

Acting in Partnership

**Evaluation of FRAMA (Fund for Agricultural Rehabilitation
after MITCH) Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAGFOR)
– Sida project Nicaragua**

**Bengt Kjeller
Raquel López**

**Department for Natural
Resources and the
Environment**

Acting in Partnership

Evaluation of FRAMA (Fund for Agricultural
Rehabilitation after MITCH)
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAGFOR)
– Sida project Nicaragua

Bengt Kjeller
Raquel López

Sida Evaluation 01/35

**Department for Natural
Resources and the
Environment**

This report is part of *Sida Evaluation*, a series comprising evaluations of Swedish development assistance. Sida's other series concerned with evaluations, *Sida Studies in Evaluation*, concerns methodologically oriented studies commissioned by Sida. Both series are administered by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, an independent department reporting directly to Sida's Board of Directors.

Reports may be *ordered* from:

Infocenter, Sida
S-105 25 Stockholm
Telephone: (+46) (0)8 690 93 80
Telefax: (+46) (0)8 690 92 66
E-mail: info@sida.se,

Reports are also available to *download* at:

<http://www.sida.se/evaluation>

Authors: Bengt Kjeller, Raquel López.

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Sida Evaluation 01/35

Commissioned by Sida, Department for Natural Resources and the Environment

Copyright: Sida and the authors

Registration No.: 1999-3604

Date of Final Report: August 2001

Printed in Stockholm, Sweden 2001

ISBN 91-586-8833-1

ISSN 1401-0402

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Sveavägen 20, Stockholm

Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

Telegram: sida stockholm. Postgiro: 1 56 34-9

E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

Table of Contents

Resumen Ejecutivo	1
1 Executive Summary.....	4
2 Introduction	8
3 Methodology of the Evaluation.....	8
3.1 Aim and Purpose	8
3.2 Working Procedures	8
3.3 The Fieldwork	9
4 Context and background.....	11
4.1 Mayor reasons for the damage caused by hurricane Mitch	11
<i>4.1.1 Droughts and floods are interrelated.....</i>	<i>11</i>
4.2 Earlier Swedish co-operation in the sector	13
4.3 The project area	14
4.4 The Effects of Mitch	14
4.5 The swift formulation of the project, the pacesetter of FRAMA.....	16
<i>4.5.1 Preparatory work.....</i>	<i>16</i>
4.6 The objectives and the design of the project	17
<i>4.6.1 The organisation</i>	<i>17</i>
4.7 The components of FRAMA.....	20
<i>4.7.1 The demand driven GENERAL FUND</i>	<i>20</i>
4.8 The budget	21
4.9 The execution of FRAMA.....	21
<i>4.9.1 The Publicity Campaign.....</i>	<i>21</i>
4.10 The response of FRAMA.....	23
<i>4.10.1 The changes: rationalisation and technical supervision in the countryside.....</i>	<i>23</i>
5 Principal Findings.....	25
5.1 Fulfilment of the objectives.....	25
5.2 Rehabilitation of farms	26
5.3 The coupon system for planting and animal husbandry	30
5.4 The Programme for Reduction of Vulnerability, PRV.....	31
5.5 A fund for studies and investigation in support of FRAMA activities	31
5.6 Cost and benefits	33
5.7 The impact at regional and local level	35
5.8 The administration of FRAMA.....	36
5.9 The Economics of FRAMA	36
6 Conclusions and recommendations	38
7 Principal Lesson learned.....	40
 Appendix 1: Persons Interviewed	 41
Appendix 2: List of beneficiaries inquired.....	42
Appendix 3: Maps and Photos	45
Appendix 4: Work Programme	47

Appendix 5: Acronyms	48
Appendix 6: List of References	49
Appendix 7: Terms of Reference	51

List of Tables

1. The budget	22
2. Type of damage by Mitch among farmers who benefited from the project.....	27
3. Type of damage by Mitch among farmers who did not benefit from the project.....	27
4. Type of assistance and percent of the farmers who benefited from the specific assistance.....	28
5. Range of assistance received by the beneficiaries of FRAMA.....	28
6. Crops by area which were planted before and after Mitch by those who benefited from the project	28
7. Type of crops planted by area of farmers affected by Mitch who did not benefit from the project	29
8. Cost and benefits	
9. Administrative costs of FRAMA.....	35

List of Figures

1 Principal Watersheds affected in Matagalpa	15
2 Principal Watersheds affected in Jinotega	16
3 Organisational Structure of FRAMA.....	19
4 Time frame.....	23

Appendix

Appendix 1	Co-executive institutions interviewed
Appendix 2	List of beneficiaries inquired
Appendix 3	Maps and photos
Appendix 4	Work programme
Appendix 5	Acronyms
Appendix 6	List of references
Appendix 7	Terms of reference

Resumen Ejecutivo

FRAMA fue un proyecto de rehabilitación agropecuario en los departamentos de Jinotega y Matagalpa en Nicaragua después el huracán MITCH en Octubre de 1998. FRAMA comenzó en Mayo 1999 y termino en Julio de 2000. El costo fue 29 millones SEK (3MUSD).

El objetivo de la evaluación era medir el impacto de FRAMA y tener las experiencias para la fase final de la planificación de FondeAgro, un proyecto agrícola, de largo plazo en Matagalpa y Jinotega. Además los resultados de FRAMA son interesantes para futuras acciones en el área de prevención de desastres y rehabilitación en general.

Suecia y Nicaragua ha tenido una larga colaboración en el sector agro-forestal desde 1980. El programa forestal termino en 1998 y el proyecto de las Tiendas Campesinas en 1993. Ninguno de los dos programas impacto suficiente y hoy no hay ni suficiente bosque ni organización gremial o comercial de los pequeños agricultores.

Matagalpa y Jinotega son áreas básicamente agropecuarios. Hay casi 100.000 fincas y una población rural en alrededor de 500.000. Unos 25% de las fincas pequeñas son dirigidas por mujeres. De la población 50% tiene menos que 15 años y hay un crecimiento poblacional de 4% anual. Se produce café, leche, carne, granos básicos y en menor escala arroz, hortalizas y productos no tradicionales. La diferencia entre las categorías de productores es muy grande. La mayoría tienen menos que 7ha y viven en condiciones precarias. Los grandes tienen mucho mas recursos pero están también en crisis por la dependencia de su especialización en café y las fluctuaciones del mercado mundial y su alto grado de endeudamiento.

El Mitch afecto a todos pero con consecuencias más graves para los que vivían cerca de los ríos que inundaron las fincas. Se perdió en general las cosechas de granos básicos y hortalizas. La infraestructura se perdió y las tierras fueron lavadas e/o enterrada bajo arena y piedras en las zonas mas afectados. El daño vario mucho entre zonas y entre productores de la misma área.

Hubo ayuda de alimento y para siembra. Los que no habían perdido su infraestructura y/o tierra podrían recuperar pero quedaron en una situación más precaria. No había ayuda para rehabilitación y los que lo necesitaban estaban desatancados.

El objetivo general de FRAMA fue contribuir al proceso de rehabilitación y transformación agropecuaria a favor de los pequeños productores de escasos recursos afectados por el huracán Mitch en Jinotega y Matagalpa.

Los objetivos específicos fueron:

1. Recuperar los niveles productivos de los beneficiarios anteriores al desastre.
2. Combatir el incremento de la pobreza en la región meta por causa del desastre natural.
3. Reducir la vulnerabilidad de los beneficiarios cara a eventuales futuros desastres naturales.
4. Coadyudar en el proceso de transformación agropecuaria de la región meta.

FRAMA tenia tres componentes:

1. Fondo General para rehabilitación de fincas y cupones para la siembra.
2. Programa de Reducción de la Vulnerabilidad, PRV para reparación de caminos rurales.
3. Fondo de Estudios y Consultorías, FEC.

Las características del FRAMA:

FRAMA era: *El proyecto oportuno en el momento difícil!*

- Tenía un *monto adecuado* para la capacidad de implementación del proyecto durante el corto tiempo de un año bajo (12%) en relación a las demandas/necesidades. Una prórroga de 6 meses ajustando el proyecto aun más al calendario agrícola había evitado algunas pérdidas por Ej. : frutales y mejorado la calidad de trabajo.
- Estuvo *bien y rápidamente preparado* por el personal del propio ASDI y junto con los consultores locales e internacionales de alta calidad y desempeño.
- La creación de un *nuevo modelo de cooperación* entre ASDI y el Gobierno de Nicaragua/MAG-FOR a través:
- La sustitución del modelo Proyecto preparado (enlatado) por el concepto de *Políticas y Manejo por Objetivo en respuesta a la demanda de los más afectados*.
- La formación y vigilancia de un *Comité Ejecutivo*, CE FRAMA, *con representación igual*, presidencia rotando, negociando y tomando decisiones *por consenso y con minutas abiertas* para el público. El sistema del *veto* que agilizo la implementación.

A través de su participación en el CE ASDI *asumió una responsabilidad en conjunto con el MAG-FOR* que fue un factor clave para la buena ejecución de FRAMA. La elaboración de la estructura del proyecto y estableciendo su *marco legal* con *nombramiento de los directores* por consenso y legalizado a través una certificación del Notario Público era un trabajo de alta calidad realizado a corto tiempo.

- La Unidad de Proyectos, UP FRAMA, con una *Gerencia moderna y dedicada*, mas que una “Dirección” del estilo estatal, y un personal técnico y practico conociendo y identificándose con los afectados del Mitch.

El modelo mas de las personas que participaron permitió y controló que FRAMA *no fuese politizada ni corruptizada* aun que existieron intervenciones con este propósito mas que todo a nivel local y en relación con el proyecto de los cupones.

- *Una respuesta* con un “mini-Mitch” por parte *de las familias campesinas* como resultado de la campana de información usando unas radiales y antes la posibilidad de obtener una ayuda sin adeudarse para recuperar la producción y aliviar la pobreza. La campana inicial impacto “demasiado” creando inundación de gente y solicitudes por las puertas de FRAMA. *-La existencia de organizaciones y empresas locales* con capacidad y voluntad de participación como co-ejecutores de los proyectos. Lo que falta y falta son organizaciones de los pequeños propios campesinos/finqueros con capacidad de trabajar con proyectos sin intermediarios.

Conclusiones y recomendaciones

1. FRAMA logro ayudar a las 2865 familias campesinas a rehabilitar la infraestructura de sus fincas y recuperar su producción. También logro ayudar a 6315 familias a sembrar una manzana mas de granos básicos a través del sistema de cupones.

Pero esto era solamente un 12% de las solicitudes recibidas. Quedo muchas fincas y familias que no han podido recuperar sus niveles de producción.

Concluimos que FRAMA logro lo que en realidad fue su objetivo principal: recuperación de los niveles de producción de los seleccionados.

2. FRAMA combatió en parte a la pobreza pero las familias gravemente afectadas por el MITCH no han podido recuperar sus niveles de vida. Los impactos acumulados de fenómenos naturales y desastres humanos mas los efectos de la economía agraria y el deterioro de los servicios de salud y de tener que pagar para los estudios de los niños no les han permitido levantarse.
3. La vulnerabilidad de la gente ha aumentado. Sus reservas están disminuidas. Mas gente tiene que salir de su finca para buscar trabajo. Mas agricultores tienen que prestar y trabajar a media, con condiciones y interés reales muy altos, para poder sembrar. crisis del sector cafetalero agrava la situación.
4. Con los hombres trabajando fuera de la finca, el presupuesto familiar es severamente afectado por la decapitalización y el aumento del número de niños y jóvenes *la situación de la mujer campesina y los mismos niños se hace mas grave*. Un proyecto de largo plazo tiene que tomar muy en cuenta el papel central de la mujer, los niños y la juventud en la agricultura.
5. FRAMA no pudo en el corto tiempo impactar mucho en el área de prevención. Es mejor y más que todo más barato prevenir que curar. Los desastres en Nicaragua son tan frecuentes que los proyectos deben hacer un análisis de riesgo y tener un componente fuerte de prevención. *!No hay desastres naturales ; Lo que hay son fenómenos naturales que se convierten en desastres humanos por falta de prevención*. Como las causa son humanos también nos podemos prevenir las y evitarlas.
6. FRAMA tampoco podrá contribuir mucho a la transformación agropecuaria al favor de los pequeños agricultores de escasos recursos. Recomendamos que MAGFOR-ASDI busca como promover *la finca diversificada* a través de una política económica que la hace competitiva tanto a corto como a largo plazo. Recomendamos que MAGFOR-ASDI investiga las posibilidades de crear en colaboración con otros donantes proyectos integrales *sobre las cuencas y/o microcuencas* del agua. Hay que buscar el interés común para crear esfuerzos colectivos. Ya existen proyectos de este concepto tanto en Matagalpa como en Jinotega. La colaboración con CATIE debería ser explotada en máximo en este sentido.
7. *FRAMA tiene FAMA*. La gente esta contenta y tienen ideas y solicitudes para la “segunda phase”. *Se debe buscar una formula que moviliza y aprovecha los recursos existentes* i.e apoyo financiero para un grupo de agricultores que tienen un proyecto de *desarrollo empleando su técnico*. *La formula trabajar sobre la demanda del FRAMA funciona*. FRAMA *no dejo la gente endeuda y dependiente*. FONDEAGRO debe tener cuida no hacerlo tampoco.
8. El *modelo organizativa* y sus conceptos claves como coparticipación, transparencia, dirección gerencial, etc. fue un éxito y podrá ser modificados para FONDE AGRO y otros proyectos.

Trabajando a través una empresa consultora ASDI tiene que definir la división de responsabilidades.
9. Las *definiciones, reglamentación y legalización* fueron importantes y bien echo. ASDI debe considerar elaborar un Manual de guía para estructuras organizativas y las definiciones apropiadas.
10. El proyecto de FRAMA era preparado y ejecutado a través la división de recursos naturales del ASDI. Un puesto especial para FRAMA era creado a dentro de la embajada de Managua y llenado por la misma división. *La participación de división especializada* de ASDI HQ y en el campo *era un prerequisite para la implemantacion ordenada y segura del proyecto*. Para el proyecto a largo plazo es importante de seguirlo de cerca y mantener un buen control si ASDI quiere mantener su buen papel que juego adentro del FRAMA.

1 Executive Summary

FRAMA, Fund for Agriculture Rehabilitacion of MAG-FOR and Sida, was an agriculture rehabilitation project in Jinotega and Matagalpa districts of Nicaragua aimed at rehabilitate damages after the deep tropical depression Mitch which struck in October 1998. FRAMA started in May 1999 and ended in July 2000. A total of 29 million SEK was spent within the project.

The objective for the evaluation was to measure the impact of FRAMA and provide experience for the long-term agriculture project under preparation basically in the same area as the one assisted by FRAMA. The results from the evaluation are also of interest for future actions in the area of disaster prevention and rehabilitation in general.

