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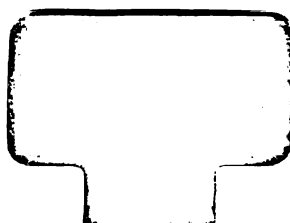
**Introducing the**  
**Work Plan Management**  
**System**

A computerized work planning system for supporting Policy Planning and Management in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources in Trinidad and Tobago

Output of National Project for "Improving the Agricultural Policy Analysis and Planning Infrastructure in Trinidad and Tobago"

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IICA OFFICE IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO





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## **Introduction to the Workplan Management System**

### **A Computerized Work Plan Management System for the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR) Trinidad and Tobago**

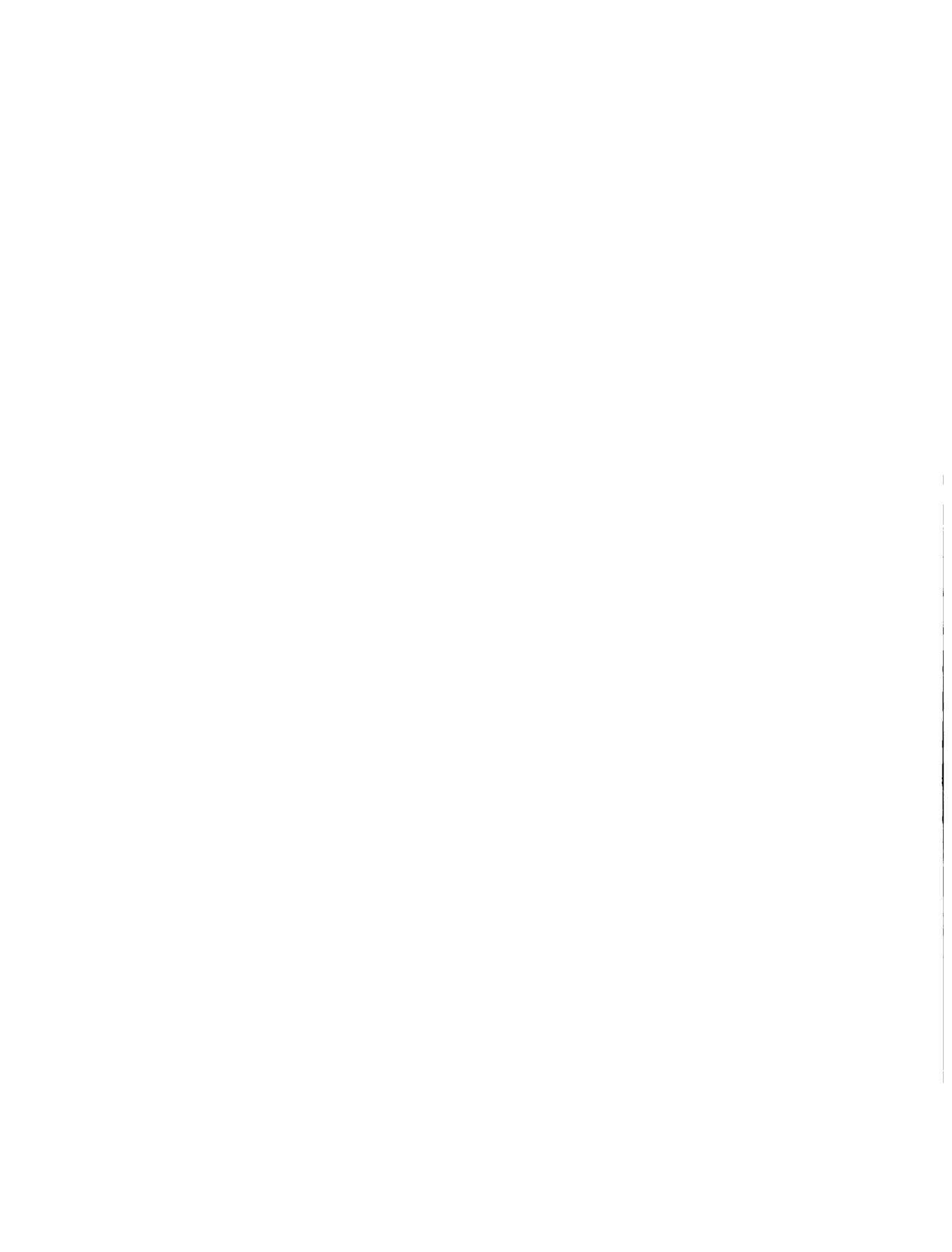
**Willard Phillips**

**Policy Analysis and Planning Specialist**

#### **Introduction:**

The Work Plan Management System is a computerized database developed to collect and report on details of institutional policy and workplans on an annual basis. The development of this system was motivated by prior evaluations of the MALMR which pointed to the need for a more efficient and structured work-planning and monitoring process as an important aspect of institutional strengthening. The major elements of such institutional strengthening were outlined in the *Final Report of the Basic Agricultural Sector Studies (BASS)* conducted on behalf of the MALMR by the Tahal and Agrocon Consultants. This report recommended the introduction of an Annual Planning regime to the MALMR, and, combined with subsequent national developments towards public sector reform, served to broaden the MALMR's approach to annual planning.

The development of the Work Plan Management System was identified as an important output of IICA's National Project for "Improving the Infrastructure for Agricultural Policy Analysis and Planning in the MALMR". The development of this project was also guided by some of the recommendations of the BASS, and represents IICA's response to supporting the MALMR in this area. The program has been developed to a test version stage, and joint initiatives have begun towards the institutionalization of the system in the MALMR.



