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TRAINING SEMINAR ON THE APPLICATION OF  
COMPUTER MODEL FOR FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS AND REPORTING (GAMBIA)

XP/GAM/89/059

THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

Report of the Evaluation Mission\*

Prepared in co-operation with  
the Republic of the Gambia and the  
United Nations Industrial Development Organization

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\*This document has not been edited.

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#### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The seminar, XP/GAM/89/059, covering four weeks for 15 participants, successfully produced its planned results (outputs). Considering various constraints, the selection of participants by the National Investment Board (NIB) was performed in a very thorough and professional manner, resulting in an ideal group based on the nominations received. Based on the topics covered, the workshop duration was fairly adequate and its content, with focus on financial analysis and UNIDO's Computerized Model for Feasibility Analysis and Reporting (COMFAR), was well suited to the desire profile of participants but limited in that other vital sectors such as market analysis, etc. were not covered. The practical approach of case studies and working groups was very effective, although this would have realized greater impact if actual cases for the Gambia were utilized rather than hypothetical cases.

The report addresses details of the latter part of the seminar. The participants' reactions to the seminar and its benefits were on the whole favourable. The training programme, however, was considered rather limited but its substantive content and quality of instruction was assessed as very good. The course organization and management were good and training facilities and materials were considered fair. The extent to which the workshop met the participants' expectations was either as planned or more than planned.

The report gives an appraisal of the project document, suggests the need for extension of the coverage and need for actual cases to be used as examples in future.

Based on the positive experience with the seminar as well as the identified need for further training so as to maximize the impact and to provide greater multiplier effect, future close co-operation between UNIDO and the NIB in training activities is strongly recommended.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COMFAR	-	UNIDO's Computerized Model for Feasibility Analysis and Reporting
CS	-	Case Study
CV	-	Curriculum Vitae
HTO	-	Host Training Organization
LDC	-	Least Developed Country
NIB	-	National Investment Board, Banjul
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	-	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WG	-	Working Group

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The project XP/GAM/89/059 - Training Seminar on the Application of Computer Model for Feasibility Analysis and Reporting at the National Investment Board (NIB - Gambia) was organized by UNIDO in co-operation with the NIB. It is one of a series of UNIDO training activities (projects) for nationals from developing countries in the field of industrial investment projects preparation and evaluation.

The problem addressed is the inadequacies of local skills and capabilities in the preparation and analysis of pre-investment studies. In response to a growing number of requests to address the above-mentioned problem, the subject seminar was organized for a duration of four weeks for 15 participants from various ministries and parastatals in the Gambia.

The evaluation report addresses the second half of the seminar.

### 1.2 Purpose of evaluation

This exercise was undertaken in keeping with the decision of the Project Review Committee of UNIDO of 1986 which requested the Evaluation Staff to select a number of repetitive-type training projects and based on analysis, to recommend ways of improving the evaluation and to suggest methods, based on lessons learned, to increase the effectiveness of such projects.

In accordance with the above, an end-of-seminar evaluation was undertaken by David Tommy of the Evaluation Staff. The evaluator spent the last ten days of the seminar on:

- (a) Observing the conduct of the seminar;
- (b) Detailed interviews with participants, the instructor and organizers;
- (c) Evaluation discussion session where answers to an end-of-seminar questionnaire were analyzed and overall impact reviewed; and
- (d) Discussion with the host organization (NIB) representatives.

The observations, findings and recommendations are provided hereunder.

In view of the background, responsibilities and facilities available to each participant at his or her place of work, it is vital that an ex-post evaluation be carried out six to nine months after the completion of the seminar to assess the applicability of knowledge and skills acquired. Findings of such an exercise will complement the findings of the end-of-seminar evaluation in planning more effective future activities of this nature.