Since 1983 Sweden and Nicaragua have had a long-term collaboration in the agriculture and forestry sectors. The forestry programme ended 1998 and the Farmers Stores project in 1993. None of the two projects made sufficient impact and today the forestry sector is still weak and there is no significant economic or other union organisation for the small-scale farmers.

The economy of Matagalpa and Jinotega Districts are based on agriculture. The area has about 100.000 farms and a rural population of 500.000. Women run around 25% of the small farms and half of the population is under the age of 15. The rate of population growth is 4%. The area produces coffee, milk, meat, grain and at a smaller scale rice, vegetables and non-traditional products. The difference between the farmers is very wide. The majority farms less than 7 hectares and lives under very harsh conditions. The large-scale farmers have more resources but are also in a crisis due to their specialisation and dependence of the world market and high degree of debt.

The MITCH affected everybody but consequences were more serious for those that lived near the rivers. Almost all grain and vegetable crops were lost. In the most affected areas farmers lost fences, wells, buildings and other infrastructure. . The fields were covered by sand and stones The topsoil was often washed away. There were large variations in damage between adjacent farms as well as between different geographical areas.

Immediately, in response to the disaster received food aid and also to some extent aid for the new planting season. Those that had not lost their infrastructure or soil were able to get back into production but were left in a more vulnerable situation. Before FRAMA there was no funding for rehabilitation and those who needed not able to plant their land.

The main objective of FRAMA was to contribute to the rehabilitation and transformation of Agriculture among small-scale farmers affected by Mitch in Matagalpa and Jinotega with limited resources.

The specific objectives were:

1. To recover the productive pre-MITCH levels of the target group.
2. To reduce the increasing poverty in the region caused by the natural disaster.
3. To prepare the target group to be less vulnerable in the event of future disasters.
4. To assist the process of agriculture transformation in the region.

FRAMA had three components:

1. The General Fund including rehabilitation and a coupon system for the planting of grains and coffee.
2. A Programme for the reduction of vulnerability, PRV which mainly was used for repair of rural roads.
3. A Fund for studies and investigations in support of FRAMA.

The characteristics of FRAMA

- It was the right project at the right time ;
- It had the right amount of funding considering the project concept, design applied and the one-year time limit set. But it only covered 12% of the actual demand. A prolongation of the project with six months better adjusting the assistance to the agriculture season would have helped to avoid losses, i.e. fruit trees and raised the quality of the field work. If the original project concept of only approving or rejecting applications without close scrutiny and supervision had been followed the spending capacity would have been much higher but at the cost of real rehabilitation.
- The Sida staff quickly and very competently prepared FRAMA, using local and international consultants of high calibre/quality working with dedication.
- The creation of a new model for the co-operation between SIDA and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry through:
 - The substitution of a prepacked project model for the concept of policies and management by objectives in response to the demands of the target group.
 - The formation of the Executive Committee, EC FRAMA, for supervision. This had equal representation from Sida and MAGFOR, rotating president, negotiating and taking decisions by consensus and with minutes open to the public. A 72 hour veto systems also speeded up the implementation.
- Through participation in the EC, SIDA assumed responsibility together with MAGFOR. This was a key factor for the proper execution of FRAMA.
- The elaboration of the project structure, establishing its legal framework, appointing the Executive and the Administrative Directors in agreement and certifying it through the Notarius Publicus was high quality work under pressure. Sida acting as a guarantor assured staff security.
- The Project UNIT, PU FRAMA, with its modern and dedicated management team rather than the traditional state Director style combined with a practical technical team that both knew and identified itself with the target group further contributed to the success.

The model and the persons that participated, controlled FRAMA in such a way that it was not turned political neither was it corrupt.

The response to the publicity campaign by radio was like a mini-MITCH flooding the offices with applications and farmers. The large attraction was the possibility to recover agriculture production and alleviate poverty without getting into deb. FRAMA didn't have the resources to respond to this enormous demand.

However, the message was redefined to:” the aid is for those poor small scale farmers that have suffered losses by MITCH which can verified.” This reduced the assistance to a more handleable level.

FRAMA used local organisations and firms with capacity and willingness to participate as co-executors of the project these were municipalities, NGOs etc. Still missing were organisations of the poor small-scale farmers to work with projects without middlemen.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. FRAMA managed to assist 2865 farm families to rehabilitate their farms and production levels to pre- Mitch situation. FRAMA also helped additional 6315 families to plant around 0,7 ha more of food grain. This only represents 12% of the applications received. Many farms and families were left without help and therefore unable to recover .However, FRAMA achieved its main objective which was to recover the pre MITCH production levels of the selected target-group which were reached
2. FRAMA contributed to reduce poverty, but the families who were seriously affected by MITCH have not been able to recover their previous living standard. The accumulated impact of natural phenomena, human disasters like the war, the effects of the agriculture economy and the obligation to pay for health and education services does not allow them to raise their standard of living.
3. The vulnerability of the poor people has increased. Their reserves are depleted. More and more people have to leave their farms and look for work outside. More and more farmers have to take credit and work as sharecroppers with high interest rates and tough conditions in order to be able to plant. The present coffee crisis will be deeply felt.
4. With the men working outside the farm and the family budget reduced the women and the children are left in a hardening situation. A long term project much take the women, children and youths of the agriculture community into serious consideration.
5. During its short existence, FRAMA could not achieve much in the area of prevention to reduce the vulnerability next time something similar happens But prevention is better and also much cheaper than cure. The disasters in Nicaragua are so frequent that any long-term projects should analyse the disaster risks and include a strong prevention component.
6. FRAMA could neither contribute much to the transformation of agriculture in favour of the poor small-scale farmers. We recommend that SIDA and MAGFOR promote the diversified/mixed farm through an economic policy and support that makes them competitive both in the short and long term. We recommend that the parties investigate the possibilities to create/support projects that use the watershed as a base for planning and action. In the polarised countryside of Nicaragua it is necessary to seek the areas of common interest to lay the base for joint action. Water and soil fertility are such areas. There are already watershed projects under way in both Matagalpa and Jinotega and the Sida work with CATIE in this area should be fully exploited. Sida focusing on agricultural productivity should seek the collaboration from other donors in the watershed for an integrated effort. Participation of the population should be defined and contracts negotiated and signed.

7. FRAMA is famous in the whole of Matagalpa and Jinotega. People have ideas and hope for what they call the second phase. This hope can be capitalised if used right. The demand driven concept of FRAMA could be adopted for the long-term project in order to mobilise and use the local resources i.e. land, farmers, technicians etc that exists. FRAMA did not indebt the farmers and the long-term project should take care of not doing it either.
8. The organisational model of FRAMA and key concepts like joint participation, transparency, modern management, decisions by joint agreement were successfully used. They could be modified and used by the long-term projects as well as other projects. In the long term Sida-MAGFOR project the roles will have to be made very clear so that the division of powers and responsibilities are coherent.
9. The definitions, rules and legislation were carefully prepared and became very important for the outcome of the project. We recommend that SIDA consider the write up of a manual or guide for project preparations with respect to the organisational structure and appropriate definitions.
10. The FRAMA project was prepared and executed through the Division of Natural Resources at Sida. A temporary special post at the Embassy in Managua was created and filled by the same division. The participation of the specialist division of SIDA HQ and in the field was a prerequisite for the safe and proper execution of the FRAMA project. For the long term project it is important to have close insight and good control if SIDA wants to maintain its good role played within FRAMA.

2 Introduction

SIDA contracted Scandiaconsult Natura AB, Stockholm Sweden to carry out the evaluation of FRAMA. The team consisted of Bengt Kjeller, agricultural economist, as team leader and Raquel Lopez, agronomist. Both consultants have experience from the agriculture sector of Nicaragua in general and the project area in particular. The mission was carried out during four weeks starting 16th of April 2001 and concluding 11th of May with the delivery of the first draft report.

3 Methodology of the Evaluation

3.1 Aim and Purpose

It was of interest both for Sweden and Nicaragua that an evaluation of the impact of FRAMA should be carried out. The mayor reason is that MAGFOR and SIDA are in the final stages of planning for a long-term agricultural project in the same geographical area. Lessons learned from FRAMA will be important for the design of the project. Beside this, it is of interest both for Sida and MAGFOR and other institutions in Nicaragua and Central America to draw lessons from FRAMA. Hopefully it can contribute to improve future involvement in prevention and rehabilitation of disasters.

The principal aim for the mission was to establish the degree of fulfilment of the objectives of FRAMA with focus on its impact on the target group i.e. to what degree they had been able to recover the pre Mitch production levels. The acceptance and effectiveness of the project at local and national level should also be evaluated. Special emphasis on lessons learned for prevention and rehabilitation has been at the heart of the mission. Therefore the focus was on impact, recuperation of production and prevention of future disasters similar to this.

3.2 Working Procedures

The work started at Sida HQ followed by discussing the focus of methods and defining a work programme with Sida in Managua. At the beginning, discussions were held with the former Executive Director of FRAMA. Initial meetings in Managua were followed by fieldwork in the project area. In order to report progress and clarify issues, two midterm consultations were held with Sida. Before the team leader left Nicaragua a final discussion with Sida/MAGFOR was held.

The literature was easily assessable and of great value for the mission. Despite the emergency character and short duration of FRAMA, the documentation left behind was plentiful and well managed. All applications and other project information were carefully classified and filed.

One limitation was that the accounting system was not designed to provide information to establish the total volume and values of work carried out and material provided. The second main limitation was that the project had terminated and the staff was dispersed. The MAGFOR staff that had

worked with FRAMA in the region had been transferred. Because of the local elections all of the mayors were new.

The mission took the former Executive Director of FRAMA, now head of the policy division at MAGFOR, as the main MAGFOR representative. We regret that we did not pursue the former MAGFOR staff in general and in particular those that served on the Executive Committee.

The mission studied the preparatory reports as well as plans, budgets; applications for project support, reports, and formats and project studies. The bulk of the necessary information is contained in the FRAMA Final report with its 17 appendices.

The missions main informers were:

- The farming families that received assistance from FRAMA.
- Farmers that did not receive FRAMA aid.
- Technicians of the local municipalities
- Staff of the executing agencies.
- Key FRAMA project staff.
- Sida and MAGFOR

The mission also took advantage the presence of the Orgut team by discussing and checking information and impressions. They were currently undertaking a study and design of the long-term agricultural programme.

3.3 The Fieldwork

The fieldwork was carried out between 17th April to 10th May. At an early stage the mission realised that the impact of Mitch varied considerably between farmers, even within a very limited area. Therefore, it was necessary to establish a representative method for sampling in order to compare the impact. To facilitate this a questionnaire for the interviews was developed to serve as a guide for the discussion with farming families and executing agencies. In order to create a statistically significant sample some 100 farmers were answering the questionnaire.

The approach to measure the impact was to compare the pre-and post-FRAMA situation. To be able to do this, the production and annual income of the families before and after Mitch were analysed. Additionally, families who did and did not receive assistance from the project were compared.

The initial situation was reconstructed using the information collected by the project technicians during the farm to farm supervision carried out in order to establish the damages of Mitch. This information was found within all the executed projects.

The situation after FRAMA was established using a survey covering 10% of families within the target group from different FRAMA financed projects in 7 selected out of the total of 20 municipalities which were covered (municipalities (Dario, Sebaco, Matagalpa, San Ramon, Jinotega, Pantasma and la Concordia).

A smaller sample of non-recipient farmers was studied in order to make the most objective comparison over the project impact possible.

Direct farm visits and the interviews with executing agencies and key project personnel were carried out by the mission. The interviews based on the questionnaire for the statistical survey was done by

7 technicians; each one assigned a municipality. They had not earlier been involved in FRAMA. The mission did a random selection of farmers to be visited and supervised the technicians.

The basis for the statistical study was 94 beneficiaries and 27 non-beneficiaries in 7 municipalities. In total the mission visited and held in depth interviews with 37 farming families in 10 different villages. Discussions were held with 8 executing agencies. In order to evaluate the result of the coupon component 6 interviews were held with the farmers and a group discussion was held with 15 farmers in the Municipality of Matiguas. The statistical programme SPS was used to analyse the data.

4 Context and background

4.1 Mayor reasons for the damage caused by hurricane Mitch

“At one o clock at night we heard a very strange noise and I asked my husband to go out and find out what it was. He went out and immediately came back shouting that we had to leave immediately, without saving anything but the life. We ran uphill and we were climbing the hill with the water at the heels, it was a matter of seconds, the house and everything we had was taken by the river....”

The very deep tropical depression Mitch struck Nicaragua in October 1998. The event caused severe damage. The drier areas were hardest hit, and valuable agricultural land was covered by debris, leaving some of it beyond the economic possibility for rehabilitation. Crops were destroyed; irrigation channels, wells and farm infrastructure was washed away or covered by soil, stones and trees. Houses were demolished and people lost their lives. The productive capacity was seriously affected. Especially hard hit were the already poor small-scale farmers. Without assistance from outside many of them would have been without means to start building up a life again. In this situation, FRAMA came in to assist the most vulnerable and those hardest hit to come back to normal (pre Mitch) situation again.

It is well known, not at least by the Nicaraguans that the country is constantly exposed to natural threats, if not hurricanes it is droughts or earthquakes. According to CEPAL Nicaragua has suffered losses amounting to 6,2 billion US\$ in the last twenty-six years. This equals three times the gross national product or an annual loss of 238 million US\$ or an equivalent of 50% of the export value. The magnitude of the accumulated losses is a barrier for sustainable development of the national economy and thus also the farmers. The dualism in the country with a few rich and powerful and many poor without influence aggravates the situation.

The combination of four factors led to the serious negative effects of Mitch.

1. The magnitude of the depression itself with a probable recurrence of hundreds of years.
2. The passing of the Mitch over an ecologically vulnerable territory affected by aridness and steep slopes
3. The social vulnerability of the poor people who are forced to settle in high-risk areas in the most impoverished parts of the country.
4. The inappropriate production processes causing continuous environmental degradation and depletion of the resource base. This is realised by unsustainable economic activities like indiscriminate cutting of forest and the advance of the agriculture frontier towards the Atlantic coast.

The last two factors are to a large extent a result of misguided policies and aggravated by the dualism prevailing in the country.

4.1.1 Droughts and floods are interrelated

Jaime Wheelock in his book “Natural Disasters of Nicaragua” advocates that there are no natural disasters but only natural phenomena that are converted into human disasters.

This is supported by Sture Linner in the report “Emergency assistance for development”, where he defines three types of catastrophes:

- The emergency disasters which draws much attention from the rest of the world.
- The chronic disasters like, starvation, diseases etc, which often don't get much attention even though their effects might be worse than the emergencies.
- Between the two is what Linner calls "slow processes" like increased poverty or environmental degradation, often an effect of wrong economic policies.

