International Soil Help Now Available

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The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) has entered into a project agreement with U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) that will provide international technical assistance and improve the Department of Agriculture's Soil Taxonomy for application to soils in other countries. The Soil Management Support Services (SMSS) project will operate under a 3-year contract.

Through SMSS, funds will be provided for short-term assignments of professionals for technical assistance to countries requesting aid on soil surveys, soil classification, land use planning, soil conservation, and soil fertility. The project will also assist in revising Soil Taxonomy to make it more applicable to soils in other countries, thereby improving the cost effectiveness of transferring crop and soil management technology within and among countries. To help accomplish the revisions, a permanent International Soils Program Staff will be formed, consisting of a director, research soil scientist, and secretary. Current plans are for the director and secretary to be located at an SCS office in Lanham, Md. The research soil scientist will be located at the SCS National Soil Survey Laboratory in Lincoln, Neb.

A SMSS committee has been established to serve in an advisory capacity and to facilitate international coordination among the agencies and institutions that will participate in the SMSS project. The committee members will serve 2-year terms; to ensure continuity, one-half of the members will serve 1-year terms for the 1st year, of the project. The committee chairman and cochairman will serve 2-year terms. The Director, International Soils Program Staff, will serve as executive secretary to the committee.

Technical assistance provided by the project will include:
—Professional expertise in formulating policies and programs relating to problems in land use and land use planning for food production in countries requesting assistance.
—Professional technical assistance to countries for soil surveys and soil conservation.
—Participation in evaluations of proposed and ongoing projects for soil surveys and soil conservation.
—Seminars and training programs to meet soil management needs in countries requesting assistance.
—Specific analytical and field testing services.
—Publications on selected aspects of soil management that affect land use and land use planning in countries requesting assistance.

Soil classification activities will include: