



Implementation Tips for **USAID** Partners

for Effective, Compliant, and Inclusive Programs



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Implementation Tips *for* **USAID Partners**

for Effective, Compliant, and Inclusive Programs

About Strengthening Civil Society Globally

The Strengthening Civil Society Globally (SCS Global) program, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under a Leader with Associates (LWA) Cooperative Agreement, works in any sector and across sectors to offer USAID Missions and Operating Units a flexible, worldwide platform for designing and implementing projects that strengthen civil society and independent media, and integrate participatory approaches, inclusion, transparency and accountability to advance Development Objectives.

The SCS Global Leader Award identifies, develops, and disseminates evidence-based approaches for effective development programming. As of October 2021, SCS Global had the following Associate Awards:

- SCS Azerbaijan – Empowering Civil Society Organizations for Transparency (\$2.5 million, 2018 – 2022)
- SCS Balkans – Balkan Media Assistance Program (\$9.9 million, 2017 – 2022)
- SCS Botswana – Accelerating Progress in Communities 2.0 (\$14.4 million, 2019 – 2021)
- SCS Bosnia-Herzegovina – Media Engagement Activity (\$10 million, 2021 – 2026)
- SCS Cambodia – Innovations for Social Accountability In Cambodia (\$16 million, 2019 – 2024)
- SCS Cambodia 2 – Civil Society Support Activity (\$8.5 million, 2021 – 2025)
- SCS Chad – Civil Society Strengthening Activity (\$8.5 million, 2019 – 2023)
- SCS Democratic Republic of Congo – Media Sector Development Activity (\$15 million, 2019 – 2024)
- SCS Djibouti – Civil Society Organization Strengthening Project (\$2.9 million, 2018 – 2020)
- SCS DRG – Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (\$9.5 million, 2017 – 2022)
- SCS Guinea – Citizen Involvement in Health Governance (\$12.17 million, 2017 – 2020)
- SCS Honduras – ComunicAcción Ciudadana (\$4.06 million, 2018 – 2020)
- SCS Indonesia – MADANI – Civil Society Strengthening Initiative (\$19.8 million, 2019 – 2024)
- SCS Jamaica – Local Partner Development (\$16 million, 2017 – 2023)
- SCS Kenya – Safeguarding Democratic Space in Kenya (\$6.35 million, 2018 - 2021)
- SCS Kyrgyz Republic – Cultivating Media Independence Initiative (\$10.65 million, 2017 – 2022)
- SCS Lebanon – Civic Action Accelerator Program (\$20 million, 2021 – 2026)
- SCS Mauritania – Tamkeen (\$12 million, 2021 – 2026)
- SCS Mexico – Resilient Civil Society Activity (\$16 million, 2021 – 2025)
- SCS Myanmar – Advancing Transition to Peaceful Democracy Through Participation of Civil Society and Media (\$25 million, 2018 – 2023)

- SCS Tanzania – Boresha Habari – “Better News” (\$9.7 million, 2017 – 2022)
- SCS West Bank Gaza – Civic Participation and Community Engagement Activity (\$5 million, 2021 – 2023)
- SCS Zambia – Youth Lead Activity (\$2.8 million, 2018 – 2021)
- SCS Zambia 2 – Open Spaces (\$11 million, 2021 – 2026)

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About this Book

This collection of *Implementation Tips for USAID Partners* brings together 68 articles to support new partners, especially those who have little or no experience with USAID. Each *Implementation Tip* includes a specific question that is answered in the body of the document, along with definitions and links to additional resources. The *Implementation Tips* are divided into eight topics: governance, finance management, human resources, program management, compliance, monitoring and evaluation, external relations, and inclusive development. The *Implementation Tips* related to inclusive development can be further broken down into six sub-topics: inclusive development overview, persons with disabilities, older people, inclusive monitoring and evaluation, gender, and youth.

Experienced international development practitioners working with civil society organizations (CSOs) around the world contributed to and reviewed the contents of this collection to ensure it fills gaps in available capacity development resources. We hope that this collection, along with complementary tools and resources available on www.NGOConnect.net, does this and, in the process, helps CSOs and new and underutilized partners grow and become ever better at implementing their programs and fulfilling their missions.

How to Use This Book

The table of contents at the beginning and the index at the end help you quickly find the specific topic you need.

Online version

If you are reading this online, you can skip from one page to another whenever a word or phrase is in green and underlined. These are active links, meaning that, when clicked, a new page will appear that contains more information on that particular subject.

To avoid duplicating information that is provided in depth elsewhere online, when you click on a word or phrase underlined in green you may go to a website that we believe is safe and useful. You can tell where you are by looking at the web address or URL in your browser “window.”

Governance

1

Governance

Governance refers to the systems and processes needed to ensure the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision, and accountability of an organization. This is typically the responsibility of the Board of Directors who make the policies that the executive director and staff carry out day to day. Good governance is essential to effectively operating any nongovernmental organization (NGO). Many NGOs, founded to address pressing social needs, start with just a few people doing multiple tasks and often make no clear distinction between governance and management functions. However, as an organization grows, distinguishing governance from management is critical to enabling the organization to fulfill its mission, live up to its values, and be successful over the long term.

This section introduces basic governance concepts, the distinctions and relationships between management and the Board of Directors, and offers an overview of strategic planning, a key process for setting an organization's future direction.

TOPICS

- 1.1 **Governance, Management, and the Role of a Board of Directors**
- 1.2 **How to Set Up a Board of Directors**
- 1.3 **An Overview of Strategic Planning**

Governance, Management, and the Role of the Board of Directors

Q. What is the difference between governance and management? Why is this important?

A. Governance is about the “big picture”—that means vision and organizational direction. Management is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of policies and procedures and the allocation of resources.

In most civil society organizations (CSOs), governance is provided by a Board of Directors, which may also be called the management committee, executive committee, Board of Governors, or Board of Trustees. In most countries, the Board has a legal, moral, and fiduciary responsibility for the organization. At its best, a Board reflects the collective efforts of accomplished individuals who advance the organization’s mission and long-term welfare.

The Board has many responsibilities that vary depending on the size and structure of the organization. These responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- *defining expectations* for the organization
 - * setting and maintaining vision, mission, and values
 - * developing strategy (for example, a long-term strategic plan)
 - * creating and/or approving the organization’s policies
- *granting power*
 - * selecting, managing, and supporting the organization’s chief executive
- *verifying performance*
 - * guaranteeing compliance with governing documents (for example, a charter)
 - * ensuring accountability and compliance with laws and regulations
 - * maintaining proper fiscal oversight

Definitions

Governance—The systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision, and accountability of an organization; typically the purview of a Board of Directors.

Management—The responsibility for directing the day-to-day operations of the organization.

By-laws—Rules governing the operation of an organization. By-laws often provide the methods for selecting directors, creating committees, and conducting meetings.

A CSO's sustainability—its ability to serve its clients over the long term—depends largely on the quality of the organization's governance.

References

[A Handbook of NGO Governance](#)

sets forth basic principles and practices of nonprofit governance. Published by European Center for Not-for-Profit Law in cooperation with the CEE Working Group on NGO Governance and the Trust for Civil Society in CEE.

[Boards and Governance: Legal and Ethical Responsibilities, Best Practices for Board Members.](#)

Online resource managed by the Center for Nonprofit Management.

Distinct Roles and Contributions of the Board and Management



Management takes direction from the Board and implements policies on a day-to-day basis. Management has the following responsibilities:

- *communicating* expectations—mission, strategy, policies—to the entire staff
- *managing* day-to-day operations and program implementation to fulfill the expectations
- *reporting* results to the Board

Even when the roles are understood, there isn't always a bright line that distinguishes governance from management. In a new organization it is easy for the governing body to get weighed down by questions about short-term management and operations and to lose sight of the need to focus on strategy for the longer term.

When the balance between the responsibilities of the Board and management is established and functioning well, the organization is better able to:

- *meet expectations* of clients, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders,
- *deliver quality* programs that are effective and efficient,
- *comply with laws*, regulations and other requirements.

Next Steps

If your organization is struggling with finding a balance between the roles of the Board and executive management, review your organization's charter or other governing document, the Board's terms of reference, and the job descriptions of senior management staff to see what parameters are defined.

If these sources are insufficient to provide clarity, then consider asking the Board to define responsibilities and procedures more precisely. In the end, it is part of governance—and therefore part of the Board's responsibilities—to ensure that organizational roles and structures are clearly defined.

Recruiting an Effective, Diverse, and Inclusive Board of Directors

Q. Why do we need a Board, and how do we develop an effective one?

A. One of your organization's key assets is its Board of Directors, also called a Board of Governors, Board of Trustees, or Executive Committee. In most countries, a Board is needed to enable a civil society organization (CSO) to register and operate legally. A CSO's Board of Directors is typically made up of volunteers and is separate from the organization's management and paid staff. The Board's primary function is to provide oversight to the organization, including ensuring that the CSO fulfills its mission, lives up to its values and remains viable for the future. It may be composed of community leaders, representatives of beneficiary groups, and/or private donors. A Board typically meets regularly with the organization's executive director and management team to review progress.

Organizations are governed in different ways. Some Boards meet frequently, especially when organizations are young or facing challenges. Other Boards are more hands off, meeting quarterly or annually to review financial and performance reports and to set goals for the coming year.

Like it or not, your Board members will be seen in the community as a reflection of your organization. In this way, the Board can be both the face and fate of your organization. Therefore, it is very important that you find Board members who will represent your organization well and be able to attract support for your cause.

Define Eligibility Criteria and Term

Although each CSO is unique, some qualifications for Board members are nearly universal. A Board member must be:

- *committed to the mission of the organization.* You want someone who cares about your work and is willing to volunteer to support it.
- *willing to fulfill all of the Board responsibilities* set forth by the organization. These responsibilities can include attending Board meetings, participating on a committee and helping raise funds.

Definitions

Governance—The systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision, and accountability of an organization; typically the purview of a Board of Directors.

Management—The responsibility for directing the day-to-day operations of the organization.

By-laws—Rules governing the operation of an organization. By-laws often provide the methods for selecting directors, creating committees, and conducting meetings.

References

[A Handbook of NGO Governance](#) sets forth basic principles and practices of nonprofit governance. Published by European Center for Not-for-Profit Law in cooperation with the CEE Working Group on NGO Governance and the Trust for Civil Society in CEE.

[Boards and Governance: Legal and Ethical Responsibilities, Best Practices for Board Members.](#) Online resource managed by the Center for Nonprofit Management.

Establish the length of time or term a Board member will serve at the outset. This will help candidates decide if they can commit to the position and will help the organization maintain a fresh and dynamic Board.

Develop a Written Job Description for Board Members

Once you determine the qualifications that you are looking for in Board members, write up position descriptions to refer to when recruiting and evaluating Board candidates. Below is an example of a Board member position description.

Example of Position Description for Board Members

1. Know and support the mission of the organization
2. Attend (specify monthly, quarterly, and so on) Board meetings regularly
3. Prepare for meetings in advance
4. Maintain confidentiality
5. Offer informed and impartial guidance
6. Avoid special agendas and conflicts of interest
7. Participate in committees and special events
8. Advise the chief executive/executive director
9. Take part in resource mobilization
10. Promote the organization in the community

Source: A Position Description for Board Members from [A Handbook of NGO Governance](#)

Sample Orientation Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Overview of mission, vision, and goals of organization
- Overview of roles and responsibilities of the Board
- Review of the Board position description detailing specific expectations
- Opportunity for Board candidate to ask questions
- Inquiry into candidate's willingness to serve on Board
- Next steps discussion

Source: [Sample Orientation Agenda](#) by Create the Future, [Developing a Board Recruitment Plan](#)

Foster Diversity and Inclusion

Consider what you want the composition of your Board to be. Each person will bring his or her own personal and professional contacts and life experiences to service on a CSO Board. With a diversity of experience, expertise, and perspectives, a CSO is in a stronger position to plan for the future, manage risk, make prudent decisions, and take full advantage of opportunities.

Diversity in Board make-up may be reflected in gender, age, religious affiliation, income, skills, professional experience, and so on. A diverse Board brings a wide range of perspectives to an organization, which in turn generates more thoughtful approaches to helping the CSO realize its mission.

Set Recruiting Priorities

Think about what skills and perspectives are needed. Review your organization's strategic plan and the current Board's strengths and weaknesses. Then, identify any gaps between the skills, knowledge,

and perspectives needed to fill those gaps. Based on this analysis, you can set clear recruiting priorities for Board members. For example, an organization focused on HIV/AIDS prevention or water and sanitation issues may want to recruit one or more Board members who have expertise in those technical areas or individuals who have the ability to raise money from the private sector.

Where to Look for Board Members

Consider recruiting individuals who are:

- *leaders in the communities your organization serves.* This is a good way to ensure that your organization's strategies are relevant and in line with the needs of the community you serve. Also, such leaders often have connections to groups and networks that may be able to support your work.
- *active in professional associations* such as those that represent business, accounting, law or the technical sector in which your organization works. These individuals can offer expertise that might otherwise be very costly for the organization to obtain.
- *prominent or famous.* Carefully weigh the potential benefits and disadvantages of well-known Board members. Before you approach them, determine whether they have expressed an interest in your cause. Also, be aware that celebrities may not have enough time to fulfill the commitments asked of Board members.
- *from your beneficiary group.* Doing so will ensure that the voice of the people you serve is heard in the Board room.

Every member is expected to contribute to the governance of the organization. The level and type of contribution will vary depending on the individual Board member's situation, skills, and experience. Do not exclude a candidate because he/she does not have the same material resources as others you are considering.

Board members can contribute in different ways, and a unique perspective may be just as valuable as fundraising ability, depending on your organization's circumstances and needs.

Develop a Standard Process to Recruit and Select Candidates

Recruiting Board members is not a one-person or one-time job. It is good practice to enlist a small committee who will follow a systematic process of recruiting, interviewing and selecting new Board members. Recruitment and selection processes should be described in the organization's by-laws so that they can be referred to whenever a position on the Board needs to be filled.

To start, survey your community to identify a pool of potential candidates the committee believes could be a good match for Board positions based on the descriptions you developed. As when filling a

Take time to get to know the candidates for your Board and carefully consider what each will bring to the organization if selected to serve.

Avoid Conflicts of Interest

It is assumed that a CSO's Board members act in the best interests of the organization. There are, however, situations that cast a shadow on this statement. Here are some examples:

- A Board member also serves on the Board of a rival CSO and buys office equipment from the company of the Board member's cousin.
- A Board member hires a staff person to provide services privately.
- The CSO gives a stipend to the son of the chair of the Board.

There may be reasonable explanations for these situations that do not necessarily involve actual wrongdoing. But in all of these cases there are *potential* or *perceived* conflicts of interest even if no actual wrongdoing exists.

Because the Board is a reflection of your organization, it is best to steer clear of even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Source: ECNL, in cooperation with the CEE Working Group on NGO Governance and the Trust for Civil Society in CEE, *A Handbook of NGO Governance*.

staff job, try to find at least two candidates for every open seat on the Board so you can have some choice when it comes time to make final decisions.

