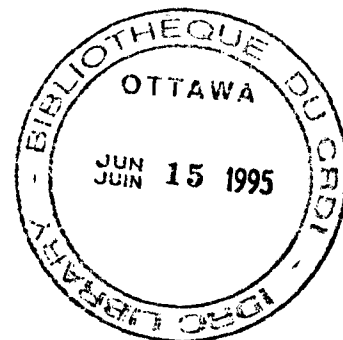LACRO Discussion Series: 2

LACRO
Survey

The Role of the
Regional Office

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LACRO Discussion Series

The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Office Discussion Series is intended to promote exchange and consultation on development issues.

The reports are neither official policy nor documentation of the International Development Research Centre but are intended to reflect a diversity of opinion about development issues in the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

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APPENDIXES

TABLES

I.   Introduction

One feature of the International Development Research Centre, (IDRC) is the importance that it gives to regional offices of which there are now currently seven serving different parts of the developing world.[1] The Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office, the subject of this document, was first established in Bogota, Colombia, in 1972 and was moved to Montevideo, Uruguay in 1990. The Montevideo office is currently staffed by six Regional Program Officers, a Regional Director, a Regional Comptroller and local staff.

Regional offices, as agencies of the headquarters, can perform various roles and these have changed over time. During the first period of IDRC's history they were small representative offices which evolved into larger offices with program staff who had world responsibilities. In 1991, the Board of Governors approved a re-organization which gave program staff a greater regional identity while linking the different regions through a series of global programs or themes.[2] The divisional structure, which had been the dominant organization form, was modified by a hybrid combination which sought to balance regional and headquarters. Other similar agencies, both bilateral and private, are undertaking similar explorations.

In 1994, the President and the Board of Governors asked the regional offices to re-examine their functions in the light of the new corporate strategy and the heightened importance of effective program delivery. The first region, subject to this discussion, was Asia and the first cycle of a potentially new strategy is now in draft form.[3] The paper, quite properly, raises questions with regard to the most useful division of labour between headquarters and a regional office and how the Centre's Agenda 21 mandate can be most effectively delivered. This exercise is to be extended to other regional offices, including Montevideo, and hence the origin of this survey.

The Centre has provided over an hundred grants to the region since the commencement of the new strategy for an estimated total commitment of $35 mn. About three quarters of the resources allocated to the region are managed from headquarters with about one quarter through the Regional Office. The ratio has remained relatively stable over the last few years and led to the conclusion that a corporate strategy for the region must involve all staff

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[1]   These are Singapore for the Asia region; Delhi (India) for South East Asia; Dakar (Senegal) for West Africa; Nairobi (Kenya) for East Africa; Cairo (Egypt) for the Middle East and Pakistan; Johannesburg for South Africa and the subject of this survey, Montevideo (Uruguay) for Latin America and the Caribbean.

[2]   See IDRC's Corporate Policy Framework 1993-1996 (1992), Ottawa.

[3]   See IDRC Program in Asia, (1994) which is to be discussed by the Centre's Board of Governors in October 1994.

(headquarters and Regional Office) active (or interested in working) in the region. Two different views about the region, as can sometimes happen, based on headquarters or the Regional Office perspectives are not only potentially damaging to long term development but an inefficient use of scarce resources, and could result in a failure to use effectively the natural division of labour and its consequent specializations.

These are issues that require consultation; and as a first step in planning a more efficient use of all Centre resources, this survey was undertaken among Ottawa staff in order to understand their views about the role of the Regional Office and the services demanded. In this way both headquarters and LACRO views and ideas regarding the effectiveness of the Centre's activities can be used as inputs into the planning process. This report records the major findings of the survey.

II.   Methodology

The questionnaire was discussed, developed and revised at the Montevideo office: and mailed, with a letter from the Director, on August 18, 1994 to all professional program staff at headquarters and finance and administrative personnel. A total of 89 questionnaires were distributed and on October 4, 56 responses had been received for an effective response rate of 63 per cent. The structure of the original sample, by responsibility centre, and responses are to be found in T.2.1.

T.2.1.   <u>LACRO Survey; Sample and Response Rate</u>

RESPONSIBILITY CENTRE	SURVEYS MAILED	RESPONSES	RESPONSE RATE (PERCENT)
President's Office	8	5	62.5
CAID	15	11	73.3
ENR	18	10	55.6
ISSD	12	6	50.0
HSD	10	4	40.0
SSD	8	6	75.0
F&A	18	6	33.3
Anonymous		8	
TOTAL	89	56	62.9

The questionnaire, (Appendix 1), included both pre-coded and open questions; identification of the respondent was optional. The total number of responses received, both in absolute terms and in relation to the total sample indicates that the results are quite reliable. Further, the response rate was quite even across responsibility centres.

III. The Survey Results; Principal Dimensions

The survey sought data about four different dimensions that are important to the work of the Centre; general professional behaviour; views about working in Latin America and the Caribbean; information sources; and perception about the functions of the Regional Office.

(a) General

Professional work in development is specialized by either regional knowledge or by themes or professional area or a combination of both; the question was asked to see if there was a bias against thinking in regional terms which could possibly disadvantage a regional office. The results to this question clearly indicate that the majority of the respondents see their work, sensibly enough, as a combination of theme and regional knowledge.

T.3.1. Professional Work Definition

Question 1: *Do you see your professional work at the Centre by themes or regions or both?*

CATEGORY	No.	PERCENT
Themes or substantive area	11	19.6
Regions	2	3.6
Both	43	76.8
TOTAL	56	100.0

However, it is possible that not all respondents have had recent experience of either the region or the Regional Office. The next set of questions asked if during the last two year period, respondents had visited either a given region or the Regional Office and the responses are combined in T.3.2

The table demonstrates that, on average, a visit to a region is associated with a .79 probability that it will be associated with a visit to a regional office. However LACRO remains the exception with only just about half of the visits to the region involving a visit to Montevideo. Only Singapore, with a considerably higher probability, has a lower than average ratio even though the region has received less visits.

This pattern leads to a further issue, the value of a regional office representation for the Centre. More than 79 per cent of respondents, believed that regional office representation was valuable although the open question indicated that there was a desire for greater flexibility and experimentation, as well as a number which questioned the administrative definition of a region used in this survey. The importance of Centre representation is found in the table 3.3 (over):

T.3.2   Travel to Regions and Regional Offices[4]

Question 3:   *During the last two years how often have you travelled to the following Centre defined regions?*

Question 4:   *How often, during the last two years, have you visited the regional offices in these regions?*

	REGION	REGIONAL OFFICE	RATIO OFFICE/REGION
ASRO/Singapore	27	20	0.74
EARO/Nairobi	28	24	0.86
LACRO/Montevideo	39	22	0.56
MERO/Cairo	23	19	0.83
ROSA/Johannesburg	12	11	0.92
SARO/New Delhi	27	25	0.93
WARO/Dakar	27	23	0.85
TOTAL	183	144	0.79

T.3.3.   Centre Representation

Question 5:   *Do you think that the Centre should have representation in every region?*

	No.	PERCENT
Yes	44	78.6
No	7	12.5
N/A[5]	5	8.9
TOTAL	56	100.0

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[4]   Number of staff that have visited the Region and/or the Regional Office at least once during the last two years.

[5]   Not applicable or not answered

(b)   Latin America and the Caribbean

Does this interest in regional representation extend to Latin America and the Caribbean? The responses strongly support representation in the region as can be seen in T.3.4, with over 94 percent, one of the highest in the survey, answering positively.

T.3.4.   Centre Representation in Latin America and the Caribbean

Question 6:   *Should the Centre be represented in Latin America and the Caribbean?*

	No.	PERCENT
Yes	53	94.6
No	1	1.8
N/A	2	3.6
TOTAL	56	100.0

Program and non program staff visit the region on a regular basis and T.3.2 demonstrated that Latin America and the Caribbean received the greatest proportion of visits from respondents. The number of visits, by country, are set out in T.3.5 (page 6) which shows a total of 193 visits to 26 countries. However, about half the visits are concentrated in the first five countries, that is Chile, Mexico, Costa Rica, Uruguay and Brazil. Fifteen of the countries, or 58 per cent of those listed fall below the average number of visits.

