for at least one of the four pillars will have been designed and will be in use in six countries by the end of 2005. Of the countries visited this has already been achieved in both Indonesia and the Philippines for IRAP; in addition, guidelines on Maintenance and Small Scale Contracting are ready for field testing in Indonesia. Strategy document/guidelines for labour based technologies with a focus on maintenance exist for India but its use will depend on decisions to be made in critical upcoming workshops. There are already strategy documents produced by the ILO on local contracting, labour-based technology and maintenance in Nepal. Currently ASIST is formulating a training strategy for the rural infrastructure sector. By mid 2005 it will be possible to make a more qualified judgement as to the likelihood of achieving this indicator in the latter two countries.

⁷ However, DFID still needs to be convinced that the methodology properly addresses issues of gender and social exclusion – a legitimate concern that we discuss later.

⁸ In the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Nepal, India and Sri Lanka.

<p>OUTPUT 3. <i>Relevant institutions strengthened and capacity enhanced</i></p>	<p>INDICATORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Production of high quality relevant materials in local resource based strategies</i> • <i>Target groups (politicians, planners, engineers, contractors) sensitised/trained in local resource based strategies in all 12 countries</i>
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2.10 Overall ASIST-AP produces an impressive number of high quality training materials in local languages. These are used to good effect to sensitise target groups who themselves go on to produce good quality and careful plans (the accessibility maps produced by local government planners in Indonesia were impressive). Materials exist for IRAP in Orissa and are currently being finalised in Nepal.⁹

2.11 Progress in terms of sensitising target groups is good *at local level* where guidelines are being field-tested. However, our impression is that sensitisation of politicians and policy makers largely depends on the seniority and connectedness of the ASIST staff member or consultant in country. (ASIST staff from Bangkok simply do not have time to spend on this activity - they travel almost constantly but often spend only a few days in each country at a time). In some countries policy influence is taking place (in Indonesia ASIST-AP are actually contracted to backstop a policy body) but we could see little evidence of wider policy influence in the Philippines or Nepal (the case studies give details).

<p>OUTPUT 4. <i>Significant implementation of policies and strategies achieved (through third parties)</i></p>	<p>INDICATORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Quality backstopping by ASIST AP in implementation</i>
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2.12 Here we take ‘significant’ implementation to mean the willingness of governments to roll out programmes on a district, provincial or national level, i.e. beyond the test districts in which ASIST-AP is currently working. On this basis ‘significant’ implementation, even of IRAP, is a long way off in all countries (with the possible exception of the Philippines where IRAP has been implemented, on and off, for the last 13 years).

2.13 That said we obtained good feedback on the ability of ASIST-AP to provide quality backstopping for implementation processes in the countries visited. The best example of this is Indonesia where there is a dedicated ASIST team backstopping the government umbrella body, the ‘Coordinating Team on Rural Infrastructure Development’ that aims to coordinate policies, strategies and regulations for rural infrastructure development. There is also effective backstopping taking place in India, Laos, Cambodia, Nepal and in the Philippines at a sector level (in the context of an ADB loan to the Department of Agriculture).

2.14 Our one concern was that ASIST-AP is sometimes in danger of doing too much implementation itself. This is understandable as government demand (indeed, pressure) is so great that it is difficult to pull back and say ‘our job is only to field test approaches in order to influence policy, not to become an implementation agency’. ASIST-AP need to make this

⁹ This assessment is based mainly on the four case study countries, however ASIST-AP informed us that a labour-based technology manual has been produced for East Timor; labour-based training materials have been developed or are under development for Laos, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand; model contract documents exist for Laos and Cambodia; and generic training material on local contracting is being produced.

message very clear in all countries. Implementation of IRAP is a job that can be done, in our view, equally well by NGOs once it has been field-tested by ASIST-AP.

<p>OUTPUT 5. <i>Knowledge of local resource based approaches enhanced through research and disseminated</i></p>	<p>INDICATORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Relevant research undertaken</i> • <i>Universities participating in implementing aspects of the programme</i> • <i>Regional meetings to share best practice</i> • <i>ASIST-AP web site operational</i> • <i>Contributions to journals, bulletins, & publications.</i>
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2.15 ASIST-AP have produced an impressive range of high quality technical manuals on their different pillars, translated into national languages. An ASIST-AP website is up and running; international and national staff make contributions to journals, including the ILO Newsletter in some countries; ASIST also organise conferences and then publish conference papers. The list of 19 forthcoming publications at Annex VI gives an indication of the range of work in progress. Editing articles for publication from reports and articles authored by consultants falls to the staff members in Bangkok - a time-consuming job. Given the resources at the disposal of this small group the publications record of ASIST-AP is impressive.

2.16 It would, of course, have been good to see ASIST-AP knowledge products going beyond technical issues and addressing some of the interesting – and problematic - contextual issues, economic, political and social. The contribution by the Philippines staff member to a discussion of political constraints to the implementation of IRAP is one step in this direction. We have recommended that she be encouraged to continue this line of exploration. Thought-provoking and non-promotional analysis of this kind (she analyses the difficulties of introducing transparent and poverty oriented planning procedures to local governments where decision making was traditionally the preserve of the mayor) would make a significant contribution to ILO's wider knowledge work.

2.17 We asked the Bangkok team to list what analytical work they would like to commission if additional funds (a person) became available. Their list included issues of relevance to the ILO as a whole (e.g. working with partners – lessons from working with the ADB and WB). Details of 'Analysis that ASIST-AP would undertake if they had additional resources' is given in Annex VI.

2.18 In summary, good progress has been made on this output. However, ASIST-AP in Bangkok and national staff and consultants in each country have a wealth of experience in the region and a rich knowledge base; currently, only the technical aspects of this are being captured and disseminated in ASIST knowledge products.

Are outputs likely to achieve the project purpose?

2.19 The **purpose** of ASIST-AP is 'To improve the access of the population to decent work and to economic & social goods and services through rural infrastructure provision'.

2.20 It is really too soon to say whether the programme will achieve this in any of its countries of operation - given ASIST has been operating for only 3-4 years in most of them. There is inevitably a time lag between policy endorsement and infrastructure *practice* (even when policy exists sector ministries don't necessarily implement it - or even know about it). And when good implementation occurs in one district it takes time for the success of this to filter up to policy level, be endorsed centrally and then implemented regionally or nationally.

For the most part ASIST-AP are pushing forward and encouraging change processes, they will not achieve massive impacts overnight.

2.21 That said, the evaluation team were keen to know if ASIST-AP had mechanisms in place to assess whether, in say 5 years, the project purpose was being achieved. Were there mechanisms (e.g. government mechanisms) to assess whether (a) IRAP was in use by local planners (b) it resulted in decisions that benefited the poor through avoiding elite capture (c) it allowed women's voices to be heard in the planning process, and so on. We were not convinced that either governments or ASIST-AP has yet thought this through. However, it will be important to see that mechanisms are set up soon so that an assessment of future impact can be made.

ISSUES NOT INCLUDED IN THE OUTPUTS: GENDER, POVERTY, POLITICAL CONTEXT

2.22 There are three issues that are not reflected in the log frame but that the evaluation team think are important. It was agreed with ASIST-AP that we would look at these. They are: the gender focus of the programme as a whole; the poverty impact of IRAP; the political context of implementing local resource based strategies.

The gender focus of the programme

2.23 Gender disaggregated data is allowed for in the standard IRAP process and a gender sensitive version of IRAP has been developed for the Philippines. However, there is some evidence that usually the IRAP process is applied rather mechanically, without any particular emphasis on its gender potential or any prior analysis of gender issues at local level. The evaluation team is therefore uncertain whether gender or any other form of social exclusion – based on poverty, ethnicity, religion or caste – is directly addressed in the IRAP training. National staff responsible for the training seemed not to have discussed its significance. Nor did we find mention of gender in publications on the other pillars. The ASIST Bangkok team have commissioned some studies on gender (including of IRAP) but it is difficult to see how these have influenced practice. In any case, the gender studies we had sight of tended to be short on analytical thinking and fell back on old adages ('everyone needs gender training'). Possibly so, but not very likely in the circumstances; a more practical, hands-on 'just do it' type approach is required.

2.24 As mentioned in an earlier footnote, DFID have picked this up in Orissa – they can see the potential benefits of IRAP but want to be sure of its gender and inclusion focus.

Poverty

2.25 The evaluation team have similar concerns about ASIST-APs approach to poverty. IRAP, for example, claims to have pro-poor outcomes as it is based on an objective assessment of the accessibility of local populations to economic and social goods and services. However, because there is no analysis of the *context* in which IRAP is used at local level it is hard to know whether it does, in fact, have this impact. IRAP training does not include an analysis of who is poor in the local area, the nature of poverty, whose voice is consistently not heard and so on. Thus, IRAP works on the basis of an assumption – but as yet no evidence - that because the approach is rigorous, transparent and based on accessibility data it will inevitably be more poverty focused than when planning decisions were handed down from the top or made by the local mayor. Our feeling is that work urgently needs to be done on the impact of IRAP in 2005 (when local government planners, trained by ASIST, will start using the IRAP approach) so that (a) positive results can further strengthen arguments for its use and convince sceptics like DFID and (b) less positive results can inform reviews of the methodology and how ASIST-AP deliver it.

Political context

2.26 ASIST-AP work is about changing the way central and local governments operate so that rural infrastructure becomes a window for reducing poverty, improving governance, building local capacity and setting standards for decent work. The decentralisation process means that all countries are in the process of shifting power – and budgets – to lower levels of government. This process is often contested by traditional budget holders – the central sector ministries for example – who do their best to hang on to the lion’s share of the budget, allowing only a part of it to be devolved to lower levels of government. This provides a fascinating but difficult environment with constant power struggles at central, provincial and local levels. ASIST-AP staff in Bangkok and in country are alert to this ever changing political context and talk about it with real understanding.¹⁰

2.27 ASIST-AP see their role as securing the correct policy, strategy and concurrently, developing local capacity for implementing rural infrastructure to achieve poverty reduction and decent work objectives. In other words they do not see their role as narrowly technical. That said, discussions on political context – the sort of information that is useful to wider ILO colleagues and other development actors – do not find their way into publications or become principal issues in workshops. Our point is *not* that ASIST-AP staff and consultants lack political awareness – far from it – but this is not translated into written pieces. ASIST-AP hosted a regional workshop in 2003 on how decentralisation can affect the delivery of rural infrastructure services - this was attended by representatives from 11 countries. However, although reports on workshop proceedings focus on best institutional as well as best technical practice socio-political analysis was limited.¹¹

2.28 Greater analysis of the political context that was reflected in publications (including, where relevant, in technical guidelines) would be of benefit. Apart from being useful for the development of formal ASIST-AP strategies at a country level it is the stuff of bridge-building between a technical programme like ASIST-AP and all other development actors in the region – not least ILO itself. ASIST-AP have long term experience in the region and understand it – they are missing a trick by not sharing this experience more widely.¹²

ADEQUACY OF FOUR FIELDS OF OPERATION

2.29 ASIST provides advice and information services and training in four fields of operation – local level planning, rural infrastructure maintenance, small scale contracting, and labour based technology. These four fields represent, more or less, the translation of the infrastructure project cycle into four definable work areas. ASIST does not, of course, implement its own projects. It inputs into government projects using government funds or loan funds from the IFIs, which, at least in theory, is the same thing. From the documentary evidence available to the evaluators there are differences between the AP and Africa ASIST modes of operation. ASIST-AP works to a larger degree with IFIs than bilaterals, mainly because the bilaterals play a minor role in the infrastructure sector in Asia – as compared to Africa. Due to this, the nature of the TA funding in country activities differ in the two regions

¹⁰ Currently they are involved in policy discussions with senior officials – vice presidents, secretaries of state etc. - in Lao PDR, Cambodia, Madya Pradesh and Indonesia on socio-political issues which affect programmes at a practical level.

¹¹ An example of the sort of ‘context’ question that deserves attention is in Vietnam where, despite massive moves towards privatisation, robust arguments are still required to convince government of the need to develop a vibrant private sector for rural infrastructure i.e. small-scale contractors – given that strong vested interests continue to canvas for the maintenance of state owned enterprises (SOEs).

¹² This is not to suggest that ASIST-AP have the same depth of understanding of the political context in all 11 countries. But they have many years of experience in several of them, e.g. Indonesia, the Philippines, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam.

– Africa relying more on grant sources from bilaterals and AP in country activities funded through IFI loan proceeds.

2.30 This section addresses two questions. First, how the four field's emphasis translates into country programmes? Secondly, whether the emphasis given to different pillars in different countries is the most effective use of ASIST's skills and competences in the opinion of the evaluators. Are there gaps, missed opportunities, opportunity costs?

How do the four pillars translate into work on the ground?

2.31 ASIST is a highly opportunistic programme. Its main resource is the knowledge base and connectedness of its (small) group of international and national staff. Because of its limited financial resources it has to have products that government in the region are willing to buy, either with their own budgets or as components of loans. Not surprisingly ASIST looks for entry points that are in demand by governments and offers the 'pillar' or work area that most closely conforms to that expressed need. The rationale is that, having established a foothold and credibility through the delivery of one particular pillar, it is easier to bring in other areas if they also prove critical to achieving the overall aim of the programme: to improve the access of the population to decent work and to economic and social goods and services through the provision of rural infrastructure.

2.32 The four pillars are used as entry points in different situations.

- *Local Level Planning*, using the Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning approach (IRAP), is in high demand in countries undergoing decentralisation where there is weak capacity at local government level to plan for rural service delivery. It was the initial focus for work in several countries (for example, the Philippines, Indonesia, India, and Nepal).
- The demand for *Small Scale Contracting* is greatest in countries where government has little experience of working through the private sector *and* who are in receipt of ADB or WB loans that require systematic procurement and budgeting systems. Small scale contracting, with its dual emphasis on improving government's ability to contract out services and on the ability of private firms to respond and implement works, has been an entry point for work in Cambodia, Vietnam and Lao PDR.
- Government demand for *Rural Infrastructure Maintenance Systems* is gradually increasing as the importance of maintaining the value of existing assets is appreciated. It has become an aspect of some programmes (e.g. India and Nepal) and there is interest in Lao PDR, Cambodia and the Philippines. The current ASIST-AP plan to incorporate maintenance planning into the IRAP methodology will help increase its profile.
- *Labour Based Technology* is used for routine maintenance and rehabilitation and upgrading work throughout the sub-region. However, despite being endorsed as the technology of choice for rural infrastructure in several countries (Cambodia, the Philippines, Nepal, and India) government interest in using infrastructure works to create large-scale employment opportunities is limited. Although ASIST-AP has explored the possibility of its use in most countries no significant large scale programmes have been initiated. The experience in Indonesia is typical: in 1999 immediately after the Asian crisis ASIST-AP prepared a project for labour based works with Australian assistance. But government and donor interest faded as Indonesia began a rapid recovery from the crisis and funding for the programme never materialised. Overall, and despite ongoing ASIST-AP support for labour-based technology in some countries (East Timor, Lao PDR, the Solomon Islands), there is relatively little demand for labour based programmes *as a means of creating large scale employment* in the sub-region.

The exception to this is India where political support for employment creation through public works has always been strong and is seeing a recent resurgence.¹³

2.33 The impression gained *from two of the four countries visited during the evaluation* is that local level planning is *the* major demand area. The planning emphasis is to be expected: decentralisation is well underway and local government planners have up to 40% of their budget to allocate to rural infrastructure. They need a robust, easy to use planning tool that allows them to prioritise works. The fact that the IRAP approach allows for a poverty-focussed, participative, gender sensitive and transparent planning process is a bonus as it allows central government departments and local governments to show they are also addressing poverty reduction and good governance objectives. IRAP is also flexible enough to be easily adapted to local conditions and investment mechanisms. This means that it is readily absorbed – and in effect quickly becomes a ‘local’ product. In India maintenance is undoubtedly a major issue but to date appears to have been in a subordinate position to ASIST’s work on IRAP. This is likely to change as the research work on maintenance will be publicly presented early in 2005 and the potential exists for it to become the dominant pillar of future activity. In Nepal labour based methods and the use of small contractors are of equal importance to IRAP.

2.34 ASIST-AP note that if other countries had been the focus of the evaluation (Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam for example) then the other pillars would have come to the fore much more. They estimate the time breakdown in terms of staff skills and resources is reasonably evenly divided between IRAP, Labour-Based works and Small Scale Contracting. Maintenance is the area in which there is least demand by governments (though awareness of its importance is increasing) and it currently commands the least staff inputs.

2.35 In the opinion of the evaluation team *the opportunistic approach of ASIST-AP is the right one* and accounts for the high demand they have generated for ILO ASIST services. The question is only ‘have they got the balance right in all countries?’. Local level planning is poverty focused but it provides limited opportunities to bring in other areas of ILO ASIST expertise – labour standards, transparent procurement processes, capacity development of small firms, income generation – all of which can be introduced through the other three pillars. There will be an opportunity cost in responding to government demand for local level planning tools if it means that fewer resources are available to pursue work in less demand-led areas. However, country resources for IRAP come mainly from third parties and are specifically tied to IRAP activities in country.¹⁴ Therefore, the only opportunity cost is the time spent by ASIST-AP Bangkok staff (significant proportion of one full-time staff member and the Associate Professional Officer) on promotion and supervision activities. Looked at in this way the opportunity cost of IRAP, even in those countries where it forms the major focus, is much less than it first appears.

2.36 That said we would still caution against going too far down the road of supervising the rolling out of IRAP. The argument, advanced by ASIST-AP, is that IRAP needs to be field tested in enough communities to prove that it works (the critical mass idea). But this argument is a dangerous one - in a country as diverse as Indonesia ‘field-testing’ could go on for years. ASIST-AP is not an implementation agency; it needs to monitor the testing of guidelines only

¹³ Symptomatic of this is the intention to enact a National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, promised in 2005. This will provide a legal guarantee for at least 100 days of employment for at least one able-bodied person in every rural, urban poor and lower middle class household every year at minimum wage. There is considerable political weight behind this proposal since among the reasons for the defeat of the previous government is its perceived association with *jobless growth*. The implementation of this policy remains uncertain, however, because of possible legal difficulties if it is enacted. Doubts have also been expressed about its likely success because it flies in the face of several years of declining employment in the organised sector. Nonetheless it represents one of the few current large scale government commitments to employment creation through public works and as such is a unique litmus test of a key ILO policy objective.

¹⁴ IRAP funding is as follows: Indonesia–WB; Philippines–ADB; Cambodia–ADB; and probably in the near future India–DFID; Nepal–WB.

enough to ensure they are appropriate to the local context and can be practically implemented. Thus, in Indonesia we would question whether new funding from SIDA should be used primarily on rolling out IRAP – with some funding for field-testing the maintenance guidelines. We would suggest that the chance to field test the guidelines that have recently been developed on building small contractor capacity should not be lost.¹⁵

EFFECTIVENESS OF DELIVERY CHANNELS

2.37 ASIST-AP delivers the majority of its services directly to government – to a central department, to a sector ministry or to local government. ASIST-AP also delivers some services directly to the ADB and the WB. There is no use of the private sector *as a delivery channel*.¹⁶ With regard to funding for country level work from other donors then ASIST-AP acts as *their* delivery channel.

2.38 The evaluation team did not think that delivering services to government was ‘more’ cost effective or sustainable than delivering them to the IFIs.¹⁷ Rather, governments and the IFIs have different reasons for working with ASIST-AP and ASIST-AP has different reasons for working with them. The issue of partner satisfaction is dealt with in the following section so this discussion is only partly covered there. However, we appreciate that this heading – the effectiveness of delivery channels – is important because it also gives us, the evaluation team, a chance to comment on whether we think ASIST-AP investments of time and resources in (a) governments and (b) IFIs is effective (in other words are governments and IFIs helping ASIST-AP achieve *its* project purpose?) We think this is best dealt with after a consideration of partner satisfaction so we return to this issue at the end of the next section.

DEGREE OF SATISFACTION BY PARTNERS AND IMPACT ON PARTNER PROGRAMMES

2.39 The evaluation team asked all partners (government, IFIs and, where relevant, bilateral donors) about their perceptions of ASIST-AP’s effectiveness in their country. As is the case throughout this report, ASIST-AP refers both to the Bangkok team and to ASIST staff and consultants in country.

Governments

2.40 Government officials expressed high levels of satisfaction with ASIST-AP’s advisory and support work where they have come to know ASIST-AP well. Of the four countries visited satisfaction was highest in Indonesia but also good in the Philippines; gauging satisfaction in Nepal or India was more difficult because ASIST-AP engagement there has been much more limited.