## Introduction to the Workplan Management System

### 1. The Work Plan Management System (WPMS):

The WPMS is a structured menu driven database system designed to support the management of institutional work plans and monitoring and evaluation details. This system consists of five modules which are manipulated by simple pull-down menus, and affords internal database referencing through a series of intelligent and logical pop-up menus. These features make the WPMS quite user friendly to use by minimizing keystrokes, and providing relevant prompts for data entry/editing and report generation. The system is also designed to be fully operational on minimum computer hardware resources. The program will run reliably (although somewhat slowly) on any IBM PC or compatible with 640 RAM, and 386 processor. The program also requires three megabytes of disk space for installation, with additional storage as information is added to the database. Programme performance is significantly enhanced with more powerful computer hardware.

The WPMS allows for the entry of data in three key areas, viz. *Policies*, *Activities*, and *Monitoring and Evaluation*. It is supported by an **INSTITUTIONAL CONFIGURATION** module, and **DATABASE/SYSTEM MANAGEMENT UTILITIES**.

The *Policies Module* allows for the detailing of the institution's Policy Matrix. Here, the major policy areas in operation are

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**ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

Policy Code: PP001 Title: Policy and Planning  
Strategy Level: SEC Area: Socio-Economics Report No: SEC01

Division: APD Title: Determine domestic  
Activity Type: ACC ACCOUNTS  
ADM ADMINISTRATION  
ANH ANIMAL HEALTH  
APD PLANNING  
EXT EXTENSION & TRAINING  
FOR FORESTRY  
FSH FISHERIES  
LWD LAND & WATER DEV.  
RON REGIONAL OFFICE -NOR  
ROS REGIONAL OFFICE -SOU  
VET VETERINARY SERVICES

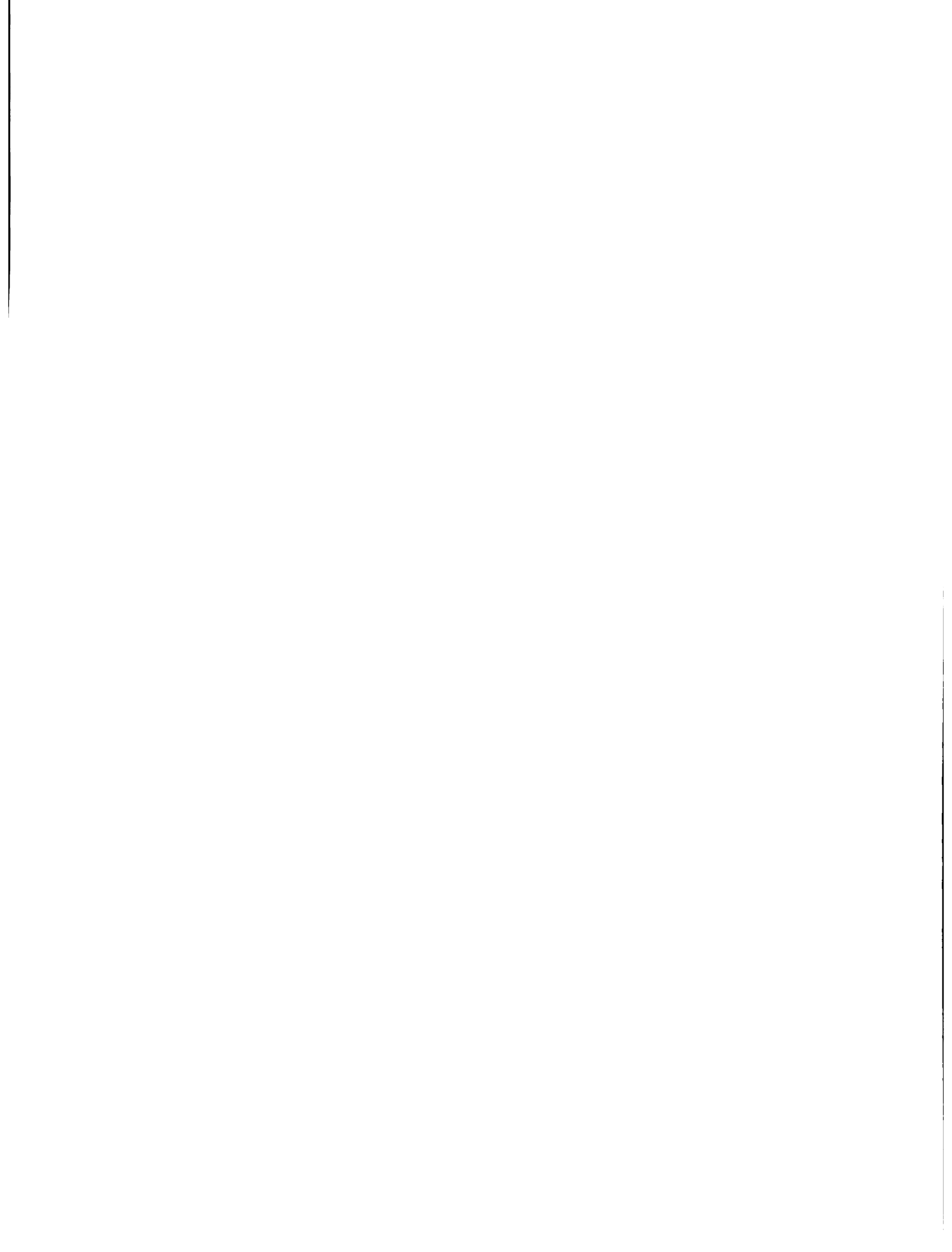
Location: APD  
Specific Objective: Ident/protect  
Fiscal Year: 1995  
Budget Summary: Amount: Balance:

Keywords: Connec Subject

PgDn/Enter - Page 2

PRESS SHIFT-F3 FOR POPUP LIST

The WPMS is designed to be very simple to use with a wide array of intelligent pop-up menus to ensure ease of manipulation and to minimize data entry errors... A data entry screen from the Activities module is shown here.





## Introduction to the Workplan Management System

outlined, and strategic areas relating to each policy are specified. This module also allows for the documentation of the results of annual policy reviews. The data entry screen for the policy matrix is shown below.

**Based on the philosophy that all activities undertaken by an organization should be supported by some enabling policy framework, the detailing of the Policy Matrix is the first major activity in the institutionalization of the WPMS. Data are entered in this screen.**

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**POLICY MATRIX**

Policy Code: **PP001** Title: Policy and Planning

Present Status: Policies and strategies of the Ministry need to be more clearly enuciated; also polices need to be more dynamic to respond to rapid

Fiscal Yr:1995

Background To Policy: Economic Policy Analysis of major financial and trade matters which affect the agricultural sector

Entry Date:

**<F7> PREVIOUS      <F8> NEXT      <ALT> MENU**

PRESS SHIFT-F3 FOR POPUP LIST

The *Activities Module* is the planning module of the system and captures details about the activities which comprise the work programme. Activities are specified according to policy and strategic areas (previously defined), as well as, the unit or department which executes the activity and the fiscal year in which the activity is executed. For the purposes of computerized management, each activity is also assigned a unique code. Information relating to each activity is entered in four main areas, viz: Activity Summary, Key Tasks, Personnel Costs and Material Costs.