Projects require travel and therefore an association might emerge between countries visited and projects developed. Question 8 attempted to explore this association by asking if respondents had considered supporting projects, a question which has value because it can only apply to program staff. The responses demonstrate that 44 respondents supported or considered supporting projects. (Table 3.6)

T.3.6.   Professional Activity

Question 8:   *Have you supported or considered supporting projects or activities in the LACRO region during the last few years?*

	No.	PERCENT
Yes	44	78.6
No	6	10.7
N/A	6	10.7
TOTAL	56	100.0

T.3.5.   <u>Visits to the Region by Countries</u>[6]

Question 7:   *Which countries have you visited in Latin America and the Caribbean during last two years?*

COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF VISITS
Chile	21
Mexico	20
Costa Rica	17
Uruguay	17
Brazil	16
Argentina	13
Colombia	11
Ecuador	11
Peru	10
Trinidad	8
Jamaica	7
Barbados	6
Nicaragua	6
Cuba	5
Venezuela	4
Honduras	3
Dominican Republic	3
Bolivia	3
Guatemala	3
Paraguay	3
St. Lucia	1
Salvador	1
Guyana	1
St. Maarten	1
Belize	1
Panama	1
TOTAL 26	193

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[6]   Staff having visited the country at least once during the last two years

In addition, given the concentration found in T.3.5, (see page 6) an additional and open question, asked respondents to list the countries where this might be the case. The answers include three regions, although their incidence is minor (3) from the total of 180 actual or potential project activities in a range of 30 countries.

The countries are listed in T.3.7 (see page 8) and here it is worth noting that just over fifty percent of the actual or potential projects are to be found in six countries - Mexico, Brazil, Costa Rica, Colombia, Chile and Peru. Unlike the table in which visits are the accounting unit (see 3.5), Colombia and Peru, two Andean countries, are now part of this project concentration. However, in general, with the exception of Argentina and Uruguay - which might be presumed as a regional office bias in travel - there is a relatively strong association between travel and projects.

A previous table, 3.1., (see page 3) demonstrated that only two respondents see their activity by region (and by extension, country) alone; the bias is toward technical or substantive (theme) area. However when asked about the Latin American and Caribbean region, over two thirds believed that the Centre should concentrate on particular countries. The responses are found below.

T.3.8. Country Concentration

Question 10: Should the Centre concentrate on particular countries in Latin America?

	No.	PERCENT
Yes	35	62.5
No	13	23.2
N/A	8	14.3
TOTAL	56	100.0

An open question tried to find out which countries the 35 respondents believed should be the areas of concentration and the responses are tabulated in T.3.9. There were 101 votes for 22 units (3 areas and 19 countries). If regions are excluded the leading countries for Centre concentration are Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Cuba and Mexico; if the regions are included there is a clear vote (37) for Andean countries, followed by Central America with Nicaragua as the country most singled out in this region. There is, therefore, a relatively strong wish to concentrate on particular countries.

T.3.7.   Professional Activity by Sub-region

Question 9:   *If yes, where did or would these projects take place? (Could you list by individual countries).*[7]

COUNTRIES	NO. OF RESPONSES
Mexico	18
Brazil	17
Costa Rica	16
Colombia	15
Chile	15
Peru	12
Ecuador	11
Uruguay	11
Argentina	9
Nicaragua	7
Trinidad	6
Jamaica	5
Cuba	4
Bolivia	4
Belize	4
Honduras	3
St. Lucia	3
Guatemala	3
Venezuela	3
Paraguay	2
Panama	2
Barbados	2
Haiti	1
Dominican Republic	1
USA	1
Guyana	1
El Salvador	1
Andean Region	1
Caribbean Region	1
South Cone	1
TOTAL 30	180

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[7]   Respondents listed a variable number of countries/regions, thus total adds to more than 56 cases.

T.3.9.   Countries/Areas of Concentration

COUNTRY		NUMBER OF RESPONSES
Peru		11
Central America		11
Andean Region		9
Ecuador		9
Bolivia		8
Caribbean Region		6
Cuba		6
Mexico		5
Nicaragua		5
Brazil		5
Colombia		5
Guatemala		4
Costa Rica		3
Haiti		3
Chile		2
Honduras		2
Jamaica		2
Paraguay		1
South Cone		1
Argentina		1
Panama		1
Salvador		1
TOTAL	22	101

c)   Information

IDRC's mission, all over the world, requires a complex amalgam of information. Not only have program officers and staff to be versed in various scientific disciplines but they must filter this knowledge through their experience about institutions, communities and the social system. Further, given the demand for policy work, they also have to know about political and economic trends, often to the point of knowing which minister or deputy is influential. There is, therefore, a considerable demand for a broad range of information and several questions explore this need. (T.3.10)

T.3.10.   Information about the Region

Question 11: Is information about Latin America and the Caribbean important to my work?

	No.	PERCENT
Yes	52	92.9
No	1	1.8
Don't Know	2	3.6
N/D	1	1.8
TOTAL	56	100.0

Their information comes from a variety of sources and T.3.12 lists the numbers and a simple rank order. Colleagues and the Regional Office were by far the most important source followed by professional journals and the library.