2.41 In most cases government officials specified strengths and weaknesses. The strengths – mentioned particularly in Indonesia and the Philippines - were the competence of the staff group – in Bangkok and nationally - and the fact that governments can be sure of a rapid and flexible response from ASIST-AP.¹⁸

¹⁵ However, if the guidelines on small scale contracting that have been developed by the national consultancy team in Indonesia don’t include any reference to labour standards then they would need to be revised first to include this emphasis.

¹⁶ ASIST engages with two types of private sector firms but does not use either of them as delivery channels. One is the large project management companies responsible for implementing the physical works of infrastructure projects - ASIST may have provided advice on project design or delivery but will have done this directly to government not via the PM company. The other is small-scale contracting companies whose abilities to bid, manage and implement physical works may be the focus of an ASIST capacity building programme.

¹⁷ See TOR, task vi.

¹⁸ The rapid response comment was made particularly with regard to Indonesia where there is a part-time consultancy team of 8 people working at central and local government level. It was less mentioned in the Philippines partly because the ASIST-AP staff member there is attached to the Department of Agriculture as part

2.42 The weaknesses mainly related to the inability of ASIST to respond fully to demand. Bangkok staff were seen to make flying visits to sort out technical and financing issues but not to have sufficient time to understand the constraints faced by policy makers. The fact that each Bangkok staff member covers about six countries did not elicit sympathy from government officials – they simply wanted more quality time spent in *their* country. ASIST-AP was also seen to have a limited crisis response capability. Although the ILO In-Focus Programme on Crises is mandated to respond to crises their lack of technical capacity means that ASIST-AP is sometimes called on to help. The problem is that ASIST-AP itself is overstretched and does not always have the right resources to respond to requests for help with disasters - they did not send people to Bam or Gujarat for this reason. This elicited criticism from within the ILO.

2.43 The other weakness mentioned was the use of international consultants when nationals could have done the job. This was mentioned in both Nepal and the Philippines. The crux of the problem - as with ASIST-AP's inability to respond to demand - is time, capacity, and, ultimately, funding. Bringing in tried and tested international consultants has a known cost and the job can be done quickly. It means ASIST does not have to spend time identifying national consultants and then developing ways to build their capacity where this is necessary. From a national perspective however this is not justified – the very fact of using national consultants whose capacity ASIST-AP has to build is what international organisations should be about. We agree. But we also see why, with a tiny and overstretched staff group, and with very little certainty that capacity building will be a cost effective investment (the programme could close summarily due to funding constraints) ASIST-AP sometimes goes for the easier option.

2.44 The issue of the impact of ASIST-AP work on government programmes is difficult to assess at this point. However, the Indonesia case study – and particularly the output to purpose log frame matrix – gives a very positive example of impact. For the sake of balance however, it should be read alongside the matrices for, say, India, where ILO impact on government programmes is not yet discernable.

The ADB (and the World Bank)

2.45 Comments on the level of satisfaction with ASIST-AP services are based on interviews with a range of staff in ADB HQ in Manila. However, because the evaluation team met only one WB officer – in India - it is not possible to summarise a WB view on ASIST-AP.¹⁹

2.46 Satisfaction is high amongst the ADB staff in Manila with whom ASIST-AP interact because they help them do their job better. ASIST-AP provide ADB with a range of services:

- they contribute to the *design* of rural infrastructure projects in ways that allow ADB to address issues of participation, poverty reduction, income generation and/or capacity building;
- they are able to make *presentations* to government partners and politicians which demonstrate the practicality and good sense of using local resource based approaches to infrastructure;
- they are commissioned by ADB to help with *project implementation*, for example, through training local government officers in local level planning, labour standards, labour based methods etc.;

of an ADB loan. Her ability to respond to requests for assistance from elsewhere in government or even from the ILO office is very limited. 'Rapid' response in the Philippines case means that a staff member is prepared to fly in from Bangkok.

¹⁹ The World Bank official in India noted that ASIST-AP bring knowledge on best practice, particularly on labour based technologies, and act as a catalyst for change. He thought ASIST-AP bring skills and international experience that aren't available locally.

- they also provide *quality control*, monitoring and advisory services during implementation;
- they help *peer review* the proposed use of DFID/JICA/Dutch poverty funds involving infrastructure.

2.47 In the opinion of the evaluation team – and of the ADB staff met - ASIST-AP offers ADB a unique package. As part of ILO ASIST-AP has international standing (the ILO brand image has strong currency in ADB); ASIST are a safe pair of hands (they relate well to governments and politicians); and ASIST-AP offers services at competitive rates with flexibility at the project design stage when task managers are strapped for cash - at which times ASIST-AP can provide advice at no cost through the use of its core funds. In short, ASIST-AP offers ADB the chance to hire cost effective, quality technical services out of a reputed institution that in turn helps project design teams meet ADB's own poverty and safeguard requirements.

2.48 As noted in the previous section the evaluation team were also interested in what ADB 'did' for ASIST-AP. In one sense the benefit is mutual: help with project design can evolve into ADB contracting (and in some cases sole-sourcing) ASIST-AP for an aspect of project implementation or monitoring. Thus the work being undertaken in the Philippines and Cambodia on IRAP, in Cambodia on labour based technologies, in Lao PDR on rural road design, contract supervision and local capacity building – all of this came about because ADB projects needed skills in areas in which ASIST-AP had proven expertise. In the countries of Indochina in particular, ADB work helped ASIST-AP increase its influence and profile with government partners. However, as noted previously in this report, although ASIST has had an influence at a project level within ADB it has had little wider corporate influence. The reasons for this are discussed in a previous section (progress on Output 1).

Bilateral donors

2.49 The evaluation team were not able to meet a sufficient number of bilateral donors who knew ASIST-AP to gain a view of their 'satisfaction levels'. Even though DFID has played a very significant part in providing core-funding for ASIST-AP this has been at a central level, not via country offices. As noted, DFID does have contact with ASIST-AP in Orissa and the possibility of DFID providing country funds in Vietnam is also under discussion. However, contact with donors in the four countries visited remains relatively limited.

CHANGES SINCE 2002 REVIEW

2.50 The terms of reference ask whether there have been any programme revisions resulting from recommendations of the 2002 Review. The short answer to this is that significant effort has been made to respond to the recommendations of that review. By no means has everything recommended been achieved: they have not been able to recruit a member of staff with experience of poverty targeting and labour standards; and only two country strategy papers have been produced. On the other hand significant progress has been made on developing a coherent policy on infrastructure maintenance; on expanding country support teams; on best practice in Cambodia on labour based technology; on prioritising countries and activities.²⁰ Compared to 2002 ASIST-AP has (a) a reduced staff group in Bangkok - one secondee less than in 2002 and (b) a doubling in the level of annual expenditure for country level activities which has required much increased backstopping by Bangkok.²¹ Given this situation, and whilst much remains to be done, progress made has been impressive.

²⁰ On labour based technology: See ADB Review (2003): 'When Labour Works', Vol 35, March-April. See also Munters (2003) in bibliography.

²¹ ASIST-AP has successfully resisted demand to expand into more countries. China has been dropped from its high and Bangladesh from its medium priority list. Activities in China are now covered from Geneva including work on documenting best practice in labour-based works. Work in Afghanistan is now the responsibility of a special unit located in the Delhi Sub-Regional Office. ASIST-AP has resisted pressure to expand into urban

3.0 COHERENCE, INTEGRATION AND LESSON LEARNING²²

3.1 The ASIST-AP log frame focuses primarily on achieving technical, institutional and dissemination outputs. However, the terms of reference for this evaluation also require a consideration of integration and coherence issues which are not reflected in the log frame. Their inclusion reflects a concern within ILO at HQ and country level, and an acknowledgement by ASIST staff that the relationship between ASIST and other parts of ILO could be better. There was a general feeling that this evaluation was a good opportunity to think seriously about what integration can usefully mean and how it might be achieved to aid ASIST and ILO effectiveness.

3.2 The issue of lesson learning is relevant throughout this section but is given specific attention in the discussion of cross learning between the two ASIST programmes (Africa and Asia-Pacific) and cross learning that can be achieved through secondments.

THE DESIGN OF ASIST-AP AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO EIIP

3.3 The emphasis of the EIIP programme and the hallmark by which it (but not ASIST-AP) continues to be known, is on the development and implementation of employment intensive policies in infrastructure that aim to create jobs – and thereby directly reduce poverty - for the rural and urban poor.²³ Most related programme components are presented as supporting this central job creation objective.²⁴ Research studies commissioned by EMP/INVEST also reflect this concern insofar as they address frequently asked questions about labour based technologies – how many jobs can they provide compared to equipment-based works? When are they technically viable? When are they cost effective? What is their macro-economic impact? And so on.²⁵

3.4 Labour based technology is represented as one of ASIST-AP's four pillars and forms a part in the programme in most countries. As explained in the preceding section, the potential for *large scale employment intensive works* is limited in the region and does not sell well to governments. The reasons for the lack of emphasis on job creation in the region are clearly outlined in the ASIST-AP programme document.²⁶

activities on the basis that it has neither the in-house expertise nor a comparative advantage in relation to specialist agencies like HABITAT.

²² This section deals with TOR tasks i, iii, iv and xiii.

²³ This section draws on the Programme Document for EIIP ('A global programme: investing in employment for poverty reduction and local economic growth', ILO, 2003) and relevant Governing Body reports for the Committee on Employment and Social Policy (e.g. 'Productive employment for poverty reduction and development, March 2004) and the Committee on Technical Co-operation (e.g. 'Thematic evaluation report: Employment-intensive investment and poverty alleviation', March 2003). ASIST-AP documents referred to include the Programme Document and the latest Annual Progress Report, May 2003-April 2004.

²⁴ Other programme components support the employment potential of labour based works, for example, capacity building private sector contractors, teaching employment intensive approaches in national training and education institutes, promoting labour standard implementation through improved labour based contracting procedures. But all of these are presented in HQ documentation as related to, and supportive of, labour intensive programmes, rather than being legitimate independent *alternative* areas of work. See EIIP Programme Document, referenced above.

²⁵ See the section on EIIP in the bibliography for examples of studies commissioned on the impact of labour intensive technologies.

²⁶ The Programme Document for ASIST-AP states: 'In the countries of South Asia it would be redundant to suggest that labour based methods should be used given that the major means of production of much of the infrastructure is labour. Equally, in the countries of East Asia, which are generally middle income countries, the idea of labour based methods needs to be approached more from the point of view of a rational use of local resources rather than as a technology to supplant the conventional methods. Moreover in many countries of the region the most rewarding entry point may in fact be the emphasis on local level infrastructure planning. This is technology neutral and affords with it the possibility to bring with it concepts of decent work, local participation, equal opportunities and poverty oriented strategies.' (p. 14)

3.5 One might ask why it is that EIIP has kept labour based infrastructure as its main thrust and not become more nuanced to reflect issues in the AP region. In our view, one reason is presentational: the employment creation message has been very successful both in maintaining the existence of the programme in ILO Geneva and in securing donor funds (a large number of which have supported the use of labour based approaches over the years). With the adoption by the ILO of a new results-based strategic management and budgeting system, to be implemented in full in the 2006-2007 biennium, the *raison d'être* of the EIIP – employment creation – has been re-affirmed as a core strategic objective. EMP/INVEST hope this re-affirmation will prove to be a first step in reversing the long trend in declining budgets and staffing levels for the EIIP.²⁷

3.6 A second reason for the EIIP message being firmly oriented towards employment creation may be that the field experience of the team at the centre – in EMP/INVEST – has been largely Africa based. It is natural that the centre should draw on its own extensive Africa based experience where it is perceived that labour based works have been more extensively rolled out. However, it is also important to note that even in Africa there is an ongoing debate as to the current relevance of labour based works and their ability to provide significant long term employment outside a few countries.

3.7 Does this difference in emphasis between EMP/INVEST at the centre and ASIST in the Asia and Pacific region matter? Our assessment is that it does matter because the lack of coherence between the two programmes has prevented much cross-learning or open, critical debate. EMP/INVEST, for their part, have been frustrated at the lack of support and input by ASIST-AP into their employment intensive message and agenda. At the same time documents prepared about the EIIP have rarely reflected the impact and lessons learned from the major components of ASIST-AP's work. Thus, lessons on how to influence the policy environment, on delivering TA to countries undergoing rapid decentralisation, on the pros and cons of working through the ADB and the WB, on the process of strategic decision making (e.g. when to make poverty reduction through IRAP an entry point rather than the other pillars) – very little of this is currently being effectively shared or debated. Although EMP/INVEST publications on the EIIP do indeed deal with ASIST-AP's other pillars (local level planning, small scale contracting and maintenance) these are presented as additional activities to the main issue of employment creation rather than as strategies in their own right.

3.8 In the opinion of the evaluation team this is a good time for EMP/INVEST and ASIST AP to develop a strategy for closer collaboration. This must include discussions on how the programme will be presented at the centre and in the region. Consideration must be given to the fact that EMP/INVEST is mandated to deliver employment creation and therefore needs to maintain this as an emphasis. At the same time there is ample opportunity for EMP/INVEST to reflect more strongly, in its publications and messages to ILO Geneva as a whole, other ways in which its regional programmes are contributing to decent work and poverty reduction agendas.

3.9 It is our opinion that, between them, the EMP/INVEST and the ASIST regional programmes have the experience to make a significant and innovative contribution to ILO as a knowledge organisation. But to realise this will mean going beyond the job creation focus; it may also mean shifting away from the approach that currently characterises centre and regional publications. A knowledge programme is not simply about stating 'what should be done' and 'how to do it' however important these are. It also involves tackling difficult issues and having them debated. There are many important issues in the infrastructure field that have not yet

²⁷ Whilst other development programmes were closed or merged during the 1990s the Employment Intensive Investment Programme survived, albeit with much reduced staff and resources - its staff were reduced from 16 to 4.5 over 4 years. The current HQ staffing levels of EMP/INVEST are 2.5 supported from ILO's regular budget and 2 from programme support income (PSI).

seen proper *debate*. For example, in which countries is it still viable to canvas an employment intensive approach? What circumstances must prevail to make this a realistic and sustainable option that governments will support? Is ILO ASIST, as the instigator of the IRAP approach, the best agency to deliver it at country level? Why not an NGO? How can the crisis in government capacity to work with the private sector (small scale contractors) be rapidly addressed? Can an approach to this be ‘productised’ in the same way as IRAP? These topics are purely indicative – the point is that knowledge is generated more often by tackling the issues for which there are no ready answers than by continuing to advance well-known positions.

INTEGRATION OF ASIST-AP INTO ILO PROGRAMMES

3.10 The integration of ASIST-AP into ILO programmes can occur in two ways. First, ASIST-AP work in a country can be formally represented by ILO as part of its strategic country plan. This is helpful as it signals the contribution that the ILO Office sees ASIST as making. The best example of this (that we know about) is in Cambodia and Vietnam: in each case the Sub-Regional office (Bangkok) has integrated ASIST-AP into ILO wider country objectives – these, in turn, reflect government objectives set out in the 5 year plan or PRSP. Second – and somewhat independently of whether ASIST-AP is formally represented as part of ILO’s strategic country plan – ASIST can be integrated into ILO country work through joint work on the ground. For example, through ASIST and the ILO Country Director or Deputy regularly meeting to discuss policy and politics, through staff liaising on publications, through joint work (e.g. on the PRSP), through the ILO office helping ASIST to identify donor funds. This is what happens in Indonesia. The benefits of such a relationship are self-evident.

3.11 However, as discussed above, there are instances where integration could be much better. The problem tends to be explained by both sides in terms of structural constraints and/or personalities (‘we relate to different ministries’;²⁸ ‘they should come and sit in our office’; ‘they don’t tell us what they are doing; ‘we make courtesy calls but rarely discuss anything substantive, so what’s the point’). A rather hands-off relationship then becomes the norm. This is counterproductive for all concerned and requires action on both sides. Calls for ASIST staff or consultants to come and sit in the ILO country office may miss the point (in Indonesia the ASIST-AP consultants and ILO are based in different cities but the relationship works very well). What is more important is that the relationship is seen as one of equality and mutuality and is grounded (at least initially) in an issue in which both have a real interest. Identifying common interests and working on these is key.

PROMOTION OF LABOUR STANDARDS AND DECENT WORK AGENDA INTO INFRASTRUCTURE

3.12 In principle, labour standards and the decent work agenda are promoted into infrastructure in those countries where ASIST works on small scale contracting, maintenance or labour based works. In practice some opportunities may be being lost, particularly where ASIST has relied on national consultants to incorporate labour standards into guidelines. It is not necessarily the case that university based staff, with engineering degrees, will necessarily have experience of labour standards. In Indonesia there is very limited mention of labour standards in the guidelines on maintenance or small scale contracting being prepared by the national team of university based consultants. Explicit mention of the need to incorporate a labour standards perspective needed to be made in their TOR.

²⁸ The counterpart ministry for the ILO is the Ministry of Labour; the counterpart for ASIST varies – it may be Planning, Finance, Local Government, Rural Development, Transport or Agriculture depending on the nature of their activities in that country.

3.13 The labour standards and the decent work agenda is strongest in Nepal, Lao PDR and Cambodia (and, previously, Vietnam) where government engineers are being trained in contracting procedures which incorporate labour standards. The main labour standard issues addressed are wages, the minimum age, equal opportunity, recruitment and workmen's compensation schemes (for accidents).

3.14 As noted above, the local level planning tool developed by ILO and promoted by ASIST (IRAP) is not related to labour standards. Thus in countries where IRAP is the main or only focus there is little work around labour standards – at least currently. However, this is recognised by ASIST: the strategy is to establish a presence through one pillar first and then to raise awareness of the importance of other pillars when a level of demand has been generated.

CROSS LEARNING BETWEEN ASIST-AP AND ASIST-AFRICA

3.15 The evaluation team could not find a strong culture of cross learning between ASIST-AP and ASIST Africa (at least this was the perspective gained in the AP region, we did not visit Africa). Despite an impressive number of publications produced by each region there were no joint publications. Both organisations contribute to the ASIST Bulletin, but the bulk of the work, and therefore the coverage, is done in Africa. Nor was there much evidence of formal (published) dialogue between individuals around common themes (the future of employment intensive works in the two regions; the impacts of decentralisation on infrastructure provision to give two examples – there are many more).

3.16 This is not to suggest that staff in the regions have no contact. They talk to individuals about matters of technical concern when necessary. Some members of ASIST-AP previously worked in Africa as well as Geneva and are familiar with issues there and some translation of skills and experience has occurred. An example is contractor training where experience from Ghana, Lesotho, Kenya and Tanzania formed the basis of early work on this topic in Asia. A reverse learning example is IRAP - the initial concept was born in the Philippines in 1990 where it quickly evolved into a local level, decentralised, planning procedure based on people's access to services. IRAP was then exported to Africa. Today however contact between the two regions is more limited than we expected.

3.17 This lack of contact is partly (although not fully) explained by the organisational and operational history of the two offices. ASIST-Africa was established in 1991 entirely out of donor funds. It set up a document and information base, published a regular bulletin on labour-based affairs, acted as a coordinator for the then many donor activities in labour-based works in some countries (Kenya, Mozambique), and organised technical assistance inputs into projects and programmes. Strong donor support has remained crucial to its operations up to the present time, especially for the technical assistance activities in which it participates. It was also able to draw on the accumulated experience from backstopping a number of internationally assisted large-scale programmes in the region – Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, several labour based technology initiatives in Tanzania and Zambia – and growing experience with the first attempt in Ghana to encourage small-scale contractors for labour-based road rehabilitation and maintenance. All of these activities were judged internationally to have achieved a qualified success, although some were experiencing sustainability problems at the time ASIST-AP was established.

3.18 ASIST-AP came into being in 1998, in the wake of the Asian economic crisis of 1997, with initial funding from Danida and DFID, and in kind support from the Netherlands. Although there had been a more than two-decade history of ILO seeking to influence regional governments to adopt employment intensive infrastructure investment policies, there were very few programmes on a comparable scale to those in Africa. While trying to revive the notion of central government directed employment intensive policies, it was also decided to

try to build on the evident success of the IRAP process for which the local government level had been used as the entry point. The current four-pillar package of services then came into existence. This change of emphasis, coupled with the strong regional trend towards decentralised government, has given ASIST-AP a characteristically different mode of operation to ASIST-Africa. Whereas ASIST-Africa has responded to (mainly donor initiated) demands, ASIST-AP has had to create demand.