After identifying candidates, contact them by telephone to introduce the organization, describe the position and explain the recruitment process. Follow up by sending the same information in writing via e-mail.

If a candidate is open to serving on your Board, schedule an interview as soon as possible. This is a chance for you to learn more about the candidate and for the candidate to learn more about the position and your organization. It is also the best opportunity to screen a candidate for potential conflicts of interest. If a Board member has a conflict of interest, it can threaten the integrity of the entire organization. Thus, it is very important to ask about any relationships the candidate has with the organization's executives, staff and competing organizations.

At the end of the interview, ask whether the candidate is still interested in serving on the Board so you do not waste time considering someone unwilling to accept the position if offered.

After concluding all interviews, convene the selection committee. When deliberating, take into account the position description, as well as the goals of the organization and desired make-up of the Board. Make your selection and inform the candidates.

Although it can be challenging to find effective Board members, it is worth the effort because having the right people with the right skills on your Board can help you realize your mission and increase your impact in your community.

An Overview of Strategic Planning

Q. How do we get started planning for the future?

A. Strategic planning is a participatory and structured process to help you determine your organization's future direction. It is a management tool that will help your organization identify its current capacities, its needs, and its goals. There are various methods for conducting strategic planning, but at its simplest it is a process of collectively answering four basic questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know if we have arrived or not?

A strategic planning process and its results are only as good as they are honest and useful—honest means looking at internal and external factors objectively, and useful means putting into words the specific goals and action steps to help guide the organization forward.

The Planning Timeframe

Think of the future of your organization as divided into three phases:

1. The **actionable or short-term horizon** is defined by what you know—the program descriptions, agreements, staffing arrangements, and workplans currently in place. Your actionable horizon may be a year or it may extend through the end of your USAID award or other funding.
2. Your **strategic or medium-term horizon** is typically a two- to five-year period, which begins when your actionable horizon starts to taper off. Variables such as funding, staffing, and workplans tend to be increasingly uncertain as funding for specific programs ends.
3. Beyond your strategic horizon lies your **long-term vision**. This is where variables become unpredictable, but your organization's long-term vision is the driving force for charting your course. However, some variables may not be completely open-ended. For example, you may not be able to identify future funding sources precisely, but you likely have some good ideas and leads. This is the phase during which your strategic plan is especially relevant.

Definitions

Action plan—A series of specific steps describing what needs to be done, how, when, and by whom to accomplish one or more objectives. Written action plans can be used at the organizational, project, or activity level.

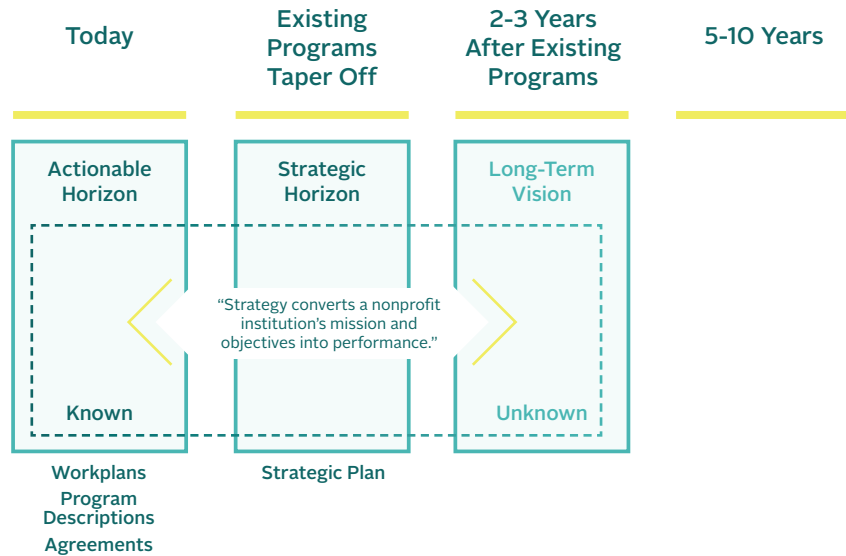
Horizon—The amount of time an organization will look into the future when preparing a strategic plan. This time frame typically ranges from two to five years, but the appropriate horizon depends on the sector.

Vision—An inspiring statement of what an organization is striving to achieve. CSOs often focus on the problem they hope to solve by painting a picture of an image they have for the future after the problem has been solved or the situation measurably improved.

Mission—Takes the vision a step further by summarizing the actions the organization is going to take to make its vision a reality. It is a statement that clarifies the purpose of the organization and its daily business.

Stakeholders—Individuals or organizations that can influence or be affected by your program.

SWOT analysis—A process of considering the Strengths and Weaknesses within your organization, plus factors outside your organization that offer Opportunities or pose Threats.



Ten Steps in Strategic Planning

- 1. Agree on a strategic planning process.** To get buy-in and improve the chances that the plan will not sit on a shelf, involve the people who will be responsible for implementing the plan. At a meeting with the key staff, Board members, and even some external stakeholders, clarify the mandate and scope of work and discuss the value of strategic planning and its costs in terms of time and resources. Develop a workplan and timetable and assign specific tasks to individuals.
- 2. Define or review the organization's vision and mission.** Be sure there is a consensus on why the organization exists, what it seeks to achieve, and whom it serves. This forms the basis for writing or reviewing your vision statement. Then, write or review your mission statement.

 - *Sample vision statement:* "XYZ CSO envisions our community free of hunger, where every person has secure access to sufficient and safe food to sustain a healthy and productive life."
 - *Sample mission statement:* "Our mission is to fight poverty and hunger in our community by building agricultural, educational, and economic development programs that meet the needs of the community."
- 3. Conduct an environmental scan or SWOT analysis.** Look at the Strengths and Weaknesses within your organization, plus factors outside your organization that offer Opportunities or pose Threats. Rather than try to solve all your problems at once, choose a priority, such as staffing, and consider it from these four points of view. After the analysis, decide what you want to change or what needs to be changed.

References

[Civicus Strategic Planning Toolkit](#)

[Problem Solving: SWOTS & Strategic Plans](#)

- 4. Identify key issues and choices.** Discuss and specify the organization's priorities in terms of time and importance.
- 5. Develop strategic goals.** Link your strategic goals to your vision. This is essentially a picture of what the organization will be like if it successfully implements the strategic plan. For example: "Increase the income of female-headed households in X province through better animal husbandry and marketing."
- 6. Develop strategic objectives that describe how you intend to accomplish your goals.** For example: "By [year], we will support [N number of] initiatives aimed at increasing the income of [Y number of] female-headed households in X province through improved livestock breeding and raising practices and better marketing."
- 7. Create an action plan.** Describe the specific steps—what needs to be done, how, when, and by whom—to accomplish each strategic objective.
- 8. Identify the resources needed to carry out your action plan.** Answer basic questions including: What funding sources do we have? Where else might we find funding? What human resources do we need? Who among our staff has the necessary knowledge, skills and experience? Add the answers to your action plan.
- 9. Create a budget and implementation plan.** Once you have developed the action plan and identified the necessary resources, estimate how much it will cost to carry it out over the next three years.
- 10. Monitor and evaluate progress; adjust the plan as required.** The strategic planning committee should continue to meet regularly to look at internal progress and external realities and then modify the plan as necessary to reflect new circumstances.

"Strategic planning is a process by which we can envision the future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to influence and achieve that future."

- Clark Crouch

Financial Management

2

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Financial management is more than just keeping accurate accounting records. It also involves planning, controlling, and monitoring financial resources to achieve organizational objectives. At a minimum, a financial management system should ensure that costs are properly categorized, tracked, and charged to the appropriate accounts, and that managers are able to report financial information accurately to the Board and to donors. A good financial management system makes it easier to be accountable to donors and project beneficiaries, thereby enhancing their respect and confidence in the organization. This, in turn, helps an NGO be more competitive and can increase its chances of maintaining long-term financial health.

This section introduces the key elements of a comprehensive financial management system and ways an NGO can strengthen its capacity in this critical area. It also covers USAID requirements for requesting funds, reporting expenditures, allocating resources, and auditing.

TOPICS

- 2.1 Overview of Financial Management**
- 2.2 Pipelines and Burn Rates**
- 2.3 Understanding Fluctuating Exchange Rates**
- 2.4 Cost Share**
- 2.5 Allocating Shared Costs**
- 2.6 Foreign Tax (VAT) Reporting**
- 2.7 Requesting USG Funds Using the SF-270**
- 2.8 SF-425: Completing Your USG Financial Status Reporting Form**
- 2.9 Annual Audit Requirements: Questions and Answer**

Overview of Financial Management

Q. What does good financial management involve?

A. Good financial management involves planning, organizing, controlling, and monitoring resources so that your organization can achieve its objectives and fulfill its commitments to beneficiaries, donors and other stakeholders.

Good financial management requires more than simply keeping accurate accounting records. Many CSOs may have only an accounting or bookkeeping system rather than a financial management system. Accounting is a subset of financial management. A financial management system encompasses both administrative systems and accounting systems.



Administrative systems provide the framework for handling procurement, travel, inventory, facilities, and personnel matters such as payroll and benefits.

Accounting systems encompass the methods, procedures and controls established to gather, record, classify, analyze, summarize, interpret, and present accurate and timely financial data.

Four Key Pillars of Financial Management

Although one model of financial management does not fit every organization, the following components are essential to good financial management:

- 1. Planning.** Looking ahead to prepare for the future, such as developing budgets to cover activities of a program or the entire organization for one year or a longer period.
- 2. Organizing.** Clarifying who does what, why, when, and how.

Definitions

Financial management— Planning, organizing, controlling, and monitoring financial resources to support the objectives and functioning of an organization.

Financial management manual— A collection of the policies and practices that describes how an organization conducts its day-to-day fiscal affair

References

U.S. Government Standards for Financial Management Systems
[U.S. Code of Federal Regulations 2 CFR 200.302](#)

US Government Standards for Internal Controls
[US Code for Federal Regulations 2 CFR 200.303](#)

[Practical Financial Management for NGOs—Getting the Basics Right.](#)
 Mango (Management Accounting for Non-governmental Organisations)

CSO Financial Management Manual

Sample Table of Contents

- Financial accounting routines
- The Chart of Accounts and cost center codes
- Delegated authority rules (that is, who can approve what)
- The budget planning and management process
- Ordering and purchasing procedures
- Bank and cash handling procedures
- Management accounting routines and deadlines
- Management and control of fixed assets
- Staff benefits and allowances
- Annual audit arrangements
- How to deal with fraud and other irregularities
- Code of Conduct for staff and Board members

The manual may also include reference materials such as:

- Organization chart
- Job descriptions
- Standard forms
- Glossary and/or list of acronyms and abbreviations

Source: [Practical Financial Management for NGOs—Getting the Basics Right](#).

Terry Lewis. Mango (Management Accounting for Non-governmental Organisations) 2015.

3. Controlling. Establishing systems and procedures, checks and balances, to make sure that the financial resources of the organization are properly handled and that risks are managed.

4. Monitoring. Comparing objectives with actual performance to identify strengths and weaknesses in planning and implementation and adjusting as necessary.

Who is responsible for financial management?

Staff members at every level have a role to play in helping manage risks, answer to donors and beneficiaries, and deliver results for the organization. The Board is responsible for the financial oversight of your organization and is ultimately accountable by law. However, the Board typically delegates the day-to-day responsibilities to the executive director or top management who delegate some functions to senior managers. The senior managers, in turn, delegate some functions downward, and so on, as illustrated in the table that follows.

Players in Financial Management	Sample Responsibilities
Board of Directors (Trustees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee financial controls and ensure accountability • Review and approve annual budget • Approve financial policies, including delegating authority • Review and approve financial reports and audited financial statements • Monitor and support resource mobilization • Assess financial risks facing the CSO
Chief Executive Officer – CEO (Executive Director)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to the Board and manage budgeting process • Appoint/hire financial staff and delegate tasks • Review donor and other agreements/contracts • Ensure financial records are accurate and up to date • Ensure correct, timely preparation and submission of financial reports • Ensure that program activities are in line with budget and deliverables • Monitor resource use and manage income generation • Monitor financial needs of the organization and business planning

Players in Financial Management	Sample Responsibilities
Senior Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and monitor the budgets for their departments or projects • Review organization financial reports and give input to CEO • Further delegate some financial responsibilities to their team • Project future financial needs
Program Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set project budgets to ensure that all costs are included (such as deliverables, M&E, implementation) • Control budgets to ensure money is spent as agreed and work with finance staff to ensure policies and procedures are followed, and that expenditures are coded and reported accurately • Work with appropriate staff to ensure that procurements are best value for money
Financial Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handle the CSO's cash, including banking and issuing receipts • Administer the payment process to ensure bills are paid on time • Complete the books of accounts and reconcile them every month • Prepare internal and external financial reports

USG Financial System Minimum Requirements

The U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) provides a set of minimum requirements that a CSO's financial management system must meet before it can receive a USG award and must maintain throughout the period of performance. Detailed information is available online at www.ecfr.gov.

Create a Financial Management Manual

Document how your administrative and accounting systems work. There is no single "model" financial management manual, and yours will depend on the needs and structure of your organization. However, the sample table of contents on page 16 is a good starting point. Print and assemble the policies and procedures in a manual that is shared with staff and readily accessible to everyone.

Pipelines and Burn Rates

Definitions

Award Amount—The total amount anticipated to be spent by the USG over the life of the project.

Obligated Amount—The amount the USG has committed to spend on the project to date, which may be a portion of the award amount.

Unobligated balance—The portion of the award amount that is not yet obligated.

Pipeline—The amount of funds obligated but not yet spent.

Burn Rate—The rate at which an organization spends its award funds (obligated amount) on a periodic basis, typically monthly.

Q. What are my “Pipeline” and “Burn Rate,” and how do I calculate them?

A. You may have heard the terms “pipeline” and “burn rate” discussed in relation to the financial management of your grant. But what do they mean, what are they used for and how do you calculate them?

To monitor how much money you are spending under your U.S. Government (USG) grant and to make sure there is enough money available to cover your upcoming expenses, two key figures to track are your **pipeline** and **burn rate**.

To calculate these, start by looking at your grant agreement to identify the amount the USG has committed so far for your grant, known as the “obligated amount.” Note that this amount is different from the “award amount,” which is the total expected to be obligated over the life of the grant.