The two authors advocate that the negative consequences of natural phenomena to a high degree depends on prior human activities, thus their effects of them can be influenced and many times prevent it from happening again. "What man has caused he can also repair" Thus, to avoid fatalism, Mitch could provide the opportunity to be a turning point for Nicaragua, if experiences are analysed and conclusions are drawn and implemented.

Sture Linner illustrates the scenery of a gliding scale of catastrophes:

A	B	C	D	E
Industrial Accidents ¹	Hurricanes, Volcanoes ²	Earthquakes ³	Droughts, Floods ⁴	Deforestation, Land degradation ⁵
Emergency				Chronic

Certain types of catastrophes are followed by others, thus creating accumulated effects: A drought is followed by a hurricane that washes the soil and causes flooding which in turn destroys the wells and contaminates the water. The diseases come in forms of diarrhoeas and cholera. In their efforts to recover the people see no other way out than to destroy the land even more, just for survival. The accumulated effects are becoming increasingly serious and next time an extreme natural phenomenon occurs it will hit even harder.

The negative effects of natural phenomena in Nicaragua are increasingly gliding towards position E, that is they are becoming chronic. But it is still possible to change the trend if the right actions are taken. It is evident that the heavy flood, which occurred during Mitch, was worsened by deforestation. The fact that in 1930 there were 30 million hectares of forest while today there is only 10% or around 3 million hectares left.⁶ has had a negative influence on the hydrological conditions in the watersheds.

The floods and droughts are interrelated; it is symptomatic that the areas most affected by Mitch were the drier parts of Nicaragua. Because a series of previous droughts a protective vegetative cover was lacking. This combined with the loss of topsoil and organic matter reduced the soil capacity to infiltrate and store the water thus considerably increasing the overland flow.

The prevention of effects from extreme acts of nature, which occurs almost annually in Nicaragua, should be of high priority for the farmers and the country as a whole. So far there has been done very little to this effect, while the potential for real gains in this area are enormous.

¹ A. For example Chernobyl, completely caused by man

² B. Caused by the forces of nature and the difference between natural phenomena and catastrophes is less than for the other categories.

³ C. Created by nature, nothing else can be done than to adapt.

⁴ D. The human component is very strong; here we can work preventive. .

⁵ E. Destruction of the ecological stability caused by human activity, which finally can lead to a total breakdown of the environment.

⁶ Coordinador Civil, Nicaragua).

Therefore it is important for the long-term agricultural program not only to look at the increase in production. In order to maintain the long-term productivity it is necessary to also have the occurrence of phenomena like Mitch in mind, so that next time it happens negative effects can be less. The techniques to do this are already there.

However, the key to achieve less vulnerability doesn't lay in the techniques. They are there; ready to be used when the conditions are right. The key lies in creating awareness; new attitudes and building institutions that can support more sustainable practices in agriculture. In Nicaragua there exists almost a colonial type of mentality towards agriculture. Many people who own the farms live in towns. There is a deeply rooted culture characterised by exploitation rather than long term sound ecological practices and thereby healthy economic development. Fragmentation and insecurity as regards the ownership of land is prevailing. If the development of the high agricultural and forestry potentials are to be a reality, the fundamental causes underlying the following has to be addressed:

- the subdivision of farms into units that are unable to support a family,
- alternative occupations as agriculture alone can not be expected to support a population that doubles in 17 years,
- the lack of effective laws that regulate and provide security for land lease,
- the absence or poor implementation of laws that regulates land use and good land husbandry,
- the regulation and persuasion of the care and use of water,
- forestry laws which are contradictory and not supporting the development of the forestry sector, despite the high natural potential,
- the absence of effective policies and laws promoting the development and management of common resources like rural roads and rural electricity,
- as the individual farmers are without power alone, the organisation into associations could improve their situation,
- the many unresolved conflicts over land. (and recently also threats for land confiscation by the banks due to indebtedness by larger farms), and;
- the generally poor implementation of existing laws and regulations

4.2 Earlier Swedish co-operation in the sector

Sweden assisted Nicaragua for more than 20 years within the agriculture and forestry sectors. The forestry programme began in 1980 and was terminated 1988. Despite the large potential for forestry in Nicaragua and long-lasting Swedish support the sector is still poorly developed. The farmers stores project, mainly funded by emergency funds during the civil war, started 1985 and lasted up to 1993. Despite the 8 years efforts, the majority of small-scale farmers are neither economically organised, nor in associations or farmers unions. Thus, none of the two projects made a lasting impact.

Had these two projects been more successful, the countryside and the small-scale farmers would have been better prepared and had their own capacity for emergency and rehabilitation work necessary after Mitch.

A mayor reason for the poor success of the Swedish projects has been the lack of legal foundation about people's rights and responsibilities to utilise the forest as well as for the right to organise themselves. One can not avoid referring to the Indian Oxford economist Armatyra Sen who states; "what people finally receives depends on the legal rights they can uphold".

4.3 The project area

The economy of Matagalpa and Jinotega districts is dominated by agriculture. The rural population is about half a million with 50% under the age of 15 years. Population growth stands at 4% per year. There are around 100.000 farms, most of them less than 7 hectares. About a quarter of the households on the smaller farms are headed by women. There are a substantial number of land-less people who are working as seasonal workers at the coffee plantations. They may rent a small plot used for growing of basic grains for food.

The distribution of land is very uneven. Approximately 80% of the total land are controlled by 20% of the larger farms. There are large differences in working and living conditions between the farms. A modern commercial farmer using the latest technology may have neighbours hardly at subsistence level using century old techniques. Their common ground is that they are all trying to optimise the use of their resources but are all affected by the long lasting rural crisis. At the moment of the evaluation visit, the coffee crisis affected big and small. Large farmers have been jailed for not paying debts and the banks confiscated their farms.

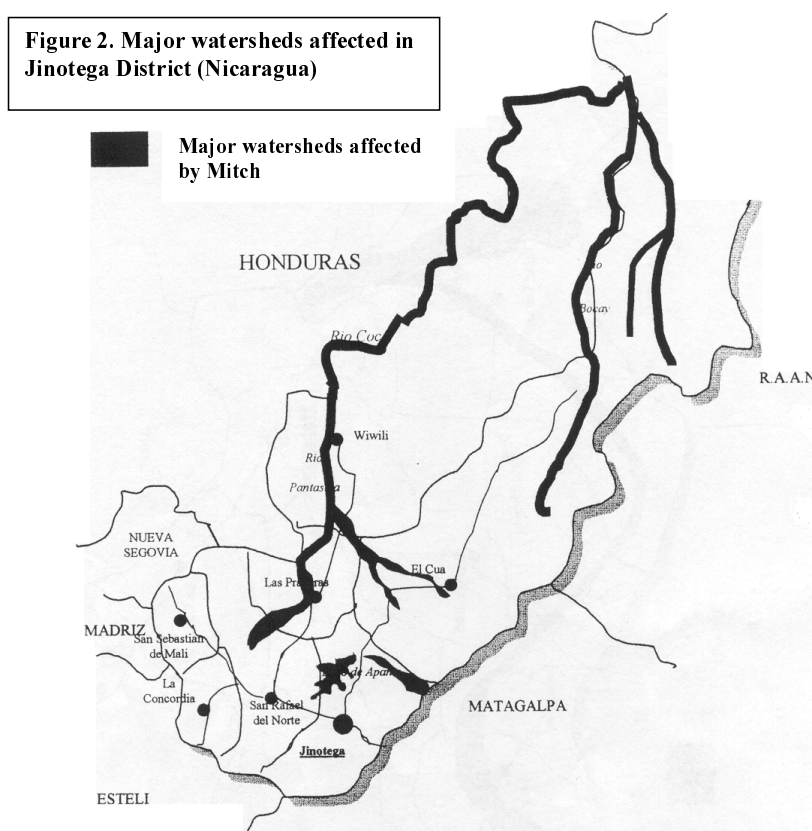
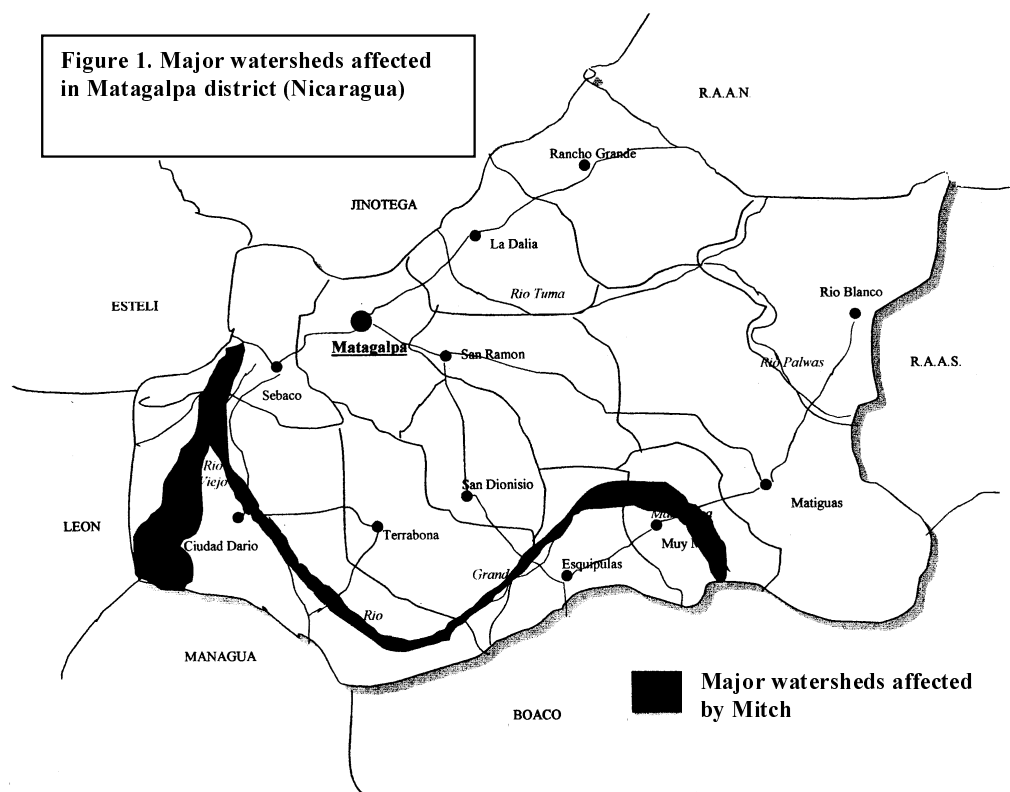
Matagalpa and Jinotega were seriously affected by the war. The war was followed by a period of criminality with robberies and farmers taken as hostages. As a result of insecurity, farmers from the large and middle-sized farms left their land and took residence in towns. The situation has now improved but insecurity still prevails.

The effects of the structural adjustments programmes have forced the already poor people to pay for education and health services, which they can ill afford.

The extreme poverty in rural areas affects 80% of the population. Serious malnutrition among children amounts to 25%. The poverty makes people very vulnerable to climatic disturbances, as they have very small margins. This situation forces the farmers to take a short term perspective with the consequence that production practices becomes unsustainable, leading to a resource base which is gradually being reduced. Such is the situation today and such was the situation in which Mitch found the people of northern Nicaragua in October 1998.

4.4 The Effects of Mitch

Mitch, the hurricane of the century turned into a very deep tropical storm when coming in over land. It affected the whole of Central America. The depression struck Nicaragua by the end of October 1998 and offloaded more than 1000 mm of rainfall during one week. The northern and north-western regions were hardest hit.



In the Matagalpa-Jinotega region the most affected zone were the *eastern areas* containing the municipalities of *San Isidro, Ciudad Dario, Sebacco, Terrabona, San Rafael and the Concordia*. The farmers cultivating vegetables on the banks of Rio Grande de Matagalpa and Rio Viejo were particularly hard hit. The flood brought debris from the mountains, which covered the fertile soil with a thick layer of sand, stones and tree stumps. Other farmers had their topsoil washed away and irrigation channels were destroyed. Houses, wells, fences, pumps were all carried away by the flooding. These farmers were left without assets over one night.

The *central zones*, with the municipalities of *Matagalpa, Jinotega, Tuma La Dalia* and *San Ramon* are mountainous areas. Here the damages were very varying. Most common damage was landslides and gully formation. For some farmers this meant a complete loss of their productive base like coffee plantations. They also lost fences and coffee processing equipment. Farmers who were specialised in flower production and bee keeping lost a substantial amount of infrastructure.

The *southern zone*, with the municipalities of *Esquipulas, Muy Muy, Matiguas* and *Rio Blanco* are having flat to undulating topography with occasional hill outcrops. The area is characterised by extensive cattle production. Here, the rivers flooded the fields, mainly leading to losses of pasture and to a lesser extent of infrastructure. The major reason for the relatively smaller damage is that the productive areas are far away from the Rio Grande of Matagalpa and thereby safer.

The *northern area* including the Municipality *Pantasma* is centred along the Rio Coco. Here much farmland was flooded covering it with sand and stones as well as other debris. Many farmers lost their soil and land. Banana plantations were seriously damaged, as were irrigation systems, fences, etc. According to FRAMA the damages in Pantasma were underestimated in the beginning.

The *eastern zone*: including the Municipalities of *Wiwili, Cua Bocay* and *Waslala* includes a large area of plains and mountains. This is the old agriculture frontier with a very high level of poverty. There is serious lack of infrastructure and social services. The government has very thin presence on the ground. In this zone the damages were relatively small due to less rain. There were losses of crops and infrastructure and close to the riverbanks soil was washed away. Despite being less affected the state of poverty was such that many small farmers were totally ruined.

4.5 The swift formulation of the project, the pacesetter of FRAMA

4.5.1 Preparatory work

Since 1998 SIDA and MAGFOR had analysed the agricultural situation in the northern parts of Nicaragua. The aim was to establish a long-term programme for agricultural development. Mitch interrupted this work.

The new situation after Mitch led to an agreement to formulate and establish a short-term agricultural rehabilitation project. The aim was to re-establish the pre-Mitch production levels of the poor small-scale farmers.

The following studies were carried out during the preparations:

1. MAGFOR: "Hurricane Mitch-agricultural and forestry sector: "Rehabilitation and transformation." (February 1999)
2. Sida, Christopolos/Barrios "Agricultural rehabilitation after Hurricane Mitch and an outline of long term rural development priorities" (March 1999)

3. Sida: Genfors/Wetterblad. "Project preparation for Sida decisions."
4. Sida: Barrios/Gomez/Belli "River bank damages by Mitch and technical rehabilitation recommendations". (April 1999)
5. Sida /SIPU; Synnerholm/Echanove "Project Document" (May 1999)

The emergency situation by itself coupled with the request from MAGFOR and the directives from the Sida management to prepare the project created a conducive situation of work. Diverging views on the type and scope of the damage were overcome through good teamwork, dedication and braveness. This spirit from the preparatory work was not lost but reinforced by the implementation team. The organisational set-up with a real Executive Committee allowed the project both in theory and practice to "regroup" and retake the initiative more effectively as needs arose.

Neither the preparation nor the implementation followed the "book" on how to do but the Executive Committee and management let reality decide when it differed from the rules and reformulated them in a very orderly manner.

4.6 The objectives and the design of the project

"What was good with FRAMA was that it was not prepacked in advance"

FRAMA represented a new model for collaboration from the executive leadership down to the beneficiaries. It was made very clear in the project document that the project should be driven by the demand of the target group. Policies and management by objectives should guide the project. As a result of the active Sida participation the project was not hijacked by bosses or middlemen but ownership became local. The partnership between farmers MAGFOR and Sida as well as with implementing agencies constantly grew from preparation to final implementation.

4.6.1 The organisation

The Executive Committee (EC)

The high command of FRAMA was the Executive Committee, (EC). The EC had equal representation by SIDA and MAGFOR. The two organisations shared equal powers and responsibilities and all decisions were taken by joint agreement. The chairmanship was rotating between the two. Both parties signed the minutes. The transparency of decisions was ensured in that the minutes were open to public. The EC had the right to veto, within 72 hours, over proposals from the Project Unit.

The main functions of the Executive Committee were:

1. Determination of the policies, strategies, definitions and regulations. .
2. Approval of plans and budgets for the Project Unit.
3. Supervision of the Project Unit.
4. Approval of projects over 25.000 US\$.
5. External audits and evaluations.

Sida had personnel with experience from the agriculture sector in Nicaragua both at the Head Office in Stockholm and at the Embassy in Managua. There was also back up of high calibre national consultants who gave Sida the capacity to fully execute its mandate as member of the EC.

This innovative model and its concepts to guide the project were crucial for the success during the preparation stage and at the initial phase of FRAMA.

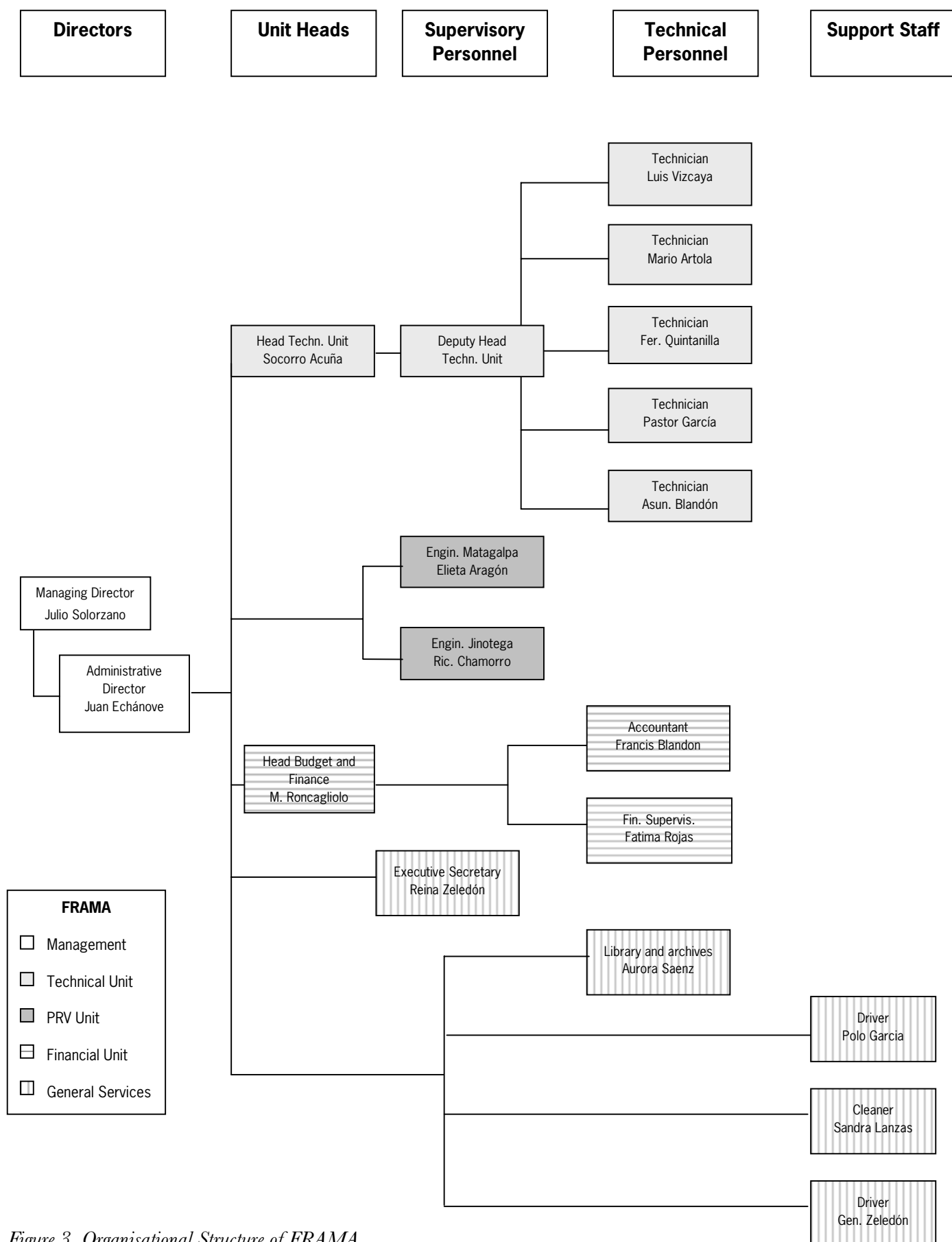


Figure 3. Organisational Structure of FRAMA

The Project Unit (PU)

The project unit, PU, was responsible for the development and execution of the project activities. It acted under the direction and supervision of the EC.

The PU was an independent unit within MAGFOR and was created by a decree of the Minister the 14th of May 1999. This solution was new and innovative for Sida projects and it was important for the positive outcome of the project that the legal status was clear.

An Executive Director with an Administrative Director in charge of the administration headed the PU. Both were appointed through a joint agreement between SIDA and MAGFOR. The agreement was made official and public through a certification by the notary public the 21st of May 1999. This was important since it gave the management full authority according to their terms of references as established in the project document. The Executive Director was nominated by MAGFOR and the Administrative Director was nominated by SIDA.

The Executive Director had a background as agricultural economist as well as a prominent farmer and leader of regional as well as national farmer's organisations. His leadership represented a modern management style, very useful to the outcome of FRAMA.

The Administrative Director had a background as a lawyer with both theoretical and practical project experiences. He played a key part in the formulation of the project document as well as the regulations for the programme.

Besides these two key figures the national Sida consultant had a crucial role to play. He actively participated in the project, especially at the initial phase until the executive director and his team were able to take control of the project.

The new high profile of Sida significantly contributed to the stability of the project and that there was no change of directors.

According to the project document and the Sida/MAGFOR opinion the PU FRAMA should have a very slim organisation with only five members of staff. Reality would prove this standpoint to be wrong already at the initiation of the project.

The combined skills and qualifications of the three key persons, especially the active role of the Executive Director and later on the work of the field staff made FRAMA operative and efficient during its relatively short time. The stability that FRAMA experienced was the effect of having the right people in the right place with clearly defined rules that could only be modified in a predefined way.

The partnership was symbolised by the presence of the Swedish flag together with the Nicaraguan at the entrance of the FRAMA office. Unlike the case for many donors the flag was put there as an initiative by the Nicaraguan Executive Director. He had it locally made and placed it at the side of the Nicaraguan as a symbol of SIDA as the custodian of the project.

To conclude, the success of the PU was due to a modern management style, well-motivated staff and the active presence by Sida.

4.7 The components of FRAMA

FRAMA had three components:

1. The General Fund including rehabilitation and a coupon system for the planting of grains and coffee and funds for animal husbandry.
2. A Programme for the reduction of vulnerability, PRV which mainly was used for repair of rural roads.
3. A Fund for studies and investigations in support of FRAMA.

4.7.1 The demand driven GENERAL FUND

The principal aim of FRAMA was to finance rehabilitation projects for small-scale farmers affected by Mitch. The underlying principles to achieve this were:

- the beneficiaries could only be farming families seriously affected by Mitch;
- assistance was going to be guided by demand,
- all assistance was to be in the form of grants. Explicitly the use of credit was not to be used.
- contrary to the more common approach to implement the project through a government institution or a specific project structure FRAMA was designed more as a financier and co-ordinator. The implementing functions were handed over to various organisations existing in the area

The combination of the flexibility of the budget for the General Fund, the organisational model and the dedicated personnel made it possible to successfully prepare and supervise the projects in the field.

The foundation of FRAMA was a General Fund for financing of project proposals received and selected according to criteria established in the operational regulations. It consisted initially of a rehabilitation component, later divided into two approaches, rehabilitation of affected farms and a coupon system to support planting and veterinary services.

Executing Agencies

Eligible applicants to execute activities under FRAMA were: farmers groups consisting of not less than 10 families, national and international NGOs, commercial enterprises, national government institutions and local government authorities and municipalities. The applicants were required to have experience from the agriculture area in the region.

The project decided to only work through executing agencies and not directly with farmers groups because of limited capacity by the later. The executing agencies revised the groups and made them larger. Farmers that were found not to qualify were excluded and others that were eligible but for some reasons had been left out were included.

FRAMA-PU received and reviewed applications from 41 organisations. Out of these organisations 33 were considered suitable for financial support. As a consequence, a diverse mixture of organisations executed a total of 54 projects. Approved applications from national NGOs dominated, operating 31 projects or 28,8% of the budget. The Agriculture Unions and Local Governments had 18 projects and 21% of the budget each. International NGOs executed 5 projects with 13,6% of the budget.

The PRV (Programme for Reduction of Vulnerability) component was mainly executed through private companies directly and/or through CARE international. This component, part of the general fund consisted mainly of repair of roads and the construction of about 20 tanks and reservoirs for water.

To conclude; apart from the coffee union and a few co-operatives the small-scale farmers did not have their own organisation for project execution. Therefore, the NGOs were taking roles that under other circumstances should be played by the farmers themselves.

4.8 The budget

The budgeted amount of totally 29 million SEK was totally utilised.

The initial budget as per the project document is presented in table 1.

Table 1 – The budget

	SEK (*million)
General Fund and PRV	20,0
Fund for studies investigations	2,0
PU, operational expenses	1,53
PU, investments	0,45
Publicity campaign	0,35
Sundries	0,95
Subtotal FRAMA	25,3
Line of finance for other studies, SIDA	3,7
Total	29.0

Right from the start, after having received a flood of applications there was a change of concept by the PU from only approving or rejecting applications to a model where the projects were more closely supervised by technical staff. A coupon system for support of planting and veterinary services was also introduced. The implications of this on the budget was that while only 13% was spent 1999 as much as 87% was spent the year 2000. This was a result of the more intensive supervision and the coupon system. If FRAMA had had the capacity to work with coupons for the first and/or second planting season 1999 this would have been of more value for the farmers.

4.9 The execution of FRAMA

4.9.1 The Publicity Campaign

Before starting the actual execution of FRAMA a publicity campaign of 8 months was planned for.

Figure 4 Activity Chart

General Activities	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May
Selection of PU Staff														
Forming the Committee														
Publicity of FRAMA														
Designing the campaign														
Preparing material														
Execution of the campaign														
PRV														
Selection of Experts														
Identification of projects														
Tenders														
Execution														
Final Evaluation														
General Fund														
Developing proposals														
Presentation of proposals														
Evaluation and approval of														
Execution of projects														
Financial Monitoring and														
Technical monitoring and														
Final evaluation														
Fund for Studies and														
Presentation of proposals														
Approval														
Execution of studies and														

The campaign to publicise FRAMA was launched in Matagalpa on the 19th of May 1999. The main speaker was the vice president. Additional dignitaries were the MAGFOR Minister and the Sida Counsellor. The 500 participants attending the launching represented some 50 organisations of farmers, NGOs and the local government of Matagalpa and Jinotega.

The launching was immediately followed by a series of workshops with the aim to explain the objectives of FRAMA as well as the procedures and requirements for applications.

To make the farmers in Matagalpa and Jinotega aware about FRAMA and also advice them on the procedures to apply for assistance, MAGFOR/Sida contracted a publicity company. The campaign consisted of three parts: publicity, promotion and public relations. In addition to the publicity campaign the project thought it necessary to employ a Promotion Co-ordinator with a team of 12 field promoters. Their assignment was to make FRAMA known and help the farmers to develop their projects. This campaign started before the PU had been set-up. The FRAMA message was initiated by mid May 1999. The impact was immediate and massive.

The radio was one mayor means of communication from the very first moment. The information through radio messages and programmes with interviews were very powerful. Other media also very closely covered FRAMA activities. Thus, FRAMA was very capable of establishing and maintaining good public relations.

By mid June 400 applications had already been received. The need for funds necessary to implement this was already far beyond FRAMA's financial capacity.

In July, as a response to the flood of applications, FRAMA modified and made the radio messages more specific. It was stressed that FRAMA could only finance small-scale farmers with limited resources who had lost substantial infrastructure. The losses caused by Mitch were also to be verified. As the applications continued to fill up the office the final date for applications was brought back to the last of August instead of the end of December as was initially planned.

At the closing date, FRAMA had received applications for 1382 projects of which 50 were represented by informal groups. The projects would have supported 73,351 families to a total cost US\$ 22,727,035. FRAMA only had US\$ 3 million or about 13% of the requested amount at its disposal.

4.10 The response of FRAMA

4.10.1 The changes: rationalisation and technical supervision in the countryside

According to the project document, the function of the project staff at the PU should primarily be to approve or reject applications. To do this it would be sufficient with an Executive and an administrative director supported by a field supervisor and an accountant. After the onset of the publicity campaign, with a situation of offices full of applications and pressure from a large part of the farming community in the region, FRAMA only had two choices: to run the project as a "lottery" or to find out which ones who really needed help. The second option was chosen.

In order to get a better understanding of the applicants FRAMA contracted the statistical division of MAGFOR, to carry out a study. A team of 50 persons made a rather profound study by visiting 500 farms. Based on this study and other information, FRAMA was able to better define the target group and link it to the resources available.

As a result of this, the procedures for approving/rejecting applications were totally changed. The team of promoters was obviously not necessary. Instead a technical group of 7 people was employed. It was decided that an agricultural technician should visit all the farms within a selected project in order to establish if the farmer met the FRAMA criteria, i.e. being a small farmer, having lost the infrastructure etc. The aid was limited to compensation only of direct loss as a result of Mitch. The upper ceiling for any applicant was set to 1,500 US\$. In fact, the supervision was so tight that a successful applicant was visited four times: for evaluation of the application, twice for supervision of ongoing work and finally upon completion of work.