3.19 Strong donor support has also enabled ASIST-Africa to give more emphasis to core ILO principles and to diversify into other fields. It is, for example, active in urban roads, drainage and sanitation, which ASIST-AP is not.²⁹ In contrast, most of the technical assistance activities in which ASIST-AP participates is financed with loan funds. This produces a much more challenging climate in which to market services than those supported by donor grants. In this situation ASIST-AP is necessarily more demand-led and does not seek to execute projects, rather, and as discussed in previous sections, it adds value to those being executed by other agencies by emphasising local resource use.³⁰

3.20 Given the difference in organisational and financing history, would much be gained by increasing the degree of contact and the opportunities for cross learning?

3.21 The question of whether there would be gains depends on whether one believes that greater collaboration could (i) improve the quality of work undertaken e.g. through the sharing of unique products and experiences; (ii) make for better strategic decision making on overall directions; or (iii) produce better products for ILO corporately, e.g. in terms of 'knowledge' publications. However, even if the above factors apply it could be argued that the main audience for ASIST-AP dialogue is ILO's offices in the Asia-Pacific region where all staff are addressing common country environments and can therefore learn from each other's experiences. On this basis, would there be added value in communicating with Africa where conditions are very different?

3.22 Our own feeling is that there are compelling reason for increasing the degree of contact and the opportunities for cross-learning between the two regions. This is primarily because each region does have unique experiences, approaches and products which could benefit the other.³¹ In addition, *some* issues do need to be debated internally and across the two regions - more dialogue on some of the 'big questions' would enliven the programme at the centre and in the regions.

3.23 For this to occur however there needs to be an institutional mechanism and finance for exchanges – the last meeting between the two sets of ASIST personnel was 2000 in the ILO Turin training centre. The issue of financing is part of the wider funding issue and is taken up in the final section.

ROLE OF SECONDMENTS

3.24 ASIST-AP has had two sorts of secondments: one is Associate Professional Officer/Associate Expert level, i.e. younger people at a relatively early point in their careers, with some country experience; the other is older professionals with considerable institutional, policy and practical experience.

²⁹ The ASIST-AP view is that it has no comparative advantage in most of these fields which it feels are best left to specialist UN agencies like HABITAT.

³⁰ These conclusions were based on the documents made available for the evaluation. We have subsequently been informed by EMP/INVEST that there are several recent examples in Africa of a demand responsive approach being adopted by ASIST Africa in response to government (not donor) initiatives.

³¹ For example, on the technical side South Africa is the major centre for urban, community-based and high technology labour-based works; in Asia there are advances in implementing IRAP, in capacity building approaches, materials research and bio-engineering.

3.25 In principle secondees could contribute to a regional programme like ASIST in two ways. They might contribute to country level promotional and policy work thereby acting like an extra pair of hands for the existing core staff group of three. *Or* they might develop areas of work that are important to the organisation by bringing in skills or experience that existing staff do not have. In this case the contribution of the secondee is based on the *different* skills they bring. In exceptional circumstances they might, of course, do both.

3.26 In the past secondees to ASIST-AP seem to have fallen between the two stools. They have not significantly added to the existing skills set nor have they brought enough of a sufficiently different skills set to have made a lasting impact. This is not to suggest past secondments have not been useful - they have allowed ASIST-AP to extend their reach in some countries and they have undertaken some important office based tasks (setting up the website for example). However, their added value to ASIST-AP as the recipient organisation could have been greater.

3.27 The current secondees are both from DFID and the experience is positive. The Associate Professional Officer is seen to have 'found her place'; her ability to listen and learn quickly is particularly valued. She is also beginning to challenge some long held assumptions and bring in some new ideas, particularly around gender and inclusion. The senior adviser brings a wider perspective to the work based on experience, strategic thinking – seen as a DFID hallmark - and a familiarity with donors. With both individuals there has been a settling in period but both are seen as now sufficiently familiar with the programme to make a real contribution. And both want to extend their contracts (an indicator of satisfaction on their part). ASIST-AP's experience with secondments has therefore been variable but the current DFID complement is valued.

3.28 However, there are some generic issues around secondments that need to be taken into account in future. The evaluation team came to three particular conclusions:

(i) First, young professionals would be more effective based in a country office than in the regional office in Bangkok. Most do not have the experience to promote the programme to senior government officials and IFIs; nor to provide back-up to ASIST-AP teams in country - most teams comprise individuals more experienced than themselves. Therefore, unless they have a specific and very different skill that is in demand in the office, it would be far better to place them in country teams where they could gain more first hand knowledge and work alongside and support ASIST-AP staff and consultants. (The evaluation team could identify a useful role for young professionals in all of the four countries visited.)

(ii) There is definitely a role for mature professionals in the regional office. However, secondments need to be based on a concept of demand and supply if the organisations and the individuals involved are to benefit optimally. ASIST-AP could help by being more proactive in future, e.g. by circulating to potential donors a profile of competencies that they require. The sending organisation may not be able to respond fully but they will at least have some demand criteria to apply if there are placement options.

(iii) In the future, and as already discussed, ASIST-AP could greatly benefit from a secondee with high quality analytical skills so that more of ASIST-AP's non-technical experience can be captured and disseminated. ASIST-AP's work is making a central contribution to wider ILO and development goals. But current publications focus on the technical issues (rightly, because this *is* their core competence); however, important lessons are not being captured: analyses of the institutional, governance and poverty context, lessons on working with IFI partners, insights on how a small TA programme can influence government policy, and so on. These issues should be feeding into ILO as a knowledge organisation and being discussed by ILO and development colleagues in the region and beyond.

4.0 MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL ISSUES

4.1 This section discusses key issues associated with the management; administration and finance of the ASIST-AP programme and, where possible, contrasts these with those with ASIST Africa. It does this by first examining ILO management of technical assistance services, including technical and administrative support from HQ. It goes on to discuss the distribution of staff resources. It then examines the funding of the two programmes, how this has changed in the period 1998-2004 and the potential for cost recovery from partners. Finally, the implications that funding mechanisms have for the sustainability of the programmes is considered and the financial support options for ASIST-AP in future.

ILO MANAGEMENT OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

4.2 As noted earlier ASIST-AP is one of two ILO regional support, information and training programmes technically supported by the Employment Intensive Investment Branch (EMP/INVEST) in Geneva.³² All three programmes are seen as the operational arms of the Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme (EIIP) housed in the Employment Sector. However, for practical purposes the ASIST-AP programme comes under the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) located in Bangkok. This is not the case with the other ASIST programmes. The ASIST Africa programme and South America EIIP expert answer on administrative and financial matters directly to EMP/INVEST in Geneva.

4.3 For most administrative and financial purposes the ASIST-AP programme is responsible to the Regional Director (Bangkok). Exceptions are the approval of budgets, legal matters that arise from technical cooperation contracts and formal relations with the main core funding donors. So in practice ASIST-AP functions as a regional programme of the ILO. That means that ASIST-AP works with and through the country offices and the Sub-Regional Offices (SROs) in Bangkok, Delhi and Manila.

4.4 ASIST-AP's funding sources are also different to those of ASIST-Africa insofar as ILO contributions to ASIST-AP's core and country funds come mainly from regional sources.³³ It is not clear what ILO funds have been allocated to ASIST Africa. The main financial role of ILO HQ is to influence the apportionment of centrally negotiated core donor funds to the different ASIST programmes. In addition to contributing directly to core funding the ILO regional structure is also an increasing source of finance for country activities through Regular Budget Technical Cooperation (RBTC) funds. In the seven years 1998-2003 this source contributed \$382,242 or \$54,606 per year. In 2004 alone it will contribute a further \$184,000. Thus, regional ILO support is increasing not decreasing.

4.5 In principal then ASIST-AP is accountable both to the ILO Sub-Regional Office in Bangkok on financial and administrative grounds and to the EMP/INVEST in Geneva for technical and some administrative purposes. In the opinion of the evaluation team this has not led to over-management by ILO – as can happen when there are two loci of accountability – but to a management 'space' that has allowed ASIST-AP a great deal of freedom to manage itself. It has grasped this enthusiastically. The question this raises for the evaluation is whether this constitutes 'effective and efficient' management of TA services by the ILO - the question posed in the terms of reference.

³² Currently there is not an ASIST programme in South America. An EIIP expert is based in Lima and activity focuses on community contracting and labour-based works research. Additionally there are some EIIP projects in Central America and these are being backstopped by EMP/INVEST.

³³ There have been some direct inputs from EMP/INVEST regular budgets into ASIST AP activities including the funding of the international consultant for the Cambodia cost comparison study. ILO HQ also paid more than US\$ 100,000 in support of the development of the WB preparatory project (PRIP) in Cambodia that ASIST AP was responsible for.

4.6 In the opinion of the evaluators the space that ASIST-AP has been given to operate in partly accounts for the success of the programme. In particular, the autonomy allowed for by the management of the region has enabled ASIST-AP to do what it is good at: respond flexibly and quickly to requests for government and IFI assistance in a wide range of countries with a tiny staff group. We agree with some ILO offices in the region, with the centre and with ASIST-AP staff themselves that there is room for better collaboration and information flows between ASIST-AP and both ILO regional and country offices and with EMP/INVEST. All sides need to take responsibility for ensuring this happens. Section 3 focused on this issue. However, we are not suggesting that the answer to the problem of limited collaboration is for ILO to assume a more directive management role. Indeed, it is refreshing to see a TA programme that is, in our view, managed very well internally, and staffed with experienced ILO hands, being allowed to get on and do what it is good at. ILO regional management is supportive but not overbearing and if this can be taken as an example of ILO management of TA services (and we cannot comment as to whether it is typical or not) then it is a positive example in our view.

TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FROM HQ

4.7 Although in theory HQ provides a mixture of technical and administrative support to ASIST-AP the centre's limited staff resources mean that in practice policy considerations and administrative matters dominate. It is simply unable to provide the technical support that might result from more active international knowledge collation. Similarly while formally the Development Cooperation Department (CODEV), located in HQ, undertakes the liaison and negotiating function with donors, with 60 to deal with, and the interests of numerous ILO programmes to represent, it is not feasible to undertake all the work on behalf of ASIST-AP.³⁴ So staff restrictions at the centre and geography necessarily imposes on ASIST-AP a largely self-contained way of working. The downside of this is that much of the core and all of the country fund seeking is undertaken by ASIST-AP staff and this forms a significant part of their workload (see below). The upside is the good client relations it engenders.

DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF RESOURCES

4.8 Roughly half of the time of the staff of ASIST-AP is spent on regional matters – marketing, promotion, publications, administration etc.. The remainder is spent on country specific activities. In 2003 and 2004 this was spread over 11 countries, with the four countries used for the evaluation case studies estimated to occupy between 60-70% of country specific effort.

4.9 The country specific activities are really the sharp end of what ASIST-AP does and it is a moot point as to whether their consumption of only a half of professional time is a low proportion or not. There are no ready comparisons and the opposite could also be argued: that as a regional programme of the ILO ASIST-AP staff in Bangkok ought to be spending more time on regional activities and contributing more of their experience to regional ILO matters. Our feeling is that the manager of ASIST-AP (who currently spends approximately 30% of his time on country activities) could usefully and effectively put more time into regional work. This will, however, take time away from supporting country programmes and we appreciate that without additional core funds to recompense for this time-transfer country activities will be affected. There is no obvious answer to this dilemma. But if collaboration is to increase between ASIST-AP and both ILO regions and the centre then time and resources have to be made available for this.

³⁴ Roughly half of these donors are permanent and half ad hoc.

PROGRAMME FUNDING

4.10 ASIST-AP receives two main types of funding – *core* and *country* funds. *Core funds* are contributed by ILO HQ and donors, and cover staff costs and promotional and technical activities including international and national consultancies. They are not tied to a specific project or country and are used to establish and develop contacts with governments, and project and programme financing institutions. The critical importance of core funds for the way the ASIST-AP programme operates (flexibility, a fast response etc.) have been discussed in previous sections. *Country funds* result from contracts for the technical backstopping of specific projects and programmes. They cover ASIST-AP staff travel and local costs, and the costs of any additional temporary staff or consultant services necessary to execute the contract. They exclude any ASIST-AP staff salary costs. The main sources of country funds are Regular Budget (ILO) Technical Cooperation (RBTC) funds available to ILO area, Sub and Regional offices for technical assistance and, increasingly, ADB and WB.

4.11 Table 1 shows how the two main sources of funding have developed since 1998. These figures do not tell the full story, since much of the funding is committed for relatively short periods of time: 1-3 years.

4.12 *Core funding* for ASIST-AP has fluctuated, but exhibits a generally rising trend in absolute terms. Over its seven year life core funds have averaged 80% of the total.

4.13 The characteristic of ASIST-AP's approach is to avoid large project involvement in favour of trying to influence policy directions in the broader rural infrastructure sector. Initial contact activities, funded out of core funds, are (hopefully) followed by longer-term TA involvement funded out of country funds, and are executed by in-country teams or consultants backstopped by ASIST Bangkok. Core funding is thus essential to the way ASIST-AP operates. It provides flexibility, an ability to respond quickly, and capacity to influence policy so as to fulfil poverty reduction and decent work objectives.

Table 1. ASIST-AP and core and country funding 1998 – 2004, US \$

Year	ASIST-AP		
	Core	Country	Core as % total
1998	188,131	-	100
1999	377,522	257,152	59.5
2000	509,522	57,000	89.9
2001	828,980	211,000	79.7
2002	1,065,914	50,000	95.5
2003	1,152,545	609,042	65.4
2004	1,786,184	681,261	72.4

4.14 Over the full period country fund fluctuation in ASIST-AP has been greater than core funding, but now also appears to be on a rising trend. This reflects the growing number of agencies wishing to avail of ASIST-AP's services, as is evident from the more detailed funding breakdown for 2003-2005 in Table 2. Prominent among these agencies are ADB and ILO country offices.

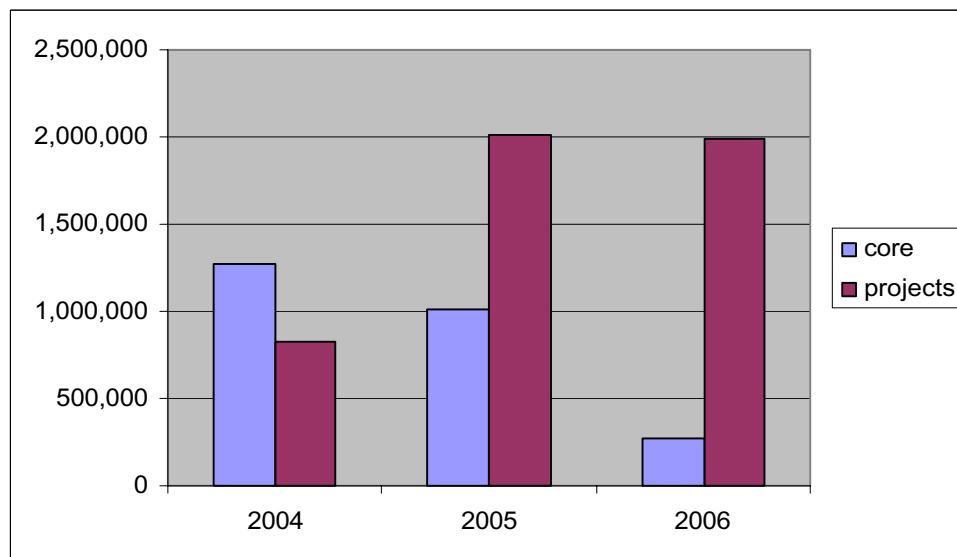
4.15 The total amount expected to be made available to the ASIST-AP programme from all sources of funds over the period 2003-05 (Table 2) is close to \$6 million. DFID is currently providing over 50% of the total funding, whilst ILO provides 12%.

Table 2. Core and country fund sources and amounts for ASIST-AP 2003-05

Donor	Core funds	Country funds	Total Amount \$
ILO	450,000	250,800	700,800
DFID	3,127,002	-	3,127,002
ADB	-	1,073,725	1,073,725
WB	-	136,778	136,778
DANIDA	247,720	-	247,720
Netherlands	90,000	-	90,000
UNDP/Japan	-	180,000	180,000
SIDA	360,000	-	360,000
Total	4,274,722	1,641,303	5,916,025

4.16 Pipeline projects for ADB and the WB, with a high chance of approval, are expected to yield a further US \$ 3.9 million of country funds to ASIST-AP in the period 2005 – 2007. A pipeline project for DFID (India), with a medium chance of approval, is expected to yield a further US \$ 2.5 million of country funds in the period 2005-2009. The trend in country funding thus appears to be buoyant, but it is currently supported by a declining amount of secured core funding as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Estimated Core and Project funding 2004 -2006



4.17 The guaranteed core funding for the ASIST-AP programme will decline over the next two years. On the other hand, country projects funding - based on ongoing discussions with the ADB, WB and other donors - will increase considerably. With these two projections leading in opposite directions questions need to be asked about how the technical support to these country projects will be provided from 2006. More fundamentally, with no current guarantees of core funding, should ASIST-AP be pursuing country projects not knowing whether there will be the capacity to support them? Clearly, even to meet present demands

there is a need to increase the current levels of core funding; to meet future demand core funding levels will need to rise significantly.

4.18 On a more positive note SIDA is expected to become a contributor for work in four countries in 2005 and 2006.³⁵ This will, however, be a departure from previous core funding in that it will be tied to specific countries.

4.19 Core funds for ASIST-Africa have also fluctuated (Table 3), but maintained a roughly constant level. For ASIST Africa core funds are in the range 20-50% of the total.

4.20 As a proportion of total funding core funds appear to be increasing in ASIST-Africa. In ASIST-AP core funds have always made up a larger percentage share of total funding than in ASIST-Africa. These differential trends are mainly explained by the expansion of country funds in Asia and their decline in Africa. In the case of ASIST-AP the proportion of core funding is likely to decline in the immediate future as TA contracts increase.

Table 3. ASIST-Africa core and country funding 1998 – 2004, US \$³⁶

Year	ASIST-Africa		
	Core	Country	Core as % total
1998	1,542,779	5,970,781	20.5
1999	1,677,345	3,780,157	30.7
2000	1,742,068	4,613,589	27.4
2001	1,333,184	4,080,634	24.6
2002	1,587,909	2,295,816	40.9
2003	1,521,554	2,323,990	39.6
2004*	1,239,488	1,152,246	51.8

* budgeted estimates not expenditures

4.21 On the basis of the data supplied to the evaluators ASIST-Africa appears to be experiencing a steady decline in its country funding with the estimated figure for 2004 being substantially below the 1998 peak. According to EMP/INVEST this is because ASIST Africa has been seeking to have less implementation responsibility and to increase advisory and capacity building operations. EMP/INVEST also point out that some countries (Ethiopia, South Africa) have chosen to implement labour-based programmes with the assistance of non-ILO consultants.

Potential for cost recovery from partners

4.22 When considering the funding of the core work done by ASIST-AP, and the dilemmas it currently faces, the question inevitably arises as to whether it ought to be possible to fund it from a levy on the project work done for other donors, especially the IFIs. This, however, reflects a misunderstanding as to the nature of both core and credit funded programme activities.

4.23 The role of the staff in ASIST-AP Bangkok has a very large advocacy element, the cost of which cannot, in practice, be passed on to programmes. It can take up to four years of

³⁵ Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam.

³⁶ It is not clear from the information available to the evaluation team that the two ASIST's follow identical accounting procedures, but these figures are believed to be broadly compatible with those of ASIST-AP. In the case of ASIST Africa its country funds come mostly from backstopping donor projects

visits, demonstrations and visible outputs before a recipient government is prepared to agree to credit TA funds being used to support a modest ASIST-AP input.

4.24 This advocacy work does not, therefore, equate to the business development work that a consultant would expect to do, and to fund from overheads. It is the first step in an integrated influencing process. Replication and scaling-up activities comprise the second step. These lead, ultimately, to a third step - changes in recipient government policy, mainstreaming and institutionalization.

4.25 Donors using ASIST's services are already charged an overhead (nominally 13%) by ILO. In the ILO this is termed Programme Support Income (PSI) and is supposed to approximate to the overhead costs that ILO incurs in administering and technically backstopping projects. However, the: (i) level; and (ii) use of this levy are contested by both ILO and donors.