Your **pipeline** is the amount of funds obligated but not yet spent. This is the amount of money that is available for you to draw down on for project activities. Calculate this by adding up all the funds you have spent to date and subtracting that amount from the total obligation.

$$\text{Calculation: Pipeline} = \text{Obligation} - \frac{\text{Total Amount Spent}}$$

The **burn rate** is the rate at which you are spending your obligation. The basic calculation for your burn rate is to figure how much you have spent and divide that by the number of months you have been spending.

$$\text{Calculation: Burn Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Amount Spent}}{\text{Number of Months}}$$

References

[USAID Automated Directives System \(ADS\) Glossary](#)

[USAID's Accrual Documentation](#)

Examples:

- My CSO has been awarded a Cooperative Agreement for a total of US\$1,000. We received an initial obligation of US\$10. When the workplan was approved, we received an additional obligation of US\$300, bringing our total obligation to US\$310.
- My CSO has been managing the award for four months and has spent a total of \$145.
- Subtracting our total spent (US\$145) from our total obligated (US\$310) gives us a pipeline of US\$165.
- Dividing the amount spent (US\$145) by the number of months we have been spending (4) gives us a burn rate of US\$36.25 per month.

Next Steps

- Using your pipeline and burn rate, you can calculate how many months worth of money you have left before you will need an additional obligation.

$$\text{Calculation: } \frac{\text{Pipeline}}{\text{Burn Rate}} = \text{Approximate \# Months Money Left Before the Obligated Amount Will be Spent}$$

In our above example, dividing My CSO's pipeline of US\$165 by the burn rate of US\$36.25 tells us that My CSO will spend its remaining obligation in about four and a half months, assuming spending stays at about the same level.

By tracking your pipeline and burn rate, you can monitor your spending to make sure you are neither spending too quickly nor too slowly. Most important is that by watching these figures, you will know when you need to request an additional obligation from the USG.

Items to Consider

Remember: The process for requesting and receiving additional funds from USAID can take a considerable amount of time, so plan ahead so that your project can continue without interruption.

Obligation vs. Award

It is important to understand that your obligation amount is not necessarily the full amount of your award. The total award amount is the amount anticipated to be spent over the life of your project. The obligated amount is the amount USAID has definitely committed to spending on the project.

Therefore, just because your organization has received an award, USAID is only liable to pay you up to the amount of the obligation. Any spending your organization does above the obligated amount is at your own risk!

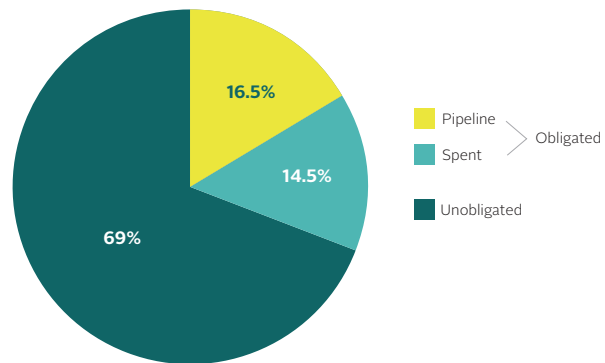
My NGO's USG Award

Award Amount	\$1,000
Original Obligation	\$10
Additional Obligation	\$300
Total Obligation to Date	\$310

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total
Spending	\$25	\$55	\$35	\$30	\$145

	Calculations	Results
Pipeline	\$310-\$145	\$165
Burn Rate	\$145/4	\$36.25
Months Remaining	\$165/\$36.25	4.5 months

Total Award Amount Breakdown



Understanding Fluctuating Exchange Rates

Q. What are fluctuating exchange rates, and how do they impact project implementation?

A. While most transactions with vendors in-country need to be completed in local currency, the budget submitted for your U.S. Government (USG) award, the amount obligated and the financial reports you provide to your funding agency need to be in U.S. dollars (USD). Consequently, as you convert funds from one currency to another, you need to be aware of how changes in the exchange rate between currencies can affect the actual amount of funding available to implement your program.

This issue of *Implementation Tips* discusses the effects of fluctuating exchange rates and provides strategies for addressing the issue with minimum disruption to program services.

Fixed versus Fluctuating Exchange Rates

An exchange rate is the price for which one currency may be exchanged for another at a given moment in time. There are two ways the price of a currency can be established: 1) the government (central bank) determines the rate and maintains it as the official exchange rate; or 2) the private foreign-exchange (forex) market determines the rate based on supply and demand for a particular currency relative to other currencies. As a result, the rate fluctuates or floats. The majority of the world's currencies are fluctuating.

One example of a country with a fluctuating exchange rate is South Africa, where the value of the Rand might be 8 Rand to 1 USD one day and 11 Rand to 1 USD the next day.

Program Impact

When you created the budget for your program, you likely used the exchange rate in effect when you submitted your proposal. But that rate has likely changed since you won the award and began receiving funding in USD. As a result, when you convert your allocation from

Definitions

Burn Rate—The rate at which an organization spends its award funds (obligated amount) on a periodic basis, typically monthly.

Exchange Rate—The amount of money needed in one currency to purchase another. This process is frequently called “currency conversion.”

Obligated Amount—The amount the USG has committed to spending on the project to date, which may be a portion of the award amount.

Pipeline—The amount of funds obligated but not yet spent.

Weighted Average Exchange Rate—The average of the exchange rates over a given period of time.

USD into local currency, you may find that the actual amount will vary depending on how different the current exchange rate is from the rate projected in your original budget. In some cases, this may work to your advantage, and you will end up with more funding than anticipated; in others cases, you will end up with less.

Managing the Effects of Fluctuating Exchange Rates

Sound financial management practices are the best way to anticipate the impact of fluctuating exchange rates and mitigate any negative effects on your program. Ideally, an organization will have a multi-currency accounting system that can automatically record transactions in local currency and generate reports in local currency and equivalent USD.

For organizations that do not have a multi-currency system, there are two methods suggested to account for the exchange rate:

- “first in, first out;” and
- weighted average exchange rate.

1. “First In, First Out” Method

The “first in, first out” (FIFO) method uses the oldest exchange rate to account for expenses until funds received at that exchange rate have been fully expensed. For example, let’s say your organization receives 1,000 USD on January 1, and the exchange rate at that time is 1 USD = 7 Rand. Then on January 15, you receive 2,000 USD at an exchange rate of 1 USD = 8 Rand, and on January 23, you receive 500 USD at an exchange rate of 1 USD = 5 Rand. During this period of time, you spend 17,300 Rand. Using the “first in, first out” method, this amount will be converted to USD as follows:

Date	Amount Received in USD	Exchange Rate	Amount Received in Rand	Expenses in USD
January 1	1,000	7	7,000	$7,000/7=1,000.00$
January 15	2,000	8	10,300	$10,300/8=1,287.50$
January 23	500	5	-	-
TOTAL	3,500		17,300	2,287.50

In this example, if you spent 17,300 Rand, it would equal 2,287.50 USD, and your balance of funds in USD would be \$1,212.50 (\$3500 – \$2,287.50)

2. Weighted Average Exchange Rate Method

In locations where the exchange rate fluctuates significantly during a month, using the weighted average is the preferred method to calculate a realistic exchange rate.

The weighted average exchange rate is the average of the exchange rates over a given period of time. It is calculated by multiplying each rate by the amount exchanged at that rate, adding the three subtotals together and dividing by the total USD amount exchanged. Using the same example, the table below shows the exchange rate at which costs can be converted back to USD for reporting on expenses.

Date	Amount Received in USD	Exchange Rate	Amount Received in Rand	Expenses in USD
January 1	1,000	7	7,000	7,000
January 15	2,000	8	16,000	8,000
January 23	500	5	2,500	2,300
TOTAL	3,500		25,500	17,300

In this example, the weighted average exchange rate would be 7.29 (25,500/3,500). If you spent 17,300 Rand, using the weighted average exchange rate method, it would be equal to 2,373.11 USD (17,300/7.29), and the balance of funds on hand would be \$1,126.89 (\$3500 – \$2,373.11).

With the weighted exchange rate, the program can accurately capture the costs incurred and what funds are remaining and minimize the exchange rate variance, which should be accounted for in your accounting system.

As you can see, the different methods result in slightly different answers. However, the goal is to limit the foreign exchange risk using a relatively simple conversion method.

As mentioned above, you may have used a different exchange rate in effect when you submitted your proposal. For this example, had the exchange rate been 10 Rand to 1 USD at the time, either illustrated method would provide a more accurate reflection of costs in USD than if you were to use your initially budgeted exchange rate.

Pipelines

Calculating how much you are spending in both local currency and USD is crucial to manage your award effectively, but it is only the first step. Once you account for the fluctuating exchange rate, it is important to keep track of your spending by regularly updating your pipeline and burn rate so that you know how much funding remains for planned activities, and you can adjust these activities if necessary. (For information on how to calculate your pipeline and burn rate, see Implementation Tip on “Pipelines and Burn Rates.”)

It is important for your financial team to be in touch with your program team regarding the project's pipeline and the amount of

funding remaining for activities. Workplanning, in particular, should be done with careful consideration of updated pipelines.

Reporting

Quarterly and annual financial reports to the USG must be in USD. Local costs will be captured in the report according to the exchange rate method your organization selects.

Maintaining communication with your funder is essential. If the exchange rate has a measureable impact on your programming and your targets, it is critical to share this information and troubleshoot how you will address a shortfall. On the other hand, should the exchange result in some additional money, the savings may be reprogrammed on activities/costs in an approved workplan or project description. Reprogramming savings on new activities should only be done after discussion and approval from the USG.

Documentation

Establish a written policy on how you will address foreign exchange rates. Not only will this help ensure that the policy is applied consistently by all staff, but it will also serve as backup documentation if questions arise during an audit.

Managing Subgrantees

To reduce the burden of managing foreign exchange rates, it is recommended that all subgrants be signed in local currency. This allows your subpartner to better manage its budget, since both the budget and actual expenditures are in the same currency.

Cost Share

Q. What is cost share? What counts toward cost share, and how do I report it?

A. Cost share is the non-U.S. Government (USG) portion of the costs of your project. Cost share is not required on all USG awards. If cost share is mentioned in the solicitation, your organization must choose which costs, if any, will be proposed as cost share in your proposal. Cost share may be cash and/or in-kind contributions. Once you commit to providing cost share and it is included in your agreement's approved budget, you are required to provide documentation showing that this obligation has been met successfully.

If you committed to providing cost share but are unable to meet your obligation as planned, you are still responsible for it.

Example: Your agreement has an approved budget of US\$1.1 million, which is comprised of US\$1 million in USG funds and US\$100,000 in cost share. If you document and report cost-share contributions of only US\$75,000, you are responsible for the remaining US\$25,000. If you do not provide acceptable documentation and report the remaining balance before the end of the project's period of performance, the Agreement Officer may:

1. Reduce your final obligation of USG funds by US\$25,000;
2. Require the organization to refund USAID \$25,000 when the award expires or is terminated; or
3. Reduce the cost share required under the award.

What Counts Toward Cost Share?

Cash and in-kind contributions from a non-USG source may be eligible to count toward your cost-share commitment. To be counted, a cost-share contribution must meet all of the following criteria:

- Must be verifiable in your organization's records;
- Is not included as a contribution for any other USG-assisted program;
- Is necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of project objectives;

Definitions

Cost Share—The portion of project costs not covered by the USG. This may be cash or in-kind contributions.

In-Kind Contribution—Non-cash resources contributed to a project. This may include volunteer services, equipment, or property.

Reference

[U.S. Code of Federal Regulation—
2 CFR 200.306 Cost Sharing or Matching](#)

Cost Share vs Matching Funds

The term “matching funds” is used when program recipients are required to provide a certain amount of non-USG funds to a project in order to be eligible to receive USG funds.

“Cost share” refers to all other cases where non-USG contributions are committed to a program.

- Is allowable under subpart E - Cost Principles (including reasonableness of the cost or value of the donated goods or services); and
- Is not paid for by the USG under another agreement (unless the grant or agreement is authorized to be used as cost share); and
- Is included in your approved budget.

Reporting Cost Share

In order to demonstrate that you are meeting your cost-share obligation, you must record the amount (or equivalent amount in the case of in-kind contributions) in your quarterly Federal Financial Report using the Standard Form-425 (SF-425). These amounts must be verifiable in your organization's records and are subject to being audited.

Tips for Documenting and Reporting In-Kind Contributions

- Volunteer services may count toward your cost-share obligation, but they must be documented and, to the extent feasible, supported by the same methods you use with your employees (such as timesheets). Rates recorded for volunteers (to calculate a financial equivalent for their time) should be consistent with those paid for similar work by your organization or rates paid for similar work in the local labor market.
- Donated supplies may include expendable equipment, office supplies, laboratory supplies, or workshop and training materials.
- The value claimed for expendable personal property, donated or loaned equipment, donated land or buildings, or donated space must be reasonable and may not exceed its market value at the time of the donation.
- The value of donated land and buildings must be established by an independent appraiser (e.g., certified real property appraiser) and certified by a responsible official in your organization.
- The value of office space must be determined by adequate market research.
- You must document the basis you used for determining the value for any personal services, material, equipment, buildings, or land that you report as an in-kind contribution. There is no mandatory way to do this, but it must be fair and clearly documented.

With the authorization of the Agreement Officer, you may capture cost-share contributions from your subrecipients on the project (if any) in meeting your obligation. Please note that the same documentation and reporting considerations apply to subrecipients.

Tip: Certain procurement restrictions that apply to the use of USG funds may not apply to the use of non-USG cost-sharing resources. For example, the source, nationality, and restricted goods requirements do not apply to cost share expenditure.

In Your Agreement

USAID Partners: If applicable, your cost-share commitment typically is listed in the following sections:

- The end of your award letter in section A. General Item 5—"Cost Sharing Amount (Non-Federal)"
- Attachment A to your award in the Schedule section
- Part 4—"Cooperative Agreement Budget"
- Part 9—"Cost Sharing"

Sharing Costs Across Projects vs. Shared or Indirect Project Costs

Q. We have multiple projects with different funders; how do we account for shared office expenses?

A. An organization with more than one project incurs three categories of expenses:

- **Direct project costs.** Costs that can be clearly attributed to a specific project such as a dedicated staff person, or specific equipment and supplies used only by a single project.
- **Shared project costs.** Costs that are required to carry out a project, but are difficult to attribute to a specific project, such as electricity or administrative support staff or office space used by project staff.
- **Non-project costs.** Legitimate organizational expenses, but costs not related to any specific project or costs that are not “allowable.”

Shared Resources vs. Shared Costs

There is an important difference between a resource that may be shared by more than one project and something that is a shared or indirect cost.

A resource that may be shared by more than one project typically falls into the direct cost category. For example, let's think of a professional staff member as a resource that may devote time to more than one project. Since the individual's time is tracked on a timesheet, you will know exactly how many hours were spent working on Project A versus Project B. Therefore, you can allocate the exact number of hours and salary to each project as direct costs.

Another example: If your organization has a vehicle, it may be used for trips by more than one project. However, every trip taken should be noted in the vehicle usage log book. If this practice is followed, the expenses for each trip can be allocated as direct costs to each project based on the log book.

Definitions

Direct Project Expenses—

Goods and services specifically purchased for the exclusive benefit of one project that are charged to that project.

Shared Project Costs—

Goods and services used by multiple projects (and for which a vendor cannot invoice each project separately) that are charged to each benefiting project based on a reasonable and consistent manner.