## 2. PROJECT FORMULATION

The project document took into account the design problems identified in a previous project of this nature by the Evaluation Staff. To this end, there was, therefore, no inconsistency in the project objective; activities were clearly defined, the target participant groups and special considerations involved spelt out. A clear end-of-training indicator is also provided. Despite the good quality of its project design and internal logic, there is failure in not including two vital subjects - economic analysis and market analysis.



### 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

An outline of the work giving the coverage of various topics was contained in the project document. The selection of participants was from NIB, other governmental agencies and parastatals concerned with industrial development. The target was to train them in practical methods and techniques for project preparation and evaluation. The implementation of activities generally was in accordance with the prescription contained in the project document.

The budget foreseen for the seminar was US\$ 24,069. The breakdown included the defrayment of the following costs: 1 Financial Analyst/COMFAR Specialist (including travel and per diem), teaching materials and teaching aids and staff member mission.

#### 3.1 Invitations

Invitations were extended by NIB on behalf of UNIDO based on the outline contained in the project document. This was some several months before the start of the project.

#### 3.2 Selection of participants

The selection of participants to the seminar was carried out by the NIB in line with the guidelines provided by UNIDO. This exercise was carried out in a consequent and professional manner.

The cross-section of the participants was mostly Gambians with at least a BA degree in economics or business management and 3-5 years of professional experience in pre-investment studies preparation. At least one of the participants had attended a similar programme organized by UNIDO at the Hamburg Institute for Economic Research in November 1987. The list of participants, with information on educational background, employer, etc. is annexed therewith. In keeping with the project document, about 15 participants benefited from the seminar. The number would have been greater but for the fact that representatives from e.g. Ministry of Finance could not attend due to workload at that material time.

Of the 15 core participants, 9 had degrees in economics, 4 in business administration, 1 in agriculture (general) and 1 in both engineering and economics. Therefore, as intended in the project document, the majority of participants had basically an economic background. The participants' professional experience ranged from one to ten years, but in the majority of cases, amounted to three to five years. Two of the participants were women.

Based on observations of the instructor, results shown in working groups and interviews by the evaluator, up to 80 per cent of the participants would fall into the category of people who are very directly involved in pre-investment activities and are likely in a limited way to immediately apply a good deal of their new skills and knowledge. There is, however, the limitation that some of the participants do not have access to a computer. The remainder of the participants have some kind of involvement with industrial pre-investment work but are not likely at this juncture to directly apply the new skills acquired in the workshop on their day-to-day work. This is a preliminary analysis which could be the subject of ex-post analysis.

The above classification notwithstanding, the capability, motivation and enthusiasm of participants in the seminar can be assessed as very satisfactory. The average attendance was good. The participants had a good command of the language of instruction, English.

### 3.2 Organization of seminar

The seminar was organized and managed by the NIB (Gambia). NIB is not a training institute but is a practically-oriented arm of the Government concerned with investment policies and environment in the Gambia. This particular seminar is the first of its kind in which NIB has been involved.

The seminar was held at the premises of NIB in Banjul. The facilities were to bare minimum with very limited hardware and on a couple of occasions, thwarted by power failures. The efforts of the organizers to minimize these shortcomings are commendable. In addition, the organization of the workshop at Banjul has its disadvantages, including that of certain participants having to split their time between attending the seminar and attending to pressing office matters.

The actual details of the seminar followed closely and to a significant extent the outline enshrined in the project document (XP/GAM/89/059). The instructor was limited to one international expert financed by UNIDO. Three working groups were established based on the number of available computers. The working groups' composition remained the same throughout. These groups operated in a single classroom.

The focus of the seminar was obviously on financial analysis and the application of COMFAR. It is apparent that this was as a result of UNIDO's intention to sensitize the participants to the importance of cost-benefit analysis which in current practice often does not play a significant enough role in pre-investment considerations. (The social cost-benefit aspect was somewhat marginalized.)

The breakdown by subject matter is very close to that foreseen in the project document.

The main training materials consisted of lecture hand-outs, examples, case studies and other information made available during the seminar. It is apparent that lessons learned from previous seminars were put into good use in the organization of this seminar.

#### 4. EVALUATION OF SEMINAR BY PARTICIPANTS

##### 4.1 Organization of the evaluation sessions

The assessment of the reaction and learning levels relied heavily on the reaction and opinions of participants (and to a certain extent of the instructor). Hence, this level of evaluation is appropriately termed self-evaluation. It addresses predominantly implementation of activities and production of planned outputs in the form of new knowledge and skills acquired. The achievement of the project objective can only be analyzed after a certain period has elapsed from the actual seminar. This can only be through ex-post questionnaires or through the conduction of an in-depth evaluation (including the visiting of selected participants).

This end-of-seminar evaluation is rather limited and relies primarily on responses of participants to a structured questionnaire. The sample questionnaire and a statistical summary of answers are annexed. The questions are grouped into the following categories:

- (a) Expectations met by the seminar;
- (b) Seminar content and organization'
- (c) Management and administrative matters; and
- (d) Miscellaneous remarks and suggestions.

The questionnaire was distributed to participants during the penultimate day of the seminar and collected that same day as well as in the morning of the final day. On the last day of the seminar, a three-hour evaluation session was organized. After introductory remarks by the evaluator on the purpose of evaluation and UNIDO plans on use of lessons to be learned from it, a review and discussion of participants' reactions was held. Questionnaire responses were obtained from all participants.

The summary of major reactions is given hereunder. In addition to views expressed in the questionnaire responses and during the discussion session, some additional remarks by participants in individual interviews with the evaluator are also incorporated.

##### 4.2 Expectations met by the seminar

The reaction of participants to the seminar and its benefits were generally favourable. This response should be assessed against the background that the large majority of the participants are involved primarily in economic work.

The seminar had met the participants' expectations either as planned (80 per cent) or more than planned (20 per cent). All of the participants are of the opinion that the workshop was beneficial to their professional work.

The topic that appears to be most beneficial to participants is COMFAR. This is fully in line with the planned focus of the seminar. Economic analysis is omitted from the seminar programme and it is apparent that it is a topic that ensured the acquisition of completely new knowledge. It is,

therefore, not surprising that the participants noticed this omission and requested its inclusion in following seminars. This notwithstanding, the interest and fascination of participants with COMFAR is not surprising and fully justifies the considerable percentage of time devoted to this topic.

During the discussion on COMFAR it became apparent that only some 40 per cent of the participants had any previous involvement with computers, while only 10 per cent had some familiarity with COMFAR. The interest for a subsequent detailed follow-up (multi-week seminar) on COMFAR, economic analysis and market analysis appears to be high.

#### 4.3 Seminar content and organization

The overall substantive content of the seminar was assessed by participants either "as expected" (88 per cent) or "higher than expected" (10 per cent). Of the individual topics, the issues of financial analysis and COMFAR received the highest rating.

The quality of the presentation and information was assessed positively by the participants. All participants, however, noted that there was room for improvement, particularly in the demonstration exercises on COMFAR. The efforts of the instructor were rated very good, particularly her presentations and discussion skills.

The duration of the seminar (against the background of the topics addressed) was considered adequate by 80 per cent of the participants, while 20 per cent considered it somewhat short. The daily workload was, on the whole, considered adequate.

#### 4.4 Management matters

The course management and support services received unanimous praise from the participants. The training facilities were considered at times inadequate for reasons beyond the control of the NIB. These included a half-day power failure, limited number of computers and the fact that the group exercises had to take place in one standard room. The enthusiasm, devotion and quick action on even the smallest matters by the Course Director, however, deserves special mention.

#### 4.5 Comments and suggestions

As discussed previously, many of the participants noted the inadvertent omission of economic and market analysis from the seminar programme. Almost all of the participants underlined the need for a follow-up to this seminar. The follow-up seminar should focus extensively on financial, economic and market analysis, including computer applications. Several participants in the discussion noted the hypothetical nature to the Gambian situation of the majority of the case studies.

## 5. ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

The comments presented hereunder are based on the evaluator's observations during the one-week involvement with the seminar.

### 5.1 The host training organization - NIB

The enthusiasm and dedication of NIB even in the face of grave limitations contributed significantly to the seminar's success. This is highly appreciated. The interest and drive of the organizers to ensure that participants/candidates presented by ministries and the private sector meet the minimum requirements set by UNIDO accounts for the fairly homogeneous representation of participants. In view of the fact that the seminar was conducted by one instructor, this was very important.

NIB proved that it could be a very competent institution for organizing seminars of this type. The positive results should prove beneficial for the reputation of both NIB and UNIDO.

### 5.2 Participants' selection process

The effectiveness of a seminar of this type, i.e. the attainment of the project objective, is highly dependent on choosing the participants who will be in a position to practically apply the knowledge and skills acquired by the end of the training. The selection for the seminar as reported earlier appears to be closely in line with the guideline established in the project document.

From the standpoint of involvement and dedication at the seminar, as well as the likely rapid utilization of new skills in their regular work, candidates from NIB, the Central Bank and development/finance corporations (commercial banks) should be given preference. This was substantiated during the discussion and overall evaluation of the nature of the daily assignments of the candidates.

In addition, inasmuch as a certain group of participants were very dedicated during the seminar and also appeared quick at appreciating issues, their main limitation appeared to be the fact that they do not have access to computers at the end of the seminar.

### 5.3 Seminar duration and content

As mentioned earlier, the seminar content focussed on financial analysis and COMFAR and is in a way suited to the desired profile and current jobs of the participants (primarily economists but also business management and engineers involved in financial/economic analysis). The omission of economic, market, technical analysis and investment promotion was not beneficial as a good overview of all pre-investment activities and complete analysis is required. The title of the seminar, however, fully corresponds to the elements which it emphasizes: "Training Seminar for the National Investment Board on the Application of the Computer Model for Feasibility Analysis and Reporting (COMFAR)". The participants, however, included candidates outside NIB and future seminars should reflect this.

The duration of the seminar, whilst on the whole considered adequate by participants, had its own limitations. In view of the fact that participants

had to devote part of the day to their office work, the training was mostly between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon. Whilst participants were very keen, there were, however, elements of distraction due to normal office demands and also key figures who should have participated fully had to pull out to go on official missions.

#### 5.4 Follow-up to the seminar

In order to adequately evaluate the impact of the training, there is need for an ex-post analysis of participants' experiences. A questionnaire for the exercise has been prepared. This could be sent to participants six to nine months after the seminar and in content addresses primarily the actual application of knowledge and skills and the possible multiplier effect of the training.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Conclusions

The seminar held in November/December 1989 can be considered successful since the results/outputs in terms of scope, depth and quality of knowledge and skills acquired by participants, as well as their end-of-training attitude, are at least as planned in the project document. This conclusion is based on observations of the conduct of the seminar, reaction of participants to the evaluation questionnaires, individual discussions and discussions with the host organization.

The seminar duration of four weeks and its workload is reported adequate. The extent to which the training had met their expectations was either as planned or more than planned. The overall content of the seminar was positively assessed while the quality of instruction considered good. Concern is, however, expressed over the omission of topics like economic and market analysis. According to initial reactions, there is a need for a serious introduction of these topics, including investment promotion, which are vital in the investment decision process. The title of the seminar, however, justifies the omission of these topics.

Account is taken of the fact that a small proportion of the participants by the end of the seminar will not be able to immediately apply the skills gained due to the inaccessibility of computers. The benefit of the seminar to this group is, therefore, doubtful. Another questionable issue is the extent to which participants without prior knowledge of COMFAR are adequately informed in pre-feasibility studies for them to meaningfully apply COMFAR; the different studies and when a particular one applies - opportunity, feasibility, etc.; the duration of the seminar and possibility of making full use of COMFAR software.

### 6.2 Recommendations

If a future seminar were organized, the content extended and conducted in the same professional manner as this one, its success would be more than likely; however, to make its performance even better and to increase its subsequent effectiveness, certain improvements are possible.

The following modifications are recommended for future seminars of this type:

- (a) The project design is adequate. It could, however, be extended to include issues such as economic analysis, market analysis and investment promotion. The title should also be subsequently modified to extended participation beyond the host institution and to reflect the broader scope of the topics.
- (b) The experience gained from observing the group of participants at this seminar should be utilized in selecting participants for future seminars. Arrangements should also be made to ensure that the undivided attention of the participants is allowed during the period of the seminar.

- (c) The responses to the ex-post questionnaire, which should be sent to participants six to nine months after the seminar, should be analyzed and the findings of this evaluation used for fine-tuning future seminars to ensure greater impact, etc.



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Educational Background</u>	<u>Name of Institution</u>	<u>Short Job Description</u>
1. Ansumana Makald	30	Business Management/ Economist	IBAS (Indigeneous Business Advisory Service)	Small Enterprises Prospect Identification and Promotion; Business Advice; Research and Training
2. P.A.M.A. Jallow	41	Business Management	IBAS	Project Management and Feasibility Appraisal
3. M.Y.M. Sallah	37	Economist	NIB (National Board)	Financial Analyst and Project Planning, Control, Appraisal and Evaluation
4. F. Sinyang (Ms.)	26	Economist	NIB	Financial Analyst
5. Sako Mboge	39	Economist	NIB	Investment Project Appraisal and Evaluation
6. L.K. Manjang	25	Business Management	NIB	Financial Analyst
7. I. Jawara (Ms.)	28	Economist	NIB	Investment Promotion and Analysis
8. M.S. Foon	35	Economist	Central Bank of the Gambia	Economic Research and Credit Approval for Small and Medium Enterprises for the Private Sector (World Bank Line of Credit)
9. R. Andrews	25	Economist	Central Bank of the Gambia	Economist
10. O.E. Joiner	34	Economist	Gambia Commercial Development Bank	Supervisor of Credits
11. M.B. Ceesay	27	B.Sc. Agriculture	Department of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture	Cadet Planner

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS (cont'd)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Educational Background</u>	<u>Name of Institution</u>	<u>Short Job Description</u>
12. A. Wadda	23	Economist	NIB	Caded Economist
13. M.A. Cham	35	Economist/ Business Management	NIB	Financial Analyst
14. D. Njie	35	Economist	NIB	Investment Project Approval and Evaluation
15. W. John	56	Economist/ Business Management	Shell	Director of Shell Petroleum (Banjul)

**UNIDO**

**TRAINING SEMINAR ON THE APPLICATION OF  
COMPUTER MODEL FOR FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS  
AND REPORTING**

**DECEMBER 1989**

**BANJUL, THE GAMBIA**

**EVALUATION  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

INTRODUCTION

UNIDO is appreciative of your participation at the workshop. At the end of the course, we would like to evaluate all the experiences gained during the past four weeks with a view to improving upon the design and organization of future workshops. The evaluation exercise should include the participant's objective assessment of the workshop. Toward this end, you are requested to answer the following questions from your individual point of view. The option is open to you to either write your name on the questionnaire or to return it anonymously.

Thank you in advance.

N.B. In specific cases where 'MULTIPLE RESPONSE' is indicated by parenthesis against the question, more than one answer is allowed.