T.3.11.   Information Sources

Question 12: How do you obtain information about Latin America and the Caribbean? Could you please state importance?

	Very important	Important	Unimportant	N/A	TOTAL
Newspapers	14	26	6	10	56
Television	4	18	19	15	56
Library	17	18	5	16	56
Information services	12	16	11	17	56
Colleagues	28	21	7	0	56
Professional journals	18	15	6	17	56
General journals	6	18	13	19	56
Regional office	28	11	9	8	56

The least of the "very important" category were television and general journals. Newspapers rank highest in the "important" category again followed by colleagues (21), the library, general journals and television. Television was also the least important of the "unimportant" followed by general journals and, surprisingly, by information services. A tentative conclusion might be that respondents look to professional colleagues and written materials before general or popular information. Nine respondents, found the Regional Office to be unimportant.

Most, although not all information about the region, is to be found in the two principal languages, Spanish and Portuguese. The table (T.3.12) presents the ability to use and to obtain information in one or both of these languages. Spanish is the dominant language skill (almost two thirds of the respondents are able to use it). However, less than one fourth is able to use information in Portuguese. This language, used by over 180 mn people in Latin America, is the least developed of the language skills and clearly the greatest lacunae.

T.3.12.   Information by Language

Question 14: Can you make use of information provided in ... ?

Question 15: Are you able to obtain information in either, ...?

	ARE YOU ABLE TO?			
	USE INFORMATION IN		OBTAIN INFORMATION IN	
	NO.	PERCENT	NO.	PERCENT
SPANISH	23	41.1	19	33.9
PORTUGUESE	1	1.8	0	0.0
BOTH	12	21.4	7	12.5
NONE	17	30.4	21	37.5
N/A	3	5.4	9	16.1
TOTAL	56	100.0	56	100.0

(d)   The Role of the Regional Office

With these responses, how do headquarters staff in IDRC see the role of the regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean? And what kind of role does the office play?

There is very little likelihood of developing appropriate specialization if there is not a two way exchange of information. Question 17 asks if respondents inform the office if they are travelling in the region and it can be seen that the majority do so regularly with two respondents indicating that they never do so. (T.3.13)

T.3.13.   Reporting to Regional Office

Question 17: When you visit Latin America and/or the Caribbean do you inform the Regional Office?

	No.	PERCENT
Always	36	64.3
Sometimes	11	19.6
Never	2	3.6
N/A	7	12.5
TOTAL	56	100.0

However important the Regional Office is for information, (see T.3.10 on page 10), it is clearly not unique and this feature is reflected in the answers to question 18, with a relatively high proportion of respondents describing their communications as "infrequent".

T.3.14.   Communications with Regional Office

Question 18: Would you describe your communications with the Regional Office ...

	No.	PERCENT
Frequent	12	21.4
Average	22	39.3
Infrequent	21	37.5
N/A	1	1.8
TOTAL	56	100.0

The following tables attempt to capture the nature of communications and both tables are set out with the responses as reported. The first of the two tables (T.3.15) asked about certain categories of information. The most important was "project development", a specific and defined activity, followed by general information or regional knowledge. Other features were not regarded as "very important" while there is a narrower spread about the range for the "important category". Here, communication as a "Centre requirement" has the least weight while two subjective categories, (personal information and general interest) are considered as important. "Centre requirement" and "budget information" are regarded as unimportant from a regional office, reflecting the current administrative structure of the Centre. However in neither case does "unimportant" amount to more than 25 percent of the responses.

T.3.15. Communications by Type

Question 19: What are the principal reasons for these communications? Could you state importance?

	Very important	Important	Unimportant	N/A	TOTAL
Project Development	30	13	2	11	56
Centre themes	11	24	9	12	56
Budget information	4	22	12	18	56
Regional knowledge	17	22	4	13	56
Centre requirement	9	18	14	15	56
Personal interest	5	24	8	19	56
General Information	8	23	9	16	56

The second of these two questions found in T.3.16 (over) asks respondents to look at the role of LACRO within the current IDRC structure by providing seven categories of activity. Although there were a quite high non response rate - higher than other questions - only one (evaluate project activities) had less than 40 replies. The most important role for regional offices, according to the respondents - was to report on institutions (47), provide administrative support (37), identify project opportunities (36), monitor (36) and report on projects (34). The least important, both under fifty per cent, were project development and project evaluation. Headquarters wishes an active office but in certain defined areas.