Modified Total Direct Cost—

TDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to \$25,000 of each subaward. MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditure, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, and participant support costs.

Negotiated Indirect Rate Cost

Agreement—NICRA is a rate negotiated individually between an organization and the USG to cover indirect costs.

References

USAID [Best Practices Guide for Indirect Costing](#)

A shared or indirect cost, on the other hand, is one that has been incurred for common or joint purpose and that benefits more than one program. Consequently, it is not easy to allocate these costs to the different programs. Examples of common shared office costs are utilities, Internet service charges, and expendable office supplies like paper and paper clips. Unlike the examples above, it is not obvious how much should be charged directly to any one project.

Some organizations that are prime recipients and receive USAID funding directly have gone through a process with USAID to establish a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and use that to address these kinds of costs. But most organizations do not have a NICRA (or only have a NICRA for headquarter expenses) and, therefore, need a method for figuring out how to allocate these kinds of costs.

Set—and Keep up to Date—a Shared or Indirect Cost Policy

Keep these guidelines in mind when setting a policy that answers the following questions:

- What specific costs and resources are considered “shared?”
- How will your organization divide shared costs among different projects?
- When will the formula be reviewed and revised?

Sample Formula for Calculating Shared Expenses

Costs that cannot be attributed to one project or another as a direct cost will need to be addressed by establishing a formula. One approach is to use a percentage based on the number of employees on one project vs. the total number of employees or the allocation of dedicated office space.

To use the allocation of dedicated office space method, first figure out which parts of your office are dedicated to a specific project, such as space for dedicated project staff, and what parts are shared, such as meeting rooms or the reception area. Of the areas that are dedicated to specific projects, calculate the square meters allocated to each project. You can even divide the office space of an individual who splits time based on the percentage she or he allocates to each project. Add up the area dedicated to each project and calculate the percentage dedicated to each project.

For example, let’s say a 1,000 square meter office houses two projects; 800 sq. meters of office space is dedicated to the projects, while the rest is shared. Of the dedicated space, 600 sq. meters is for one project, while 200 is for the other project. This means 75 percent of the overall space is charged to the first project (750 square meters), and 25 percent to the second (250 square meters). These percentages may also be used as the basis for allocating costs for other shared expenses.

Items to Consider

Q: If we have a NICRA, do we still need to allocate shared costs?

It is tempting to think that having an established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) will solve the challenge of allocating shared project costs. A NICRA can simplify how you are reimbursed for your overhead costs in certain USG-funded projects. However, if you have projects funded by other donors, you may still have costs that are shared among different donors; thus, regardless of whether or not you have a NICRA, it is a good management practice to establish a policy for allocating shared project expenses.

There is no single correct method for allocating shared costs, but it should be clear how your organization handles these costs. This helps to ensure that your project funds are used wisely and that you are distributing costs fairly. And do not forget, as projects and funding streams change, you should adjust your policy accordingly.

Multiple Office

If your organization has offices in several different locations, you may want to set some general guidelines and have each office set its own specific policy based on the projects and expenses at that location. The policies should be in writing because during your annual audit, the auditors will review and compare your policy with your practice. Some projects that share offices set a formal Memorandum of Understanding that includes detailed agreements on additional topics, such as shared assets, payroll, and human resources issues. This is especially common when the separate “project teams” come from different operational units or are from completely different organizations.

What is the *de minimis* rate and when can I use it?

If a non-profit organization has never negotiated an indirect cost rate agreement, the organization may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC), and this can be used indefinitely. The organization must ensure that it is consistent in charging costs as direct and indirect.

Am I ever able to charge indirect costs as a fixed amount?

If an organization has never received a NICRA, or never chosen the 10% *de minimis* rate and the indirect costs are not included as direct costs in the budget, then indirect costs must be charged as a fixed amount and shown as a separate line item in the budget. In this case the award will specify the categories that are covered by the fixed amount and the organization cannot charge these costs separately as direct costs. The organization must account for the expenses in its accounting system (general ledger) because if there is a 20% variance, USAID can seek reimbursement of the variance. If the variance is less than 20%, there is no adjustment.

Foreign Tax (VAT) Reporting

Definitions

Value Added Tax (VAT)—Tax levied on the purchase of goods and services, similar to sales tax in the U.S.

Q. Is our organization exempt from paying VAT and customs duties on goods and services purchased with USG funds? And, what are the Foreign Tax Reporting requirements?

A. Organizations implementing U.S. Government (USG)-funded development projects are exempt from certain taxes and duties imposed by the government of the country where they are working. Exemptions cover both prime recipients as well as subrecipients.

Specific exemptions and the process for requesting reimbursements of taxes paid are outlined separately for each country in bilateral agreements between the USG and host governments. Below are several common exemptions, as well as taxes you may be required to pay. You will need to find out what exemptions and requirements are relevant in each of the countries in which your organization is working.

The following provides examples of the kind of information to report, discusses the requirements of the USAID Foreign Tax Report (due from USAID recipients every year on April 16) and offers suggestions for tracking your tax payments and reimbursements to make reporting easy.

Taxes Exempt in Most Countries

- Value Added Tax (VAT) levied on commodities purchased in-country.
- Customs duties levied on commodities imported into the country for use in USG-funded projects.

Taxes Not Exempt

- VAT or sales tax levied on items purchased outside of the host country where you are implementing your USG-funded program. For example, if an organization purchases commodities in South Africa for use on its USG-funded project being implemented in Mozambique, it would not be exempt from paying VAT in South Africa.
- Organizations with headquarters (HQ) outside of the host country, including those in the U.S. or Europe, are not exempt from VAT or sales taxes in their home country, whether the items purchased are used in the HQ office or in the field.

References

[Procurement Executive Bulletin \(PEB\) 18-01](#)

[USAID Guidance on Foreign Tax Reporting](#)
[Mandatory Reference for ADS 302](#)

In Your Agreement

USAID partners will find the “Reporting Foreign Tax” clause in the standard provisions in their agreement in the section called Reporting Host Government Taxes.

Other Taxes Levied by Host Governments

Though the USG seeks exemptions on all taxes levied against foreign assistance projects by host governments, there are several categories of taxes that you may be required to pay, for example:

- Payroll taxes, and
- VAT on projects with no USG funding.

Be sure to check with the in-country mission and other donors for details about what taxes your organization may be required to pay.

Country Specifics

Each country negotiates its own bilateral agreement with the U.S., which includes provisions regarding the taxation of U.S. foreign assistance.

These provisions typically address what taxes are exempt and how organizations implementing USG-funded programs can receive reimbursements for any taxes paid. Exemptions and reimbursement procedures can vary widely from country to country, but it is your responsibility to check with the Mission regarding the rules in the country where you are working.

Work with the in-country USG team to answer the following questions:

- What taxes am I exempt from paying?
- What taxes, if any, am I required to pay?
- What is the process for obtaining an exemption or reimbursement?

The process for obtaining an exemption or reimbursement varies by country. Some countries provide VAT exemption letters to show vendors at the time of the purchase. Others require that you pay the VAT and later request reimbursement, either through the Revenue Authority or through the local USAID Mission or U.S. Embassy.

Where the recipient has a means to obtain an exemption or a refund of the taxes and does not take reasonable steps to obtain the exemption or refund, the paid taxes will not be an allowable cost.

Contact your in-country team or your Contracting Officer's Representative/Agreement Officer's Representative (COR/AOR) for further guidance.

Foreign Tax Reporting

A Foreign Tax Report must be submitted by all organizations receiving USAID funding by April 16 each year. All organizations receiving USAID funds must comply with the foreign tax reporting requirements established by the U.S. Embassy in that country.

The purpose of The Foreign Tax Report is to ensure that U.S. foreign assistance is not being taxed and, therefore, that the funds are used

The Foreign Tax Report must be submitted by all organizations receiving USAID funding by April 16 each year.

Where the recipient has a means to obtain an exemption or a refund of the taxes and does not take reasonable steps to obtain the exemption or refund, the paid taxes will not be an allowable cost.

The purposes of the Foreign Tax Report are to ensure that U.S. foreign assistance funds are being used for their intended purposes and not being taxed and to track whether or not foreign governments are complying with the terms of their bilateral agreements.

Because exemptions and reimbursement procedures vary from country to country, check with the in-country team or U.S. Embassy in the country in which you are working.

for their intended purposes. The USG uses these reports to track whether or not foreign governments are complying with the terms of their bilateral agreements.

Who Must Report

Any organization that purchased US\$500 or more worth of commodities with USG funds or paid any customs duties in the country where it is operating during the prior fiscal year is required to submit an annual report on foreign taxes. This report is required even if you did not pay any taxes on those items during the reporting period.

All subrecipients under your award with in-country purchases of US\$500 or more must also track taxes paid and reimbursements received. You must incorporate subrecipient data directly into your report.

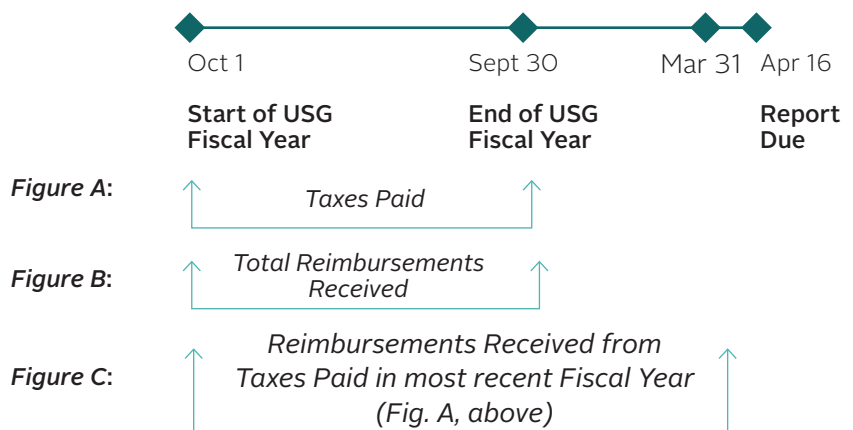
What Taxes Do I Report?

- The tax was paid to the government in the country where you are implementing.
- The transaction was US\$500 or more (not including the VAT).
- The transaction related to a commodity defined as supplies, materials, goods, or equipment. Purchases of services are not required to be reported.
- The purchase related to your USG-funded project. (Report the purchase regardless of whether the specific purchase was made with USG funds or was part of cost share, as long as it was a legitimate part of the project).

When is the Report Due, and What Timeframe should it Cover?

The Foreign Tax Report is due annually each year on April 16. You are required to report the following three figures:

- **Figure A.** Taxes paid to the host government during the previous fiscal year. This includes VAT and customs duties.
- **Figure B.** All reimbursements received during the previous fiscal year, regardless of when the original tax was paid.
- **Figure C.** Reimbursements received from the taxes paid through March 31 of the fiscal year being reported on.



Where Do I Submit My Report, and What Is the Format?

Submit the report to the office listed in your Cooperative Agreement under the Reporting of Foreign Taxes standard clause or as directed by your funding agency (usually the U.S. Embassy or your funding agency's in-country financial management office). Also send a copy of your report to your AOR/COR.

There is no standard form for the report. However, the report must contain the following:

- Your organization's name;
- Contact name with phone, fax, and e-mail;
- Your agreement number(s);
- Amount of foreign taxes assessed by a foreign government on purchases valued at US\$500 or more financed with USG funds under the agreement(s) during the prior fiscal year. If you work in multiple countries, list each country separately. However, if you work on multiple projects within one country, you can report on the total for each country. Only foreign taxes assessed by the foreign government in the country in which you are working are to be reported. Foreign taxes assessed by a third-party foreign government are not to be reported; and
- Report all reimbursements you have received during the prior fiscal year regardless of when the foreign tax was assessed. Also, provide a separate figure giving the total of any reimbursements of taxes assessed during the fiscal year you are reporting on that you have received through March 31.

Example

Organization: My CSO

Contact: Jane Smith

Phone: +255-555-5555.

Fax: +255-555-5556.

E-mail: jane@myngo.org

Agreement Number: XYZ-123456

Country	Taxes Paid during FY 20	Reimbursements Received during FY 20	Reimbursements Received in FY 21 (through Mar 31)
Mozambique	US\$0	US\$0	US\$0
Tanzania	US\$1,000	US\$1,000	US\$1,000

In this example, the organization is operating in two countries: Mozambique and Tanzania. The amounts in this table are summaries by country and are not broken down by project or subrecipient. During FY16, the Mozambican Government did not assess any taxes on the

To simplify your annual reporting, develop a process for tracking VAT and customs duties paid, as well as for requesting and receiving reimbursements from the host government.

prime recipient (or subrecipients, if any). However, it did reimburse the organization US\$500 for taxes assessed prior to FY16. During FY16, the Tanzanian Government assessed the organization US\$1,000 in taxes but reimbursed the organization in full by March 31, 2017. A separate Foreign Tax Report must be submitted for each country (Tanzania and Mozambique) as directed by the funding agency.

Tracking VAT and Duty Payments and Reimbursements

Your organization should develop a process for tracking VAT and customs duties paid, as well as for requesting and receiving reimbursements from the host government. Establishing such a process greatly simplifies your annual reporting and helps ensure your funds go toward providing services to beneficiaries.

Consider the following strategies for tracking your VAT payments and reimbursements:

- **Develop a list of exemptions and required taxes**, so everyone in your organization involved with procurements is aware of the policy. Share this with subrecipients as well.
- **Create a special code in your accounting system for tracking all payments of exempt taxes**. Use this code only for exempt taxes—not for legitimate taxes paid.
- **Create a special code in your system for tracking incoming tax reimbursement payments from the host government**. Make sure you can tie the reimbursements received back to the original accounting entry that recorded the taxes being paid. This will make it easy to identify which reimbursements have and have not been received.
- **Establish a log that tracks the tax payment and reimbursement process**. This should document each tax payment, reimbursement request, and payment received. You may also want to make sure you have a policy for keeping copies of receipts and reimbursement requests sent to the host government or USG office, as applicable (see the example below). Customize your process, so it fits in with the host government and USG in-country requirements regarding submitting requests and expected turn-around time for tax reimbursements.
- Since your subrecipients may also have purchases of commodities or other expenditures covered by these provisions, **work with subrecipients to submit their reports to you prior to the April 16 deadline**, so you will have sufficient time to incorporate their data into your report. Note that their reports must also include reimbursements through March 31, so their deadline would need to be sometime between April 1 and April 15.

Example VAT Tracking Log

Below is an example of a log for tracking your VAT payments, reimbursement requests, and payments received. You can create a log like this for each country in which you operate, and the log can include all requests related to that country, even from different projects. You may also want to use this log to track VAT payments for transactions under US\$500 for auditing purposes, though you will not include these in your USAID-required Foreign Tax Report.