Another measure to rationalise the operations was that FRAMA had to create larger groups with more participants in each. The number of co-executors was also reduced to those with best-proven capacity. Further, FRAMA assigned quotas to each municipality according to damage suffered. Through this an order of priority between the districts was established.

The execution of the project started with the hardest hit municipalities. The Executive Director of PU FRAMA met with the mayors of the local governments in order to establish priority areas for action. This was followed by local workshops with different organisations to inform and co-ordinate actions.

5 Principal Findings

5.1 Fulfilment of the objectives

The general objective of FRAMA was to assist small-scale farmers affected by Mitch in their rehabilitation and their transformation of the agriculture. The area was limited to Matagalpa and Jinotega districts.

The specific objectives were:

1. To recover the pre MITCH production levels of the target group.
2. To reduce the increasing poverty caused by the natural disaster in the region.
3. To reduce the vulnerability of the target group in face of eventual future disasters.
4. To assist the process of transformation of the agriculture in the region.

It was noted that the farmers had in general been able to recuperate their pre-Mitch level of production. But families had not yet been able to regain their pre-Mitch living standard, as a lot of property accumulated over years had been lost. The accumulated impact of previous strains of “natural disasters” like the droughts of El Niño, the tropical rains of Mitch in addition to the economic and political insecurity and the still felt post war effects have seriously weakened the farming community.

For the farmers, which were reached by the project, FRAMA achieved its main objective, to recover the pre MITCH production level. FRAMA managed to help 2865 farmers to rehabilitate their farms. Additionally, FRAMA assisted 6315 families to plant around 0,7 ha of basic food grains. However, this only represents 12% of the applications received. Many farms and families were left without help and have been unable to recover.

Regarding objective 2, all FRAMA activities contributed to poverty reduction within the target group. But there are so many other obstructing factors contributing to the precarious situation in the area. Therefore the project didn't managed to address the very underlying factors to the poverty, both in the sense of the long term impact on those reached and the number of families assisted.

In fulfilment of objective 3 it must be realised that is not possible to reduce the vulnerability towards “natural disasters” and other unfavourable factors like unpredictable producer- prizes within such a short life span as FRAMA had. Therefore FRAMA had little impact on this sub-objective; this has to be fulfilled by the long-term project.

As for objective 4, an important tool to reduce the vulnerability of agriculture is to transform it. Generally, when it comes to small-scale producers' diversification rather than specialisation is a key strategy. However, again given the short time-span of the project it was unrealistic to create significant changes in the farming systems. With some exceptions, such a process normally takes decades, and should thus be an important component of the long-term project.

An important principle for the project was to avoid the feeling of giving out handouts. The policy to donate and not give credit was the only real option for FRAMA. However, there exists an opinion among some of the implementing organisations that FRAMA could have used a more selective approach and allowed the use of credits in their project areas to avoid future problems. This is not a

realistic thought, since the pressure to repay loans would have put another heavy burden to the already precarious situation on the shoulders of farmers.

5.2 Rehabilitation of farms

In a study done in April 1999⁷, the most affected areas were identified; there the rivers had flooded the land and left heavy debris behind. In total some 280 to 350 ha of highly productive land mainly for vegetable production was considered in need of rehabilitation. The work needed included the removal of sand, stones and trees, covering the soils and repair of the infrastructure for irrigation. The pre Mitch price of this land was estimated to 5–6000 US\$ per hectare. Had these farmers not been able to recover their land the alternative had been to farm uphill with the potential for environmental damage, like serious erosion hazard and increased risks for landslides.

As related earlier, after the publicity campaign FRAMA received 1,400 applications from all kind of organised and not organised groups representing 75.000 farmers. To assist all requests would have meant a project cost of 23 million US\$ compared to the 3 million US\$ available

Faced by this reality the project had to establish very clear definitions and criteria in order to be able to reach only the hardest hit and the poorest farmers. To facilitate this, a special study was made by the MAGFOR statistical division. This study was designed to better understand the farmers in the region and how Mitch had affected them.

Having established the criteria for assistance and after the PUs consultations with the local governments, areas for interventions were decided upon in priority order. Much attention was given to collaboration with the executing agencies in order to ensure that they followed the FRAMA regulations. The ceiling for support was set to 1500 US\$/farmer. Within the rehabilitation component the executing agencies (NGOs, municipalities, etc), served as intermediaries between FRAMA (Sida/MAGFOR) and the beneficiaries, as the producers were lacking their own organisations to do this work.

After the EC had decided on area priorities and target group definitions as well as procedures for project implementation the technicians of the PU as well as those of the implementing agencies went to work. Each approved farm received four visits by technicians. The first was to inspect the farm in order to establish if it really fell within the definitions for the target-group. The MITCH damages were to be verified and the aid applied for negotiated. After approval a start up visit and a follow up visit was made. After finalisation of the project a final inspection was carried out. All visits were well documented according to a standard procedure.

⁷ Baiiros/Gomez/Bell “ River bank damages by Mitch and technical rehabilitation recommendations (April 1999)

Table 2 Type of damage by Mitch among farmers who benefited from the project.

Item damaged	% of affected farmers	Average loss/ affected farmer
Coffe	17	0,78 ha
Grains	40.4	2,1 ha
Bananas	13.8	2,17 ha
Vegetables	11.7	0,67 ha
Fences	33	816 meters
Hose pipe	5.3	44 meters
Wooden pens	1.0	80 meters
Wells and tanks	6.4	1,5 units
Houses	14.9	1,14 units
Loss of soil	53.2	1,85 ha

n=94

By the end of FRAMA, 89 projects, covering 2,865 families had received assistance for rehabilitation to a value of 1,25 million US\$ or equivalent to 54% of the project budget. The average project costed US\$ 14,038 with 32 farmers receiving US\$ 436 each and 40% of the households female headed. Average family size was 6, with two children under the age of 15.

The result of the study by the mission confirms that it was the hardest hit families who received assistance from FRAMA. However there were many farmers with equal needs that did not get any assistance at all. (Se tables 2 and 3).

The non-benefiting farmers gave as main reason for being excluded from FRAMA that the local leaders where biased at the time the eligible groups were created. Not having been included in one of the few existing groups the lack of own organisations did not allow them to enter another group and apply for aid. Others did not hear about the FRAMA until late.

Table 3 Type of damage by Mitch among farmers who did not benefit from the project

Item damaged	% of affected farmers	Average loss/ affected farmer
Coffe	15	0,39 ha
Grains	55.6	2,22 ha
Bananas	11.1	1,0 ha
Vegetables	25.9	0,75 ha
Fences	40.7	1,291 meters
Hose pipe	3.7	400 meters
Wooden pens	-	-
Wells and tanks	3.7	1 unit
Houses	7.4	1 unit
Loss of soil	40.7	1,12 ha

n=27

Two thirds of the farmers received information about FRAMA either from a friend 31%, or over the radio 29%, followed by local leaders or technicians 25% and NGOs 15%. The most effective means of communication was obviously interpersonal. The majority of farmers had not been in contact with the NGOs before FRAMA. Thus FRAMA also functioned as a contact link between farmers and NGOs, which can be considered an important side effect of the project

The amount of assistance was based on the demand and level of damages suffered. For example, the loss of fences was claimed by 33% of the farmers and 70,2% of those who applied received support to re-fence (tables 3 and 4). It is notable that farmers

did report neither loss of irrigation equipment nor losses of hand tools but this type of aid represents the highest percentage. The farmers chose this alternative as they saw intense land use as the fastest way to recover production on a small piece of land. They also wanted to be more independent on the climate

Other important activities were the distribution of fruit trees and poultry. This package was included in most projects and aimed mainly at the women as a boost of the household economy.

The project did not have sufficient time to prepare these components and there were substantial losses of trees and poultry. More awareness creation and development of recommendations adapted to the different situations would have given better results.

Table 4 Percentage of farmers who benefited from the specific types of assistance

Type of assistance	%	N
Land Clearing	7.4	7
Rehabilitation of wells and tanks	3	3
Repair of fences	70.2	66
Irrigation equipment and hand tools	74.5	70
Multipurpose trees	50	47
Poultry yards, silos, other on farm infrastructure.	57.5	54

n=94

Table 5 Range in value of assistance received by beneficiaries of FRAMA

Range of assistance in US\$	%	N
Below 152 ⁸	25.3	20
152-304	24.1	19
304-454	26.6	21
454-597	6.3	5
597-757	2.5	2
More than 757	15.2	12

N=94, Average value of aid=US\$ 392

Out of the farmers interviewed 77,7% judged the aid as very helpful for the following reasons:

- It covered the damage that Mitch had created,
- It helped to make some profits,
- It assisted to recover items that had been lost and the help came at the right time.
- The production was raised.
- It helped poor people to restart a new life after Mitch.

The rest of the farmers argued that the aid was passable because all losses were not compensated for. As an example, one farmer mentioned that he was aware that the maximum amount of aid from FRAMA was limited to 1500US\$/household. But he only got US\$ 212 in compensation despite his losses was estimated to US\$ 2562. The FRAMA created great enthusiasm and expectations but it was impossible that it could cover everything that people had lost.

Table 6 Area of crops planted before and after Mitch by beneficiaries of FRAMA

Type of Crop	Before			After		
	% of producers which planted	Average area planted ha/farmer	Total area planted (ha)	% of producers which planted	Average area planted (ha)	Total area planted (ha)
Food grains	89.4	2,8	58,8	78.7	2,81	51,8
Bananas	14.9	2,38	9.8	11.7	1,12	7,7
Vegetables	24.5	1,4	14	26.6	1,68	16,8
Coffee	22.3	1,82	14,7	19.1	2,08	12,6
Other crops.	6.4	1,26	4,2	7	1,12	5,6
Total			101,5			94,5

N=94

⁸ The range in USD might seem odd, but is a result of the conversion of Cordoba into USD (1USD=13,2C)

Apparently there is no big difference in area or crops planted before and after Mitch. Therefore it is likely that this was an effect of FRAMA, especially for vegetables, cultivated on the riverbanks. Here each farmer had lost an average of 0,7 ha. The assistance in the form of land clearing, the distribution of pumps and new wells gave this good result. (Table 6)

During the field visits it was noted that the farmers located at the riverbanks of Rio Coco in Pantasma, mainly cultivating bananas had lost almost everything to Mitch. They have recovered approximately 50% of their previous production levels but felt that FRAMA did not estimate the damages objectively. According to them, the budget assigned to the Municipality was too low. Table 6 shows a considerable smaller area under bananas indicating that these farmers have not been able to recover like others.

Table 7 Area of different crops planted by non-beneficiaries of the project

Crop	Before			After		
	% of producers which planted	Average area planted ha/farmer	Total area planted (ha)	% of producers which planted	Average area planted (ha)	Total area planted (ha)
Food grains	81.5	2,38	52,36	81.5	2,29	50,4
Bananas	11.1	1,03	3,08	-	-	-
Vegetables	33.3	1,20	10,85	37.0	1,01	9,1
Coffee	14.8	0,86	3,43	11.1	1,17	3,5
Other crops.	3.7	1,4	1,4	-	-	-
Total			71,2			63

N=27

From table 7 it can be noted that those farmers who did not receive aid from FRAMA were not able to re-establish their pre Mitch level of production. It appears that many farmers did not get assistance from any NGOs either. Only 11,1% of them received aid from organisations like CARE, UCA, San Ramon, UNICAFE, etc. This aid consisted of tools and seed in the range of US\$ 114 to US\$1505 given as credits. Within this group 68% considered the aid from the NGOs mediocre and 33 considered it bad.

From the statistical survey and the interviews it was clear that FRAMA had an impact and helped the farmers back to pre-Mitch level. In the sample farmers had recovered production and the average annual income was even better than before. On the contrary, farmers who did not benefit from FRAMA had less income after Mitch than before.

In comparing the average annual income of both groups (FRAMA and non-FRAMA) they had approximately the same income US\$ 1120 respective US\$ 1134 before Mitch. After Mitch the beneficiaries of FRAMA had an average income of US\$1228 and the non-assisted group 928. This makes a difference of 300 US\$/farmer or almost 30% higher income for those who were assisted by the project. There are few projects, which have these good results within such a short time.

The assistance to 2865 farmers multiplied by US\$ 300 gives a rough figure of 860,000 US\$ as the annual impact of the project. The farm families had their land re-established and received equipment as pumps, well, and tools which can be used in the future, assuming a long lasting impact. At least as long as there is not another flood taking it all away!

5.3 The coupon system for planting and animal husbandry

The approach to first establish the amount of damage and then supervise the work was demanding and slow in relation to the number of applications. Therefore, FRAMA decided to assist applicants considered to have suffered less damage through a coupon system of inputs for planting and animal husbandry. Later on FRAMA used this method in areas where damages were more severe, trying to cover 25% of the applications. Areas selected were Cua Bocay, Matiguas, Muy Muy, Ranch Grande, Esquipulas, La Dalia, Wiwili, San Ramon, Rio Blanco, Pantasma, Yali, la Concordia, Jinotega and Matagalpa. The coupon system allowed three packages to choose from, maize/beans, coffee or animal husbandry. The value of each package was approximately 100 US\$. In total 6315 farmers benefited from coupons.

The scheme was first tried 1999, on small scale during the planting of the third crop (December/January) and then for the first planting 2000 (May/June).

FRAMA identified the needs and developed the packages that farmers could choose from. Deals were negotiated and struck with suppliers of inputs. Applications were revised and approved or rejected by FRAMA not individually but per group. Successful applicants were given their coupons and could retrieve their package at an accredited store of their own choice.

The internal evaluation made by FRAMA 1999 realised that farmers not only needed seed and fertilisers, but also inputs for animal husbandry. Those were included in the second round of coupons. However, gradually the initial intention of the coupons was changed. Of the “differing use of coupons” 36% was for barbed wire, machetes, spades and other hand-tools, some 20% was used for herbicides, 13% for knapsack sprayers, 13% for iron sheets and 18% for household items like maize grinders, foodstuff and clothes. It can be estimated that in total 70% of the coupons were used for farm inputs and 30 for domestic needs.

During the field visits in Cua Bocay, Matiguas and Muy Muy the mission learnt from the farmers that the aid provided through the coupon system had been very useful, because the poverty they experienced and that they had lost all their seed at the time of Mitch.

In Cua Bocay farmers stated that the Communal Movement had charged them 3 US\$ for to be included in the project list and if approved the applicant got additional charges at the time of collecting the package. There were also several cases where the coupons were changed into food.

FRAMA executed the coupon system without going through the executing agencies. Consequently there was no technical advice as part of the package. Some farmers expressed that they did not manage to use the improved seed varieties and some did not apply pesticides and fertilisers as required for optimum yield. Some of the NGOs criticised the coupon system since it negatively affected their credit schemes.

The best results of the coupons were achieved in the coffee nurseries, which enabled the farmers to establish 0,35-0,7 ha of coffee each.

Many farmers were disappointed since they did not get any assistance from FRAMA. They felt that they suffered as much as others and this has created some local tensions. One group also claimed that the businessmen had raised the prices on inputs and they were the ones who had benefited most from the programme. However, this was an isolated case since FRAMA assisted in negotiating with suppliers and in supervising the exercise.

5.4 The Programme for Reduction of Vulnerability, PRV

The budget line PRV (Programme for Reduction of Vulnerability) was intended for larger and more complicated operations and therefore needed the direct intervention of PU FRAMA. Examples of anticipated works were, land rehabilitation using heavy machinery, road repairs and stabilisation of riverbanks. The PRV was not, as initially intended, used for land reclamation. Those costs were instead charged the rehabilitation component.

Inaccessible roads were identified as a key factor, which could paralyse production in some areas. Consequently almost the whole PRV component was directed towards road repairs. A number of criteria were set for the selection of roads to be repaired. Among those can be mentioned: level of damage, state of roads, other road projects, number of farmers and level of production that could be affected. The projects were co-ordinated, with the local governments and community leaders. All projects were presented to the Executive Committee for approval. The whole process of identification, selection, tendering, contracting, execution and supervision was regulated by FRAMA.

Private construction firms executed most of the work, with CARE executing about half of the projects. Totally US\$ 473,485 was spent on PRV representing 21% of the general fund. One serious case of corruption was detected and juridical action taken.

In total PRV assisted the repair of 205 kms of rural roads, including 3 larger culverts and 3 small bridges. The component also repaired 21 small water reservoirs.

The beneficiaries of the project were considered to be the people depending of the roads. Therefore the total number of people who benefited were set to 68.000. The average cost per km of road was estimated to 38.00 US\$ varying from US\$ 1500 to 17600 per kilometre. The cost per beneficiary was calculated to 7,5 US\$.

It can be concluded that FRAMA did not have sufficient technical and managerial capacity to handle this component to full satisfaction. The management team was already overloaded and the road engineer first employed did not perform as required. The decision to work through CARE and complement their action was therefore the best option. Some local governments also had capable staff that took charge of implementation i.e., Pantasma. However, the communities and local governments appreciated the work financed by FRAMA. The mission judges that the funds were well used.

A question to discuss is if FRAMA could have left this work to other institutions and instead used the funds for agriculture rehabilitation. The National Consultancy team supporting Sida estimated that some 280–350 ha of land was in need of clearing. FRAMA achieved 50% of this. The cost for clearing one ha was about US\$ 650–760 and FRAMA could have cleared 700 ha or maybe doubled the area covered, had the PRV been used for this purpose.

5.5 A fund for studies and investigation in support of FRAMA activities

The project included a fund for studies and investigation. The money could be used for FRAMA but also in related areas. The study component was intended to stimulate and provide learning for the future long-term project. Drowned by the flood of applications and the change of project concept from granting/rejecting applications to supervised implementation FRAMA had to put long term thinking and learning on the shelf and deal with what was already at the table.

The PU formulated and/or negotiated the TOR and contracts with the consultants with the approval of the Executive Committee:

After the initial change of approach from a more passive to active role part of the funds was used to compensate for the lack of budget to support the FRAMA technical staff for supervision of field activities. These costs were later charged to a correct vote, established later.

The main studies carried out covered the following areas:

- A soil study in areas covered by sand as a result of the floods,
- The establishment of a data base for the FRAMA farm projects,
- A Study to establish the characteristics of the applicants.

Funds were also used for:

- Contracting of civil engineers for the PRV
- A workshop for sharing the FRAMA experience

The studies seem to have been well founded and properly carried out. The base for definitions and decisions within the project was improved as a result of these.

The voted amount was 126.105 US\$, which was used in addition to 40.000 US\$ for the external audit and external evaluation.

The three main studies mentioned above were all fundamental for the successful implementation of FRAMA. The soil study carried out by the national expert determined how the rehabilitation work of flooded areas in Sebacco and Dario should be done. It also provided technical advice to the farmers. There is a need to follow up this study in order to help those farmers that are facing problems with the production.

The database and the study to establish the characteristics of the applicants allowed FRAMA to define the target-group with acceptable accuracy.

5.6 Cost and benefits

Table 8. Costs for activities

Item/activity	Unit	Quantity	Unit cost	Total cost	
Land rehabilitation	⁹		US\$ ¹⁰	US\$	Percentage of budget
Landclearing/reclamation	Ha	163	620	101,515	4,4
Fencing	Meter	448,700	0,46	204,772	8,9
Land purchase	Ha	64.4	661	42,620	1,9
Irrigation pumps	Unit	260	663	172,545	7,51
Watertanks/reservoirs	Unit	136	114	15,455	0,6
Wells	Unit	118	1019	120,235	5,2
Livestock	Unit	241	455	109,545	4,8
Food banana plantation	Ha	52.5	217	11,364	0,5
Knapp sac sprayers	Unit	813	62	50,505	2,2
Soil conservation	Meter	15,250	1.44	21,9235	1
Hose pipes	Meter	17,147	1.44	23,475	1
Vines	Ha	20,3	606	13,182	0,6
Coffee plants	Units	231 012	0.4	11,747	3,8
Fruit trees	Units	20 658	1.2	23,475	1
Multipurpose trees	Units	76 528	0.2	17,393	0,8
Chicken pens	Units	1 364	130	176,803	7,7
Other rehabilitation activities				57,104	2,5
Total rehabilitation				1,249,414	54
Coupons 1999 and 2000	Units	6 315	1 199	573,788	25
PRV				473,481	21
Total				2,296,689	100

Land rehabilitation

FRAMA established the ceiling amount for support at 1500 US\$/farmer. This was related to the level of damage at the farm and the needs to get back to pre-Mitch production. Thus, there was not any list with anticipated activities made beforehand but the actual support came as a result of a negotiation between the technicians and farmers based on the application and first inspection.

A study¹¹ estimated the damages of soil adjacent to river 400 hectares. FRAMA managed to rehabilitate about 50% of these areas. Most land was rehabilitated in the Dario and Sebacco areas

⁹ The table was initially in Manzanos for area and Varas for distance, in converting has been used 1 MZ= 0,7 Ha and 1 Vara= 0,83 meter

¹⁰ In the original table the currency was expressed in Cordobas, in conversion has been used 1 US\$=13,2 C\$ (rate at the time of the mission)

¹¹ Barrios/Gomez/Belli” river bank damages by Mitch and technical rehabilitation recommendations” (April1999)

since the land there is flat. The damages on the steep slope of Rio Coco could not be treated in the same way. Instead the farmers were assisted by the supply of irrigation pumps.

The cost to rehabilitate the land by clearing sand and debris was high and some farmers did not have all their land cleared. Some land was covered with up to two meters of sand and stones mixed with soil. In general 20 centimetres of sand was left above the old topsoil. The material removed was deposited around the fields or used for as material for road repairs. Farmers complained that the high amount of sand in the soil destroyed its waterholding capacity. Earlier it had been enough to irrigate once a week. Now they had to do it every day, meaning high pumping costs. Another problem was that during heavy rains excess water was discharged back into the fields from the deposits around the fields, causing waterlogging. The mission therefore recommends, as did FRAMA that MAGFOR follows up the technical advice for farmers on rehabilitated land.

The cost to purchase irrigable land on alluvial soil in Sebacco was estimated to be 7,000–8,600 US\$/ha. The 500 US\$ cost invested into clearing 1 ha was therefore well justified. The value of land not cleared did at the time of the mission have a value of less than 1000 US\$ per hectare. Land cleared but now left without irrigation facilities had lost more than 50% of its earlier market value.

In some cases where farmers had lost all the land FRAMA bought new land. Totally 65 ha of land was bought and 0,7 ha was allocated to each affected farmer.

To conclude, the land clearing was very useful and it re-established earlier market values of the soil.

Irrigation pumps

The mission did not have sufficient time to study the use and impact of the 260 pumps, purchased through the project. It was however clear that they were in high demand and much appreciated by the farmers. As a follow up the executing agencies that worked with this component should be approached by SIDA/MAGFOR to report on the maintenance and use of the pumps.

The mission estimated roughly that the pumps enabled the farmers to irrigate 1,4 ha per pump or some 350 ha in all. The return in increased crop production is high but we do not have sufficient material to present a reliable figure on benefits. Farmers appreciated that both income and food security had improved. However, the executive director of FRAMA has rightly pointed out that there is a risk that too many pumps will affect the already delicate water situation.

To conclude, the distribution of pumps made a big impact and was very useful

Construction and repair of wells

Many farms had their wells filled up with sand or destroyed as they collapsed. FRAMA assisted farmers with 188 new wells and repaired 15. It can be estimated that each well can irrigate between 0,35 to 0,7 ha of vegetables. The cost per new well was US\$ 1,020. The profit from one-year vegetable production is sufficient to repay this investment.

Fencing

One common results of Mitch was the loss of fences to keep cattle in their pastures and to protect field crops and vegetables from damage by livestock. Both wire and poles were often lost. The fences also have an additional function to mark the borders between neighbours. In total some 500.000 ms of fences were restored. Many of these were done as “live fences” for environmental protection. The cost per ha of the barbed wire was 107 US\$. It is not meaningful to attempt to

estimate the economic benefit; but adequate fences are a prerequisite for farming and thus of high value.

Plantain in Pantasma

Farmers living near the banks of Rio Coco are depending on cultivation of plantain. They were affected by heavy losses in their plantations (on average 1,4 ha /farmer). FRAMA gave assistance to 75 farmers to replant 0,7 ha each. The cost per ha was US\$ 107 and the estimated yearly return is US\$ 1336 per hectare

The Coupons

The coupons, which assisted the farmers with US\$100 of inputs for planting and animal husbandry, reached 6315 beneficiaries. Many of those were so poor that they would have been unable to plant their fields without this support. It is estimated that 3500 ha of maize, 595 of beans and 1,050 of coffee or totally about 5200 ha was planted as a result of the coupon system.

1250 Cattle farmers benefited from the packages consisting of vaccines and other inputs for livestock.

Multipurpose trees and poultry

To especially assist women fruit trees and poultry were distributed. This assistance proved less successful with few trees surviving, as planting was done in the dry season and in an incorrect way. A big proportion of the poultry died, as they were not suitable to the local conditions. The feeling expressed by some farmers that poultry competed with scarce food resources gives a strong indication of the level of poverty in the area.

5.7 The impact at regional and local level

FRAMA was widely praised for its openness, clear rules and efficient administration. FRAMA was a pioneering project for rehabilitation of farms. The approach to openly invite applications from various types of organisations was also a new concept.

At Government Departmental level the project was well accepted but left little lasting impact in changed attitudes and working procedures. At local Government level, FRAMA has probably had long-time effects expressed in better understanding of the farmers' problems, a sincere will to assist in solving them and better efficiency in project planning and execution. An important explanation for this lies in that local governments were consulted and involved at a very early stage, especially on rehabilitation of farms and infrastructure.

The principle of the NGOs sharing the costs with FRAMA created a feeling of a joint project and shared responsibility. However, the lasting effects vary. For example APPEN, which is partly financed by USAID and is targeting assistance to small-scale farmers, has increased their coverage. Others, like CONAT, Movimiento Comunal de San Ramon and the Local Government in Pantasma have all got larger project portfolios through increased credibility among donors.

Other organisations like URCUMUL has not maintained its assistance to farmers since FRAMA ceased.

In conclusion: FRAMA was well accepted both at regional and local level. It has contributed to an improved working spirit.

5.8 The administration of FRAMA

In May 2000, Sida contracted a consultant¹² to carry out an institutional and organisational analysis of FRAMA. The main conclusions from the study were:

1. The model of organisation led to successful execution of operations.
2. Given the short time of the project, the work of the PU was outstanding. It was extremely creative, efficient and on time. Because of the urgency it concentrated on supervising the fieldwork, setting rules for results, processes and technical competence, simplifying rules for finance, human resources and general administration.

FRAMA was characterised by order and efficiency. The working procedures were well defined and had clear regulations. The combination of an executive director with an administrator, both with excellent capacity to define and give rules for action gave the project a highly efficient management team. An accountant and an assistant supported the two managers. An internal auditor was employed and reported to the executive committee of FRAMA.

Sida contracted an external auditor from Deloitte& Touche in August 2000. The auditors concluded that the accounts were correct and that the internal control structure had been adequate.

The evaluation mission agrees with the findings of the study of the administration and the audit.

5.9 The Economics of FRAMA

Table 9 Costs of FRAMA

	US\$
General Fund (Rehab.,Coupons, PRV)	2,444,343
Costs	
Research and Studies	106,380
Publicity	44,440
Operational Costs	256,017
Benefits for personnel	16,992
Office repair (flooding)	8,213
Depreciation	22,000
8% administration. for rehab (8% of 1,036,000)	104,480
Subtotal	558,524
TOTAL AMOUNT USED	3 ,002,868

Administration and supervision costs as% of total 18,6

It is not possible to say if FRAMA stroke the right balance between rehabilitation, coupons and PRV: Neither is it possible to say whether it was “overregulated” or “oversupervised”. The best cost/ benefit ratios are found in the rehabilitation component but it reached a limited amount of farmers. The funds used in the coupon system component that reached 6315 families would have been sufficient to rehabilitate 1500 more farms. Some farm inputs for the rehabilitation like barbed

¹² Martinez, Ana Elisa “Análisis institucional y organizacional del Proyecto “Fondo de Rehabilitación Post-Mitch MAGFOR_ASDI” en Matagalpa y Jinotega

wire for fencing could have been distributed through the coupon system, as fencing doesn't need much supervision. Had the coupon system been used more widely for the planting 1999 and had it included farm inputs not requiring technical assistance it had been more valuable for the farmers. It would also have cut administrative and supervision costs.

In conclusion the administration and supervision of FRAMA was efficient but costly.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

1. FRAMA assisted 2865 small scale farm families to increase their production through the rehabilitation component. Additionally, through the coupon system it helped 6315 families to plant 0,7 ha of crops each. This only represents 12% of those who applied. Thus, many families were left without assistance to recover. The major reason for this was the demand driven nature of the project, which made it impossible to know the actual need beforehand. The damage was very uneven and many people who applied did not meet the defined criteria. It can be argued that this could have been prevented by more research before the publicity campaign, but there was no time for that. The conclusion of this is that FRAMA achieved its main objective; to recover the pre Mitch production level; but only for those who were selected. The majority was left without help.
2. The repair of roads was a crucial activity, but could probably had been left to other institutions. FRAMA did not have adequate technical know how and management capacity to supervise the road work contracted out under PRV, 50% of the PRV component was executed by CARE. The amount of money spent on repair of roads equals the clearing of 700 ha of new land.
3. There was a reasonable balance between the components. The mission would however have recommended more emphasis on rehabilitation in areas like Pantasma, where the needs were large. This could have been achieved through using fewer coupons and no or very little road repairs, especially if the activities were labelled agricultural rehabilitation.
4. It is important that the technical assistance given by executing agencies is followed up, with for example advice on how to manage rehabilitated soils.
5. One sub-objective of FRAMA was poverty alleviation. However, the families who were seriously affected by Mitch have not yet been able to get a reasonable living standard. The combined effects of natural disasters, effects of the war, a non conducive environment for agriculture and heavy costs for education and health services makes it very difficult to raise the standards of living to pre Mitch level. This can not be addressed in a project with such a short duration but has to be considered in the long-term agriculture project.
6. The vulnerability of the poor people has increased and this trend continues. More and more people are forced to leave their farms and look for alternative sources of income. For these who remain many are forced to take credits at high interest rates or work as sharecroppers under very harsh conditions in order to be able to plant. The present coffee crisis will have a tremendous negative impact. This is another important issue to address by the long-term project.
7. With the men working outside the farm, and a seriously reduced family budget the women and children are experiencing extreme hardships. It is important that a long-term project takes this group into special consideration.
8. FRAMA didn't have any significant impact in reducing the vulnerability. Should similar events occur in the future the effects are likely to be similar or worse. This is understandable given the short life span of the project. However, it is important that long term projects takes into consideration the high frequency of natural disasters, which is the reality in Nicaragua. Much can be done through working with nature in order to reduce the impact of those events. The mission recommends that a risk analysis should be done.

9. Neither did FRAMA contribute to more sustainable farming systems for the small-scale farmers. To increase the resilience towards unpredictable and negative physical and socio-economic conditions it is recommended that Sida and MAGFOR promotes the diversified/mixed farm. The mixed farm is better prepared both economically and ecologically to withstand or take advantage of negative effects, e.g. fluctuations in the prices on the world market and climatic disturbances. This is best achieved through an economic policy and various support activities which make the farms competitive both in the short and long-term. Technical and economic information, advice and education coupled with promotion of farmer collaboration and organisation is needed. Support to farmers that invest in and protect the long-term productive capacity of his/her land should as far as possible be given directly to farmers without creating dubious credit-schemes that hardly work.
10. The mission recommends that the parties investigate the possibilities to create and support projects that use the watershed as the basic planning unit. In the polarised countryside of Nicaragua it is necessary to seek areas of joint interest for common action. Water and soil fertility are entry points for such action. Watershed projects are already underway both in Jinotega and Matagalpa. Sida is already collaborating with CATIE on this and to increase the impact Sida should collaborate with other donors on this approach. In defining these projects the participation of the population is crucial. Contracts of responsibilities between the beneficiaries and donors should be negotiated.
11. FRAMA is famous in the whole of Jinotega and Matagalpa. In designing the long-term projects it should be capitalised on that people have hopes that there will be a second phase. They also have ideas of what a project should contain. The demand driven concept of FRAMA should be continued and adapted to mobilise and better utilise the use of local and existing resources, the land, farmers knowledge, extension staff and so on. FRAMA didn't leave the farmers with debts and the long-term project should avoid this also.
12. The organisational model of FRAMA and key concepts like, sharing of responsibilities, participation, transparency, decisions by joint agreement and a modern management style was successful. The model could be modified to be used by the long-term project in the area as well as for other similar projects. In contracting consultants to facilitate the implementation it is crucial that roles and responsibilities between the consultant and other actors are clearly defined and agreed upon from the beginning.
13. Before the start of the project the definitions, regulations and legislation were carefully prepared which was important for the outcome of the project. Because of clear rules, the work of the executive committee and its qualified staff worked honestly and without political bias. It is recommended that Sida compile a manual or guide for preparation of projects of similar type. This should include recommended organisational structure and the roles for different actors. FRAMA can provide good background material for this.
14. FRAMA was prepared and guided by the Natural Resources Division of Sida. At the Embassy in Managua the same division temporally created a specific post for the project. This arrangement was a prerequisite for the good outcome. For the long-term project it is important for Sida to maintain the same insight and close control, as was the case in the FRAMA project.

7 Principal Lesson learned

Sida was an active and not sleeping partner in FRAMA. This caring participation guaranteed that the project staff was not removed or did surrender to undue pressure. They were and stayed honest and worked very actively to benefit the target group. That the Sida protection was needed and appreciated was best symbolised by the fact that the National director had the Swedish flag made and put at the side of the Nicaraguan in the very FRAMA office entrance.

The joint consensus decisions between Sida and MAGFOR guaranteed that they could not be reversed afterwards. The FRAMA project was well defined but had in-built flexibility. It also had a strong and clear legal position. In this project Sida showed that it not only cared but also had guts.

Appendix 1

Persons Interviewed¹³

Institution	Person Interviewed	Position
Alcaldía de Pantasma	Mauricio Castillo	Project Coordinator
Centro de Promoción Cristiano San Ramón	Sonia Vázquez	Chairman of the J.D
CARE Matagalpa	Hugo López	Coordinator
TECHNOSERVE	Gustavo Lopez	Coordinator
CONAAT	Martha Yadira Zeledón	Chairman
Alcaldía San Rafael	Juan de Dios Jirón	Technical officer
APENN	Alejandro Lau	Project Responsible
Proyecto Cuenca Matagalpa	Edgar de León	Project Responsible
MAGFOR	Julio Solorazano	Director Policies Unit
MAGFOR	Eddy Castellon	Director Statistics section
MAGFOR	Livio Saenz	
Sida, Stockholm	Eidi Genfors	Director ALA
Sida, Managua	Torsten Wetterblad	Councillor
Sida, Managua	Peter Herthelius	Senior Programme Officer
FRAMA	Julio Solorazano	F. Executive Director
FRAMA	Manuel Roncagliolo	Accountant
FRAMA	Socorro Acuna	Head of Field Department
ASOCAFEMAT	Ileona Lopez Rodrigues	Manager

¹³ List not complete

Appendix 2

List of beneficiaries inquired

	First name and surname	Community	Municipality	Supporting Organisations
1	Lucas Videa Tinoco	Las Piedras	Pantasma	Alcaldía
2	Sabrina Rugama Zelaya	La Vigia	Pantasma	Alcaldía
3	Luis Cornejo Acuña	Las Piedras	Pantasma	Alcaldía
4	Jorge Luis Picado Rodriguez	Las Piedras	Pantasma	Alcaldía
5	Cristobal Cornejo Acuña	Las Piedras	Pantasma	Alcaldía
6	Concepción Castillo Herrera	La Piragua	Pantasma	Alcaldía
7	Joaquín Hernández Balladares	La Vigia	Pantasma	Alcaldía
8	Feliciano Martinez Rivera	La Piragua	Pantasma	Alcaldía
9	Elpidio Galeano Talavera	La Vigia	Pantasma	Alcaldía
10	Jorge Omar Aráuz Montenegro	Santa Cruz	Pantasma	Alcaldía
11	Lucina Emilia García Reyes	Santa Cruz	Pantasma	Alcaldía
12	Oscar Gadea Tinoco	Guansapo	Pantasma	Alcaldía
13	Gabriel Gómez Montenegro	Santa Cruz	Pantasma	Alcaldía
14	Jorge Antonio Herrera Picado	Estancia Cora	Pantasma	Alcaldía
15	Firmo Zelaya Cruz	Santa Cruz	Pantasma	Alcaldía
16	Marlene Quintero	Azancor	San Ramón	C.P.C
17	Rafael Castro Rivera	Azancor	San Ramón	C.P.C
18	Ismael Chavaría Pravia	Azancor	San Ramón	C.P.C
19	Porfirio Rivera Cruz	Tapasle	San Ramón	C.P.C
20	José Adolfo Obregón	Tapasle	San Ramón	C.P.C
21	Alfredo Rivas Herrera	Tapasle	San Ramón	C.P.C
22	Ana María Solano G.	Tapasle	San Ramón	C.P.C
23	Lucas Castro López	Azancor	San Ramón	C.P.C
24	Nieves Suazo Cordero	Tapasle	San Ramón	C.P.C
25	Martha Emilia Muñoz	Tapasle	San Ramón	C.P.C
26	Bernarda Rivas Herrera	Tapasle	San Ramón	C.P.C
27	Calixta Palma Blandón	Escalera	San Ramón	C.P.C
28	Félix Díaz Mendoza	Escalera	San Ramón	C.P.C
29	Julio Palma Blandón	Escalera	San Ramón	C.P.C
30	José Clemente Benitez García	Escalera	San Ramón	C.P.C
31	Santiago Dávila Perez	Escalera No 2	San Ramón	C.P.C
32	Domingo López Tellez	El Guineo	Matagalpa	Urcumul
33	José Isidreo Figueroa Gómez	El Guineo	Matagalpa	Urcumul
34	Leopoldo Mendez Tórrez	El Guineo	Matagalpa	Urcumul
35	Rito Suarez Soza	El Guineo	Matagalpa	Urcumul
36	Margarito Hédez Mendez	El Guineo	Matagalpa	Urcumul

37	Filomena Centeno Cantarereo	Calpules	Matagalpa	Urcumul
38	Catalima de Jesús Gonzalez C.	Calpules	Matagalpa	Asoc. Ganaderos
39	Roberto Leonel Zeledón M.	Calpules	Matagalpa	Asoc. Ganaderos
40	Luis Alberto Zeledo'n M.	Calpules	Matagalpa	Asoc. Ganaderos
41	Nicólas Centeno Cantarereo	Calpules	Matagalpa	Asoc. Ganaderos
42	Juan López Talavera	San Gabriel	Jinotega	Conaat
43	Javier Sarante Morales	San Gabriel	Jinotega	Conaat
44	Jorge Inez Zeledón López	San Gabriel	Jinotega	Conaat
45	Gonzalo López López	San Gabriel	Jinotega	Conaat
46	Juan Alberto López Hernández	San Gabriel	Jinotega	Conaat
47	Ines López López	San Gabriel	Jinotega	Conaat
48	Roberto de Jesús García Reyes	Datanly	Jinotega	Conaat
49	José Benito López López	San Gabriel	Jinotega	Conaat
50	Francisco Macario Ponce Meza	Datanly	Jinotega	Conaat
51	Juana Meza Gonzalez	Datanly	Jinotega	Connat
52	Bernardo Gregorio Ponce Meza	Datanly	Jinotega	Conaat
53	Mauricio Hernandez Jarquin	Datanly	Jinotega	Conaat
54	Indalecio Rodriguez Gonzalez	Datanly	Jinotega	conaat
55	Rita Hernadez Gonzalez	Datanly	Jinotega	Conaat
56	Encarnación Hernandez G	Datanly	Jinotega	Conaat
57	Elisa Margarita Herrera C	Colón Arriba	La Concordia	IICA
58	Isidro de Carmen Herrera C	Colón Arriba	La Concordia	IICA
59	Leonardo Torrez	Coyolito	La Concordia	IICA
60	Oneeifora Casco Valdivia	Colón Arriba	La Concordia	IICA
61	Macario de Jesus Altamirano S	Colón Arriba	La Concordia	IICA
62	Aura lila Morazán Valdivia	Colón Arriba	La Concordia	IICA
63	Paublo saenz	Colón Abajo	La concordia	IICA
64	Jose dolores Torrez Herrera	Yupalí	La concordia	IICA
65	Fanor Ebren Zelaya	Campos Azules	La Concordia	IICA
66	Amgelma Zelaya	El Coyolito	La Concordia	IICA
67	Leonor Valdiiva	El Coyolito	La Concordia	IICA
68	Fausto Cruz Navarrete	Valerio	La Concordia	IICA
69	Freddy Rayo Miranda	Molimo Sur	Sébaco	APENN
70	Martha Velasquez	Molino Sur	Sébaco	APENN
71	Andres Velasquez	Molino Sur	Sébaco	APENN
72	Antonio Castillo Luna	La Caña	Sébaco	APENN
73	Martín Díaz Soza	La Hielera	Sébaco	APENN
74	Rafael Mairena Tórrez	Molino Sur	Sébaco	APENN
75	José Ramón Velasquez Ríos	Molino Sur	Sébaco	APENN
76	Omar Alvarado Montoya	Surco Muerto	Sébaco	APENN
77	Julian García López	Lomas Altas	Sébaco	APENN
78	Máximo Rodriguez	Paso Real	Sébaco	INTA
79	Marcos Trajillo Rodriguez	Paso Real	Sébaco	INTA

80	Jérónimo Rodríguez	Paso Real	Sébaco	INTA
81	Boanerge Escoto Ruíz	Paso Real	Sébaco	INTA
82	Alejandro Ruiz Castellón	Los Cocos No 2	Darío	Alcaldía
83	Luis Alberto Laguna Cordero	Los Cocos No 2	Darío	CARE
84	Matías Triminea Angulo	San Juanillo	Darío	CARE
85	María Luisa Cardoza	Los Cocos	Darío	Alcaldía
86	Adrian Ruiz Castellón	Las Delicias	Darío	CARE
87	Ernesto Vasquez Ruíz	Las Delicias	Darío	CARE
88	Ernestina Navarrete	Sabana Verde	Darío	FRAMA
89	Jerónimo Morán	Sabana Verde	Darío	Alcaldía
90	Santo Mariano Tórrez	Las Delicias	Darío	Alcaldía
91	Felix Rodriguez Gonzalez	Sabana Verde	Darío	Alcaldía
92	Concepción Angulo Soza	Las Delicias	Darío	CARE
93	Juan de la Cruz	Sabana Verde	Darío	FRAMA
94	San Antonio Morán	Sabana Verde	Darío	FRAMA