T.3.16.   Role of the Regional Office within the System

Question 20: Ottawa and Regional Offices work with a division of labour. Do you see LACRO as best placed to ...?

	Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A	TOTAL
Identify project opportunities	36	4	4	12	56
Develop project proposals	24	11	5	16	56
Monitor projects	36	7	1	12	56
Report on projects	34	5	2	15	56
Report on institutions	47	1	0	8	56
Evaluate project activities	24	10	3	19	56
Provide administrative support	37	4	0	15	56

Given the above and the value of LACRO providing useful services that support current functions, what information is considered to be useful or needed? Table 3.17 demonstrates an interest in greater substantive or technical information followed by information about institutions (29) and countries (24). Respondents were less interested in project administration and indeed 13 respondents wished for less. However there was apparently little call for increased support for travel or meetings, both categories rating a strong OK.

T.3.17.   Regional Office Information

Question 22: What information or services would you like to receive from LACRO in order to support your work?

	More	Ok	Less	N/A	TOTAL
Country information	24	21	1	10	56
Institutional information	29	19	0	8	56
Theme trends	31	11	1	13	56
Project administration	15	26	13	2	56
Meeting support	7	28	2	19	56
Travel information	8	32	1	15	56
Project development support	15	21	1	19	56

The Regional Office should not only be active in certain support areas but place an emphasis on institutions, themes and countries rather than project development and monitoring. This trend toward information rather than projects shows itself in a number of the tables and needs to be analyzed more closely.

IV.   Concluding Observations

The report has emphasised on the description and the presentation of the results in tabular form so that readers can draw preliminary conclusions. The survey is neither complete nor conclusive but will permit the Centre and the Regional Office to develop further activities, particularly discussions between the Centre staff working at headquarters and in the region, with this survey as a useful base.

(a)   Centre Themes

The Centre supports activities which generate knowledge for change and sees knowledge and information as key to the process of development. And so this work is clearly one aspect of a longer and broader process involving many actors. Given the size and heterogeneity of Latin America and the Caribbean, the survey hoped to obtain information about the principal trends facing the region as a first step toward finding a preliminary consensus.

When asked about which themes or areas the Centre should support (Q23) most replies used Centre shorthand to describe their own professional work and very few replies looked at issues in terms of the region itself. The broad range of response illustrates that there is no centrewide trend toward priority themes within the broad envelope of the CPF and, as noted, responses reflect the specific interests of the respondents. One put it bluntly,

> " I find this question a bit irrelevant. Of course, each PO will emphasise his or her topic of interest."

(b)   Regional Concentration

There was greater consensus among respondents about regional or country concentration. Central America, the Andean countries and the Caribbean ran high even though discrepancies about priority areas are strong as documented by assessments of the Caribbean.
One respondent stated to the question on greater concentration by countries,

> "Yes, but I am not convinced that we need to be in the Caribbean. Given the shortage of funds and what I see as the need to focus geographically as well as substantively, I would drop out of the Caribbean because of the availability of other donors, relatively high incomes (with some exceptions) and the high costs of operation".

Another response, to the same question, stated that it was important not to "minimize or eliminate the Caribbean even though it is small demographically".

However a number of respondents, consistent with earlier questions, emphasised the importance of problems and issues rather than countries.

(c)   The Role of the Regional Office

The survey results showed that 95 per cent of the respondents consider that the Centre should be represented in the region. When asked about the role it should play, there is a strong endorsement for reporting on institutions, providing administrative supervision but with less support for the development of project proposals and evaluation activities. This trend is more marked among non program and the anonymous respondents, as can be seen in the table below.

However, this question, which asked about the division of labour between Ottawa and the Regional Office, evinced some of the most interesting responses, suggesting that Ottawa staff have definite views about this issue. It is difficult to capture the different aspects of this answer in a table and so the answers to this open question are to be found as Appendix 2.

T.4.1.   Required Services by Program and Non-Program Staff

Question 20: Ottawa and Regional Offices work with a division of labour. Do you see LACRO as best placed to ...?

	PROGRAM	NON PROGRAM	ANONYMOUS	TOTAL
Nr. of cases	37	11	8	56
Identify project opportunities	25	7	4	36
Develop project proposals	18	3	3	24
Monitor projects	24	7	5	36
Report on projects	21	7	6	34
Report on institutions	32	8	7	47
Evaluate project activities	17	4	3	24
Provide administrative support	26	7	4	37

Note: Number of respondents agreeing on LACRO's advantage in IDRC activities

In addition, the survey asked about the expectations that respondents had about the regional office and a table is presented below, broken down by program and non program responses.