** You may want to track your payments and reimbursements in local currency*

Acct Sys Ref #	Date	Vendor	Description	Transaction Value (Pre-VAT)*	VAT*	Project	Date Reimb. Requested	Date Reimb. Received
210	23-Oct-20	ABC Supplies	Office furniture	\$1,200	\$120	A	31-Oct-20	15-Jan-21
223	15-Jan-21	DEF Imports	HBC Kits	\$1,000	\$100	B	31-Jan-21	
235	02-Feb-21	GHI Computers	Computers	\$2,000	\$200	C		
236	02-Feb-21	JKL Inc.	Printer	\$500	\$50	D		

Requesting USG Funds Using the SF-270: Request for Advance or Reimbursement

Definitions

FMO—Your funding agency's Financial Management Officer.

Program Income—Program income is money earned by a program for the benefit of the program itself. It is generated from charging fees for services or from sales of commodities.

Program Income is different from income-generating activities, through which a program's grantees or beneficiaries keep income earned.

References

Download PDFs version of these USG standard forms

- **SF-270** (Request for Advance or Reimbursement)
- **SF-1034** (Public Voucher for Purchases and Services Other Than Personal) or the
- **SF-425** (Federal Financial Report)

In order to take advantage of some of the form's features, including auto-calculations, be sure you have the latest version of Adobe Reader. Download it for free at <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

Q. When and how do I request funds, and how much can I request at a time?

A. The U.S. Government (USG) disburses funds to grantees in two ways: 1) by advancing funds or 2) by reimbursing partners for expenses after they have been incurred. Your Cooperative Agreement and/or your funding agency's Financial Management Office (FMO) will direct you to the disbursement channel you are authorized to use.

To request funds, you must fill out the SF-270 (Request for Advance or Reimbursement) or the SF-1034 (Public Voucher for Purchases and Services Other Than Personal) or the SF-425 (Federal Financial Report) and submit it to your funding agency's financial management officer (FMO). If you have multiple USG awards, you must fill out a separate form for each award. A detailed explanation of how to fill out and submit the SF-270 follows.

Initially, you will be limited to requesting funding advances one month at a time. Each request must be for the amount you estimate you will spend in the upcoming 30-day period. You are not allowed to request or hold on to any extra "contingency funds." However, if a particular planned procurement is delayed, you are permitted to carry over those funds until the following month. If an activity is cancelled you can spend the funds on another activity in your approved workplan.

Although individual agency policies may vary, in general, you will be required to complete the SF-270, SF-1034, or the SF-425 and submit it at least 3 weeks before the month in which you require the funds. The FMO will review and determine the appropriateness of the funds requested. If your request is unusual, such as a request for an atypically large amount of funds for an upcoming procurement, it may be helpful to provide an explanation or documentation with your request. Turn-around times vary among agencies, but generally you can expect funds within one week.

Subject to approval of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Controller of the federal agency/USAID, you may submit:

1. one request every 30 days covering a 30-day period
2. three requests covering 30-day sub-periods of a 90-day period to be paid automatically every 30 days
3. one request for 90 days that will be paid in 30 day-increments

Estimating Advances

When estimating your request, do not merely divide your annual budget by 12 months; instead, calculate specifically what you think you will spend in the upcoming month. Some elements of your budget may be divided evenly among months (for example, salaries), but some, such as purchases of non-expendable equipment, may happen all in one month (for example, at the beginning of a project).

Partners who are implementing with subrecipients should work together to ensure that funding requests and spending are managed smoothly, so no organization runs out of money. To do this, ask subrecipients to provide monthly or (when approved) quarterly funding estimates. You also may wish to institute a process with subrecipients for advances and reimbursements similar to the one you follow for the USG.

Filling Out the SF-270

Although the SF-270 is used to request advances or reimbursements from the USG, your agency's process may differ slightly from that outlined below. Always defer to the instructions provided by your FMO.

The SF-270 is a two-page form: the first page contains space for you to input information and data; the second is for signature and includes instructions on how to complete the form.

On the first page, there are three primary sections—the top portion for information about your grant and your request; the middle section in which you calculate your advance or reimbursement; and the third section for requesting advances only.

Items to Consider

Timing your SF-270 and SF-425 Submissions

Since the FMO uses the information from your SF-425 Federal Financial Report to process your SF-270 Request for Advance, it is important to make sure you have completed and submitted your SF-425 in a timely fashion. Though you are not required to submit the SF-425 until 30 days after the end of the quarter, waiting that long could delay the processing of your request for funds. Therefore, submit the SF-425 as soon as possible if you have a pending request for funds.

Bank Account Requirements

Your organization and your subrecipients are not required to maintain advances in a separate bank account, provided that the organization's accounting and financial management systems are able to account for the receipt and expenditure of funds and interest earned on the advances. The advances must be deposited into an account with a reputable bank, and the organization must only use an interest-bearing account unless:

- your organization (or one of your subrecipients) receives less than US\$120,000 in USG funds per year; or
- the best, reasonably available interest-bearing bank account would not expect to earn more than \$250 in interest in a 12-month period on the advance; or
- an interest-bearing account requires a minimum balance that is so high as to make it impractical to use.

Non-US organizations may keep up to US\$250 of any interest earned to cover administrative costs. Interest earned in excess of US\$250 per year must be remitted to your funding agency. US organizations may keep up to \$500 of interest earned to cover administrative costs.

The U.S. Government disburses funds to grantees in two ways: 1) by advancing funds or 2) by reimbursing partners for expenses after the fact.

Items to Consider

Keep an Eye on your Obligation Ceiling!

The turn-around time for processing a request for funds is fairly short as long as you have sufficient funds obligated under your award. If you request funds above your obligation ceiling, your agreement will have to be modified to obligate additional funds to your award amount before the FMO can process your SF-270.

It is in your best interest to monitor your obligation amount closely. As soon as you have expended 75% of your obligation, contact your AOR to request that additional funds be obligated.

REQUEST FOR ADVANCE OR REIMBURSEMENT <i>(See instructions on back)</i>		OMB APPROVAL NO. 0348-0004		PAGE OF PAGES	
		1. TYPE OF PAYMENT REQUESTED a. "X" one or both boxes <input type="checkbox"/> ADVANCE <input type="checkbox"/> REIMBURSEMENT b. "X" the applicable box <input type="checkbox"/> FINAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARTIAL		2. BASIS OF REQUEST <input type="checkbox"/> CASH <input type="checkbox"/> ACCRUAL	
3. FEDERAL SPONSORING AGENCY AND ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENT TO WHICH THIS REPORT IS SUBMITTED		4. FEDERAL GRANT OR OTHER IDENTIFYING NUMBER ASSIGNED BY FEDERAL AGENCY		5. PARTIAL PAYMENT REQUEST NUMBER FOR THIS REQUEST	
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		7. RECIPIENT'S ACCOUNT NUMBER OR IDENTIFYING NUMBER		8. PERIOD COVERED BY THIS REQUEST FROM (month, day, year) TO (month, day, year)	
9. RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION Name: Number and Street: City, State and ZIP Code:		10. PAYEE (Where check is to be sent if different than item 9) Name: Number and Street: City, State and ZIP Code:			

Top

Calculations

Advanced Only

11. COMPUTATION OF AMOUNT OF REIMBURSEMENTS/ADVANCES REQUESTED				
PROGRAMS/FUNCTIONS/ACTIVITIES ▶	(a)	(b)	(c)	TOTAL
a. Total program outlays to date <i>(As of date)</i>	\$	\$	\$	\$
b. Less: Cumulative program income				
c. Net program outlays <i>(Line a minus line b)</i>				
d. Estimated net cash outlays for advance period				
e. Total <i>(Sum of lines c & d)</i>				
f. Non-Federal share of amount on line e				
g. Federal share of amount on line e				
h. Federal payments previously requested				
i. Federal share now requested <i>(Line g minus line h)</i>				
j. Advances required by month, when requested by Federal grantor agency for use in making prescheduled advances	1st month			
	2nd month			
	3rd month			

12. ALTERNATE COMPUTATION FOR ADVANCES ONLY	
a. Estimated Federal cash outlays that will be made during period covered by the advance	\$
b. Less: Estimated balance of Federal cash on hand as of beginning of advance period	
c. Amount requested <i>(Line a minus line b)</i>	\$

AUTHORIZED FOR LOCAL REPRODUCTION (Continued on Reverse) STANDARD FORM 270 (Rev. 7-97)

Top portion

Below are tips for completing the key sections.

OMB APPROVAL NO. 0348-0004		PAGE OF PAGES
1. TYPE OF PAYMENT REQUESTED	a. "X" one or both boxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADVANCE <input type="checkbox"/> REIMBURSEMENT	2. BASIS OF REQUEST <input type="checkbox"/> CASH <input type="checkbox"/> ACCRUAL
	b. "X" the applicable box <input type="checkbox"/> FINAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARTIAL	
4. FEDERAL GRANT OR OTHER IDENTIFYING NUMBER ASSIGNED BY FEDERAL AGENCY		5. PARTIAL PAYMENT REQUEST NUMBER FOR THIS REQUEST
8. PERIOD COVERED BY THIS REQUEST		
FROM (month, day, year)		TO (month, day, year)

- **Box 1(a)** – The type of payment requested will be an advance, a reimbursement or a combination of the two.
- **Box 1(b)** – For all requests other than the final request at the end of your grant, select partial payment.
- **Box 2** – The basis of the request depends on the type of accounting system you are using. The U.S. Government disburses funds to grantees in two ways: 1) by advancing funds, or 2) by reimbursing partners for expenses after the fact.
- **Box 8** – The “period covered by this request” should be one calendar month (e.g., FROM January 1, 2017 to January 31, 2017), unless otherwise directed by the FMO.

After completing the top portion, you must determine whether to fill out the full calculation area in the middle of the form or the simplified calculation area for Advances Only at the bottom of the form.

Fill out the full calculation area if any portion of the funds requested includes a reimbursement. You also must fill out the full calculation area if you have any program income.

If you are not requesting a reimbursement and do not have program income, you may skip down to the Advances Only portion of the form, described on the following page.

Calculation Area

The primary calculation area includes three columns across the top (a–c) and a Total column. It is not necessary to break out your funding request across these columns unless directed to do so by your AOR/COR or FMO.

The calculations (rows labeled a–j) are explained and illustrated on the following page.

- a) Total program outlays to date:** All expenditures for your program, including cost share, as of the beginning of the request period. In other words, if your request is for Jan 1–31, 2009, give the total outlays as of Dec. 31, 2008.
- b) Less: cumulative program income:** If your program has earned any program income, enter it here.
- c) Net program outlays** (line a minus line b).

11. COMPUTATION OF AMOUNT OF REIMBURSEMENTS/ADVANCES REQUESTED				
PROGRAMS/FUNCTIONS/ACTIVITIES ►	(a)	(b)	(c)	TOTAL
a. Total program outlays to date <small>(As of date)</small>	\$	\$	\$	\$ 175,000
b. Less: Cumulative program income				0
c. Net program outlays <small>(Line a minus line b)</small>		0		175,000
d. Estimated net cash outlays for advance period				58,250
e. Total <small>(Sum of lines c & d)</small>		0		233,250
f. Non-Federal share of amount on line e				11,750
g. Federal share of amount on line e				221,500
h. Federal payments previously requested				167,500
i. Federal share now requested <small>(Line g minus line h)</small>		0		54,500
j. Advances required by month, when requested by Federal grantor agency for use in making prescheduled advances	1st month			
	2nd month			
	3rd month			

- d)** *Estimated cash outlays for advance period:* How much you will need for the advance period (in our example, January 1–31, 2009). All funding needed (including cost share), regardless of any carryover cash on hand.
- e)** *Total* (sum of lines c and d).
- f)** *Non-federal share of amount on line e:* All past cost-share contributions, plus all cost-share contributions you plan to contribute during the advance period. (If you are not sure what cost share you may be able to commit to during the advance period, it is fine to put US\$0 in your SF-270, as long as you properly account for the actual cost share generated in your next SF-425.)
- g)** *Federal share of amount on line e:* This is the total amount you have requested from the USG toward this project to date, including the funds requested for the advance period.
- h)** *Federal payments previously requested:* Sum of all money you have requested to date from the USG.
- i)** *Federal share now requested* (line g minus line h): The result will be the total amount of USG funds you need for the upcoming month (request period), less any unspent USG funds you have on hand.
- j)** *Advances required by month:* The final row is used only when you request funds on a quarterly basis but receive these funds in monthly installments.

Advances Only

To fill out *alternate computation for advances only* (box 12), calculate how much funding you will need for the next month and subtract the amount of any unspent USG funds you have remaining from your previous advance to come up with the amount you are requesting for the period. During the previous period, if you spent more than your previous advance, the *unspent funds remaining* block may show a negative amount.

Submitting Your SF-270

Once you complete the first page and have the Project Director or other designated certifying authority within your organization sign and date the second page. Then, scan and e-mail the form to the payment office specified in your award, and copy your AOR/COR and USAID/Washington Activity Manager. If you have not heard from your FMO within a few days, e-mail him/her and your AOR/COR to make sure he/she has received your request.

The SF-425: Completing your USG Financial Status Reporting Form

Definitions

Accrual Accounting—A method that records revenues on the income statement when they are earned and expenses when they are incurred—not when cash is paid.

Cash-basis Accounting—A method of bookkeeping that records expenses when cash is paid out and income when cash is received.

FFR—Federal Financial Report, also called the SF-425.

FMO—Your funding agency's Financial Management Officer.

Obligated Amount—The amount the USG has committed to the project at the time of the award, which may be the full amount of the award or a portion of the award amount. In other words, it is the amount available to your organization to spend on the project at that particular time.

Q. How do we complete the SF-425, and when is it due?

A. Recipients of USAID assistance are required to submit periodic Federal Financial Reports (SF-425) in accordance with the reporting frequency specified in their agreements. The report indicates how much cash has been received, what the funds were used for, and the remaining balance left at the end of the reporting period.

Each report you submit must be supported by documentation sufficient to show how the drawn down funds were allocated to the line items in your agreement's budget.

The following tips are provided to help you complete the form. They are not meant to substitute for the USG instructions found online or for guidance provided by your Financial Management Officer (FMO). Instead, they aim to address some questions first-time users may have when filling out this form.

Filling Out the SF-425

Download a PDF version of SF-425. Use a separate SF-425 for quarterly reporting for each Cooperative Agreement. Do not use one SF-425 to cover multiple agreements. Start by filling out the top portion. It asks for basic information about your organization, grant, and the period covered in this report.