Level of the levy

4.26 ILO's Bureau of Programming and Management has conducted a study showing that to fully cover costs the PSI ought to be closer to 30%. However, donors have complained about this on the basis that as a UN agency ILO's staff costs are already substantially higher than those in equivalent private sector professions. ASIST-AP has won a concession from ILO in only charging a PSI of 10% when it is doing most of the project administration, or when working on projects for ADB and the WB.³⁷ In the latter cases it was argued that since these were loans to poor countries then as a matter of principle they should not be used to finance HQ activities. In a further variation SIDA has insisted - for ASIST-Africa project RAF/97/05/SID - that 5/13ths of the 13% PSI levy has to be retained by the ASIST programme. It is understood that they will apply the same stipulation to future funding of ASIST-AP; whether ILO administration will agree to this is unclear.

Use of the levy

4.27 Normally the PSI is split into three with a third to the administrative and finance sections jointly, a third to the regional or sub-regional offices, and a third to the sector (e.g. Employment) in which it is earned. Its distribution is the prerogative of the Head of Sector. In practice it is used to support the work of all sector departments and branches including those without technical assistance programmes and therefore not in a position to earn PSI. Thus there is no linkage between the PSI that ASIST-AP earns and what it might expect to receive back, if anything at all. *Securing more country funds (and hence PSI) does not therefore translate into more core support from the PSI levy.*

4.28 ASIST-AP could of course seek to charge its (staff) time to projects, but this would commit staff to specific outputs in particular countries. This could be done for very short missions (2-3 weeks). However, anything more would compromise the role of the team as advisers. They would in effect be acting as consultants and this could jeopardize the non-commercially motivated status they enjoy as UN personnel. ASIST-AP prefers that consultancy inputs into programmes are provided wherever possible by regional consultants whose fees are low by international standards.

³⁷ We were informed by EMP/INVEST that there have been other similar reduced PSI precedents for WB projects in the EIIP but the nature and basis for the concessions offered is unclear.

Impact of funding arrangements and programme's response to these

Impact of funding arrangements on ASIST team in Bangkok

4.29 The most obvious impact of inadequate *core funding* is that ASIST staff in Bangkok cannot effectively backstop activities in 11 countries.³⁸ While this number implies that the four senior staff cover less than 3 countries each, in practice their special technical skills require *some* to work in up to 7-9 countries. This is far too many. ASIST staff themselves estimate that they can cover only three countries effectively.

4.30 Limited *donor funding* in many of the 11 countries of operation means that ASIST Bangkok staff spend around 25% of their time trying to generate country funding from donors. In some countries they do this alone, in others with the assistance of the ILO office. This time has a high opportunity cost even though it is not 'wasted' as such: it inevitably involves establishing good relationships with key donors and IFIs through exemplifying the type of service that ASIST can provide. Thus 'chasing money' often has positive practical outputs.³⁹ That said, it further detracts from the amount of time staff can give to backstopping country teams.

Impact of funding arrangements on country operations

4.31 Current funding arrangements have impacts that need careful management, particularly uncertain and tied funding at country level. On the one hand ASIST-AP have to contend with too little flexible core funding. On the other there is increasing funding for specific outputs that reduce its flexibility. Ironically it is this flexibility that has made it such a good programme in the first place. In these circumstances the evaluation team feel that it might benefit the ASIST team to think more strategically sooner, for example, through using a scenario planning approach.

4.32 Scenario planning that involved national staff/consultants and key country partners (the ILO office for example) might have other benefits. 'Waiting to see' if funding can be secured is disempowering – it gives national staff little sense of the possible directions of the programme and their place in it. If, on the other hand, they are involved in scenario planning (literally, what is our strategy under, say, three different possible funding situations) they retain a sense of control of where the programme might go and the part they might or might not play in it. Involving the ILO country office would help the office appreciate the work of ASIST in country (if they don't already), participate in discussions about future strategic directions, and secure their support in making joint approaches to funding sources. All of this already happens in some countries (Indonesia for example).

4.33 Of course, there are some practical impacts of funding that ASIST cannot plan for. Institutionalizing/mainstreaming ASIST's pro-poor approach takes time, up to 5-7 years. Sometimes funding runs out before an activity has reached the stage of being institutionalised or has had any impact on policy because it takes longer to achieve than anticipated. (Donors usually commit themselves only for 2-3 years.) Also it may be the result of external events (changes in government, removal of champions to other posts) that are outside ASIST (or ILO's) sphere of influence. For example, one of the three sets of guidelines being produced in Indonesia by the national team of university based consultants is not sufficiently funded to

³⁸ Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand (although activities have almost stopped as of mid-2004), Philippines. Indonesia, Timor Leste and Solomon Islands.

³⁹ One example is the help ASIST Bangkok staff recently gave to an infrastructure project design team in ADB. As a result of ASIST's substantial input to the project document it incorporated a (costed) poverty and decent work focus. ASIST provided this service at no cost (i.e. out of core funds). However, this paid off: its high quality convinced ADB to argue ASIST be sole-sourced on the basis that they were the only body able to provide the range of skills required to implement the poverty focus described in the project document.

allow their testing at local level. Without this there is very little chance that they will have any impact on either local practice or central government thinking.

Options for supporting ASIST-AP financially in the future

4.34 Core funding is essential to the way that ASIST-AP operates and in the past most has come from donor sources as ILO's ability to fund this activity has been limited. If core funding remains at the level projected for 2005 and 2006 then staff and country project activities will necessarily have to be reduced.

4.35 Under present internal ILO arrangements ASIST-AP is unlikely to benefit significantly from the PSI resulting from its increased acquisition of country funds. Even if more donors were to follow the precedent of SIDA and insist on earmarking a proportion of the PSI levied on their support for ASIST use, this would not of itself generate sufficient core funding as to obviate the need for other supplementary sources.⁴⁰ Moreover, IFIs would be unlikely to agree to such an arrangement for the country projects they support.

4.36 Funds pledged directly to ILO HQ under framework agreements will also not directly benefit ASIST-AP unless they are earmarked to do so. The most effective assistance option is thus provision of core funding direct to ASIST-AP. It is this that will allow it to maintain an active involvement in country programmes and retain its flexible response capability to governments and IFIs in the region.

⁴⁰ For example, \$5,000,000 of country project support would yield a PSI of \$650,000, which under the SIDA stipulation would give ASIST-AP \$250,000 or 5% of the total. ASIST-AP's current core to country fund percentage is 80:20%.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I. PHILIPPINES CASE STUDY

1. ASIST-AP involvement

Currently, technical assistance is being provided by ASIST-AP to the Department of Agriculture (DA) to integrate local resource based strategies into an ADB capital investment loan covering 41 Provinces and 779 municipalities and cities of the country under the Infrastructure for Rural Productivity Enhancement Project (InfRES).¹ This \$150 million project will provide farm-to-market roads, water supply and small scale irrigation through decentralised local government units (LGUs). ASIST-AP support is being used to advise the LGUs on the application of a pro-poor and highly participative planning tool – Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP). The aim is to get LGUs to use this tool when prioritising infrastructure needs to be funded under the loan. The application of labour-based, equipment-supported (LBES) methods of construction and maintenance is also a priority for the DA.

Development of the IRAP tool was initiated in the Philippines in 1989 where it achieved national coverage with the Department of Interior and Local Government.² For the DA, IRAP is being adapted to meet specialised sector prioritisation demands.

ASIST-AP has also attempted, through the Department of Labour, to build on the Executive Orders promulgated by the last four Philippine Presidents in favour of employment-intensive work methods. Whilst the notion has received political favour, it remains unpopular at a technical level, which has continuously frustrated implementation. Training materials on LBES construction and maintenance are being finalised with the intention to introduce their use in the next phase of the project.

2. Projects/programmes examined

Discussions in Manila focused on ASIST-AP's work on the InfRES project with the DA and co-operation with ADB.³

3. Logic of ASIST-AP involvement and expected outputs

The ILO experience with the IRAP process signalled that working with local levels of government might be a more successful strategy than with central ministries. It also suggested that there might be scope for the introduction of more labour-based maintenance. The decision of government to decentralise many functions in 1991, the first in Asia to do so, gave support to the logic of this strategy. ASIST-AP is further seeking to add value to an ADB financed local level infrastructure investment loan by introducing labour-based methods of rehabilitation and maintenance.

4. Assessment of outputs, use by partners, ASIST-AP efficiency

Our evaluation of progress against each output is attached in matrix format. This section elaborates on some of the outputs and discusses other evaluation issues not mentioned in the logframe.

1. Sustainability

There are three aspects of sustainability in the Philippines context:

- (i) Is IRAP, as a poverty oriented, participatory planning tool for LGUs, formally recognised and endorsed by central government?

¹ This covers about 50 % of the country/provinces/ municipalities and 47% of the population.

² An explanation of this evolution is to be found in The IRAP Guidebook: Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning for Local Governments. Manila, Philippines 2002 (ILO).

³ More broad based regional cooperation with ADB is discussed elsewhere in the report.

- (ii) Is IRAP being institutionalised at LGU level in the sense of actually being used to identify priority investments for rural infrastructure?
- (iii) Are the skills required to train LGUs in IRAP sustainable, i.e. have training skills been fully localised or is there still reliance on staff from Bangkok?

Sustainability at central government level.

ASIST-AP's concern has been that although IRAP has been endorsed and used by individual departments (Interior and Local Government, Agriculture) and by donors (ADB) it has not been formally endorsed as a planning tool by central government even after 13 years of application. This is despite the fact that government has funded full-time IRAP positions at different times.⁴ ASIST-AP now realise they have been relying on the wrong department ('we were barking up the wrong tree'); the ASIST staff member in Manila is now in touch with the department responsible for LGU planning guidelines and the possibility of IRAP being formally endorsed by government now looks a good possibility (see attached output matrix).

Sustainability at LGU level

Although it is too soon to know whether the IRAP approach will be sustainable in the context of the InfRES project evidence from previous phases of IRAP indicates that application is variable and depends on a number of factors in the political economy, including whether the mayor of the LGU supports IRAP and the transparent, participatory planning it involves. An analysis of the factors at LGU level which encourage or constrain IRAP implementation is needed, not least because if there is widespread local resistance (e.g. from local leaders) then this needs to be addressed in the training itself. We recommend extending the work that the ASIST staff member has started on this issue.

Sustainability in terms of skills localisation

For the most part ASIST relies on the ASIST staff member attached to the DA who now has six years of experience in adapting the programme, conducting training and making verbal and written presentations on IRAP. There is no need to rely on ASIST Bangkok for training skills as there are a group of ex-IRAP practitioners in the Philippines (mainly in the Department of Local Government) who can be called on if required. In short, IRAP skills are fully localised.

2. Use of ASIST by IFIs

Our interviews with ADB staff indicated that ADB use ASIST in several ways:

- to contribute to project design in ways that enhance the poverty orientation of their investment projects (e.g. when they want to use participatory planning methods, labour-based technologies, build local government or SME contractor capacity);
- to peer review the proposed use of DFID/JICA/Dutch poverty funds involving infrastructure;
- for presentations to government partners and politicians about the practicality and good sense of using a local resource based approach to infrastructure;
- during implementation, for example, to train trainers or to directly train local government officers in participatory approaches, labour standards, labour based methods etc.;
- as a backstop during implementation – to quality control, monitor and advise.

The technical expertise ASIST offers ADB is exceptional but it is not, on its own, unique. What is unique is the package. As part of ILO ASIST has international standing (the ILO brand image has strong currency in ADB); ASIST are a safe pair of hands (they relate well to governments and politicians); and ASIST offers services at competitive rates with flexibility at the project design stage when task managers are strapped for cash - at which times ASIST can provide advice at no cost through the use of its core funds. In short, ASIST offers ADB the chance to hire cost effective, quality

⁴ In 2000, for example, there were 7 full-time positions for IRAP practitioners in the Local Government Academy which provided capacity building to LGUs. However, over time the individuals concerned were given other jobs so the impetus was not maintained.

technical services out of a reputed institution that in turn helps project design teams meet ADB's own poverty and safeguard requirements.

The question however, is what are the gains *for ASIST and wider ILO* in acting as consultants for ADB and other IFIs – other than the obvious one: the resources they bring help ASIST to stay in business? How is ILO compensated for use of its core funds? In providing technical services to ADB ASIST does not necessarily impact on wider ADB practice because ASIST liaise with country programme staff not policy makers. Their main interlocutors are the Poverty Reduction and Social Development Division but the latter's influence is mainly limited to areas covered by the safeguard policies they quality control. Nor does ASIST contribute to policy debates and discussions though being commissioned to write analytical papers (which might be the case if the ADB were structured more like the World Bank). ASIST staff are invited to meetings which IFIs attend (the upcoming GTZ organised conference in Berlin for example) but these occasions do not address IFI policy. In summary, there are few opportunities for ASIST to have influence on ADB policy or systems in areas of their specific competence.

One of the ways in which ASIST work could have wider influence within ADB would be through the intervention of the ILO office. Their higher level connections within ADB could open doors for more strategic interventions – for work on procurement contracting for example and the incorporation of selected labour standards into standard bidding documents. For this to occur the ILO office would need to be better informed of the possible areas in which ASIST thought it could contribute; a joint strategy would then need to be developed.

3. ASIST integration with ILO

As in Bangkok the ILO Sub-regional Office in Manila said they wanted closer integration of ASIST's work with ILO's mainstream initiatives and programmes. They did not have specific recommendations as to what sort of integration would be valuable as their knowledge of what ASIST did on the ground was limited. They suggested it would help if the ASIST staff member was physically housed in the ILO building in Makati rather than the DA project office in Quezon City. This may or may not be a practical suggestion (the agreement with the DA is that an ASIST staff member will sit in the project office). In any case we do not think location is the *primary* issue.

From the evaluation team perspective there are two more important issues.

First, there is the issue of ASIST staff 'capture' by those donors who fund them. This is a general issue and does not relate only to the Philippines. But it does present a dilemma. From the point of view of some donors (including government departments funded by loans) ASIST staff are 'their' consultants for which they have paid and for whom they exercise responsibility and, implicitly, control. The idea that ASIST staff may have additional, wider responsibilities (e.g. to an ILO country programme) does not occur to them. Unless otherwise negotiated ASIST staff will be treated like any other consultant – at the beck and call of the funder.⁵ This is not to suggest that this situation cannot be rectified through discussion; it simply attempts to explain how the current situation has arisen.

Second, there is the issue of what exactly it is that the ILO country programmes mean by 'integration'. It is well recognised by ILO that ASIST is contributing very directly to ILO's employment and decent work objectives. But contact between them is relatively limited. We suggest that ASIST and the ILO country office needs to define the *substantive areas* where knowledge can usefully be shared. For efficiency's sake specific meetings need to be identified which ASIST staff can make a priority to attend because they can play a meaningful role. Simply 'attending more meetings' may make ASIST

⁵ The issue of staff capture by donors (or by government) increases the importance of core funding. It is this that allows ASIST to respond innovatively and flexibly to opportunities to have policy impact where this is not possible within the confines of a donor supported project.

staff more familiar with the range of work in which ILO is involved but knowledge sharing needs to be done for an ultimate purpose that is beneficial to both sides. We recommend that in the Philippines (as in other countries visited) the broad areas in which integration may be meaningful and useful for both sides is first identified. Agreements can then be reached on the activities which will help accomplish this.

Log frame for ASIST-AP 2001 –2005. Output to Purpose Review Summary: THE PHILIPPINES

Narrative Summary	OVIs	Progress	Comments by evaluation team
<p>GOAL: To contribute to the poverty reduction goals of ILO countries in the Asia Pacific region.</p> <p>PURPOSE: To improve the access of the population to decent work and to economic & social goods & services through the effective use of local resources.</p>	<p>IRAP is in use at local government level and results in fairer and more transparent resource investments by LGUs.</p>	<p>IRAP is in use at government level but it is too soon to identify the extent to which this will result in increasing people's access to decent work/ services as no investments have yet been made as a result of the IRAP planning tool in the context of the ADB programme. (See comment.)</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence suggests the IRAP planning approach is being used at local level – but much less is known about the reasons for its adoption or not at local level.</p> <p>In general, the Department of Agriculture (DA), is highly satisfied with ASIST-AP's work on the InfRES project and the way they are adapting and rolling out the IRAP process to the DA's target Local Government Units (LGUs). They have also requested ASIST's help with identifying models to use for labour-based rehabilitation and maintenance.</p>	<p>Whether IRAP is actually being used, and the extent to which it has poverty impacts, will partly depend on local institutional and political factors (e.g. if local mayors endorse IRAP). Separating cause and effect and attributing impact will be difficult without a better appreciation of factors at local level before impact assessment takes place. (This issue is taken up in later comments.)</p>
<p>OUTPUTS:</p> <p>1. Local resource-based strategies for pro-poor rural infrastructure provision integrated into country investment programmes.</p>	<p>Policy instruments for local resource based strategies (Executive orders, laws, PRSP's, 5-year plans) enacted and endorsed in 10 countries.</p> <p>ADB & WB incorporate local resource based strategies into country</p>	<p>The ILO (and ASIST-AP) promoted participatory planning tool (IRAP) is not formally endorsed by government despite 13 years of application at local government level, much of this time backstopped by ILO (and since 1999 by ASIST). The Dept. of Interior and Local Government has issued only 'an advisory memo' enjoining LGUs to use IRAP.</p> <p>However, this may soon change. A recent meeting between ASIST and the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURD) promises to result in government endorsement of IRAP. This could signal the institutionalisation of IRAP as a planning tool – a real success. Of course, actual use of IRAP by LGUs will be subject to myriad factors at local level.</p> <p>The ADB loan to the Department of Agriculture (DA) for the InfRES project includes a proviso that all LGUs applying for funds must have undergone IRAP</p>	<p>The general reasons why IRAP has not been fully institutionalised in the Philippines despite many years of application are analysed by ASIST's staff member in Manila in a recent paper.⁶ This includes the fact that ASIST may have been beating on the wrong departmental door – a situation which is now being addressed through contact with HLURD.</p> <p>This indicator will be achieved in the sense that DA and some parts of ADB are using</p>

⁶ Espano, M., 2004. 'Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP)'. Paper presented to the Fourth Expert Group Meeting of IRAP, March 29-31, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Annexes - 6

	investment projects in 8 countries by end of programme.	includes a proviso that all LGUs applying for funds must have undergone IRAP training. This reflects the integration of IRAP within one part of the ADB and within one project undertaken by the Dept. of Agriculture. Again however, it does not reflect mainstreaming throughout ADB or the DA. Discussions between the government and WB (including ASIST) concerning the use of IRAP for identification of infrastructure investments in Mindanao are ongoing. This is very positive. In contrast to IRAP, Executive Order 94 does mandate labour-based works. However the labour-based component of InfRES has not been actioned due to the reluctance on the part of the implementing consultants (for whom poverty reduction is not a high priority) and contracting constraints within the ADB loan (no budget for training small contractors – the first prerequisite for a labour based programme).	ASIST to implement resource based strategies. The WB are considering using ASIST for the same purpose. In both cases ASIST helps these institutions fulfil their own poverty reduction and safeguard requirements. The wider issue (what function ASIST plays with regard to IFIs) is discussed in the text.
2. Country operational strategies defined and developed.	Strategy documents published & in use by national/local governments/ private sector/ communities in all 12 countries by end of programme.	An IRAP Guidebook (2002) for LGUs has been published and circulated by ASIST-AP. An IRAP and LBES (labour based-equipment supported) information tool has been incorporated into the ILO Sub-regional Office's 'Local Economic Social Development' Resource toolkit for LGUs. This is currently being pilot-tested in 2 LGUs in Visayas.	This indicator has been achieved at local level insofar as LGUs use the IRAP guidebook. It will be achieved at national level if HLURD subsequently adopt and formally recommend the use of IRAP.
3. Relevant institutions strengthened and capacity enhanced.	Production of high quality, relevant training materials in local resource based strategies. Target groups (politicians, planners, engineers, contractors) sensitised and/or trained in local resource based strategies all 12 countries.	Partners (Department of Agriculture; ADB) report excellent materials from ILO and ASIST-AP. We were told by DA that the IRAP process and ASIST's ability to put it over clearly, did equip LGUs to plan effectively. We did not visit LGUs so could not investigate whether they were actually using IRAP. Training and sensitization is the major role of ASIST-AP in InfRES. Thus far, 39 out of the target 100 LGUs have been trained in IRAP methodology.	