If taken together with the open question, the responses emphasise the need for an expanded intelligence role of the regional office over its well-established operating role. The responses stress the need for greater information about institutions and theme trends leading to the

definition of a Centre regional program. Identification of priority areas was repeatedly stated. For example, one respondent saw the regional office as,

> "..the driving force for tailoring and implementing the IDRC program in the region, identifying program priorities and opportunities, providing a region specific angle for the main topics of interest"

In summary, there is more demand for strategic thinking about regional issues and for project execution, than for project formulation and evaluation.

(d) A Regional or Centre Dilemma?

If the need for strategic analysis of regional trends and priorities is combined with the lack of thematic or geographic focus, there is a dilemma which will have to be faced for this region if not for others. How can knowledge intensive products and services be provided cost effectively and in a timely fashion for such a range of countries and themes?

T.4.2. Regional Office Services by Program and Non-Program Staff

Question 22: What information or services would you like to receive from LACRO in order to support your work?

	PROGRAM	NON PROGRAM	ANONYMOUS	TOTAL
No. of cases	37	11	8	56
Country information	18	4	2	24
Institutional information	21	6	2	29
Theme trends	21	5	5	31
Project administration	8	5	2	15
Meeting support	6	1	0	7
Travel information	7	0	1	8
Project development support	10	1	4	15

Note: Number of cases indicating they would like to receive more information on the topic

The complications of doing so are reflected, in part, by the information flows within the Centre (see T.3.12). Colleagues are the source of information most frequently ranked as "important" or "very important" and this response raises a broader issue, that in spite of the momentum to build a corporate core view, the work paradigm of the Program Officer is a professional or personal choice. And if projects are chosen in this way, it is possible that

professional or personal relations are a determining factor in the way that a strategy is developed and operated. The survey tables, unlike some of the more open questions, do not capture the importance of these relationships as determining co-operation or competition between Centre components. And so one possible conclusion is that the key program determinant for program content is outside any formal strategic framework. Whereas effective at the micro level, subjective or personal judgements are not a good way to build efficiency and allocate scarce resources.

Although the regional office's ability to execute projects is broadly acknowledged, further thinking is required to better articulate the use of program officer resources in both Ottawa and Headquarters: and this, of course, is not a minor issue because as this survey has demonstrated again, the Program Officers are not only the Centre's main resource but a key influence for any programming.

APPENDIX 1

LACRO SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

LACRO Survey

Purpose

The purpose of this survey is to identify the role of the Montevideo office for the programs and themes of IDRC. We hope that you will be willing to provide your views in order that we can adapt our work to your needs. Please add any further comments you may wish to make on a separate sheet of paper.

General

1. Do you see your professional work at the Centre by

    a) themes or substantive area [ ]

    b) regions [ ]

    c) both [ ]

2. In general, what do you expect from a regional office?

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. During the last two years how often have you travelled to the following Centre defined regions? State number of times (0, 1, 2, ...)

	FY 1992/93	FY 1993/94
ASRO		
EARO		
LACRO		
MERO		
ROSA		
SARO		
WARO		

4. How often, during the last two years, have you visited the regional offices in these regions? State number of times (0, 1, 2, ...)

	FY 1992/93	FY 1993/94
Cairo		
Dakar		
Delhi		
Johannesburg		
Montevideo		
Nairobi		
Singapore		

5. Do you think that the Centre should have representation in every region?

| Yes | | No |

If no- why?

_____

_____

_____

6. Should the Centre be represented in Latin America and the Caribbean?

| Yes | | No |

If no- why?

_____

_____

_____

Latin America and the Caribbean

7. Which countries have you visited in Latin America and the Caribbean during last two years?

Argentina	Brazil	Mexico

Others (please list individual countries, not generic regions)

_____

_____

_____

8. Have you supported or considered supporting projects or activities in the LACRO region during the last few years?

Yes		No

9. If yes, where did or would these projects take place? (Could you list by individual countries).

_____

_____

_____

10. Should the Centre concentrate on particular countries in Latin America?

Yes		No

If yes, could you list the most important individual countries from your point of view?

_____

_____

_____

If no, why not?

_____

_____

_____

11. Information about Latin America and the Caribbean is important to my work

Yes	No	Don't Know

12. How do you obtain information about Latin America and the Caribbean? Could you please state importance and possibly provide an example?

	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Example
Newspapers				
Television				
Library				
Information services				
Colleagues				
Professional journals				
General journals				
Regional office				

13. Which is your most useful regular source for finding out about Latin America and the Caribbean?

_____

_____

_____

14. Can you make use of information provided in:

Spanish	Portuguese	Both

15. Are you able to obtain information in either,

Spanish		Portuguese

Would information in these languages be valuable to your work? Please explain

_____

_____

_____

16. What are the major problems that you face in working in Latin America and the Caribbean?

_____

_____

_____

Regional Office

17. When you visit Latin America and/or the Caribbean do you inform the regional office:

Always	Sometimes	Never

18. Would you describe your communications with the Regional Office

Frequent	Average	Infrequent

19. What are the principal reasons for these communications? Could you state importance?
(Question continues over)

	Very important	Important	Unimportant
Project Development			
Centre themes			

	Very important	Important	Unimportant
Budget information			
Regional knowledge			
Centre requirement			
Personal interest			
General Information			

Other (please describe)

_____

_____

_____

20. Ottawa and Regional Offices work with a division of labour. Do you see LACRO as best placed to

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Identify project opportunities			
Develop project proposals			
Monitor projects			
Report on projects			
Report on institutions			
Evaluate project activities			
Provide administrative support			

Please comment on your answer

_____

_____

_____

21. What other activities/services would you like to see?

_____

_____

_____

22. What information or services would you like to receive from LACRO in order to support your work?

	More	Ok	Less
Country information			
Institutional information			
Theme trends			
Project administration			
Meeting support			
Travel information			
Project development support			

23. In your view, what are the main themes or areas that the Centre should support in the region?

_____

_____

_____

Optional Information

The following information is optional:

NAME	
DIVISION	
POSITION	
NO. OF YEARS AT CENTRE	
THEME INTERESTS	
TELEPHONE NUMBER	

Would you like to receive an abstract of this report?

Yes		No

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August 17, 1994

APPENDIX 2

QUESTION 20: RESPONSES

QUESTION 20.   *OTTAWA AND REGIONAL OFFICES WORK WITH A DIVISION OF LABOUR. DO YOU SEE LACRO AS BEST PLACED TO? PLEASE COMMENT ON YOUR ANSWER*

- If I am principal PO, admin. support in LACRO doesn't work well. However, if 2 POs, doesn't see any problem there.

-    –   *Identify project opportunities & Develop project proposals* are shared responsibilities with Ottawa.
  –   *Provide administrative support* Should be done by an independent party
  –   The rest should be LACRO's responsibility.

- All of the above except perhaps evaluation -the evaluator does not need to necessarily have a close understanding of the context.

-    –   *Identify project opportunities* if passed on to Ottawa when beyond interests or capabilities of regional staff.
  –   *develop project proposals* - No, if done in isolation. Yes, as part of a team.
  –   *evaluate project activities* - No, when not detached from initial sponsorship. No also when beyond expertise. Yes, all other cases

- *Provide administrative support* for countries in Southern cone; not in Central America. Caribbean = both LACRO/Ottawa

- LACRO is not best but "well" placed.
  Both Ottawa & the RO could/should do all. The items are those for which the RO has a comparative advantage of frequent contact and focus.

- The question is wrongly formulated. I do not think "division" is the right word. Nor a dichotomized answering. My response above should be perceived as "more" and "less" than the division in Ottawa instead of "yes" and "no" respectively.

- LACRO should be our eyes & heart on the ground with whom we should be able to work very closely & who should help us monitor or evaluate projects

- I'm not sure about the Division of labour principle. I think RO and OT should collaborate closely in the different operations.

APPENDIX 2

- Ambiguous. Depends on whether referring to Global or Regional projects.

- I don't know if LACRO will be best placed than Ottawa Office because it depends on which subject (better expertise and interdisciplinarity is in Head Office), and on which country (HO may have a better knowledge in some countries/areas than LACRO).

- While it is clear to me that the RO is better positioned to manage existing & approved activities. I am not certain who is better positioned to identify & develop new projects.

- *Identify project opportunities, Develop project proposals, Evaluate project activities:* The RO can do the work but may not be necessarily the "best" place to undertake these activities if the RO and HQ work together.

- I see collaborative relationship with RO

- *1) Identify project opportunities, 2) Develop project proposals, 3) Evaluate project activities:* 1 & 2 depend on expertise & contacts of LARO POs, 3) POs are not necessarily good evaluators.