# Introduction to the Workplan Management System

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The Activities Module is the key module of the WPMS. On entry to this module, the program first requests the specification of a relevant policy (previously specified in the Policy Matrix) as a pre-condition to the subsequent detailing of work programme activity details.

**ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

**Policy Code:** DP001    **Title:** Policy and Planning  
**Strategy Level:** SEC    **Area:** Socio-Economics    **Strat No:** SEC01

**Division:** APD    **Activity Code:** APD005    **Fiscal Year:** 1995  
**Title:** Determine and implement measures required to protect domestic agriculture from subsidized pricing and dumping by

**Activity Type:** Trade Policy    **Start:** 01/15/95    **End:** 12/15/95

**Location:**    **Activity Class:**

**BUDGET SUMMARY**  
**Amount:**  
**Balance:**

**Specific Objective:** Identify effective trade mechanisms for protecting local agricultural sector

**KEYWORDS:**  
**Commodity:**    **Subject:** Trade Protection

PgDn/Enter - Page 2

PRESS SHIFT-F3 FOR POPUP LIST

Tasks, External Conditions, and Budgets are so detailed in the Activities Module; throughout the WPMS, pop-up screens are accessed by using the Shift-F3 Keys. This is indicated at the bottom of each screen.

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**EXTERNAL CONDITIONS**

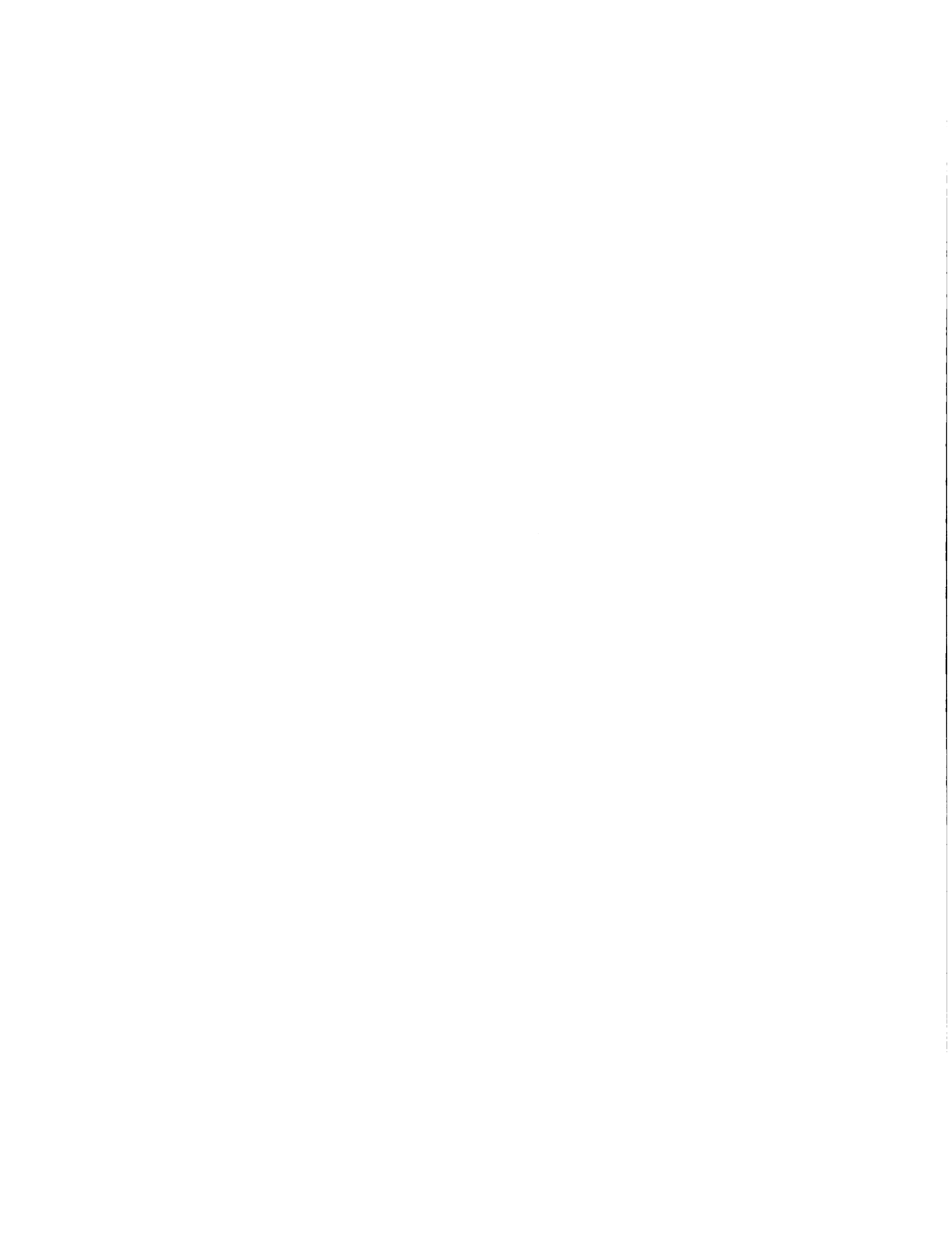
**Strategy:**    **Division:** APD    **Activity Code:** APD005    **Fiscal Year:** 1995  
 Determine and implement measures required to protect domestic agriculture from subsidized pricing and dumping by trading