<p>4. Significant implementation of policies and strategies achieved (through third parties).</p>	<p>Quality backstopping by ASIST-AP in implementation.</p>	<p>ASIST thought the Department of Local Government would take responsibility for backstopping implementation but later found they would not (ASIST admitted they had been 'barking up the wrong tree').</p> <p>In any case it is too soon to see if LGUs are actually using the IRAP tool in applying for funds from the DA. Impact assessments of the use of IRAP in previous phases suggest their use will be patchy regardless of how excellent the training is. This is due to institutional and political factors on the ground, (which have not been systematically identified).</p> <p>There is a plan to incorporate access indicators into the impact monitoring tool of InfRES. This will help indicate impact but will not necessarily explain the reasons behind successes and/or failures.</p>	<p>We note that it is one thing to deliver high quality training and quite another to know if this training is put into practice. Although it is not ASIST's role to monitor implementation one cannot but be curious as to whether, and under what circumstances, IRAP is actually implemented – and poor people benefit <i>more than they otherwise</i> would have done. This is why we support more research of the sort mentioned below.</p>
<p>5. Knowledge of local resource based approaches enhanced through research and disseminated.</p>	<p>Relevant research undertaken.</p> <p>Universities participating in implementing aspects of the programme.</p> <p>Regional meetings to share best practice.</p> <p>ASIST-AP web site operational.</p> <p>Contributions to journals, bulletins, & publications.</p>	<p>ASIST-AP organises IRAP regional meetings and shares successes and failures. The participants are mainly those involved in infrastructure planning.</p> <p>ASIST-AP also convened a regional forum on decentralised delivery and implementation of rural infrastructure. A presentation to the National Transport Centre was made (related to the University of the Philippines) and possibilities for joint research mooted.</p> <p>One individual in ADB referred to the 'blue book' on 'Building Local Government Capacity for Rural Infrastructure Works' as an invaluable guide to participatory planning in infrastructure – and the reason they had contacted ASIST-AP for help with project design.</p> <p>The political economy analysis undertaken by the ASIST staff member in Manila (for an IRAP workshop) outlines some of the difficulties with implementing poverty/decent work strategies through local governments in a highly decentralised context. This is an issue of interest to a wide audience including ILO colleagues in Manila and, possibly, other countries.</p>	<p>We think there is a need for more analysis of what really happens on the ground – we must ask the question 'under what circumstances is IRAP (or any other training programme of ASIST) actually put into practice by LGUs?' Only then will we understand the practical constraints to mainstreaming a decent work/local resource based strategy in a highly decentralised context. A better understanding of local contexts should feed into, and influence the training itself.</p> <p>We recommend follow-on work of this kind. This need not involve lengthy research but should involve visits to a cross section of LGUs to see what is going on and what the constraining factors to implementation of IRAP might be. Findings need to reach wider audiences and become part of ILO's 'knowledge base' (i.e. not inform only IRAP practitioners).</p>

ANNEX II. INDONESIA CASE STUDY

1. ASIST-AP involvement

ILO work on local resource intensive infrastructure began in Indonesia in 1993 with a two year project to manage a World Bank labour-intensive district roads project. Later, in 1999 the Asian crisis prompted ILO ASIST to prepare a nation-wide labour-based programme to generate employment with Australian assistance. However, by the time the project document was ready economic recovery was underway and both government and AusAid lost interest in supporting a national labour-based programme. This is mentioned as it exemplifies the difficulty ASIST have had in getting and maintaining government support for labour-intensive infrastructure in the sub-region.

In 2001 responsibility for rural infrastructure development and maintenance was transferred to local governments and this created new opportunities. A workshop was organised by ILO, the Central Planning Agency (BAPPENAS) and the Public Works Department (Ministry of Settlements and Regional Infrastructure). This brought together 34 representatives of leading government agencies and other local and international organisations to explore options and strategies for using infrastructure to alleviate poverty and provide employment. Support from ILO ASIST was identified under its four technical fields of operation.

By 2002, following a comprehensive identification of bottlenecks at local government level and a further workshop, both supported by ILO ASIST, it was clear that there were some champions in government committed to the idea of using rural infrastructure development as a strategy for poverty reduction and employment creation. A small project was created to assist the government establish a rural infrastructure co-ordination forum to develop this agenda. The Co-ordination team for Rural Infrastructure Development (CTRID) was officially established by decree of the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs in May 2002.

Between April 2003 and July 2004 ILO ASIST implemented the Sustainable Rural Infrastructure Development Project (SRIDP). This aimed to a) support CTRID at the central level to promote rural infrastructure as a strategy for poverty reduction and employment and b) develop guidelines and training modules on planning (using the IRAP methodology), small contractor capacity building, and maintenance. Guidelines were to be tested in East Nusa Tenggara (ENT) Province. A national consultancy team based at Gadjah Mada University has taken forward both aspects of this work with backstopping support from ASIST Bangkok.

Funds for this work are now exhausted. However, at the time of the evaluation ASIST was negotiating with SIDA on a follow-on project that would allow much of the current work to continue – at least until the end of 2005.

2. Projects/programmes examined

Discussions in Indonesia focused on ASIST supported work at central and local level: on ASIST's work with CTIRD and with the development of guidelines and their piloting in ENT. A visit was made to ENT (Maumere on the island of Flores) to meet counterpart government agencies and to attend a local planning training session for local government planners at village level.

3. Logic of ASIST-AP involvement and expected outputs

ASIST is helping the government – in the form of CTIRD – put rural infrastructure firmly on the national agenda (for the first time) *and* make rural infrastructure development an entry point to

reducing poverty and providing income earning opportunities.⁷ The development of guidelines and their testing in one province at local level is a logical complementary activity as results are intended to feed back into the policy/strategy work of CTIRD at national level.

4. Assessment of outputs, use by partners, ASIST-AP efficiency

As with other country case studies the issues discussed below are an elaboration of, or in addition to, those addressed in the attached logframe matrix. The first discussion point is explanatory rather than evaluative insofar as it seeks to put the notion of 'government ownership' of local resource based strategies into context (message: the challenges are as large here as in any other country). The second deals with the opportunity cost – as well as the benefits – of providing a responsive service. The third considers ASIST's response to funding constraints. The final point examines the relationship between ASIST work and that of the ILO Jakarta office and identifies two reasons why communication seems to work so well

1. *A nationally owned programme with official government endorsement: a reflection of real success?*

At one level the situation in Indonesia exemplifies the ultimate ILO ASIST aspiration: a government endorsed structure - CTRID – whose objective is to promote the use of rural infrastructure to reduce poverty and to provide employment at local level. In such an environment the role for ILO ASIST's is clear and agreed: to support the government's own initiative in ways that allow for the use of ILO ASIST's specific skills and experience.

In reality of course, the situation is complex and the job of integrating the approach into the policy frameworks of central government departments has only just started. The difficulty is that CTRID is, in effect, a co-ordinating structure with an advocacy mission and a dynamic chairman but very little budget. It can raise issues, provide data and present the results of pilot tested approaches to central government agencies concerned with infrastructure but it has absolutely no control over whether their policies or practices change as a result.⁸ The sector ministries remain the largest budget holders for rural infrastructure (agriculture, Bappenas, Kimpraswil (PWD), the Ministries of Economics and of Social Welfare etc.) and they do not necessarily have any incentive to be more joined up or to introduce additional strategies to reduce poverty – unless, of course, this can be done painlessly, cost efficiently and with no time delay. In short the establishment of a government co-ordinating agency is just a first step and does not indicate that all Indonesian government departments responsible for infrastructure are committed to the principles espoused by CTIRD - or even know about them.⁹

Whilst acknowledging the enormity of the challenge – and appreciating that government endorsement does not mean an easy ride – the question we asked was whether ILO ASIST support had been, and continued to be, of the right type. From the CTRID perspective it has been very valuable. By funding national workshops to bring stakeholders together in 2001-2 and funding national consultants to do initial exploratory work at local level, ILO ASIST helped create the environment that led to the establishment of CTRID. Its continuing support for a competent national consultancy team that is able to backstop the Secretariat as well as develop and field test technical guidelines continues to be highly appreciated. The lesson however is that the establishment of CTRID, however significant, is just the beginning of a long process to put *rural* infrastructure and its poverty reduction potential on the national agenda.

⁷ A new Indonesian government took office the week of the evaluation visit. The initial stance of the government is that it will favour rural development, including infrastructure. Government partners (CTRID), ILO ASIST and the national consultants were planning how to best ensure this positive stance was followed through.

⁸ The problem of lack of sector ministry buy-in is critical. This is because the majority of the budget for infrastructure at local level still comes via the sector ministries – only a relatively small percentage comes via the general allocation budget direct to local governments. It is therefore crucial to influence sector ministries and *not only* concentrate efforts at local government level – important though this is.

⁹ The Director General of a PWD department (Ministry of Settlements and Rural Infrastructure) said he had never heard of CTRID even though his staff are represented on CTRID committees and he himself is a member of the Co-ordinating team.

2. *The difficulties of staying strategic: resisting the demand to become an implementation agency*

As the above paragraphs make clear the role of ILO ASIST in Indonesia is to support a national programme (CTRID) with advice, advocacy work and practical, user-friendly, field tested guidelines for use at (eventually) all government levels. Although the national team of consultants are contracted to develop and test three sets of guidelines (on local level planning, guidelines for small contractors and guidelines on maintenance) in practice only one of these – local level planning – is currently being field tested. Two interesting issues arise here:

- the demand from all levels of government is for the local level planning training (IRAP) to be extended to more villages, more districts and to other provinces¹⁰
- the relative *lack* of government interest for the other two sets of guidelines – on small scale contracting and on maintenance. At local government level this reflects a ‘build new’ mindset, a lack of financial understanding about the importance of maintaining existing assets, and a lack of awareness of the importance of improving the skills of local contractors for technical, financial and employment reasons.

In short if ILO ASIST were to respond only to ‘demand’ they would drop everything but IRAP and become an implementation agency, rolling out IRAP through the network of Indonesian universities. Nor would this necessarily be a costly way forward: local governments have shown they are willing to pay up to 70% of costs for the training.

ILO ASIST and the national consultancy team have resisted going down this route in principal but in practice they are already trying to cover far more villages in ENT than they can effectively support. They are stretched too thinly to ensure local planners have the confidence to apply the IRAP approach (without supervision) and convince others of its benefits (see matrix). Also, very importantly, the popularity of IRAP means that relatively little attention has been paid to either maintenance or small scale contracting.¹¹ This is unfortunate as they are the two areas of work that would allow for the wider ILO agenda to be highlighted – issues of decent work, labour standards and the employment potential of local infrastructure are intrinsic (or should be) to the guidelines being produced on these two issues. Local level planning using the IRAP approach has a good chance of benefiting the poor but it doesn’t deal with decent work issues. In other words, the temptation to do ‘more IRAP’ because it is in demand is having an opportunity cost for the other two areas which are intrinsic to the wider ILO agenda.

The SIDA funding, which will come on line from 2005, will allow many aspects of ASIST’s current work to be continued. However, again, the priority will be given to ‘rolling out’ more of the IRAP training on the basis that this is government’s first priority and – ASIST argue – it is necessary to create a ‘critical mass’ of results in order to influence central government to urge national adoption of the approach. This may be the right decision – but it begs the question ‘what is a ‘critical mass?’ The ASIST position is that IRAP is an entry point for introducing wider decent work initiatives. The question is *when* to shift focus towards other decent work activities which may yield as valuable benefits but are less in demand by governments? At the very least ASIST needs to have a well worked out, written strategy for such a shift that can be debated with relevant partners and communicated to potential donors.

¹⁰ In ENT the local counterparts are either Bappedas, the local government planning department, or the Community Empowerment Agency – depending on the district.

¹¹ As noted in the matrix the funding for the guidelines on maintenance and on small scale contracting has already come to an end. Funding from SIDA will be used to field test the maintenance guidelines; additional funding will be needed to field test the guidelines on small contractors.

3. *Responding to funding constraints*

The funding situation in Indonesia has always been precarious with pockets of money (e.g. an unused amount from a previous World Bank project) or donor assistance found ‘at the last minute’ to carry on work in progress.

It is to some extent inevitable that funding uncertainty induces a ‘wait and let’s see’ approach so that plans about what is possible – which areas of the programme to continue with, which to run down, what to start new – are not made until the basket of funding available for the next one or two years is clear. The evaluation team appreciate the difficulty of planning without firm commitments of funds (or, for periods, any funds at all) but note the disempowering effect this may have on national staff/consultants, particularly if they are not themselves part of discussions about future possibilities.

One strategy that might help is for ASIST to organise a ‘scenario planning’ exercise well before funds expire. Scenario planning that involved national staff/consultants and key country partners, including the ILO office, would have several benefits. It would provide a forum for strategic planning before a financial crisis strikes (literally, what is our strategy under, say, three different possible funding situations?) and it would give all important stakeholders a voice in determining priorities for the future. It may also make it easier for national consultants to gain a sense of where the programme might go and the part they might play in it – or not, depending on funding outcomes.

4. *ASIST integration with ILO*

As noted in the attached matrix one of the strengths of the ILO ASIST programme in Indonesia derives from the close working relationship between the government agency (CTRID), the ILO Jakarta office, the national team of university based consultants and the ASIST staff member from Bangkok. The ILO office was well informed about the overall contribution of ASIST-AP’s work to the wider programme, and were appraised and supportive of their funding situation. In short there was good communication between all the above parties.

The evaluation team observed two things about the relationship between the ASIST supported national consultants and the ILO office. First the relationship was not based on physical proximity. The national university team is based in Yogyakarta not Jakarta. This is worth mentioning because in other countries the ‘problem’ of a lack of integration is often seen to be the lack of physical proximity of ILO staff or consultants and the consequent suggestion that they need to sit in the ILO office (which is clearly impractical and unnecessary here). Secondly, the fact that the ILO office related to the national consultants primarily on substantive issues not (as elsewhere) administrative matters. For example, on the team’s contribution to ILO office newsletters or on the issues paper the national team wrote as a contribution to ILO’s input to the PRSP. *In short the relationship was primarily a knowledge relationship not an administrative one.* Both these factors are worth considering when identifying how ASIST and the ILO office might work more collaboratively in other countries.

Log frame for ASIST-AP 2001 –2005. Output to Purpose Review Summary: INDONESIA

Narrative Summary	OVIs	Progress	Comments by the evaluation team
<p>GOAL: To contribute to the poverty reduction goals of ILO countries in the Asia Pacific region.</p> <p>PURPOSE: To improve the access of the population to decent work and to economic & social goods & services through the effective use of local resources.</p>		<p>From 2005 it will be possible to <i>begin</i> to identify whether local government planning decisions are being influenced by the IRAP work.</p>	<p>The issue of impact is discussed under output 5.</p>
<p>OUTPUTS:</p> <p>1. Local resource-based strategies for pro-poor rural infrastructure provision integrated into country investment programmes.</p>	<p>Policy instruments for local resource based strategies (Executive orders, laws, PRSP's, 5-year plans) enacted and endorsed in 10 countries.</p>	<p>The Coordinating Team on Rural Infrastructure Development (CTRID) is a government structure, established by decree in 2002, that aims to co-ordinate policies, strategies and regulations for rural infrastructure development and financing at national and local level. ILO helped establish the CTRID and now backstops its Secretariat. Through a university based team of national consultants it also provides guidelines and runs demonstration projects in local level infrastructure planning, small-scale contracting and maintenance – the results of which are intended to link into, and inform, the policy framework of CTRID.</p> <p>The national consultancy team contributed to the well coordinated ILO input to the PRSP process.</p> <p>At first glance it appears that Output 1 has been fully achieved. However, CTRID management and the national consultancy team are the first to stress the limited reach of CTRID: sector ministries send representatives to CTRID meetings but have few incentives to apply the principles espoused by CTRID in practice. At local level the capacity to plan, budget and implement plans for infrastructure – let alone use a pro-poor, decent work approach to do this – are very limited.</p>	<p>Our overall assessment is that despite the constraints, the ILO ASIST approach in Indonesia is the right one and continues to be effective. With the support of the ILO office, ASIST staff and the national consultants have made a very significant contribution to a wholly government owned process, with very limited funds. The CTRID may still prove to be the basis for an integrated, poverty oriented approach to the planning and implementation of rural infrastructure in Indonesia,</p> <p>Both CTRID and the PRSP contribution testify to a good, effective working relationship between government partners, the ILO office, ASIST Bangkok, and the national team of ILO supported university-based consultants. This positive collaboration has been a major factor determining the success of the programme.</p>

	ADB & WB incorporate local resource based strategies into country investment projects in 8 countries by end of programme.	There has been no recent involvement with the WB or ADB through this may change. The national consultants were recently asked by the Public Works Department (KIMPRASWIL) to make a presentation on IRAP as a potential activity to be financed under a proposed WB loan.	
2. Country operational strategies defined and developed.	Strategy documents published & in use by national governments/local governments/private sector/ communities in all 12 countries by end of programme.	<p>ILO ASIST fund the national consultancy team to provide tested guidelines in three areas - local level planning, small scale contracting and maintenance. All of these have the potential to be endorsed by the CTIRD and to influence the operational strategies of local government. However, only one – local level planning – has really taken off. The guidelines on small scale contracting and maintenance will soon be completed; funding from SIDA will be used to pilot the maintenance guidelines in two sub-districts; piloting the guidelines on small scale contracting will depend on realising additional funds.</p> <p>Local level planning guidelines (an adaptation of the IRAP process) have been published and training on their use is underway in 10 districts in East Nusa Tenggara (ENT). However the three-day training is proving insufficient to ensure that local level planners have the confidence to apply them – the 2 person planning team are constantly requested to make follow-up visits. (Having attended a follow up visit in Flores the evaluation team can testify to the need for supervision visits. Without them the approach will not be applied.)</p>	<p>The IRAP team is too small to ensure the approach is effectively <i>applied</i> by government planners in all 10 districts. The team comprises one consultant (also an experienced government economist) and one technical assistant/trainer. They are testing the guidelines in the province with the lowest HD index and least developed government capacity in Indonesia. Their pilot districts span 6 islands, thus necessitating an exhausting programme of visits.</p> <p>In our view ASIST needs to re-examine its objectives for undertaking pilot projects to test its guidelines. These should to be seen as opportunities to a) improve the guidelines and b) demonstrate the <i>success of their application</i> by local planners. Supporting the practical application process in a few districts is more important than extending the coverage of the initial training. We therefore recommend that <i>despite the huge demand</i> to extend the programme, the number of pilot districts is reduced to three (down from 10) in any future phase and the consultants made responsible for ensuring that the training can be implemented. Once this is demonstrated the aim should be to feed back successful implementation results to the CTIRD who can then champion the approach at central government level.</p>
3. Relevant institutions strengthened and capacity enhanced.	Production of high quality, relevant materials in local resource based	Institutions have been strengthened at central level (CTIRD) and capacity enhanced in those local government districts where the IRAP pilot is running.	To ‘strengthen relevant institutions’ and ‘enhance capacity’ in Indonesia is a job that may take two decades – such is the sheer scale of the decentralised government machinery, the vastness of the country and the low level of much local

	strategies. Target groups (politicians, planners, engineers, contractors) sensitised and/or trained in local resource based strategies all 12 countries.	As in other countries where IRAP is used the materials are excellent. The materials produced in workshops by local planners (e.g. the accessibility maps) are also of impressive quality. Sensitizing national and local government and politicians of the rationale for local resource based strategies is primarily the responsibility of CTIRD, i.e. government (backstopped by the national consultancy team). As mentioned before the problem is the sheer scale of Indonesia's government and the geographical spread of its provinces (this is inevitably 'drop in the ocean' strengthening).	government capacity. On the positive side the ASIST input is strategic and undertaken by a national team that includes a Project Manager and IRAP Project Coordinator with excellent government connections. Advocacy with target groups is an everyday activity. ASIST must be congratulated for identifying such a team.
4. Significant implementation of policies and strategies achieved (through third parties).	Quality backstopping by ASIST-AP in implementation.	Implementation of IRAP is taking place in the 10 districts in ENT where the training plus supervision is empowering some local planners to try it out for themselves. There has been no budget for follow up visits to other areas where the IRAP methodology has been introduced (East and Central Kalimantan, Central Java). No implementation of the other components (maintenance and small scale contracting) has occurred as the guidelines are not yet ready. (In any case, there is no budget to apply them). As the above paragraphs make clear, 'significant' implementation, even of IRAP, is a long way off. It will depend on the ability of CTIRD to convince its 11 member ministries (PWD, agriculture, education, home affairs, health etc.) at national, provincial and district level of the benefits of adopting local resource based strategies. This is, and will remain, a huge task.	This is an ongoing process to which ASIST support is making a small but strategic contribution through its backstopping of the CTIRD Secretariat and its pilot implementation activities at local level. Given the maintenance and small contracting guidelines will soon be complete, but with a budget to trial only one of them in a limited way, it is recommended that a strong 'maintenance' component is incorporated within the IRAP training. The use of the maintenance guidelines – and those on small contractors - can then be encouraged during the IRAP training in the hope that local governments use them as a resource even without training. (Note: a plan to incorporate maintenance within the IRAP process has just been agreed with the national consultancy team.)
5. Knowledge of local resource based approaches enhanced through research and disseminated.	Relevant research undertaken. Universities participating in implementing aspects of the programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant research/guidelines have been produced for IRAP and will soon be drafted for small contractor capacity support and maintenance. • University participation is good. A university network of engineering/infrastructure staff has been mobilised by the national consultancy team to provide sensitisation 'clinics' on all aspects of local resource based approaches in their areas. 	Most publications are either technical manuals of good quality or pieces that seek to explain or advocate for a local resource based, poverty oriented approach to rural infrastructure. The articles are in Bahasa Indonesian and/or English depending on the audience. They are professionally produced. As yet there is no information on how the guidelines are