Top Portion of the SF-425

FEDERAL FINANCIAL REPORT				
(Follow form instructions)				
1. Federal Agency and Organizational Element to Which Report is Submitted		2. Federal Grant or Other Identifying Number Assigned by Federal Agency (To report multiple grants, use FFR Attachment)		Page 1 of _____ pages
3. Recipient Organization (Name and complete address including Zip code)				
4a. DUNS Number	4b. EIN	5. Recipient Account Number or Identifying Number (To report multiple grants, use FFR Attachment)	6. Report Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Semi-Annual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Final	7. Basis of Accounting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cash <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accrual
8. Project/Grant Period From: (Month, Day, Year)		To: (Month, Day, Year)	9. Reporting Period End Date (Month, Day, Year)	

[The numbers correspond to spaces in the form, so do not necessarily follow consecutively]

- 1. Federal Agency and Organizational Element to Which Report is Submitted**—USAID or other USG funder.
- 2. Federal Grant or Other Identifying Number Assigned by Federal Agency**—Insert your Cooperative Agreement identification number. It may look something like XXX-A-00-09-00XXX-00 and can be found on the first page of your agreement.
- 4a. DUNS Number.** A Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique 9-digit number that is established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities. It can be obtained from D&B by telephone (currently 866-705-5711) or the Internet (currently at fedgov.dnb.com/webform). A DUNS number applies to all prime and subawards; however, it is not required for awards to individuals, awards less than \$25,000 to foreign recipients (work performed outside the United States), or where the Agreement Officer has determined that it would cause personal safety concerns.
- 4b. EIN**—Employer Identification Number, for U.S. grantees only.
- 5. Recipient Account Number or Identifying Number**—This number is for your use only and is not required by the USG.
- 7. Basis of Accounting**—Cash basis refers to the accounting method in which expenses are recorded when they are paid. For accrual basis, expenses are recorded when they are incurred. Your accountant or financial manager will know whether you are reporting on a cash or an accrual basis.
- 8. Project/Grant Period**—The start and end dates of your award.
- 9. Reporting Period End Date**— Reports are submitted quarterly, semi-annually, or annually, as specified in your agreement. Where reports are required to be submitted quarterly, the date for each report will depend on which quarter you are covering:
 - 1st Quarter: December 31
 - 2nd Quarter: March 31
 - 3rd Quarter: June 30
 - 4th Quarter: September 30

Each agreement requires a separate SF-425. Do not use one SF-425 to cover multiple agreements.

References

Download PDFs of these USG standard forms

- [SF-425](#) (Federal Financial Report)

In order to take advantage of some of the form's features, including auto-calculations, be sure you have the latest version of Adobe Reader. Download it for free at <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

Program Income Guidance

- Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations see [RAA15](#).
- US-based organizations see [2 CFR 200.307 - Program income](#).

Cash basis refers to the counting method in which expenses are recorded when they are paid. For accrual basis, expenses are recorded when incurred.

Next, fill out the middle portion, which contains the main calculations as outlined below. Some figures will be calculated automatically if you are using Adobe Reader. Once you have finished, double-check to make sure all the calculations are correct.

Middle Portion of the SF-425

10. Transactions	Cumulative
<i>(Use lines a-c for single or multiple grant reporting)</i>	
Federal Cash (To report multiple grants, also use FFR Attachment):	
a. Cash Receipts	
b. Cash Disbursements	
c. Cash on Hand (line a minus b)	
<i>(Use lines d-o for single grant reporting)</i>	
Federal Expenditures and Unobligated Balance:	
d. Total Federal funds authorized	
e. Federal share of expenditures	
f. Federal share of unliquidated obligations	
g. Total Federal share (sum of lines e and f)	
h. Unobligated balance of Federal funds (line d minus g)	
Recipient Share:	
i. Total recipient share required	
j. Recipient share of expenditures	
k. Remaining recipient share to be provided (line i minus j)	
Program Income:	
l. Total Federal program income earned	
m. Program income expended in accordance with the deduction alternative	
n. Program income expended in accordance with the addition alternative	
o. Unexpended program income (line l minus line m or line n)	

Section 10: Transactions

Federal Cash

- a. Cash Receipts**—Enter the total amount of actual cash received from the USG (before deduction of bank fees and other miscellaneous fees) through the end date of the reporting period specified in line 9.
- b. Cash Disbursements**—Enter the cumulative amount of cash and check payments as of the reporting period end date. This total includes the sum of cash expended for goods and services, cash advances and payments made to subrecipients and contractors as well as the amount of indirect expenses charged to the award.
- c. Cash on Hand**—Enter the amount of Line 10a minus Line 10b.

Federal Expenditures and Unobligated Balance

- d. Total Federal Funds Authorized**—Enter the total obligated amount. This refers to the “Total Obligated USAID Amount” listed in your Cooperative Agreement. If this amount has been revised through a modification, please use the amount listed in the modification.
- e. Federal Share of Expenditures**—Enter the amount of cumulative expenses through the reporting period.
- f. Federal Share of Unliquidated Obligations**—If reporting on a cash basis, unliquidated obligations are obligations incurred but not yet paid. If reporting on an accrual basis, they are obligations incurred but for which an expenditure has not yet been recorded. Do not include an amount that has been reported in Line 10e as this would be double counting, and do not include any amount for a future commitment of funds (such as a long-term contract) for which an obligation or expense has not been incurred.

g. Total Federal Share—Enter the amount by adding line 10e plus line 10f.

h. Unobligated Balance of Federal Funds—Subtract line 10g from line 10d.

Recipient Share

i. Total Recipient Share Required— Enter the total required recipient cost share as listed in the Cooperative Agreement. If this amount has been revised through a modification, please use the amount listed in the modification.

j. Recipient Share of Expenditures—Enter the amount of cost share expended through the reporting period.

k. Remaining Recipient Share to be Provided—Enter the amount by subtracting line 10i minus line 10j.

Program Income

This section must be completed if the recipient will generate any income as a result of work performed under this agreement. If you do generate program income, it is important to review your agreement to determine how Program Income is to be used. If no income will be generated, lines (l), (m), (n), and (o) should be marked N/A.

Next, fill out the bottom portion, which contains the main calculations as outlined below. Some figures will be calculated automatically if you are using Adobe Reader. Once you have finished, double-check to make sure all the calculations are correct.

Finally, the bottom portion contains information on indirect expenses and the signature. All documents must be signed by the authorized certifying officer.

	a. Type	b. Rate	c. Period From	Period To	d. Base	e. Amount Charged	f. Federal Share
11. Indirect Expense							
	g. Totals:						
12. Remarks: Attach any explanations deemed necessary or information required by Federal sponsoring agency in compliance with governing legislation:							
13. Certification: By signing this report, I certify that it is true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent information may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001)							
a. Typed or Printed Name and Title of Authorized Certifying Official						c. Telephone (Area code, number and extension)	
						d. Email address	
b. Signature of Authorized Certifying Official						e. Date Report Submitted (Month, Day, Year)	
						14. Agency use only:	

Section 11: Indirect Expense

Complete this information only if required by the USG and in accordance with your Cooperative Agreement.

b. Rate—Enter the indirect cost rate(s) in effect during the reporting period.

d. Base—Enter the total amount against which the indirect rate is applied.

e. Amount Charged—Enter the amount of indirect costs charged during the time period specified.

Section 13: Certification/Submission

Once you have finished, double-check to make sure all calculations are correct. Type in the name of the authorized certifying official (13a), have this person sign the form (13b), provide his/her contact information (13c/13d), and date the form (13e) Then scan and e-mail the form to your FMO specified in the agreement, copying your Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR). Always make a copy for your file. It is good practice if you have not heard from your FMO within 10 days to follow up to make sure your submission was received.

Due Dates for Submitting the SF-425

Reports are submitted quarterly, semi-annually, or annually (based on Calendar Year) as specified in the agreement. While each Cooperative Agreement varies, most grantees are required to submit Federal Financial Reports 30 days after the end of a quarter, based on the USG's fiscal year (October 1–September 30). The table below lists the due dates for each quarter and what period each report covers. Please check your Cooperative Agreement to make sure this applies to you.

Period	Due	Report cumulative program data through:
Quarter 1	Jan. 30	Dec 31
Quarter 2	Apr. 30	Mar. 31
Quarter 3	July 30	June 30
Quarter 4	Oct. 30	Sept. 30
Final Financial Status Report	90 days after the end of the award	Entire life of award

Annual Audit Requirements: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Q. What is an annual audit and how does the audit process work?

A. An audit is an independent review and examination of an organization's systems, records, and activities. Many donors require yearly audits of their grant recipients and subrecipients, and the U.S. Government (USG) is no different. Both prime recipients and subrecipients that receive a certain threshold of funds for the USG must conduct an annual audit.

An audit enables you to verify financial numbers, ensure their accuracy, and identify and assess internal controls of your financial systems. It evaluates how you are spending USG funds and complying with the regulations set forth in your agreement. Think of it as a tool to help you keep your financial house in order. To ensure objectivity, an independent auditor, whom you hire, conducts the annual audit.

The audit process involves gathering financial and other records, providing them to your auditor, responding to your auditor's report, and implementing corrective action plans. What follows are answers to some commonly asked questions about annual audits.

Who is Required to Conduct an Annual Audit?

- U.S.-based nonprofit organizations that expend US\$750,000 or more in total funding from the U.S. Government (USG), either directly or as a subrecipient, during their fiscal year.
- Non-U.S. nonprofits that expend US\$750,000 (received either directly or as a sub) or more of USAID funding during their fiscal year. Amounts received through Fixed Amount Awards do not need to be included in the \$750,000 threshold.
- For-profit organizations that receive all or a majority of their funding from USAID will be reviewed annually to determine if an audit is required.

Definitions

ADS—The Automated Directives System encompasses the totality of USAID's regulations. It also includes suggested, but not mandatory, procedures and links to examples of best practices.

Allowable Cost—An incurred cost determined to be acceptable to the USG.

Audit—An independent review and examination of systems, records, and activities.

Finding—Any error, exception, deviation, or deficiency noted by an auditor as a result of an examination of audit evidence. Findings are generally related to (a) compliance policies, procedures, and legal requirements, (b) adequacy and effectiveness of controls, and/or (c) efficiency and effectiveness of administration.

References

CFR 200 Subpart F

For non US-based orgs: [Standard Provisions for Non-US Organizations, clause M2](#)

For US-based orgs: [Automated Directives System \(ADS\) Chapter 591, clause 591.3.1](#)

Definitions cont.

Fiscal Year (FY)—Sometimes called a financial or budget year, a period organizations use for calculating “yearly” financial statements. It may or may not correspond to the calendar year, which is January 1 through December 31. The USG fiscal year covers a 12-month period that begins October 1 and ends September 30.

Management Decisions—The evaluation of a recommendation by management and a decision about an appropriate course of action.

An audit typically covers your entire organization. However, if you have just one program that receives USG funding, you may choose to have a single-program audit.

Are Audit Costs Allowable?

If your organization is required to be audited, the costs of conducting the audit are allowable, provided the audit is conducted according to the appropriate regulations outlined below.

If you are not required to be audited (in other words, if you do not reach the funding threshold), then audit costs are not allowable as a direct charge. The costs of a financial statement audit may be included in the indirect cost pool.

Where may I find the Audit Requirements?

U.S.-based nonprofits are governed by the rules outlined in 2 CFR 200 subpart F – Audit requirements. These regulations are the same regardless of what USG agency provides the majority of funding.

USAID ADS Chapter 591 governs all USAID for-profit and foreign-based recipients. This document may also be helpful to U.S.-based nonprofits as it provides clarification of 2 CFR 200 subpart F.

What Needs to be Audited?

An audit typically covers your entire organization. However, if you have just one program that receives USG funding, you may choose to have a single-program audit.

In addition, if you have a large, complex organization with many different operational units, it is possible to have an audit focus on the organizational unit that receives USG funds.

What timeframe is covered by the audit?

The timeframe covered by the audit is your organization’s fiscal year. In addition, the audit will look at previous audit findings to determine if corrective actions taken were sufficient to address previous findings.

Who May Conduct an Audit?

U.S.-based nonprofit organizations must follow the procurement process and regulations in their Cooperative Agreements.

USAID-funded foreign-based organizations should contact their in-country or regional mission to request a list of organizations authorized to conduct audits of USG programs.

If an audit is determined necessary for a USAID-funded for-profit organization, a USG official, rather than a private auditor, may conduct the audit. If a USG auditor is not available, USAID will direct the for-profit organization to hire an independent auditor.

What are Primes and Subs Responsible for If a Subrecipient is Audited?

Subrecipients submit their audits directly to the USG. They are not required to submit their audits to the prime unless there are findings related to the funding from that award, in which case they must submit a copy to the prime.

Primes need to verify that every subrecipient is audited as required and need to consider the results of the subrecipients' audits. A prime has the right to request a copy, regardless of whether or not there were findings, and this may be specified in the award between the prime and the subrecipient.

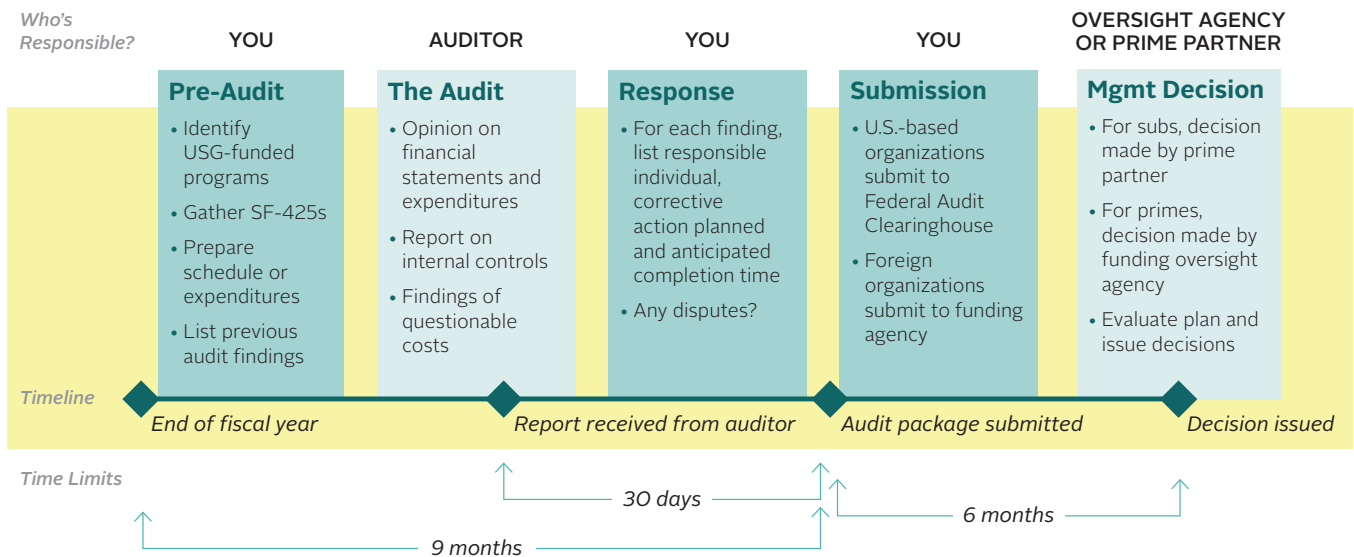
When subs have findings, the prime takes on the role of issuing management decisions on the corrective actions. The management decisions must be issued within six months of receiving an audit.

When is an Audit Due?

Your complete audit package must be submitted nine months after the end of your fiscal year or within 30 days of receiving the report from your auditor, whichever comes first.

If there are known and/or likely questioned costs that exceed US\$25,000, they must be reported as an audit finding.

Five Key Steps in the Audit Process



Who is Your Oversight Agency

If you receive funding from multiple USG agencies, one acts as your oversight agency and takes the lead on management decisions for any audit findings that relate to multiple USG agencies.

The oversight agency is the USG agency that provides the majority of funding in a given year. The oversight agency is responsible for:

- Providing technical audit advice to your organization and your auditor;
- Considering requests for extensions; and
- Reviewing the audit package for quality and completeness.

The Five-Step Audit Process

1. Before the Audit

Prepare the following before your audit is conducted:

- Identify all USG funds received and the programs under which they were received;
- Gather financial reports (such as SF-425s) covering the fiscal year;
- Conduct audit;
- Prepare a schedule of expenditures made under your USG awards; and
- Prepare a schedule of prior audit findings (if any).

2. The Audit

The audit will focus on the following questions:

- Were financial reports submitted during the year accurate?
- Were the rules, regulations, and policies governing the award followed?
- What is the status of any previous audit findings?
- Are there any questionable costs?

3. Responding to Findings

If an audit results in any findings, each must be addressed specifically by your organization in a plan for corrective action. For each item, provide the following:

- The responsible individual;
- The corrective action planned; and
- The anticipated completion date.

The Corrective Action Plan prepared by the auditee in response to the audit findings should be documented separately from the auditor's findings. This is to help distinguish what is prepared by the auditors versus the auditee.

If you do not agree with an audit finding or believe corrective action is not required, then include an explanation and specific reasons.

4. Submitting to the USG

U.S.-based nonprofit organizations will submit their audit packages directly to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse (FAC). The FAC will distribute copies to the USG agency funding your award. Your audit report must be uploaded to the FAC's website (<https://facweb.census.gov/uploadpdf.aspx>) within 30 days of receiving the report from your auditor or 9 months after the end of your fiscal year (the audit period).

The Audit Package Must Include:

- SF-SAC Form (Data Collection Form for Reporting on Audits)
- Financial Statements
- Schedule of Expenditures Under USG Awards
- Summary Schedule of Previous Audit Findings
- The Auditor's Report
 - * Opinion on the Financial Statements
 - * Opinion on the Schedule of Expenditures
 - * Report on Internal Controls for Financial Statement
 - * Report on Internal Controls for Compliance
 - * Schedule of Findings of Questionable Costs
- Corrective Action Plan

Foreign and for-profit organizations may have different submission rules set by their funding agency. Please contact your funding agency, in-country, or regional Mission office for guidance.

5. Issuing Management Decisions

For each finding, the agency or the prime (in the case of a finding for a subrecipient) will issue a corresponding management decision within six months of receiving the audit package.

The management decision must clearly state whether or not the agency is supporting the audit finding, the reasons for the decision and the expected auditee action, such as repaying disallowed costs, making financial adjustments or taking other action.

If the auditee has not completed corrective action, a timetable for follow-up will be given. The management decision should describe any appeal process available to the auditee.

Audit Follow-Up

In addition to submitting the audit package, you will be responsible for implementing your corrective action plan. Be sure to maintain documentation showing your progress on each item.

Even if there were no findings relevant to a particular USG agency, that agency still may request a copy of your audit directly from you. Further, the USG reserves the right to conduct its own audits, regardless of the outcomes of your audits.

Finally, you are required to maintain records and a copy of the audit package for a minimum of three years following submission or three years after a finding from that year was resolved.

Human Resources

3

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources (HR) is the function that deals with managing an organization's most important asset—the people who do its work. Ideally, HR policies and rules are designed to level the playing field; to help guide and protect staff and volunteers so they can contribute to the best of their abilities. Effective HR policies and procedures also help attract and retain the right people for each job and support the team who will accomplish the organization's goals. Although some HR policies must follow local law as well as donor requirements, most should reflect an NGO's own mission, vision, and values.

This section introduces fundamental HR concepts and highlights some of the policies that USAID-funded organizations must follow. It also explores practical ways to motivate staff, as well as to recruit and manage volunteers.

TOPICS

- 3.1 Overview of Human Resources**
- 3.2 HR: Putting Policies into Practice**
- 3.3 Supportive Supervision: A Strategy to Strengthen Organizations and Individuals**
- 3.4 Performance Appraisals**
- 3.5 Key Personnel**
- 3.6 Collaborating with Volunteers to Strengthen Your Organization**

HR Policy Essentials for Recipients of USAID Funding

Q. Does our civil society organization (CSO) need particular personnel or human resources (HR) policies?

A. Yes! Some human resources policies are required by local law, U.S. law, or USAID, while others are practical or necessary rules for managing an effective organization. Regardless of the source, establishing clear, well-developed HR policies will not only enhance communication between managers and employees, clarify expectations, and ensure that all staff are treated equitably. They can also protect your organization against grievances and lawsuits if they arise.

Although a number of U.S. Government (USG) regulations touch on HR-related issues (for example, under procurement you will find policies on conflict of interest, gratuities and disciplinary actions) only a few HR-specific USG regulations apply to all recipients of USAID funding. The following focuses mainly on those.

USAID Required HR Policies

Labor Laws and Regulations—Organizations must comply with the labor laws of the country in which staff are employed. For example, there may be regulations to prevent hiring discrimination or to require certain benefits. It is also important for both the organization and the employees to be clear from the beginning about the rights of the employee and employer, the grounds for discipline and termination and the processes for discipline and termination.

Standards of Conduct—Standards of conduct are established to address the behaviors and professional conduct that affect the employee's ability to perform his or her job and represent the organization. They may include reporting to work on time, performing assigned duties, supporting a safe and healthy work environment, and common workplace standards, such as prohibiting sexual harassment or discrimination.

Definitions

HR Policies—A set of rules or guiding principles that define how an organization addresses personnel related matters.

A **policy** is a formal statement of a principle or rule that members of an organization must follow. Each policy addresses an issue important to the organization's mission or operations.

A **procedure** tells members of the organization how to carry out or implement a policy.

A **policy** is the “what” and the procedure is the “how to”. Policies are written as statements or rules. **Procedures** are written as instructions, in logical steps.

References

USAID Mandatory Standard Provisions:

[U.S.-based Organizations](#)

[Non-U.S.-based Organizations](#)

[HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector](#)

Human resources (HR) policies should reflect sound practice, be written down, be communicated to everyone, and be reviewed and modified periodically to reflect changing circumstances.

Timesheet Tracking—Timesheets are required for all personnel who are paid with USAID funds, including contractors and part-time staff, and for your annual audit. In addition, it is helpful to have volunteers fill out simplified timesheets, so you can track their hours and count these toward your cost-share contribution (if you have one).

Due Diligence in Hiring Decisions—You are required to have a summary of a candidate’s academic and work history (a curriculum vitae or CV) for every employee hired under your award to verify his or her employment and salary history. Although your Cooperative Agreement may not require the use of the SF-1420—the Contractor Employee Biographical Data Sheet, the standard form used to document the salary history of employees and contractors—the SF-1420 bio data sheet is often used during the hiring process, because it is an easy way to capture the relevant information.

Faith-based Organization Hiring Protections—Under U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity laws, a faith-based organization that implements a USAID program has the right to hire people who share the organization’s faith. If you choose to do this, make sure your HR policies are clear. You may wish to have a lawyer or HR expert review your policies before you implement them.

Drug-Free Workplace Policy—Your Cooperative Agreement requires you, and any of your organization’s subrecipients, to establish a drug-free workplace policy. Every staff member in your organization must sign this policy statement. A good way to address the signature requirement for this policy is to include it in two documents: first in the personnel manual and second as a separate one-page policy document that is signed by each employee and filed in personnel files.

According to USG Mandatory Standard Provisions, your drug-free workplace policy statement must include:

- a declaration that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace;
- specific actions your organization will take against employees who violate that prohibition; and
- conditions of employment under any award, which state that an employee must abide by the terms of the statement and must notify you in writing if he or she is convicted of violating a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after the conviction.

In addition, your organization is required to establish an ongoing drug-free awareness program to inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace; your drug-free workplace policy; any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and the penalties you may enforce for drug policy violations in the workplace.

The policy statement and program must be in place no later than 30 days after the effective date of your award.

If an employee is convicted of a drug violation in the workplace, you are required to notify USAID, in writing, within 10 calendar days after conviction. The notification must identify the employee's position title and the number of each award on which the employee worked. Within 30 days of an employee's conviction, you must either:

- take appropriate action against the employee, up to and including termination (as appropriate with your organization's HR policies and applicable labor laws), or
- require the employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug-abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved by a national, state or local health, law enforcement or other appropriate agency.

In the event that local laws prevent you from following the mandates of the USG drug-free workplace policy in full, notify your Agreement Officer (AO) or Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and seek their guidance.

HIV/AIDS Policy—An HIV/AIDS policy defines an organization's stance on the employment of persons living with HIV or AIDS and the expected treatment in the workplace of persons living with HIV or AIDS. Although an HIV/AIDS policy is not required by USG funding agencies, it is considered best practice for any organization, particularly those working within the field of HIV/AIDS. An HIV/AIDS policy formalizes the organization's commitment to addressing HIV/AIDS and supporting staff living with HIV or AIDS, including benefits for care or treatment, accommodations where possible, and job security. The development of a comprehensive HIV/AIDS policy can enable the organization to keep and benefit from talented staff.

Ensure your organization is in compliance with your country's national and local labor laws regarding the employment of persons living with HIV and AIDS. In some cases, your organizational policies may exceed what is legally required, particularly in countries

The laws of the country in which you are registered as an organization and in which you work take precedence over U.S. Government policy.

Human Resources Policies

- Apply to: All recipients of USG funds
- Required for: Annual Audit (particularly time tracking)
- Verified by: Annual Audit
- Governed by: Your Cooperative Agreement and funding agency regulations and in-country laws

Codify Policies and Procedures

No matter how small or large, every CSO needs policies and procedures designed to help engage and manage people—the organization’s most valuable asset. These policies and procedures must follow local laws and address donor requirements. In addition, your policies and procedures should reflect your organization’s mission, vision and values.

Policies and procedures are only as good as they are honest and useful—honest means objectively accounting for internal and external factors and requirements; useful means using clear language that is easy to understand and follow. To get buy-in and improve the chances that your policies and procedures will not gather dust on a shelf, give staff a voice in shaping them. Codify the policies in a manual or handbook that is shared with all staff and volunteers in print and online. The benefits of capturing policies and procedures in a handbook are many: Everyone receives the same information about the rules of the organization and they know what the CSO expects of them and what they can expect from the CSO. Also, should someone charge that your policies are unfair or discriminatory, it may keep you from facing costly legal challenges.

Putting Human Resources (HR) Policies into Practice

Q. Why develop an employee handbook?

A. The employee handbook is one of the most important communication links between your organization and your employees. Although organizations have policies and procedures for managing employees, they are not always written down and understood by everyone. By documenting the rules and policies of your organization in a handbook or manual, you are communicating what the organization expects from its employees and what they can expect from the organization in turn. This helps to eliminate any confusion and makes it easier to enforce the policies, if necessary. The following offers an overview of HR policies and procedures that complement those required of USAID grantees and should be captured in your employee handbook.

Key Elements of an Employee Handbook

No two employee handbooks are exactly alike. Each organization needs to develop policies that are relevant to its particular operations. However, there are some key policies that belong in every handbook. These include the following:

1. Introduction

Every employee handbook should start with an explanation of its purpose and how to use it. It may be helpful to define common terms and include an organizational chart or organogram.

2. Policies, including:

- * **Recruitment Policies and Procedures.** The rules surrounding hiring, including how job descriptions are developed, positions advertised, candidates vetted and offers made, and what the organization's policy is on hiring relatives.
- * **Employment Categories.** The types of employment supported by the organization, such as regular full-time, regular part-time, consultant, temporary, or other and whether these categories are entitled to full, partial, or no benefits. You may need to check on your country's labor laws because "full time" can be defined as different numbers of hours.

Definitions

Human Resources (HR)—The people who staff and operate an organization. The term is also used to describe the function within an organization responsible for implementing policies related to the management of employees.

HR Policies—A set of rules or guiding principles that define how an organization addresses personnel-related matters.

HR Procedures—Specific steps needed to implement an HR policy.

HR Practices—How policies and procedures are actually designed and implemented.

Employee Handbook—A written guide outlining an employer's policies, procedures, working conditions, and expectations governing employee conduct in the workplace. It may also contain information on the organization's history, its goals and its commitments to beneficiaries and the community. (Also called an Employee Manual, HR Handbook, HR Manual, or Personnel Policy Manual.)

References

[Mandatory Standard Provisions: U.S.-based Organizations](#)

[Non-U.S.-based Organizations](#)

Keep It Practical

Having more policies and procedures is not always better. Develop a manual that is comprehensive enough to serve your needs, safeguard your organization, and guide and protect your staff but is not so extensive that it is unusable or so mired in detailed procedure that it places excessive demands on staff, making them feel they are not trusted by the organization to do the right thing.

- * **Employment Conditions.** The conditions the organization adheres to in employing staff, including employment at will and equal employment opportunity. Employment conditions may also include policies on outside employment, disability accommodation, overtime, conflicts of interest, and termination, among others.
- * **Other Employment Policies.** Additional conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, introductory or probationary periods.
- * **Administration and Benefits:** Organizations should clearly define policies on employee compensation and benefits. This does not mean that the organization should include its salary scale in the employee manual, but it should state what employees are entitled to in terms of compensation and benefits and how promotions are managed. Examples of compensation and benefits policies include:
 - **Salary Administration.** Information on salary scale or the rationale for determining salaries and conditions for pay increases.
 - **Timekeeping and Payroll.** Timekeeping requirements and pay days.
 - **Leave Benefits.** The benefits surrounding paid or unpaid time off, including vacation, holiday, sick leave, bereavement leave, leave without pay, maternity and paternity leave, home leave, time off to vote, and jury duty. National labor laws are usually very explicit on leave, so make sure your policies comply with local law. If your organization has offices in different countries, you may have to establish different leave policies in each country to ensure compliance with national laws.
 - **Other Benefits.** Additional kinds of compensation that an organization can offer, such as health insurance or medical compensation, workers compensation insurance, death benefits, pension/retirement plans, professional development benefits, and termination pay and bonuses, among others.

3. Work Conditions and Hours

Policies on work conditions and hours set standards for the work schedule/office hours, flextime and overtime, as well as use of office equipment and Internet, safety, transportation, telecommuting, or business meals, among others.

4. Employee Conduct and Disciplinary Action

Policies related to employee conduct and disciplinary action cover a wide range of topics from how employees are expected to dress for work to the organization's policy toward whistle-blowers. This is also the section where organizations would include a drug-free workplace policy, HIV/AIDS policy, or child protection policy.