**DETAILS**

#	Condition	Target	Start	End	Responsible
1	Training equipment available		02/01/95	02/28/95	H. Franklin
2	Relevant Officers available for		03/01/95	05/31/95	Dir., Extension
3	Participants identified and		02/15/95	02/28/95	Permanent Sec.

<F7> PREVIOUS      <F8> NEXT      <ALT> MENU

PRESS SHIFT-F3 FOR POPUP LIST







## Introduction to the Workplan Management System

The *Institutions Module* can be regarded as an institutional configuration facility. This module is used to enter division names, personnel and accounting codes, institutional material inventory codes, and other data which the WPMS uses to reflect the structure of the particular organization using the program.

The *Institutions Module* serves as a central reference for all the details specific to a particular organization. Using this Module it is possible to adjust the WPMS to reflect the structure of an organization. Some specific Institution Reports are also prepared using this module.

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INSTITUTION PARTICULARS					
DIVISION	CODE	POSITION	STATUS	CATEGORY	RANGE
PLANNING	APD	PLANNING OFFICER 1	PERMANENT	MONTHLY	46
AGRICULTURE	EXT	AGRIC. OFFICER 1	TEMPORARY	DAILY	35
GENERAL SERVICES	LMD	CLERK 1	ACTING	CONTRACT	22
TRAINING	UET	STENOGRAPHER	SECONDED		21
PROPERTY	ACC	HANDY MAN			47
ADMINISTRATION	ADM	DIRECTOR			55

PREVIOUS      NEXT      RETURN MENU

Finally, the *Utilities Module* provides options for specifying and changing user access privileges, selecting printers, and backing up data.

All modules, except the Utilities, offer a range of Reports related to the information entered in each module, and reports may be generated on the screen, printed on paper or saved to a file on disk. Among the types of reports which may be generated are Summaries of Activities grouped according to major Policy and Strategy Area, Technical Subject Area, Target Commodities, Implementing Division, and Key Starting and Ending Dates.

Based on the *annual planning approach*, work plans are prepared for the system annually and the specification of key dates is tied to a particular activity fiscal year.





## **Introduction to the Workplan Management System**

Moreover, the WPMS presumes the existence of a specific Policy and Strategic Area of organization in order to validate/allow entry of an activity. Hence, the system in most situations, prompts the user for policy and strategic areas as a pre-condition to the entry of activity details.