	<p>Regional meetings to share best practice.</p> <p>ASIST-AP web site operational.</p> <p>Contributions to journals, bulletins, & publications.</p>	<p>Each has been attended by about 60 participants from all over the country. Cost sharing has been between local government, CTRID and (formerly) ASIST although the last clinic was wholly government funded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CTRID produce a News Bulletin and have a website. The national team of consultants produce issues papers as well as guidelines and respond to CTRID requests for briefings and speeches on aspects of local resource based approaches. Their technical paper on 'Rural Infrastructure, Access, Employment and Income' informed ILO's contribution to the PRSP. The team also contributed an article on rural infrastructure for the latest ILO Jakarta Newsletter. All formal documents produced have both an ILO and CTRID logo. 	<p>being operationalised and whether they have poverty or decent work impacts. How is the IRAP process received at local level? Do village level planners experience opposition to the methodology? The process is intended to be socially inclusive but is this possible in practice? Does it eventually result in infrastructure being prioritised that has an impact on poverty? What happens when village plans, using the IRAP approach, are passed up to subdistrict (kecamatan) level and then to district (kapupaten) level where financial decisions are made?</p> <p>Village level planning begins in April with decisions made at district level in August. It is recommended that ASIST begin to ask these questions in 2005 when it will be possible to follow through the planning process and identify whether IRAP is making a difference to decision making in ENT. Findings need to be fed through to CTRID for discussion at national level; they may also lead to additions or modifications to the IRAP training.</p>
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ANNEX III. INDIA CASE STUDY

1. ASIST-AP involvement

This originated from an ILO response in March 2000 to the crisis in Orissa State caused by cyclone damage. A project proposal was developed by ASIST-AP and although this did not attract donor funding the local contacts made led to a decision to give trial to the IRAP process at the end of 2001 in the states of Orissa and Rajasthan working at Gram Panchayat (GP) level.¹²

Four GPs were selected to be representative of coastal, tribal, farmland and desert areas. Work was implemented by the Orissa Regional Forum for Rural Transport & Development (ORFRTD)¹³ in GPs representative of the first three areas, and a private institute, Birla Institute of Technology and Science, was supposed to select a fourth desert area. Draft IRAP guidelines, adapted to Indian conditions, were produced in Rajasthan, but the surveys remain incomplete and IRAP development has ceased in the state. IRAP guidelines have been published for Orissa based on assessment of access to the four core sectors – drinking water, primary education, health and roads – in the three GPs. Currently work in Orissa is applying this approach to a whole block (Panchayat Samiti) comprising 26 GPs, with the intention of extending the IRAP methodology to the entire 29 sectors and sub-sectors for which a GP is responsible.¹⁴ This will result in a final set of guidelines giving tools and procedures. A district level sensitisation workshop has already been conducted for technical staff, officials and policy makers, and a similar one at state level is scheduled for November.

DIFD India is currently considering a proposal to replicate the IRAP process state wide in Orissa, which has a population of 40 million and 30 districts, over a five year period.¹⁵ They are also interested in applying IRAP sectorally for the identification of health facility access needs.

In Madhya Pradesh State ASIST-AP has been carrying out an in-depth review of road maintenance practices. The results are to be the subject of a workshop envisaged in January 2005. This will be in two parts for the: (i) main decision and policy makers; and (ii) technical departments.

ASIST-AP involvement resulted from participation in a January 2002 workshop on rural roads convened jointly by the World Bank and the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD). This showed that there is no comprehensive policy framework for the rural road sub-sector in India. As a consequence attempts are currently being made by the government and World Bank to evolve a more holistic approach to their operation and maintenance.

The ASIST-AP pilot study on maintenance needs in Madhya Pradesh State has led to discussions with the World Bank concerning possible ILO inputs to projects in the states of Assam and Himachal Pradesh. In all three states ASIST-AP inputs are likely to focus on: (i) improving the utilisation of the gang labour system; (ii) exploring the future role of local government institutions in the provision and maintenance of rural roads; (iii) skills training for small contractors for road operation and maintenance; and (iv) preparation of documents, with the possible collaboration of the Indian Roads Congress, covering a maintenance manual, methods of maintenance, condition surveys, etc.

¹² The Panchayat Raj (PR) institutional system of District government was created by constitutional amendment in 1992. In most states the system has three levels: Zilla Parishad (ZP) – District; Panchayat Samiti (PS) – Block; and Gram Panchayat (GP) comprising a cluster of villages. Administrative and financial powers are supposed to be exercised at the top three of these – district, block and village, with primacy being given to the GP. However, in a number of sectors, including roads, the precise modalities and mechanisms of empowerment are still evolving.

¹³ ORFRTD is a local forum of people – representing NGOs, universities and government – who have a common interest in rural access/transport issues.

¹⁴ This represents a much more sophisticated IRAP process than is normally the case, because of the large number of sectors and sub-sectors for which access has to be assessed and quantified.

¹⁵ These are further sub-divided into 314 blocks and 6234 GPs.

ADB has also taken note of possible ILO involvement in the rehabilitation of State Roads in the Northeast Region. The likely focus of activities would be as in the other three states.

To date ASIST-AP activity in India has been funded from its core funds.

2. Projects/programmes examined

Discussions in India focused on ASIST-AP's work on IRAP development in the state of Orissa and maintenance systems for rural roads in the state of Madhya Pradesh. Pipeline projects in the states of Assam and Himachal Pradesh were discussed with the World Bank as was the proposal for extending the IRAP system state wide in Orissa with DFID India. These projects and programmes were also the topics of discussions with representatives of the ILO sub-regional office, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Labour, Indian Roads Congress, and National Institute for Training of Highway Engineers. It was not possible to discuss possible cooperation in India with the ADB.

3. Logic of ASIST-AP involvement and expected outputs

The ASIST-AP approach to engagement in rural infrastructure programmes in India is initially to provide assistance to a select number of State and District authorities, through a series of demonstration initiatives. It is expected that these will provide evidence to support the case for mainstreaming methods and practices.

Contacts with local World Bank representatives, and more recently those from ADB, have led to the articulation of a staged strategy for possible involvement with these institutions. Both organisations are seen as adding leverage to ILO's influence in the country.

The strategy adopted for possible activities in the states of Assam, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh consists of eight linked and progressive stages.

1. Prepare concept note on possible fields of collaboration.
2. On this basis agree on general fields of collaboration.
3. Formulate detailed research and analysis activities.
4. Carry out studies and analysis in selected districts.
5. Identify options for improvements.
6. Pilot solutions and recommendations in selected districts.
7. Develop manuals, training materials and other documentation.
8. State-wide training and technical support.

With the limited resources available to ASIST-AP, it is recognised by them that this is a partnership exercise. They envisage that resource contributions would be made available from various stakeholders such as the state authorities, World Bank and others to cover all the detailed activities involved in each of the steps.

In Madhya Pradesh, ASIST-AP has completed the stage of formulating research activities and is now in the process of identifying options for improvements. On this basis a certain amount of experience has been established in terms of the resource requirements for the initial stages.

Although it is unclear what resources would be needed for the next stages, or the time frame for the various pilot solutions and demonstration projects involved, it is apparent that with its current financial capacity ASIST-AP can only play a limited role unless additional funding and resources are secured. The new strategy therefore needs to include a detailed formulation of TA activities, and on this basis resource requirements - to be sought from possible partners - can be estimated. A central part of this strategy would be to solicit further funding from bilateral donors.

4. Assessment of outputs, use by partners, ASIST-AP efficiency

Our evaluation of progress against output is attached in matrix format. ASIST-AP's effective engagement in India is about three years. The IRAP product paved the way for wider involvement, with substantive work prospects under negotiation. These are likely to be crucially influenced by the workshop envisaged for January 2005 to showcase results from the pilot case study of road maintenance in the state of Madhya Pradesh. ASIST-AP has to establish itself with the key ministries – labour and rural development – since it cannot ride on the coattails of ILO that has yet to engage significantly with either. This section elaborates on some of the outputs and discusses other evaluation issues not mentioned in the log frame.

1. Sustainability

It is not sensible to attempt a comprehensive judgement on the sustainability of ASIST's inputs in India. Those on road maintenance issues have not really begun, although activities to date have stimulated government and donor interest. While more progress has been made with the IRAP process it is still not fully developed. However, it appears to have achieved a significant degree of skills localisation. The main reason for this is because the Orissa Regional Forum for Rural Transport & Development (OFRTD) is a mature and experienced NGO partner, with a strong ideological motivation that is able to add value to ASIST-AP efforts and has a vested interest in their success. In contrast, the experience of working with a private, for profit, educational institution in Rajasthan was less successful. Commercial pressures appear to have made efforts to achieve sustainability too expensive.

2. Use of ASIST by IFIs

ASIST-AP's main dialogue with donors has been with the World Bank and DFID India.¹⁶ In neither case has this yet led to funding support, but this is being discussed.

For the World Bank, the attraction of ASIST-AP lies in its ability to input knowledge on best current labour based practices and technologies, and to act as a catalyst for change. ASIST-AP is perceived to have a comparative advantage in these aspects as they are not available from local consultant sources. It was suggested by the Bank that initial marketing should be limited to these aspects as the government will not approve any inputs that are not perceived to be adding value. In this connection doubts were expressed about the wisdom of ASIST-AP trying too soon to put emphasis on labour and rights issues as these are areas of great local sensitivity and foreign interventions will simply be resisted. Moreover, the Bank has mandatory requirements attached to all loans in respect to social conditions and does not see the need for external expertise on these aspects.

ASIST-AP is also perceived by the Bank as being inadequately funded. Perhaps this is because discussions so far appear to have focused only on activities that ASIST-AP would finance. Bank demands could easily swamp locally available core funds. The issue of a longer-term role for ASIST-AP on the basis of TA funds from other sources has yet to be raised. The Bank also professed to be unclear about ILO objectives and policy in the rural road sector.

For DFID India the multi-sectoral planning approach that IRAP provides fits with their view of the needs of the decentralised PR institutions they are supporting. However, they opine that ASIST-AP need to look more carefully at institutional linkages if the IRAP approach is to be successfully embedded into the PR system. There are very real questions as to who in government might best *own* the process because of the power split that exists between normal and PR departments. This will crucially affect attempts to scale up the IRAP process to all districts. Strong institutional linkages are needed and these are difficult to forge in an area of weak and competing institutions.

¹⁶ Discussions have also been initiated with ADB but it was not possible for the evaluation team to meet the task managers concerned.

DFID India has also raised a number of more detailed issues. These focus on how the Orissa (Indian) IRAP process can be adapted so as to: (i) give more prominence to women's views and needs, especially in the data gathering; (ii) examine social exclusion (caste) issues at village level; and (iii) examine power relations (e.g. elite capture at village level) and how to address these.

DFID India report that ADB is also interested in the rural road sector in Orissa and they have agreed to accompany their formulation mission. DFID India has not put any money into rural roads, but would consider this if it could be linked to livelihoods, poverty and food security. They are concerned that state interests in rural roads only consider settlements of more than 500 persons. DFID India's focus is with the smaller, more isolated communities. This interest appears to be an opportunity for ASIST-AP to show how IRAP can be used to modify state road core road plans, as has been done in Nepal, to identify the access needs of even the remotest and smallest communities.

3. *ASIST integration with ILO*

ASIST-AP is viewed as being reasonably, but not sufficiently, integrated into the ILO's sub-regional programme. The *caveat* on its performance was mainly due to its limited capacity to respond to crises, such as occurred with the cyclone in Gujarat (2001) and the 2003 Bam (Iran) earthquake. There is however, an understanding that ASIST-AP's inability to respond to these situations is related to rigidities in its own work plan and the restrictions imposed by its donor funding. Nonetheless the lack of response to these crises is viewed as a lost opportunity for ILO.

The sub-regional office would like to see ASIST-AP: (i) bring its consultant representative more fully into the ILO system; (ii) develop stronger relations with its core constituent (Ministry of Labour); and (iii) put more emphasis on decent work and rights issues. With respect to (i) the consultant is now 50:50 financed by ASIST-AP and the sub-regional office, is physically located there, and is no longer regarded as wearing an ASIST hat alone, but as a contributor to the ILO's employment intensive policy objectives in India. (ii) simply requires that every possible opportunity is taken to keep the Ministry of Labour informed and a participant in information dissemination activities. (iii) is more difficult since currently there is not a decent work initiative in India despite a pressing need to address these issues. However, ILO has recently finalised a set of issues with tripartite constituents that includes employment infrastructure programmes in selected areas under the general rubric 'creating opportunities for decent and productive work and contributing to poverty reduction – with emphasis on the informal economy'.

One possible opportunity for greater integration with the sub-regional office might be an ASIST-AP input into the Action Programme in Construction activities in India. This is a sectoral programme of the ILO, but details of integration opportunities will not be apparent until a forthcoming stakeholders meeting is concluded. It was also suggested that because of the complexity of the labour supply chain in India, it would be sensible for ASIST-AP to try to involve other (expert) parts of the ILO in its work programme.

There was strong ILO sub-regional office support for the ASIST-AP proposals to engage in TA activities with the major international development banks because of the policy leverage this would bring.

4. *ASIST-AP relations with Ministries*

It appears that ASIST-AP is only just starting to systematically engage with key ministries in India. Although it needs to keep the Ministry of Labour (MOL) informed of its activities, the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) is the key partner for ASIST-AP road sector based activities in India. MRD would welcome ILO assistance in the area of road maintenance, which is evidently one of its most difficult problems, institutionally, financially and technically. Key problem areas are sensible procedures for funds allocation to sectors, maintenance plans based on condition surveys, and contractual details with implementing institutions. The proposed workshop in January 2005 is an opportunity to strengthen dialogue. MOL ought also to be involved so as to be reassured that the proposals resulting from research in Madhya Pradesh actually have national relevance, since doubts were expressed that this might be the case due the large differences in working practices between states. The Indian Roads Congress and National Institute for Training of Highway Engineers are also important to future mainstreaming of procedures and advice, and ought also to be participants. Both expressed their support for the proposed ILO activities.

For the institutionalisation of IRAP a key ministry is likely to be that created a few months ago to be responsible for the Panchayati Raj institutions. There was insufficient time during the evaluation mission to discuss this with a ministry representative, but it appears that ASIST-AP needs to initiate such a dialogue as soon as possible.

5. *India's employment generation and rural infrastructure initiatives*

Unlike other countries in the region infrastructure investment is still considered in India as an instrument for social and economic development. This includes strong political support for the concept of *employment generation*. Symptomatic of this is the intention of the newly elected government to enact a National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, promised in 2005. This will provide a legal guarantee for at least 100 days of employment for at least one able-bodied person in every rural, urban poor and lower middle class household every year at minimum wage. It is to begin with an asset-creating public works programmes.

There is considerable political weight behind this proposal since among the reasons for the defeat of the previous government is its perceived association with *jobless growth*. The estimated spending on the programme would amount to nearly 0.5% of the country's GDP during 2005-06, according to estimates of the National Advisory Council. The spending will gradually go up to 0.79% of GDP in 2006-07, 0.93% in 2007-08 and 0.99% in 2008-09. The employment guarantee will cover 300 (50%) rural districts in 2006-07, expanding to 450 (75%) districts in 2007-08.

The implementation of this policy remains uncertain, however, because of possible legal difficulties if it is enacted.¹⁷ Doubts have also been expressed about its likely success because it flies in the face of several years of declining employment in the organised sector. Nonetheless it represents one of the few current large scale government commitments to employment creation through public works and as such is a unique litmus test of a key ILO policy objective that could open up avenues for ASIST-AP in the future.

A further development that could affect ILO activities was the announcement on October 19 that the government had constituted a National Committee on Rural Infrastructure (NCRI) to ensure time-bound provision of *quality* infrastructure in rural areas including roads, power, irrigation, water supply, housing and telecommunications. It is not at present clear whether this will have a specific commitment to labour based technology or be linked to the guaranteed rural employment initiative. Similarly while it is stated that the NCRI will identify innovative financing arrangements pooling central, state and private funds for projects in these areas, it is not clear whether these arrangements are additional to or a substitute for present mechanism

¹⁷ The problem with enacting the draft bill is that the Law Ministry envisages that a spate of frivolous court cases for damages will result, which could be filed by political opponents of the government, claiming jobs were not available, despite the law.

Log frame for ASIST-AP 2001 -2005 Output to Purpose Summary - INDIA

Narrative Summary	OVIs	Progress	Comments by evaluation team
<p>GOAL: To contribute to the poverty reduction goals of ILO countries in the Asia Pacific region.</p> <p>PURPOSE: To improve the access of the population to decent work and to economic & social goods & services through the effective use of local resources.</p>		<p>IRAP can be considered to have achieved <i>demonstration</i> status in the state of Orissa. DFID approval of the proposal to replicate IRAP state wide is crucial to the process becoming established in India. Use by DFID to identify health sector needs in the state would provide a further boost to its reputation. However, federal level acceptance is a separate and so far unaddressed hurdle.</p>	<p>All the available evidence suggests that the PR institutional system is in a state of flux and uncertainty. Nonetheless ASIST-AP has to engage with the Panchayat Raj ministry if it expects to mainstream its products, since their approval and support will be necessary. There is no evidence that it has taken steps to do so.</p>
<p>OUTPUTS:</p> <p>1. Local resource-based strategies for pro-poor rural infrastructure provision integrated into country investment programmes.</p>	<p>Policy instruments for local resource based strategies (Executive orders, laws, PRSP's, 5-year plans) enacted and endorsed in 10 countries.</p> <p>ADB & WB incorporate local resource based strategies into country investment projects in 8 countries by end of programme.</p>	<p>IRAP has not been formally adopted as a local level planning tool and the intention to link its use to work on infrastructure maintenance systems has yet to be initiated. This is important if IRAP is to gain the support of the MRD, which is preoccupied with managing the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana – prime ministers rural road programme – and is unlikely to be interested in products or services that do not relate directly to that goal.</p> <p>The review of road maintenance practices, due in November, and its recommendations, is likely to be of crucial to the acceptability in India of ASIST-AP services other than IRAP.</p>	<p>The quality of the IRAP guideline produced for Orissa testifies to a good working relationship between ASIST-AP and ORFRTD. The NGO status of ORFRTD may be significant, since the cooperation with a private educational (for profit) institute was comparatively short lived.</p> <p>It is important that senior representatives from all relevant ministries participate in the workshop envisaged for January 2005 since it is a key marketing opportunity.</p>

2. Country operational strategies defined and developed.	Strategy documents published & in use by national governments/local governments/ private sector/ communities in all 12 countries by end of programme.	An interim IRAP guidebook has been published and circulated in India? The maintenance review conclusions are due to be showcased at a workshop envisaged for January 2005.	These could provide the basis for a strategy to improve the efficiency of traditional labour-based working practices in India.
3. Relevant institutions strengthened and capacity enhanced.	Production of high quality, relevant materials in local resource based strategies. Target groups (politicians, planners, engineers, contractors) sensitised and/or trained in local resource based strategies all 12 countries.	A guideline introduces the IRAP process as developed in Orissa at Gram Panchayat level. This will serve as a basis for future work on IRAP in India, but will be updated in late 2005 to reflect changes in the methodology. The regional 'Forum on the Pro-poor Delivery of Rural Infrastructure Services: the Challenge of Decentralisation' at which India was represented by the Joint Secretary MRD and the Development Commissioner & Principal Secretary to the Government of Madhya Pradesh, the Orissa District and State level workshops on IRAP, and the maintenance review workshop (January 2005) have contributed to this process. A presentation on the IRAP process was given to senior staff of MRD to start to sensitise them on its possible use for assessing road maintenance requirements.	The draft guideline is, as with all IRAP publications, of an impressive quality. Whilst ASIST-AP has engaged with MRD at senior level our discussions still suggested that there are not yet clearly identifiable mutual interests.
4. Significant implementation of policies and strategies achieved (through third parties).	Quality backstopping by ASIST-AP in implementation.	Activities in India are currently backstopped by a senior ex-government engineer who has been located in and integrated with the workings of the ILO Sub-Regional office. His knowledge of the road sector has led to contacts with organisations that are important to the institutionalisation of ASIST products, procedures and standards, such as the Indian Roads Congress and the National Institute for Training of Highway Engineers. He was also instrumental in setting up the research work on road maintenance in Madhya Pradesh state, which has in turn led to proposals for wider-scale involvement with the WB and ADB. Clearly the backstopping has been of a very high quality.	Backstopping in India has clearly been very effective. To build on this, future activities should include engagement with the Panchayat Raj ministry, and monitoring developments with the Rural Employment Guarantee Act and the National Committee on Rural Infrastructure.