Total: 15 (every participant who attended full time)

1. Is your profession more than that of an ...

<input type="radio"/>	economist or an	9 (60%)
<input type="radio"/>	business management	4 (26%)
<input type="radio"/>	engineer	1 (7%)
<input type="radio"/>	agriculture	1 (7%)

2. Has the workshop met your expectations?

<input type="radio"/>	more than expected	10%
<input type="radio"/>	as expected	88%
<input type="radio"/>	less than expected	

3. Has the workshop been beneficial for your professional work?

<input type="radio"/>	considerably	78%
<input type="radio"/>	somewhat	22%
<input type="radio"/>	hardly	
<input type="radio"/>	not at all	

4. What topics have been most beneficial for you considering the work you perform? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

<input type="radio"/>	project development cycle	15%
<input type="radio"/>	financial analysis	80%
<input type="radio"/>	COMFAR (Computer Model for Feasibility Analysis and Reporting)	

85%

5. What are the topics for which you would still like to get more information and training? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

- 0 project development cycle -
- 0 financial analysis 72%
- 0 COMFAR 83%
- 0 other topics (for example: technical analysis, economic analysis, market analysis, transfer of technology, project implementation, investment promotion, etc.)

economic analysis 90%; market analysis 73%; investment promotion 70%; contracting; technology transfer and technology selection

6. Was the duration of the workshop ...

- 0 too long -
- 0 adequate 80%
- 0 too short? 20%

If too long or too short, please explain why:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

7. Was the daily workload ...

- 0 too heavy 10%
- 0 adequate 80%
- 0 too light?

8. Was the programme by and large complete or was any important subject missing?

- 0 complete 52%
- 0 missing subject(s): 48%

economic analysis; market analysis; project financing; investment promotion; comparative industrial development policies

9. How do you assess the technical level of the programme?

	<u>higher than expected</u>	<u>as expected</u>	<u>lower than expected</u>
- overall	0 10%	0 90%	0
- project development cycle	0 -	0 80%	0 20%
- financial analysis	0 10%	0 90%	0
- COMFAR	0 20%	0 80%	0

10. How do you assess the quality of presentation and instruction in general?

	<u>excellent</u>	<u>good</u>	<u>reasonable</u>	<u>to be improved</u>
- project development cycle	0 30%	0 35%	0 35%	0
- financial analysis	0 65%	0 35%	0 -	0
- COMFAR	0 55%	0 45%	0	0

%

11. What about the didactic (instructional) techniques applied? Did you consider them ...

- 0 excellent 15%
- 0 good 70%
- 0 reasonable
- 0 Could be improved? Please suggest in which manner: 15%

The need for visual aids such as slide overhead projectors for illustration purposes highlighted.

12. To what extent was the ratio of lectures, discussions and working groups balanced?

	<u>Balanced</u>	<u>More Lectures Preferable</u>	<u>More Discussions Preferable</u>	<u>More Exercises Preferable</u>
- financial analysis	0 60%	0 10%	0	0 30%
- COMFAR	0 60%	0 10%	0	0 30%

13. Particular suggestions regarding ...

- lectures:

More detailed analysis and duration required in considering sensitivity analysis and project development cycle. Three hours was considered inadequate - a five-full-days seminar preferred.

- discussions:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

- working groups:

**More time should be allocated to working groups to ensure greater understanding of the lectures and modalities for skills application.**

14. What do you think of the training material? Was it ...

- 0 excellent
- 0 good 80%
- 0 reasonable
- 0 to be improved? 20%

- Particular suggestions regarding training material:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

15. Miscellaneous: How do you assess ...

	<u>excellent</u>	<u>good</u>	<u>reasonable</u>	<u>to be improved</u>
- course management	0	0 50%	0 50%	0
- secretarial service	0	0 50%	0 50%	0
- classroom facilities	0	0 40%	0 40%	0 20%
- audio-visual aids	0	0 -	0 -	0 -
- study and plant visits	0	0 -	0 -	0 -

16. Other remarks and suggestions (for example, on level of fellowship participants, measures to improve future workshops, possible follow-up to this workshop, etc.):

The duration needs to extend scope of the programme, application of local case studies and more detailed training through a follow-up that would utilize experience gained from the seminar.

17. Your name (optional): 10 with names and five anonymous.....