### **2. Institutional Pre-requisites:**

The introduction of the Work Plan Management facility, as described above, will require a certain structuring and ordering of the operational management process within the MALMR. **The use of the system implies a clear understanding of the roles of various divisions, departments, managers and technicians in the determination of institutional policy, specification of goals and targets, and the monitoring and evaluation of activities necessary to achieve overall goals. It also implies the *a priori* establishment of systems and processes which can provide information for decisions about policies and plans.**

Some of the most important pre-requisites include the following:

- A sound goal setting mechanism as can be achieved under a regime of annual policy and sector reviews as well as monitoring and evaluation. This mechanism will generate (and annually update) the policy matrix which will in turn guide the elaboration of specific work-programme activities.
- An adequate information management infrastructure; this is the management of data and information necessary to support policy and sector review. When operational, the WPMS itself will generate part of this information.



## **Introduction to the Workplan Management System**

- A suitable organizational structure; this is necessary in order to facilitate the actual management of the plans themselves, once they are specified, and the subsequent monitoring and reporting on these plans. It assumes the existence of clearly identified functional units that are sufficiently informed of the organization's objectives. In this respect, two key functions which the MALMR must provide in support of the WPMS are in *Costing and Work Planning Management*. Work Planning Management is the function which constantly ensures concurrence between the institution's policy matrix, and the activities actually being undertaken. The Costing Function will provide information to the planners on updated costs of inputs and other services required for developing the work programme budget.
  
- *Institutional Commitment*: The adoption of a system such as the WPMS is not achieved in the short term. It requires a process of constant evaluation and adjustment in/of the organization, as it may imply adjustments to *modus operandi* and, most likely, employee attitudes. Successful implementation therefore requires the organization's Commitment to the attainment of the institutional benefits which the system can generate.

### **3. The Role of the Directorate and Technicians:**

The WPMS provides a medium for two-way communication between the MALMR's Directorate and its Technicians, thereby fostering organization-wide participation in the planning process. For the Directorate, its role will be to use information supplied by the Technicians in the formulation of the annual policy framework in which the MALMR operates, and to interpret and communicate this framework to all Technicians. The Technicians will be responsible for using these guidelines in the preparation of the MALMR's annual set of activities. The Technicians will also be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the various activities and providing the feedback required by the Directorate for annually updating the policy matrix.



## ***Introduction to the Workplan Management System***

It is considered that, because the Technicians operate at the interface between the MALMR and its clients, they are best able to communicate the needs of clients to the Directorate. More importantly, it is the Technicians who should be best able to propose solutions to these needs, and should therefore be the primary proposers of activities for the annual programme of work. Their ability to adequately undertake this function in a manner consistent with the defined policy matrix depends on how well they understand the prevailing policy matrix.



## **"WHAT IS IICA?"**

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is the specialized agency for agriculture of the inter-American system. The Institute was founded on October 7, 1942 when the Council of Directors of the Pan American Union approved the creation of the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences.

IICA was founded as an institution for agricultural research and graduate training in tropical agriculture. In response to changing needs in the hemisphere, the Institute gradually evolved into an agency for technical cooperation and institutional strengthening in the field of agriculture. These changes were officially recognized through the ratification of a new Convention on December 8, 1980. The Institute's purpose under the new Convention are to encourage, facilitate and support cooperation among the 33 Member States, so as to better promote agricultural development and rural wellbeing.

With its broader and more flexible mandate and new structure to facilitate direct participation by the Member States in the activities of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA) and the Executive Committee, the Institute now has a geographic reach that allows it to respond to needs for technical cooperation in all of its member states.

The contributions provided by the Member States and the ties IICA maintains with 13 Permanent Observer Countries and numerous international organizations provide the Institute with channels to direct its human and financial resources in support of agricultural development throughout the Americas.

The 1987-1993 Medium Term Plan, the policy document that sets IICA's priorities, stresses the reactivation of the agricultural sector as the key to economic growth. In support of this policy, the Institute is placing special emphasis on the support and promotion of actions to modernize agricultural technology and strengthen the processes of regional and subregional integration. In order to attain these goals, the Institute is concentrating its actions on the following five Programs: Agricultural Policy Analysis and Planning; Technology Generation and Transfer; Organization and Management for Rural Development; Trade and Agroindustry; and Agricultural Health.

The Member States of IICA are: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela. The Permanent Observer Countries of IICA are: Arab Republic of Egypt, Austria, Belgium, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania and Spain.

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