Appendix 3

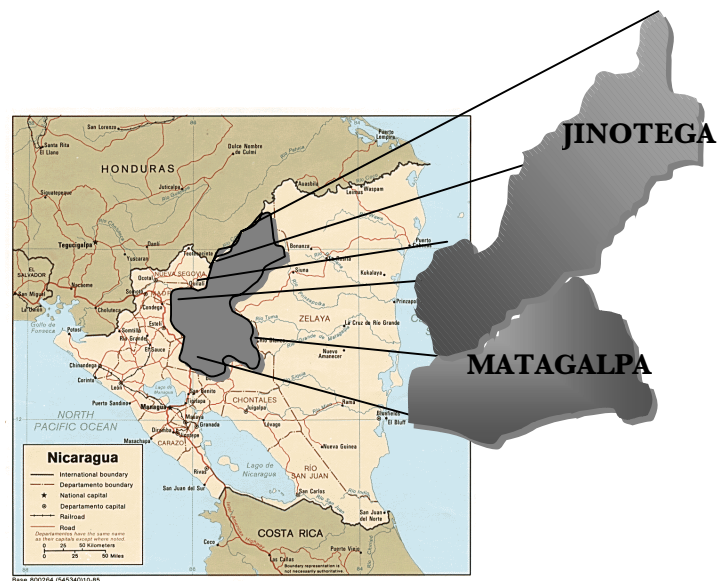
Maps and Photos

Main Map View



Map 1. Map of Nicaragua

Map 2. Map of Jinotega and Matagalpa districts, Nicaragua



Appendix 4

Work Programme

Work Programme for Bengt Kjeller and Raquel Lopez

Date		Bengt Kjeller	Raquel Lopez
April 11	Meeting with Scc Natura and Eidi Genfors	X	
April 12	Mikael Segerros, dep to Madrid	X	
April 13	Arrival Managua, Peter Hertelius, Sida	X	
April 14	Peter Hertelius, Sida	X	
April 15	Internal meeting	X	X
April 16	Torsten Wetterblad, Sida Julio Solorzano, MAGFOR ex de FRAMA Coordinadora Civil	X	X
April 17	Travel to Matagalpa Review of documentation	X	X
April 18	Manuel Roncagliolo, ex Accountant Frama Socorro Acuna	X	X
April 19	Field visit Sebacco	X	X
April 20	Review of project documentation , Matagalpa	X	X
April 23	Preparation for fieldvisits, documentation review	X	X
April 24	San Ramon, Movimiento Christiano Cua Bocay Coonat, Jinotega	X	X
April 25	Matiguas, Muy Muy	X	X
April 26	Muy Muy Alcudia Matagalpa CARE, Matagalpa	X X	X
April 27	Pantasma Association of Coffee Growers	X	X
April 30	Preparation of questionnaire	X	X
May 2	Peter Hertelius, Sida Carlos Barrios, Nitlaplan, UCA	X X	X X
May 3	Report writing	X	X
May 4	Report writing	X	X
May 7	Collection and analyses of questionnaires	X	X
May 8	Report writing	X	X
May 9	Peter Hertelius, Sida Report writing	X X	X X
May 10	Travel to Managua	X	X
May 11	Presentation of draft report, SIDA and MAGFOR	X	X
May 12	Return to Sweden and Esteli	X	X

Appendix 5

Acronyms

APENN	Agriculture export organisation for non traditional products
EC	Executive Committee
ED	Executive Director
FRAMA	Agriculture Rehabilitation Fund of SIDA and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MAGFOR	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
NGO	Non governmental organisation
ORGUT	Swedish Consultancy firm in charge of the planning for the long term project
PRV	Programme for reduction of vulnerability
PU	Project Unit
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UCA	Union of agricultural cooperatives
UNICAFF	Union of coffee growers

Appendix 6

List of References

Certificación: Organismo Donante Asdi – Entidad Ejecutora Alcaldía de Darío

Por Anne Solir Dolmuz

Certificación: Organismo Donante Asdi – Entidad Ejecutora ASOGAMAT

Por Anne Solis Dolmuz

Certificación: Organismo Donante Asdi – Entidad Ejecutora Alcaldía Municipal de Pantasma

Por Anne Solis Dolmuz

Certificación: Organismo Donante Asdi – Entidad Ejecutora CODEPARD

Certificación: Organismo Donante Asdi – Entidad Ejecutora APENN

MAGFOR – ASDI – Recopilación de datos sobre Proyectos Presentados a la UP Frama 30/09/99

Deloitte & Touche – Unidad de Proyecto FRAMA – 2/05/99

Informe de Auditoria de cierre del Proyecto “Apoyo para el Programa de Rehabilitación Agropecuaria para los Departamentos de Matagalpa y Jinotega

Informe Preliminar Post FRAMA – 12/10/00

Por Manuel Roncagliolo

Propuesta de: Plan Operativo Anual para el Año 2000

Shorebank Advisory Services – 02/00

Análisis de Mercados Financieros y Desarrollo Agrícola en Matagalpa y Jinotega

Informe de la Identificación de Proyecto de Desarrollo Rural en Zonas Húmedas del Norte de Nicaragua ASDI – MAG

Boorador Final – Septiembre 1998

Por: Victoria Reyes e Irena Vance

MAGFOR – Programa de la Nación Rehabilitación de las Fincas Afectadas por el Huracan Mitch – Noviembre 1998

Reporte de Misión – Actualización sobre los requerimientos de acción por parte de Asdi para incentivar la oferta de servicios financieros en el área rural de Nicaragua y sobre los requerimientos de acción en consecuencia del Huracán Mitch

Por: Juan Bunchenau – Febrero 1999

Mitch y Despues por Pierre Frühling

MAGFOR – Boletín Técnico – La población demandante de FRAMA Reporte de Encuesta

Dirección de Estadística

AGREGADO “A” Informe Final FRAMA – Anexo 1 al 17

Agosto, 2000

Informe Final FRAMA

Julio, 2000

Contrato de Ejecución Susciva entre la Unidad de Proyectos de FRAMA y la Entidad Ejecutora

Proyecto 201 – CONAAT

Programa de Rehabilitación Agrícola MAGFOR – ASDI

Programa Proposal, 4 Mayo 1999

Sipu Internacional

FRAMA

Base de Datos – Informe de Beneficiarios y Actividades por Proyecto

PARTE I, Agosto, 2000

FRAMA

Base de Datos – Informe de Beneficiarios y Actividades por Proyecto

Parte II, Agosto, 2000

Appendix 7

Terms of Reference

May 22, 2001

Invitation to Tender for Evaluation of FRAMA – short term agricultural rehabilitation project in Nicaragua

The Swedish Embassy in Nicaragua – through Sida's Department for Natural Resources and the Environment – hereby invites tenders from Swedish consulting firms for an evaluation of a short term agricultural rehabilitation project (FRAMA).

The evaluation study should be carried out in April 2001.

Tenders should be submitted to Sida not later than 5th March 2001.

Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of FRAMA (Fondo De Rehabilitacion Agropecuaria Mag-For, Asdi) in Nicaragua

1 Background

The FRAMA project was initiated after the hurricane MITCH catastrophe. It was designed as a short-term agricultural rehabilitation project, taking the form of an agricultural development fund on a grant basis. It started in May 1999 and terminated in July 2000. Following negotiations with the Government of Nicaragua the geographical scope of the project was limited to the provinces of Matagalpa and Jinotega.

The project objectives were to rehabilitate the small farmers production units to the level as it was before MITCH. The project also had the aim to carry out the rehabilitation in a perspective of sustainable production and disaster prevention.

A total of 27 MSEK (3MUSD) has been used during the whole project period.

The activities have been concentrated to the departments of Matagalpa and Jinotega and have been of three main categories:

1. Rehabilitation of farms
2. Rehabilitation of infrastructure
3. Coupon system for agricultural production inputs

Among the more important stakeholders beside the farmers themselves should be mentioned Ministry of Agriculture (MAG-FOR), the affected Communities, Private Business in the Agricultural and Construction Sector and International Donors in the geographical areas of operation.

The implementing organisations besides the farmers have been local entrepreneurs in the field of construction (mainly roads), municipalities, local and international NGOs and government institutions.

A separate project administration structure was set up for the advertisement/information, screening, contracting, financing and monitoring of the individual project proposals put forward to the Fund.

2 Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

The project is now terminated and the preliminary results seem promising. It is of interest for both Nicaragua and Sweden that an impact evaluation of the project is carried out. The reason for this is that the MAG-FOR and Sida are in the final planning phase of a long-term agricultural project in the same geographical area. Lessons learnt from the FRAMA project will be important for the future co-operation. Beside this it is of interest both for Sida and MAG-FOR and other institutions in Nicaragua and Central America to gain the experience of FRAMA for future involvement in disaster prevention and rehabilitation.

3 The Assignment (issues to be covered in the evaluation)

The Consultant shall evaluate:

- The degree of achievement of the objectives expressed in the project document.
- Impact on the target group.
- Acceptance of the project at provincial level and whether it had an impact on local level public administration.
- The cost-effectiveness of the project.
- Efficiency of the administrative mechanism for the project. (See further study by Ana Elisa Martinez, May 2000.)

The Consultant shall further assess:

- The sustainability of results including the environmental impact of the project.
- Documentation of and analysis on what was successful and what kind of problems emerged from the Project. Cause and effect analysis shall be done.
- Gender aspects of the project outputs.
- Lessons learnt from FRAMA, to be able to draw conclusions for eventual future emergency/rehabilitation projects. Can rehabilitation/rural development be implemented in Nicaragua and elsewhere by using similar arrangements?

4 Methodology, Evaluation Team and Time Schedule

The evaluation shall be carried out during April 2001. To be able to carry through the task during 4–5 weeks it is anticipated that two consultants are necessary. Two (2) weeks should be spent in the actual geographical areas of Matagalpa and Jinotega for fact finding. Another two (2) weeks will be spent in Matagalpa town when writing the report and shall include the time for preparation of the actual fieldwork. Co-operation before and during the consultancy with MAG-FOR and the Swedish Embassy in Managua is anticipated. The fact-finding work in the field will be carried out through interviews with the target group in areas of interest

The team shall consist of two experts who covers the areas of Emergency/Rehabilitation Projects after Natural Disasters, Rural Sociology/Economy and General Agriculture (Grain, Coffee, Horticulture and Livestock production). Further it is advised during the fieldwork to hire local assistant with good geographical knowledge of the FRAMA operational area

It is of value for Sida and MAG-FOR that one team member is coming from Nicaragua or the Central American region, preferably the member covering Agricultural questions. One member of

the team must have good knowledge of Swedish Aid policy and practice. The working language is Spanish. See further report writing

The complete archive of documents concerning the project is still in the old office of FRAMA in Matagalpa.

5 Reporting

The Consultants shall give a presentation to MAG-FOR and the Swedish Embassy on the main findings before leaving Nicaragua.

The evaluation report shall be written in the English language and should not exceed 20 pages, excluding annexes. A translation to the Spanish language of the main report shall be included. Format and outline of the report shall follow the guidelines in *Sida Evaluation Report – a Standardised Format* (see Annex 1). 5 copies of the draft report shall be submitted to the Swedish Embassy in Managua no later than 7th of May 2001. Within 1 week after receiving the Embassy's comments on the draft report, a final version in 5 copies and on diskette shall be submitted to Embassy. Subject to decision by Sida, the report will be published and distributed as a publication within the Sida Evaluations series. The evaluation report shall be written in Word 6.0 for Windows (or in a compatible format) and should be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing.

The evaluation assignment includes the production of a Newsletter summary following the guidelines in *Sida Evaluations Newsletter – Guidelines for Evaluation Managers and Consultants* (Annex 2) and also the completion of *Sida Evaluations Data Work Sheet* (Annex 3). The separate summary and a completed Data Work Sheet shall be submitted to Sida along with the (final) draft

The Swedish Embassy in Nicaragua (Peter Herthelius) is responsible for the tender evaluation, with initial support from Sida (NATUR), Stockholm.

Interested bidders may obtain Terms of Reference and tender documents from Sida/ NATUR, Mikaela Selin-Norqvist.

E-mail: mikaela.selin-norqvist@Sida.se

Tel: 08/ 698 53 82

Fax: 08/ 698 56 53

More information: please contact peter.herthelius@Sida.se

Tenders should be submitted in five copies not later than 5th March 2001 to the following address:

Sida, Department for Natural Resources and the Environment (NATUR), att: Eidi Genfors, 105 25 Stockholm

- Encl:
- Sida Evaluation Report – A Standardized Format
 - Sida Evaluations Newsletter – Guidelinse for Evaluation Managers and Consultants
 - Sida Evaluations Data Work Sheet
 - Informe de sintesis de actividades de FRAMA en 1999
 - Plan Operativo Annual Para El Ano 2000
 - Análisis institucional y oranzacional de Proyecto “Fondo de Rehabilitación Post-Mitch MAGFOR-ASDI” en Matagalpa y Jinotega
 - Bedömnings-PM. Förslag till svenskt stöd till rehabilitering inom lantbrukssektorn i Nicaragua efter orkanen Mitch.

Recent Sida Evaluations

- 01/21 Swedish Support to the Power Sector in Mozambique.** Arne Disch, Trond Westernen, Anders Ellegård, Alexandra Silfverstolpe
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 01/22 Expanded Support to the International Sciences Programme (ISP) in Uppsala University.**
David Wield
Department for Research Cooperation
- 01/23 Sida Support County Twinning Programme in the Baltic Countries 1996–2001.** Gunnar Olesen, Peter Rekve, Henrik Permin
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/24 Formative Evaluation of Uganda Land Management Project.** Jan Erikson, James Reinier Scheele, Sebina Nalwanda
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 01/25 Sida Support to the Social Rehabilitation Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SweBiH).**
Nils Öström
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/26 Swedish Support to the Agriculture Sector in Zambia.** A.R. James, M. Davelid, T. Breinholt, D. Chitundu, T. Lundström
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 01/27 Sida's Support to NUSESA – Network of Users of Scientific Equipemnt in Eastern and Southern Africa.** Eva Selin Lindgren
Department for Research Cooperation
- 01/28 Cambodian Human Rights and Democracy Organisations: Towards the Future.** John L. Vijghen
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 01/29 Sida's Support to the land Reform Related Activities in Poland.** Mark Doucette, Sue Nichols, Peter Bloch
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/30 Sida's Support to the land Reform Related Activities in Lithuania.** Mark Doucette, Sue Nichols, Peter Bloch
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/31 Sida's Support to the Land Reform Related Activities in Latvia.** Mark Doucette, Sue Nichols, Peter Bloch
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/32 Review of PAHO's project. Towards an Integrated Model of Care for Family Violence in Central America. Final Report.** Mary Ellsberg, Carme Clavel Arcas
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 01/33 Sistematización del Proyecto de OPS. Hacia un modelo integral de atención para la violencia intrafamiliar en Centroamérica.** Mary Ellsberg, Carme Clavel Arcas
Departamento de Democracia y Condiciones Sociales.
- 01/34 Of Trees and People ...: An Evaluation of the Vietnam-Sweden Forestry Cooperation Programme and the Mountain Rural Development Programme in the Northern Uplands 1991–2000.** Claes Lindahl, Kirsten Andersen, Kjell Öström, Adam Fforde, Eivind Kofod, Steffen Johnsen
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment

Sida Evaluations may be ordered from:

Infocenter, Sida
S-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: +46 (0) 8 690 93 80
Fax: +46 (0) 8 690 92 66
info@sida.se

A complete backlist of earlier evaluation reports may be ordered from:

Sida, UTV, S-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: +46 (0) 8 698 51 63
Fax: +46 (0) 8 698 56 10
Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden

Tel: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Fax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

Telegram: sida stockholm. Postgiro: 1 56 34-9

E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>