- This comprehensive range of function is the rationale for a Centre RO

- This is a tricky question! I assume it is based on current structure rather than on what new structures could possibly be.

- The role of RO is two fold:
  1) Program delivery
  2) Program support - I believe program support such as defining needs/strategies/opportunities and monitoring impact is crucial to the centre effectiveness.

- This may not necessarily apply to all projects, depending on technical expertise available.

- Impossible to answer in abstract. The Division of labour between HQ & ROs depends on research issues, distribution of staff expertise, etc. It would not make sense to split responsibilities in this kind of arbitrary fashion.

- I wouldn't say the RO is "best placed" on any of those -although it may be in certain circumstances- it depends on RO & Ottawa - based expertise, modes of collaborating, etc.

- Only "no" because of the term "best placed": LACRO staff cannot cover all the region. Some of these functions at some times will be best done form LACRO an at others from Ottawa.

- LACRO could do all of the above depending on its resources but I see the two indicated (Identify project opportunities, Report on institutions) as where its comparative advantage lies.

- A balance is needed between Ottawa/LACRO. In certain cases LACRO could take the lead but in many other things could be done directly from Ottawa.

- Project should be identified and developed in collaboration with Ottawa based staff.

- *Identify project opportunities* This should include priority setting.
  Note my new column; this should be a cooperative effort depending on items like who is best placed to do what. (*Identify project opportunities, Develop project proposals, report on projects, report on institutions, evaluate project activities, provide administrative support* DO TOGETHER)

- A joint regional/HQ expertise approach seems most appropriate for identification/developing and evaluation

- *Identify project opportunities, Develop project proposals, monitor projects, report on projects* NO BETTER, NO WORSE THAN HQ. In many cases countries are as far away or difficult to reach from Montevideo as they are from Ottawa.

- "WELL PLACED" to *Identify project opportunities,* Very well placed but not to the exclusion of Centre Staff. Ideally there should be more rotation of staff between Centre & Regions.

- I believe HQ/and the region should work together on project opportunities, proposals, monitoring and evaluation.

- This is difficult to answer the way it is framed. Each of the above can be better done by LACRO or Ottawa, depending on circumstances, calibre of PO, etc.

APPENDIX 2

- I see the regional office as a partner in all activities in the region as well as in global projects.

- I want to make a distinction between projects, where I do not feel the RO has a definite comparative advantage, and programs, where I think it does have one. That is, I think the RO should play a key role in identifying (Asia Program) the focus of IDRC activities in the region. Ditto for selected countries or sub-national regions in which we should focus. Given the definition of some foci, then I think POs and RPOs are about equal in their facility to identify, develop, monitor and report on projects.

- *Evaluate project activities* should have objective outside evaluations. *Provide administrative support* BOTH.
  But if Ottawa comes up with a project through its own contacts, it should also be considered in an objective way.

- I see RO first for most as taking "strategic" view of region (not easily realized in Ottawa) and why secondarily providing all project related services which it does.

- *Identify project opportunities* not exclusively. *Develop project proposals* There not exclusively (in partnership with HQ).
  There needs to be flexibility -but when HQ staff identify & develop, there should be some interaction with RO. There should also be tunes when RO developed projects should have interaction in HQ staff, but not always

- I think that project development is often governing by opportunity. UQAM in Montreal identified a good project in Brazil & had contacts (Para). Silvio & LACRO were prime in Cuiaba & Unamaz. Head Office was well placed to do the NAFTA workshop. Mex + U.

- Dif. to answer: both HO & LACRO do all of these in relation to their activities. Not so much one is "best placed" in all identification or monitoring region too large for that. Clearly more coordination is essential.

- The reality is that most of Latin America is just as accessible from ottawa as it is from Montevideo. Focusing by expertise topic makes more sense.

- Although too new to the Centre to comment knowledgeably, it appears that Reg. Office are best placed to the above

- Regional offices are uniquely placed to handle there responsibilities

- The most important is certainly the administrative work

- *Develop project proposals* but not exclusively. I believe there must be room for project development in Ottawa as well as in ROs expertise will, or should, determine this, as well as program priorities, How it works now confuses me, too.

- Depends a) <u>where</u> in Latin America; i.e. Ecuador to Mexico its easier to get there from Ottawa b) the PO, c) the subject

LACRO Discussion Series

1. *Potential for Partnership*, Tim Draimin - July, 1994.

2. *LACRO Survey: The Role of Regional Office*; R. Bazzani, C. Seré and A.D. Tillett - October, 1994.