<p>5. Knowledge of local resource based approaches enhanced through research and disseminated.</p>	<p>Relevant research undertaken.</p> <p>Universities participating in implementing aspects of the programme.</p> <p>Regional meetings to share best practice.</p> <p>ASIST-AP web site operational.</p> <p>Contributions to journals, bulletins, & publications.</p>	<p>Research into road maintenance practices has been completed and is scheduled to be published in November 2004.</p> <p>Birla Institute of Technology and Science has university status and is continuing to work on IRAP, but without direct financial support from ASIST-AP other than paying for attendance at international workshops (Cambodia) and policy seminars at the ILO Turin training centre.</p> <p>India was represented at the 2003 regional 'Forum on the Pro-poor Delivery of Rural Infrastructure Services: the Challenge of Decentralisation'.</p> <p>Information on activities in India is posted on the ASIST-AP web site.</p> <p>An Indian paper was contributed to the 2003 'Forum on the Pro-poor Delivery of Rural Infrastructure Services: the Challenge of Decentralisation'.</p> <p>A paper on the IRAP process in Orissa was contributed to the 4th Regional IRAP Workshop, Siem Reap, Cambodia March 29-31, 2004.</p>	<p>Significant progress in this area is expected early in 2005 with the publication of the findings of the road maintenance study.</p> <p>IRAP guidelines for Rajasthan were received by ASIST-AP after the evaluation team left Asia.</p>
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ANNEX IV. NEPAL COUNTRY CASE STUDY

1. ASIST-AP involvement

In November 2000, ILO and DFID jointly supported DoLIDAR to run a workshop to address and review the challenges of the national strategy for rural infrastructure development, and explore how to improve the coordination between the different donors' efforts to assist the rural road sub-sector. Following the workshop DoLIDAR prepared a logical framework for strengthening capacity at central and district level, which was presented to the donors in December 2000. The revised national strategy for rural infrastructure development, which has received cabinet approval, endorses the principle of local resource based strategies, but contains no specific mention of the use of IRAP.

ASIST-AP involvement in Nepal is comparatively recent being initiated in 2002-2003 with pilot work in four districts to develop a Nepali IRAP process. ASIST-AP's entry to Nepal was greatly facilitated by the success of previous ILO-directed TA in the late 1990s, under ADB finance, that had established good working relations with the Department of Local Infrastructure and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR) in the Ministry of Local Development (MLD), and produced manuals and other technical documentation such as the production of District Transport Master Plans (DTMPs), implementation arrangements, work norms and technical specifications.

As part of IRAP piloting, training was given to DoLIDAR staff and 4 local consultants, two of whom completed the course at the cost of their own time. IRAP piloting was followed by the initiation of full scale use in an entire district (Rasuwa), using one of the trained local consultants. This is expected to be completed in December 2004 the main objective being to finalise an IRAP Guide and Manual for wider application. The intention is that it will then be mainstreamed in all 72 districts through the district authorities but the mechanism for this remains unclear. However, progress has been hampered by the present state of civil unrest in the country.¹⁸ This is influencing execution of most donor activities in rural areas including ASIST-AP. The dramatic murder of the District Development Committee (DDC) Chairman in Rasuwa District, where IRAP was being piloted, has undoubtedly unsettled the process of finalising the methodology, and must raise questions as to how soon it can be fully adapted to local conditions and, more important, replicated in other districts.¹⁹ A similar cloud of uncertainty hangs over other planned ASIST-AP activities in Nepal.

ASIST-AP is supporting the World Bank in preparing its Rural Access Infrastructure Project (RAIP). The World Bank has taken the lead in ensuring that all donors pursue a common institutional strengthening policy in relation to DoLIDAR, rather than the piecemeal project driven efforts of the past. The emphasis of ILO inputs is on capacity building in the districts to manage road works and carry out local level planning. In this connection an ASIST-AP financed training needs assessment is currently being carried out as part of the World Bank project preparations.

IRAP is being considered for the RAIP, where it will be used to update DTMPs and select sub-projects. It will be applied initially in 20 districts (29%) and extended to up to 30 more districts (69% in total) that currently do not have substantial support from foreign donors. IRAP's use for this sectoral purpose is significant as it is seen by the Bank as overcoming the top-down, non-participatory limitations of the DTMP process.

¹⁸ As of October 17 it was reported in the Indian press that Maoists have overrun 68 out of Nepal's 72 districts. Only 105 out of 1135 police stations are said to be functional.

¹⁹ The Chairman had endorsed the IRAP process and figured prominently in public meetings where it was explained.

ASIST-AP has not so far worked with DFID Nepal, which is funding a Rural Access Programme (RAP) in 10 districts. Under the RAP a revised DTMP has been completed for one of the districts. This was based on accessibility planning principles, but did not use the IRAP approach since the earlier piloted version was seen as in need of further work to make it more suited to Nepalese conditions. However, DOLIDAR have set up a working group comprising its own, RAP and IRAP staff, to seek convergence of the two methodologies so that a single IRAP-based approach is used in future.

ADB intends to sole source ILO for implementing, over a 6 year period, a US\$ 400,000 institutional strengthening TA grant project linked to its Decentralised Rural Infrastructure Livelihoods Project (DRILP). It is intended to coordinate these institutional strengthening inputs with those under the World Bank RAIP at a workshop to be convened in December. Among the needed measures likely to be tabled at the workshop by ADB are improving district road maintenance, promotion of enhanced labour-based technology, training, environmental protection, and monitoring and evaluation.

ASIST and ILO Kathmandu jointly commissioned a consultant to look at decent work practices in the construction sector. A final report is being prepared following workshop discussion of the draft. However, it is clear from the draft that working conditions in the rural infrastructure sector in Nepal are extremely challenging, with widespread disregard of the most basic of worker rights, use of bonded and child labour, etc.

ASIST-AP's participation in the training and labour-based technology elements of projects funded by the ADB and World Bank provides an opportunity to showcase the findings of the decent work study. There may also be scope for more pro-active involvement. However, the immediate priority is to finalise the study and produce Nepali and English versions so that these might be used to influence the design of projects before implementation contracts are finalised.

To date almost all ASIST-AP activities have been funded from core funds, with only some field training and local logistics support being provided by the World Bank for work on their behalf.

2. Projects/programmes examined

Discussions in Nepal focused on ASIST-AP's work on IRAP development, capacity strengthening of DoLIDAR through participation in World Bank and ADB financed projects, and the recent study of decent work conditions. These topics were also the subject of discussion with representatives of MLD, DoLIDAR, the ILO Programme Officer, the consultants supervising the RAIP, DFID Nepal and GTZ.

3. Logic of ASIST-AP involvement and expected outputs

The overall objective of ASIST-AP's work in Nepal is to improve the capacity for provision and maintenance of rural infrastructure and thus contribute to the government's efforts to alleviate poverty in rural areas. To reach this objective ASIST-AP's strategy is to:

- Assist the Government in reviving its training programme for rural road construction and maintenance works. The Government requested ASIST-AP to provide assistance in building up a local capacity to deliver the required staff training to the public and private sectors involved in rural infrastructure works.
- Support developing the required capacity for DoLIDAR to assist the districts (DDCs) in developing and maintaining their rural infrastructure assets.
- Collaborate with donors, in particular the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, DFID, GTZ and SDC, to add value to their investment programmes by enhancing the local resource-based components.

- Collaborate with DoLIDAR and donors to develop country specific procedures for rural infrastructure planning based on the IRAP approach.

4. Assessment of outputs, use by partners, ASIST-AP efficiency

Our evaluation of progress against each output is attached in matrix format. It is worth reiterating that ASIST-AP have been engaged in Nepal for less than three years and have to contend with an immature and unstable local government situation that, notwithstanding the present civil unrest, is especially challenging. A countervailing factor is the good reputation ASIST-AP has inherited from previous ILO-directed TA with its main partner, DoLIDAR. This section elaborates on some of the outputs and discusses other evaluation issues not mentioned in the logframe.

1. Sustainability

It is not sensible to attempt a comprehensive judgement on the sustainability of ASIST's inputs in Nepal, since most are in an early stage of development. The current political situation also makes any kind of forecast very speculative, especially in respect to central and local government performance. Notwithstanding the present political situation, decentralisation has left a legacy of uncertainty among the various layers of government.²⁰ Lack of clarity about, and overlapping, roles is a particular problem between the MLD, DoLIDAR, and the Districts. This is compounded by frequent changes of senior level staff. For example, DoLIDAR has had three Director Generals in the last two years. This is a precarious landscape in which ASIST-AP seeks to institutionalise new operational procedures.

A positive development towards sustainability was the decision of ASIST-AP to involve the local consultant community in the development of IRAP. One of these consultants now provides the backbone of support to the development of IRAP, which must assist its long term sustainability. It would be sensible for ASIST-AP to adopt a similar approach in respect of the institutional strengthening activities that focus on DoLIDAR.

2. Use of ASIST by IFIs²¹

ASIST-AP involvement in RAIP resulted from advisory work on the earlier World Bank Rural Infrastructure Project (RIP), which succeeded in raising its official performance rating from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. ASIST-AP had thus already established a good record with local World Bank representatives. This may account for the rapid development of relations with the IFIs.

3. ASIST integration with ILO

ASIST-AP is viewed by the ILO Programme Officer as *potentially contributing* to their employment generation objective. This is considered important not just in itself, but as part of national peace building. ILO efforts in Nepal are strongly linked with the PRSP process, which locally includes employment generation as an objective.

The present draft report on decent work in Nepal and Thailand is to be produced as self-standing Nepal and Nepali language documents. Such documents might and should be used by ASIST-AP to influence the RAIP, DRILP and RAP projects because of the very poor working conditions the decent work report reveals. However, to do this they need to be

²⁰ Nepal enacted the Local Self-Governance Act in 1999 to provide a legislative basis for decentralization.

²¹ It was not possible to meet either the ADB or World Bank representatives for Nepal during the evaluation visit. Opinions were solicited in writing.

produced quickly before the implementation details of the donor assisted projects are finalised.

Decent work principles are not included in the newly approved national strategy for rural infrastructure development. Incorporation into working practices will thus have to be part of a separate ILO initiative. However, the extent of malpractice revealed by the decent work survey indicates that considerable, sustained efforts will be necessary to achieve any significant change.

4. *ASIST-AP relations with Ministries*

ILO's key partner ministry in Nepal for ASIST-AP activities is the MLD with which it currently appears to have a low profile. IRAP has been the entry point for contact with MLD, but its development has become entangled in the fractured local political and civil situation. Political representation at local district and sub-district levels has all but disappeared leaving only the civil servants – district and village secretaries. The latter are distrusted by MLD as not being technically competent. Moreover it is opined that given the high levels of illiteracy in Nepal there is a need to keep IRAP procedures as simple and transparent as possible if a useful operational tool is to result. IRAP, MLD advises, should be implemented by trained local people not the local civil servants. The feasibility of this is yet to be established, but in the charged atmosphere that prevails IRAP might need to be implemented by social mobilisers, NGOs or community groups.

ASIST-AP is not currently developing IRAP as a GIS-based tool, since it considers that the priority for intervention is at local district level. However, DoLIDAR is keen to do this for use as a central rather than district based strategic planning tool, and has initiated its own efforts. In 2003 it constructed 15 GIS-based DTMPs with partial IRAP data incorporation. In 2004 a further 16 districts will be added on the same basis.

This creates a dilemma for ASIST-AP. Responding to the DoLIDAR HQ initiative for GIS incorporation of IRAP outputs, which necessarily influences their definition and measurement, could distract from efforts to develop an efficient local level planning version where simplicity is essential. On the other hand not to assist DoLIDAR might compromise longer-term relationships.

Log frame for ASIST-AP 2001 -2005 Output to Purpose Summary - NEPAL

Narrative Summary	OVIs	Progress	Comments by evaluation team
<p>GOAL: To contribute to the poverty reduction goals of ILO countries in the Asia Pacific region.</p> <p>PURPOSE: To improve the access of the population to decent work and to economic & social goods & services through the effective use of local resources.</p>	<p>IRAP is being introduced at local government level and could result in more participatory decided resource investments by LCUs</p>	<p>IRAP, as a general multi-sectoral planning tool, is still being calibrated for Nepali conditions. Work has been hampered by the civil unrest that currently affects almost all rural districts. DoLIDAR insistence on converging the various access planning approaches into a single IRAP-based tool is a boost to its possible establishment as a national planning tool.</p>	<p>The confused local government mandates provides a challenging environment in which to introduce new procedures. Given this ASIST-AP's relationship with DoLIDAR appears promising and is likely to be enhanced by involvement in ADB and World Bank TA capacity building projects. This should be confirmed early in 2005</p>
<p>OUTPUTS:</p> <p>1. Local resource-based strategies for pro-poor rural infrastructure provision integrated into country investment programmes.</p>	<p>Policy instruments for local resource based strategies (Executive orders, laws, PRSP's, 5-year plans) enacted and endorsed in 10 countries.</p> <p>ADB & WB incorporate local resource based strategies into country investment projects in 8 countries by end of programme.</p>	<p>There is an intention to mainstream the use of IRAP in all 72 districts as a general local level infrastructure planning tool.</p> <p>The WB is considering the sectoral use of IRAP as a means of updating DTMP's in the districts where it is to finance investments. This will provide a bottom-up, participatory approach to the identification of basic access needs.</p> <p>Involvement in ADB financed local capacity building efforts linked to the DRIP are under negotiation. These will focus on enhanced labour based technology and training.</p>	<p>At present it is not clear where the resources will come from to achieve this objective (see below).</p> <p>WB use of IRAP on the RAIP would assist in mainstreaming, but from a limited <i>sectoral</i> rather than a more general planning perspective. As with all donor programmes in Nepal progress could be derailed by worsening civil unrest.</p> <p>Involvement in ADB and, possibly, World Bank financed capacity building could provide opportunities for advancing the decent work agenda in the rural construction sector in Nepal where conditions are generally very unsatisfactory.</p>
<p>2. Country operational strategies defined and developed.</p>	<p>Strategy documents published & in use by national governments/local governments/private sector/ communities in all</p>	<p>Full IRAP cycle has been implemented in Rasuwa district and the experiences and lessons learnt will be summarized for use in other districts in a guideline to be published in December. This publication will present the Nepali version of the IRAP process and demonstrate how the</p>	<p>Adoption of IRAP as a general planning tool appears to be some way off.</p>

	12 countries by end of programme.	<p>procedures could be used to develop District Transport Master Plans.</p> <p>The national strategy for rural infrastructure development, recently approved by cabinet, endorses the principle of local resource based strategies. While it contains no specific mention of the use of IRAP it does provide a positive platform for the other products and services ASIST-AP markets. It should become apparent early in 2005 if the expressed demand for these is to be fulfilled.</p>	<p>ASIST-AP should formulate a policy to capitalise on the national strategy for rural infrastructural development especially in regard to strengthening engagement with appropriate ministries.</p>
3. Relevant institutions strengthened and capacity enhanced.	<p>Production of high quality, relevant materials in local resource based strategies.</p> <p>Target groups (politicians, planners, engineers, contractors) sensitised and/or trained in local resource based strategies all 12 countries.</p>	<p>An IRAP Guide and Manual is expected to be finalised by December 2004. Institutions have been strengthened at central level (DoLIDAR).</p> <p>Consultants trained in basic IRAP techniques. The DG of DoLIDAR is to participate in November 2004 policy meeting at ILO Turin training centre.</p>	<p>The decision to train local consultants in IRAP, and use one of them as the focal point for its calibration to Nepali conditions, is a sensible approach to capacity enhancement.</p>
4. Significant implementation of policies and strategies achieved (through third parties).	Quality backstopping by ASIST-AP in implementation.	<p>Activities in Nepal are currently backstopped by a part-time external collaborator who is an experienced local consultant and enthusiastic about the IRAP process. This seems an appropriate level of input for the present scale of activities.</p>	<p>This situation is likely to change significantly if the TA, currently being discussed with ADB and the WB, is implemented as planned, starting in 2005. Also if IRAP is adopted by the World Bank for updating the DTMPs in most districts.</p>
5. Knowledge of local resource based approaches enhanced through research and disseminated.	<p>Relevant research undertaken.</p> <p>Universities participating in implementing aspects of the programme.</p> <p>Regional meetings to share best practice.</p> <p>ASIST-AP web site operational.</p> <p>Contributions to journals, bulletins, & publications.</p>	<p>Guidelines are in the process of being produced for IRAP and there seems to be genuine enthusiasm among DoLIDAR staff towards its use.</p> <p>In 2000 ASIST-AP helped Tribuvan University to establish a new section of their library that contains reports, manuals, guidelines, training materials, etc on what has been done under a variety of ILO projects in the past so as to centralize knowledge in the country.</p> <p>Nepal has participated in regional IRAP workshops.</p> <p>Information on activities in Nepal is posted on the ASIST-AP web site.</p>	<p>ASIST-AP has to decide its policy towards a GIS version of IRAP for use by DoLIDAR central staff.</p>

ANNEX V. COUNTRIES NOT VISITED: SUMMARY OF ONGOING WORK

Cambodia. Since 1992, the ILO has supported the Government in terms of defining its rural infrastructure policies, implementation strategies as well as provided technical assistance to rehabilitating a substantial amount of infrastructure in the country. More recently the ILO support to this sector includes involvement in two loan-financed rural infrastructure development initiatives.

In 2002 the ILO were awarded a contract by the Ministries of Rural Development and of Public Works. The work involved the formulation and preparation of a World Bank financed Provincial and Rural Infrastructure Project. The particular aspects that the ILO were asked to look at were the application of labour-based methods and the development of local level infrastructure planning.

In 2003 the ILO was sole sourced by the Government for a component of the Northern Region Development Programme funded by a loan from the ADB. The component is concerned with the application of the IRAP methodology in four Provinces and the institutionalisation of the process in the MRD.

Laos. ILO support to the Lao Government for its rural infrastructure works programme dates back to the early 1980s. More recently, the ILO, with technical backstopping from ASIST-AP, has been supporting the Government in establishing effective tools for infrastructure development through Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP). Due to the positive results of this technical cooperation, IRAP has been adopted by the MCTPC as its preferred planning tool for rural roads.

The ILO, through ASIST-AP, is currently providing technical assistance to the ADB loan funded Shifting Cultivation Stabilisation Pilot Project (SCSPP) in Houaphanh Province. This support consists of (i) technical inputs for the survey and design of two rural roads, (ii) assistance in supervision of the road construction works, and (iii) strengthening of local capacity to undertake similar work in the future.

ASIST-AP was involved in the detailed formulation of the road works component of the ADB funded Smallholder Development Project. As part of the preparations for this project, ASIST-AP assessed the feasibility of applying labour-based work methods for the construction of provincial and district roads in Savannaketh and Champasack Provinces. On this basis, ADB and the Government have decided to utilize ILO technical assistance for the implementation of the road works component.

ASIST-AP staff has participated in several strategy workshops relating to the effective provision of rural infrastructure in Laos covering topics such as rural road maintenance and national road strategies. ASIST-AP recently carried out a study on appropriate maintenance practices in Laos.

Solomon Islands. The ILO through ASIST-AP provided technical assistance to the Community Rural Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project. Funding for the project came from a grant from the Government of Japan, through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, as part of the recent crisis response assistance provided by the donor community. The project provided technical and financial support to rehabilitation and maintenance of roads on Guadalcanal Island.

Sri Lanka. ASIST-AP works with the Government to develop capacity at the decentralized level for the sustainable delivery of rural roads. A Training Needs Assessment (TNA) was completed in August 2004. The purpose of this study was to assess the capacity of the decentralised agencies to improve and maintain rural roads, and to identify how to strengthen local training providers to the rural road sector. Training materials for labour-based road rehabilitation and maintenance are currently being prepared by local consultants.

In addition, the World Bank has requested the ILO ASIST AP to be involved in the preparation of the rural roads component of a major road sector project. The TNA was intended to provide inputs into this preparation.

Support has also been provided by ASIST-AP, through another World Bank project, to a training programme to develop the capacity of selected Pradishya Sabahs and local contractors to effectively implement labour-based road works.

Timor Leste. After fielding two feasibility studies on the use of labour-based technology for rural road works, funding has now been secured for conducting a technical training course for engineers and technicians in charge

of rural infrastructure. A demonstration site has been identified and ASIST-AP will commence training in November 2004 on a full-scale training site, employing some 100 casual workers. Existing training materials from the region has been reviewed and translated into Bahasa Indonesia for this particular event.

Thailand. The Eighth National Development Plan initiated the process of decentralization of central governmental administrative responsibilities to local authorities. In relation to this, the Technical Training Institute (TTI) of the Public Works Department (PWD) of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) of Thailand developed and implemented a training programme for all technicians in the local governance structure, the Tambon Administrative Offices (TAO). As part of this, ASIST-AP developed in collaboration with the Thammasat University guidelines for local planning, appropriate technology and employment for community development.

Several training sessions were provided and on this basis the guidelines were further developed. The revised version was developed with technical inputs from advisers from Khon Kaen University and Changmai University, and took into account comments from trainees on the former edition.

A study on decent work in the infrastructure sector was initiated in 2003 and a draft report has now been produced. This study complemented a similar study carried out in Nepal. Discussions are now ongoing with the Government to assess how to disseminate the results of the work.

Vietnam. The ILO's support to the rural infrastructure sector of Vietnam is fairly recent. In 1999, ASIST AP carried out awareness raising workshops at the Hanoi University of Communications and Transport (HUCT) on the issues of labour-based methods, local level infrastructure planning and small scale contracting. In addition, a study was carried out on behalf of MOLISA on the Social Safety Nets, Public Works and Employment in the Infrastructure and Construction Sectors.

ASIST AP commenced work in the field of local level planning in 2001 through a study which investigated the local level infrastructure planning procedures of local government and the validity of the accessibility planning tools within that system. This work was carried out in close collaboration with the Centre for Regional Development and Planning (CERPAD) in the Ministry of Construction.

At the same time, a similar study looked at the role of the local construction industry in the provision of rural infrastructure. Vietnam has a long tradition of executing infrastructure works through state owned enterprises. There is now a move, strongly supported by the donors, to shift implementation of works to the private sector.

In 2002 and 2003, ASIST participated in the formulation of the World Bank financed Road Network Improvement Project (RNIP) with a particular emphasis on the future role of the domestic construction industry in this project and in general in the road sector of Vietnam. The ILO carried out an assessment of the capacity of the domestic construction industry to carry out road maintenance works, and identified various support measures to address any shortcomings of the industry in order to meet the performance requirements of the road sector.

ANNEX VI.
(A) PIPELINE ASIST-AP PUBLICATIONS
(B) RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS THAT ASIST-AP COULD
PURSUCE IF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WERE AVAILABLE

(A) PIPELINE ASIST-AP PUBLICATIONS

1. TAO Manual Thailand

This is the English version of the Thai language TAO manual. The reason for publishing it is that it provides a brief summary on what ASIST-AP is currently doing in some of its fields of operation.

Remaining Work: Remaining work consists of final editing of contents and preparing layout in standardised form before printing.

Proposed no. of copies: 500 *Completed*

2. Local Contracting Study Thailand

This study contains the final result of the study carried out by University of Chiang Mai. Editing and layout is now complete and the report is currently being printed.

Proposed no. of copies: 500 *Completed*

3. The IRAP Guidelines for India

The ILO ASIST Programme has been demonstrating the use of IRAP procedures at Gram Panchayat level. This guideline introduces the IRAP process as developed in Orissa. It will serve as a basis for future work on IRAP in India. It is expected that this publication will be updated in late 2005 to reflect changes in the methodology.

Proposed no. of copies: 800 *Completed*

4. Decent Work in the Construction Industry

As a final outcome of the decent work studies carried out in Thailand and Nepal, it is proposed that the results are presented in a final paper. Whether this work should be presented as a joint report of individual reports will be subject to the recommendations of the consultant.

Remaining Work: Work carried out by national consultants is now complete and the reports now need to be reviewed by a labour standard specialist (new consultancy) and as part of this assignment, identify and carry out remaining work (if any) to achieve publishable standard. Finally the work will be subject to final editing and printing.

Proposed no. of copies: 500 *Completion Date: November 2004*

5. Training Guidelines for Small-scale Contracting

The content of this work is already known through the first draft. A second volume focusing on estimating and tendering will also be completed as part of this exercise.

Remaining Work:

Volume I: Estimating and Tendering: Estimated progress on first draft around 40%. *December 2004*

Volume II: Contracts Management: Final review, editing and layout and printing *March 2005*

Proposed no. of copies: 3,000 with nominal sales price (involving PUBL in distribution)

6. Rural Road Maintenance using Petty Contractors

This is basically a paper describing good practice from RIIP - Cambodia in rural road maintenance in which the main feature is the use of petty contractors and the use of labour-based works technology.

Remaining Work: So far, all the data collection has been completed, and a draft outline of the table of contents prepared. There is still some remaining data analysis and description of the programme – plus the standard editing, layout and printing.

Proposed no. of copies: 2000 *Completion Date: June 2005*

7. Resource Manual for design and management of rural infrastructure projects

This manual is targeted to project managers and task managers responsible for the design and appraisal of rural infrastructure works projects. The manual would primarily focus on rural road works, however, the approach and implementation strategies described can also be effectively applied to other rural infrastructure works such as buildings, markets, water supply, irrigation structures and other public infrastructure.

This guide will be based on the experience from a number of rural infrastructure projects carried out by the ILO, ADB, the World Bank and bilateral donors, attempting to summarise the experience and good practices accumulated.

Remaining Work: A draft table of contents has been prepared, which needs to be elaborated on. This will act as a synopsis of the report and provide guidance to the contributors. It is proposed that ASIST-AP first drafts some of the chapters in order to test the style and level of detail, targeting of audience, etc. and then engage consultants (which are experts in their respective fields) to contribute to most of the chapters. Proposed no. of copies: 2000

Completion Date: October 2005

8. Guide on Labour-based Road Works Technology - Philippines

As a first step towards preparing a new publication on this subject, ASIST-AP is updating the training material for labour-based road works in the Philippines. The end product will be an extensive textbook for engineers, supervisors and technicians from government and the private sector on how to build rural roads using labour-based equipment supported work methods.

This guide will be an important input to the technical assistance intended for the InfRES project, in which training will form a major component of ASIST-AP support. Through, InfRES, this document will have a very large immediate audience, i.e. LGUs and contractors in 40 provinces.

Remaining Work: The first drafts of the source material are currently being finalized. The remaining work consists of reviewing and editing the text, updating illustrations, selecting photographs, editing, layout and printing.

Proposed no. of copies: 8,000 with a nominal sales price to enhance distribution *December 2004*

9. Guideline on Rural Road Planning

This Guideline will introduce a simple procedure for identifying and prioritizing rural road links for maintenance, rehabilitation and upgrading (including new construction). It will introduce a participatory multi-criteria analysis used in a number of countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It is written for local government units who have the responsibility for managing the rural road network in a decentralized environment.

Proposed no. of copies: *Completion Date: June 2005*

10. Local level planning, contracting and maintenance of rural infrastructure - the sustainable rural infrastructure development approach in Indonesia

This publication will describe the outcome of the Sustainable Rural Infrastructure Development Project implemented by ILO in Indonesia. It will describe the development and experience with three technical tools for use at local Government level: local level planning, small-scale contracting and maintenance. It will summarize the experience of demonstrating the tools in the province of East Nusa Tenggara and include recommendations for follow-up activities.

Proposed no. of copies: *Completion Date: June 2005*

11. IRAP Guidelines Nepal

The ILO ASIST Programme has been working with DoLIDAR to develop and demonstrate the use of IRAP procedures in Nepal. This publication will introduce the procedures as developed for Nepal and will present the Nepali version of the IRAP process. It will demonstrate how the procedures could be used in the development of District Transport Master Plans. A full IRAP cycle has been implemented in Rasuwa district and the experiences and lessons learnt will be summarized for use in other districts.

Proposed no. of copies: *Completion Date: December 2004*

12 - 13. Proceedings of IRAP Technical Meetings

The first of these meetings will be arranged in March 2004.

Proposed no. of copies: 300 *Completed proceedings from first meeting*

14. Socio-economic Impact Study Laos

Proposed no. of copies: 500 *Completion Date: December 2005*

15. Creating an Effective Road Maintenance Capacity in Local Government

Proceedings for the next ASIST-AP discussion forum.

Proposed no. of copies: 600 *Completion Date: May 2005*

16. Labour Wages in Local Contracting

This is basically an update of the old work of EMP/INFRA producing guidelines on wage rate setting for unskilled workers employed by local contractors carrying out rural infrastructure works. Although the guidelines will be of a general nature, it will be necessary to carry out a number of case studies in select countries to establish current practices and legal and other regulatory frameworks.

Remaining Work: This is a new initiative, and will require the inputs of international consultants. The first step will be to develop a framework TOR for the entire exercise, including field work and final compilation of reports and guidelines.

Proposed no. of copies: 1000 *Completion Date: December 2005*

17. IRAP Manual Technical – Indonesia

Translation of the current manual from Bahasa and printing in colour.

Remaining Work: Translation into English, assembling colour illustrations, final editing, layout and printing

Proposed no. of copies: 800 *Completion Date: December 2004*

18. Maintenance Study – India

Findings of the current Vaidya/Beusch work.

Remaining Work: Field data collection is now complete. International consultants will need to prepare the final report with conclusions and recommendations.

Proposed no. of copies: *Completion Date: November 2004*

(B) RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS THAT ASIST-AP COULD PURSUE IF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WERE AVAILABLE

1. Working with Partners

ASIST-AP has extensive experience of working with the ADB, the World Bank, SIDA, DFID and other donor organisations in the sub-region. This paper would consider the factors that make for a positive partner relationship and that enable ILO, as a small player in many countries, to have optimum influence and impact.

2. Requirements for the successful decentralisation of infrastructure provision

Decentralisation is not, of itself, a recipe for more effective, transparent or poverty-oriented infrastructure provision. ASIST AP has learned many lessons about delivering services to the poor through a decentralised system. The paper would outline what needs to be in place for service delivery to be effective and pro-poor, based on practical country examples.

3. The capacity crisis in rural infrastructure

Based on data from countries in the sub-region this paper would argue that it is not capital that is the constraint in providing pro-poor infrastructure, it is a lack of capacity - in government and in the private sector. Donor financing to infrastructure will continue to fail until the nature of the capacity gap is understood and addressed.

4. Procedures to measure the impact of rural roads on poverty

For decades donors have funded rural roads on the basis that they reduce poverty. However, there is no tired and tested methodology to establish the legitimacy of this claim. ASIST-AP have developed (in outline) a methodology to measure the impact of rural roads on poverty.

5. Using physical access as a proxy indicator for poverty and other MDG indicators

ASIST-AP has good data on the physical accessibility of rural populations to services in many countries in the sub-region (water, education, health, markets etc.), as a result of the IRAP process. Additional research would assess whether physical accessibility is a good indicator for poverty defined in income and other MDG terms. If it is then the IRAP database is an invaluable information source that should be made available to a much wider audience.

Improving IRAP

6. The poverty impact of the IRAP process

Have interventions made as a result of the IRAP process made any difference (have they been more poverty and gender oriented than interventions made without any systematic planning tool?) Data from the Philippines, Laos and other countries could be analysed to answer this question. The paper would help inform government impact studies.

7. Increasing the gender dimensions of IRAP

The IRAP process encourages the collection of gender disaggregated data – but is this collected or used in practice? Does it inform decision making at local government level? How might IRAP deal with social exclusion factors that are not gender based? Ways of ensuring the potential of IRAP is realised need to be explored.

8. Recognising political factors in local level decision making

Local government planners apply IRAP in situations that are not politically neutral. Ad hoc evidence suggests they can face opposition from local mayors or village leaders traditionally used to influencing planning decisions. Can the IRAP training be supplemented to help local planners deal with the political realities they face on the ground?

ANNEX VII. PEOPLE MET**DFID London**

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ANNEX IX. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR ASIST-AP EVALUATION

Background

ASIST is the delivery mechanism for the ILO's Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP). The EIIP is the second largest technical assistance (TA) programme of the ILO and focuses on policies that lead to the greater use of local resources, particularly labour, in the implementation of infrastructure works with the ultimate objective of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). To this end it provides advisory support, information services, and training. ASIST-Africa was established in 1991 and ASIST-Asia-Pacific (AP) in 1998.

ASIST aims to integrate local resource-based strategies for sustainable pro-poor infrastructure provision into country investment programmes. It works with Governments, Multilateral Development Banks, donors and the private sector at both the national and local level to influence policies, strategies and investment programmes and provides capacity building in support of these objectives.

The ASIST-AP programme focuses on four fields of operation:

- ◆ Local level participatory planning of infrastructure;
- ◆ Developing small-scale private sector enterprises
- ◆ Cost-effective use of labour-based technology
- ◆ Local level infrastructure maintenance.

DFID has been a major financial contributor to ILO ASIST both in Asia and Africa. It provided £1.4 million to ASIST Africa between 2001 and 2004 and £1.7 million to ASIST-AP for the current three-year phase (which finishes in 2005). DFID originally funded the two ASIST programmes through the now defunct Infrastructure and Urban Development Department (IUDD). In April 2004, the programme was transferred to the UN and Commonwealth Department (UNCD) but without any additional funding, so no new resources are presently available for any extensions. DFID (UNCD) currently has a £15 million Partnership Framework Agreement (PFA), most of which is to support an enhanced poverty focus and demand orientation in its TA projects in the Regions. The PFA will run to March 2006 and is due to be evaluated during 2005. It is not yet clear what future support will be made available to the ILO through a successor to the PFA.

DFID is anxious to learn lessons about the effectiveness and impact of the ILO TA programmes that it has supported at country and HQ level, and to do this in a way that can be useful to other actual or potential donors. The ILO wishes to assess to what extent ASIST-AP has been able to influence both governments and funding agencies towards a more pro-poor approach to rural infrastructure delivery. Moreover, if there are indications that ASIST AP has been successful in this, how it should internalise these achievements in the ILO in general. The remit of the current evaluation will therefore comprise both a mid-term review of ASIST-AP in particular, and an examination of broader questions about how ILO's TA engages with current policy concerns about growth and poverty-reduction, as well as how it relates to its core standard-setting work.

This evaluation will thus provide a TA case study that will feed into the PFA evaluation in 2005, and will help to guide DFID's thinking about its future support to ILO after 2006. The results of this evaluation will be presented at a stakeholder workshop later in 2004.

Scope and Purpose of the Evaluation

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of ASIST-AP, including its contribution to growth, poverty reduction, decent work, and pro-poor policy making, in order to inform decisions about future support by DFID and other donors. This assessment should be made in the context of ILO's relevant mandate in this field and provide the ILO with advice and recommendations on the development, sustainability and institutionalisation of the ILO's programme on employment investment in the infrastructure sector.

The evaluation will:

- Assess the performance of the ASIST-AP programme in terms of the original objectives set out in the logical framework, its poverty focus and demand orientation, and the specific comparative advantage of ILO's inputs.
- Compare and contrast the findings of this analysis with that of ASIST-Africa based on existing evaluation reports, and EIIP's response to these²².
- Draw out some lessons about the effectiveness of ASIST-AP for discussion with a group of interested stakeholders.

Outputs:

1. A brief inception report setting out the methodology of the review, a work programme, timeline and budget. This report will be discussed with the ASIST-AP team upon arrival in Bangkok and sent to ILO (EMP/RECON) and DFID (UNCD) for comment.
2. A draft report, for comment by the ASIST AP team, EMP/RECON, CODEV, the ILO regional and sub regional offices in Asia and the Pacific and DFID, six weeks after the start of the evaluation.
3. A final evaluation report in hard copy as well as electronic version by ten weeks after the start of the evaluation.
4. An evaluation review workshop in Geneva, bringing together donor agencies, internal and external partners, to discuss the findings and recommendations of the report.

Tasks:

- i. Review the concept and design of the current programme document and logical framework within the context of the overall EIIP programme.
- ii. Conduct a mid-term review of progress against the objectives and outputs achieved against the programme document and logical framework, including any revisions resulting from the recommendations of the 2002 Review.
- iii. Examine the way in which ASIST-AP has integrated its employment and poverty reduction work with related ILO programmes and assess how its activities can most effectively contribute to the strengthening of ILO's "decent work" mandate.
- iv. Examine how working conditions in the infrastructure sector have been assessed and to what extent decent working conditions and related labour standards have been promoted into infrastructure programmes.
- v. Examine the adequacy of the focus on four fields of operation. Consider whether there are any particular advantages or disadvantages in this focus in terms of achieving the programme purpose and whether/how ASIST-AP should take action to make good any disadvantages.
- vi. Examine the effectiveness of different delivery channels for the provision of ASIST-AP services (e.g. government, the private sector, development banks), in terms of cost-effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

²² See "EIIP in Sub Saharan Africa, Strategy paper" (March 2004) and Programme Document (May 2004)

- vii. Consult a sample of partners (e.g. line ministries, private sector, World Bank, ADB) who have benefited from ASIST-AP's services to assess their degree of satisfaction with these services, their perception of the ILO's specific comparative advantage in this area, and likely future demand for similar services.
- viii. Assess the potential for cost recovery from these partners.
- ix. In a small number of countries, examine the quality of the programme's outputs and how they have been utilised by the partners, including an overall assessment of ASIST-AP's efficiency in delivering its services. Assess the extent to which government, donor and financing agency investment programmes have been or are being improved as a result of the policy advice and support provided by the programme.
- x. Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of ILO management of TA services (Regional and HQ levels), including the efficiency of financial and other administrative transactions, the distribution of staff resources between fund raising and service delivery, the degree of support from HQ in terms of providing technical and administrative back-up and the provision of financial resources for the EIIP programme, and the degree of cross-regional lesson-learning especially with ASIST-Africa.
- xi. Assess the role of secondments in contributing skills, knowledge and technical advice that ILO would not otherwise access.
- xii. Consider the impact of funding constraints on the realisation of the programme's objectives, and how well the office has managed to work within these constraints
- xiii. Examine the evaluation and related documentation from the ASIST-Africa programme, to identify the potential for cross learning between the two programmes.
- xiv. Consult donors who have supported or currently support ILO ASIST-AP for their views on its effectiveness and potential.
- xv. Provide general conclusions about the opportunities and constraints facing ILO's provision of ASIST-related TA, and recommendations for improvements. Present these conclusions to a group of interested stakeholders in Geneva.

Resources

The services of two highly qualified independent consultants will be hired for the work described above. The total inputs for each consultant are estimated as two months inclusive of final report preparation.

The first consultant will have extensive experience in the areas of social development and or governance, (preferably in a DFID context) and will act as team leader. The second consultant will have a sound understanding of approaches and practices in the areas of poverty alleviation and employment creation as well as extensive experience with planning and implementing local resource-based infrastructure programmes.

The costs of the evaluation will be shared between DFID (UNCD) and the ILO Regional Office.

The consultants will visit ILO Geneva for a general briefing on both Regional Programmes. They will meet with the ASIST-AP Bangkok team at the beginning of their visit to Bangkok and will review documentation prepared by ASIST-AP. ASIST team members will accompany the mission on visits to the sample countries.

The consultancy is expected to start on 27 September and to conclude by 6 December 2004.
9 July 2004.