Other important policies that can be included in this section are sexual harassment, bribes or payoffs, attendance and punctuality, problem resolution, and disciplinary action procedures.

Six Steps to Effectively Implementing HR Policies

- 1. Involve.** Involve staff and give them a voice in the development of HR policies by getting their input or feedback.
- 2. Disseminate.** Print the employee handbook and distribute to all staff; have copies available in a central place in the office and/or post it online so that it is readily accessible to staff.
- 3. Notify.** Notify staff, in writing, of key policy changes; post updates for everyone to see.
- 4. Orient.** Integrate an overview of HR policies and procedures into employee orientation processes and continue to inform staff with refreshers.
- 5. Require Signature Statements.** Require staff to sign a statement verifying that they have received, reviewed, and understand the contents of the employee handbook and have had an opportunity to ask questions about personnel policies and procedures.
- 6. Be Open to Change.** Sometimes policies seem good when they are designed but do not work in practice; sometimes the policy is good, but its implementation is not. Assess your policies, procedures, and practices periodically to determine whether they are followed and useful. Listen to staff complaints and take them seriously. Do not be afraid to change or adjust a policy, procedure or practice if it is not working.

Supportive Supervision

Definitions

Active Listening—A communication technique that requires the listener to focus on understanding, interpreting, and reflecting upon what the other person is saying.

Social Intelligence—The capacity to understand social and interpersonal relationships and situations. Having high social intelligence helps you work with people to develop and pursue a common goal, such as building a workforce committed to activities that support an organization's mission.

Supervision—The process of fostering and reviewing staff performance according to the defined standards of the organization.

Supportive Supervision—A process that uses dialogue and constructive feedback to help staff, volunteers, or entire organizations improve their performance in pursuit of the organization's mission, while also setting goals for personal growth and development.

Q. What is supportive supervision and how do we do it?

A. Supportive supervision is a process that uses dialogue and constructive feedback to help staff, volunteers, or entire organizations improve their performance in pursuit of the organization's mission. Beyond simply overseeing employees' responsibilities and tasks, by using supportive supervision, managers can play a key role in making their employees feel valued and motivated and, as a result, more productive. This is particularly important in challenging environments where resources are scarce and the needs of the community are great.

By using supportive supervision, managers can not only create a healthy work environment, but can improve and sustain the performance and satisfaction of their most valuable assets: the people in their organization. Using a few key skills and tools—and with a little practice—managers can create a dynamic relationship with staff and others to help them grow as individuals and help their organization grow as well.

Guidelines for Supervising Staff

Supervision can be an interactive process; however, traditional supervision often focuses on discussing faults instead of solving problems and enhancing two-way communication to improve performance. To effectively provide supportive supervision, consider the following guidelines:

1. Set clear expectations from the beginning.

Supportive supervision can begin as soon as a person is recruited to work for your organization. The first step is providing your new employee with a clear job description. This ensures that the manager and the employee have a common understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of the position. As time goes on, the manager and employee should work together to periodically review and revise the job description to develop "SMARTER" goals that align the employee's work with the organizational mission.

A related tool regularly used in supportive supervision is a tailored checklist outlining exactly what will be assessed and what is required for employees to get a positive assessment. The checklist should be made available to staff ahead of their actual supervision session. This ensures that people see that they are being treated fairly and assessed objectively.

2. Provide regular feedback. Supportive supervision is not a once-a-year performance review; it involves continuous performance assessment. This means making time and space for the supervisor and employee to regularly communicate about job performance. Managers should employ active listening skills and provide feedback in an open and respectful manner to facilitate a dialogue about improving behavior and job performance over time. During supportive supervision sessions, both the manager and employee should have time to describe achievements in the period under review as well as challenges and areas for improvement. These discussions should be documented by the manager and shared with the employee to ensure that both agree on the outcomes of the discussions and the employee's progress is tracked in the event of a change in management.

3. Provide opportunities to discuss challenges and suggestions. Supportive supervision should be two-way communication. Your staff members are the ones doing the work on a day-to-day basis, so they have first-hand knowledge of what is and is not working. Often they also have ideas about how to address challenges or gaps; other times they will need advice and suggestions for problem solving.

4. Ensure staff get the tools, skills and resources necessary. A key part of supportive supervision is following up on any issues or challenges that are identified during discussions. If, for example, a staff member describes having a hard time completing his or her monthly site visits due to lack of transport, you may need to work with the finance manager to determine how the organization can allocate additional funds for fuel or work with the program director to coordinate access to the organization's vehicle.

Likewise, supportive supervision provides opportunities to discuss—and sometimes even provide—the additional skills and training that will enhance your staff's ability to do their work. Identifying training needs is important, as is following up after trainings to ensure that staff members have opportunities to apply the skills in their work and to share with colleagues.

5. Reward performance through recognition, incentives and opportunities for advancement.

Most people working in development are motivated by values and ideals to help people in need and strengthen communities.

By making employees feel valued and motivated, managers can play a key role in increasing employees' productivity.

References

Path

[Guidelines for Implementing Supportive Supervision: A Step-by-Step Guide with Tools to Support Immunization.](#)

UNICEF

[Supportive Supervision Mentoring and Monitoring for Community IYCF.](#)

WHO

[Training for Midlevel Managers: Supportive Supervision.](#)

SMARTER Goals are:

- Specific and clear about what needs to happen and who needs to be involved.
- Measurable, with clear targets against which progress can be measured.
- Aligned with the organization's mission and vision.
- Realistic and can be accomplished.
- Time bound so that there is an appropriate sense of urgency.
- Evaluated periodically and, if necessary, adjusted.
- Rewarded when accomplished.

Active Listening Skills

- Listen carefully to the main ideas and let the speaker finish his or her thoughts without interruption.
- Ask open-ended questions that show that you are interested in the speaker's ideas and interpretations. (For example, "What are your suggestions about how we should address this problem?")
- Do not judge, critique, or get defensive while the speaker is talking. Instead, focus on understanding his or her experience and perspective. Verify your understanding by repeating key points back. (For example, "If I understand you correctly, you are saying...").

Remember: You have two ears and two eyes...but only one mouth. So let your ears and eyes do twice as much work!

But intrinsic motivation alone may not be enough to sustain performance for everyone over the long term. External recognition for excellent work will help your employees maintain their energy and commitment. Rewards can include public recognition (such as commendation during community events or write-ups in publications) and incentives (such as small gifts or invitations to special events). Another critically important part of rewarding staff is ensuring that they have opportunities for advancement (such as trainings to enhance their knowledge and skills).

Strategies for Supervising

Supportive supervision strategies also work well in relationships with partner organizations and subgrantees. Similar to what is needed with employees, supportive supervision for a non-governmental organization, community-based organization, or other partner entails:

- ensuring that the organization's leaders and stakeholders understand what they are expected to do (including reporting);
- providing regular and constructive feedback on performance;
- creating regular opportunities for them to provide feedback to you on their challenges and get assistance with solving problems;
- supplying adequate resources and support so they can conduct their programs effectively; and
- recognizing and rewarding good performance.

Culture of Supportive Supervision

Integrating supportive supervision throughout your organization's structure will result in a stronger organization, with more efficient and satisfied people working to achieve your organization's mission. Creating a culture of supportive supervision will help your staff, volunteers, and the organization flourish.

Performance Reviews

Q. Why and how should our organization review staff performance?

A. Regular performance reviews (also called performance appraisals) can help create a culture that promotes individual and organizational success, along with teamwork. Performance appraisals allow management to track employee strengths and weaknesses, identify the best candidates for promotion, offer feedback for improvements and promote professional development. The performance review process helps:

- *Align staff responsibilities and goals with organizational or program objectives.* Performance appraisals often include reviewing an employee's job description and goals to ensure that responsibilities and goals are consistent with those of the organization or program.
- *Align staff attitudes and performance to the organization's values.* When planning performance goals, identify the values the organization wants to see reflected in an employee's performance beyond the execution of tasks related to job duties.
- *Recognize and reinforce good performance.* The review process provides an opportunity for recognizing and reinforcing good performance. When employees feel valued, they are more likely to engage in their work and, as a result, be more productive.
- *Identify and formally address issues.* Reviews reinforce ongoing communication by providing a forum for employees and supervisors to discuss problems or challenges and document the issues discussed.
- *Identify training and professional development needs.* When developing performance goals, the employee and the supervisor can plan for any training or support required to help the employee meet performance goals.

How to Establish a Performance Review Process

Employees need the reinforcement of knowing that their contributions are valued by management and the organization. During a performance review, employees essentially want two

Definitions

Active Listening—A communication technique that requires the listener to focus on understanding, interpreting and reflecting upon what the other person is saying.

Performance Review or Appraisal—A structured process to review and discuss an employee's performance of assigned duties, achievement of goals, and fulfillment of responsibilities over a specific time period.

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)—A structured, measurable plan to help an underperforming employee improve to the expected level of performance in his/her position.

360° Review—A type of performance appraisal that incorporates feedback from management, subordinates, peers, clients, and others into the review process.

Supervision—The process of fostering and reviewing staff performance according to the defined standards of the organization.

Supportive Supervision—A process that uses dialogue and constructive feedback to help staff, volunteers, or entire organizations improve their performance in pursuit of the organization's mission, while also setting goals for personal growth and development.

Items To Consider

An effective performance review process is:

- **Participatory**—Both the supervisor and employee should provide input. Feedback from peers and other managers may also be included.
- **Transparent**—All staff should understand the process and criteria used for performance assessment.
- **Applied consistently**—Regardless of whether the individual employee appraisals are conducted in phases or simultaneously, they should be done uniformly with all staff to ensure fairness and consistency.
- **Reviewed regularly**—The review process as well as the tools used should be checked regularly to ensure relevance, accuracy, and consistency with organizational needs.

References

WHO

[Training for Midlevel Managers: Supportive Supervision.](#)

questions answered: 1) What do you expect of me? and 2) How am I doing at meeting your expectations? To set up a performance review process, consider the following.

1. Outline the purpose and objectives of the performance

review. Defining the purpose and objectives helps staff and the organization to understand and monitor the process.

Performance Review Process Sample: Step 1

Purpose

- To strengthen the organization by fostering improved performance and linking individual performance to organizational success.

Objectives

- Review and update job descriptions.
- Open a dialogue between the employee and supervisor.
- Identify professional development needs and desires.
- Establish and agree upon performance goals.

2. Map the process for your organization.

With input from staff at different levels, tailor the process to the needs of your organization and decide on the following:

- What type of performance appraisal system do you want? One-on-one, 360° review—a type of performance appraisal that incorporates feedback from management, subordinates, peers, clients, and others into the review process—or a combination?
- How often should appraisals occur? Annually, annually with a six-month review, or as part of a probationary period?
- Will appraisals be customized for different staff—management, general staff, and volunteers?
- Who will conduct the appraisals and for whom?
- How will information be gathered during the appraisal process and how will it be documented and used?
- How will the performance review process be linked to other organizational processes, such as pay period, supervision, or quality assurance?

3. Develop performance review materials.

When developing forms and tools, consider fairness, consistency, and functionality. Keep tools simple and user-friendly and test them prior to implementation. Update them regularly to reflect changes in the organization and workforce. The table on the next page outlines some useful performance evaluation tools.

4. Establish a plan for implementing and monitoring the performance review process. Develop a clear timeline of activities and list of participants in the process.
 - *Establish indicators to measure the effectiveness* of key milestones during the review process. (For example, deadlines for developing, testing and revising performance review forms, dates for finishing a pilot process, and number of performance reviews completed in a specified time period).
 - *Pilot the approach with a small group of staff* to observe how the process flows, determine how easy it is to use, and make adjustments as needed.
 - *Launch the process* (in stages if needed) throughout the organization.
 - *Assess and address lessons learned* to improve the process, make it easier for supervisors and employees to use and increase overall effectiveness.
5. Train staff and supervisors to take advantage of the performance review process. Conducting a performance appraisal is not intuitive. Supervisors and staff need training in how to complete the forms, communicate with one another and set goals.
 - *Supervisor training should include:* explaining the purpose and objectives of the performance review, how to facilitate the performance appraisal using active listening, how to give feedback, and how to encourage dialogue and set performance goals.
 - *Employee training should include:* explaining the purpose and objectives of the performance review process, what to expect during a review meeting, how to handle feedback, and how to communicate with supervisors and set performance goals.

When conducted by supervisors with care and understanding, performance reviews help employees see how their jobs and expected contributions support the mission of the organization.

Performance reviews—done with care and understanding—help employees see how their jobs and expected contributions support the mission of their organization.

3 Key Personnel

Definitions

AO—Agreement Officer. A person with the authority to (1) enter into, administer, terminate, and close out assistance agreements, and (2) make related determinations and findings on behalf of USAID.

AOR—Agreement Officer's Representative.

Key Personnel—Individuals directly responsible for managing the agreement, or those personnel whose professional/technical skills are certified by the AOR as being essential for successful implementation of the project.

Poaching—Hiring someone away from their current job—working for another project, a competitor, or host country government—to join your organization.

References

How to work with USAID.

Online series designed to answer some of the most frequently asked questions and concerns from organizations interested in partnering with USAID. This how-to training is designed to provide you with practical tips and concrete examples on topics ranging from researching potential funding opportunities to effectively putting together a proposal or application, budget or monitoring and evaluation plan.

Q. What if someone designated as Key Personnel leaves the project?

A. Your Cooperative Agreement names as “Key Personnel” specific individuals on your project team who were approved at the time the award was made (or later); it states that any changes must be approved by the Agreement Officer (AO). But what does this mean?

Key Personnel are individuals identified in your Cooperative Agreement who are directly responsible for the effective implementation of the project and management of the agreement. These are the positions deemed most critical to the success of a project (such as a chief of party or director of finance and administration) and require USAID's approval before an implementer can hire them or replace them with a different candidate.

Although everyone on your team plays an important role, only a small number of people will be designated in the Agreement as Key Personnel. The number of Key Personnel designated for any award must not be more than five individuals or five percent of the employees working under the award, whichever is greater.

Any changes in Key Personnel require USAID approval. If a change is necessary, you will want to follow these steps:

1. Notify your Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) as soon as a possible change is brought to your attention (for example, if an individual designated as Key Personnel resigns). In the case of a termination, be sure you have followed your organization's human resources (HR) procedures.
2. Following your organization's procedures, conduct a fair and open competition to recruit a replacement. Document the process and your decision. Based on the position's requirements, select the best candidate to be put forward to your funding agency, since only one candidate can be proposed per Key Personnel position.
3. When you have selected a candidate, if your HR policy allows, you may extend a conditional job offer that states that the candidate's selection must be approved by the AO. Do not offer a job or sign an employment agreement without this condition.

4. Submit a request for approval of the new candidate in writing to your AO, including the candidate's CV (curriculum vitae) and a brief explanation of why the individual is being proposed (for example, strengths, expertise, and so on).

Barring any concerns, the AO will communicate back to you an approval, after which you can move forward to hire the individual you have selected.

Finally, the AO will modify your agreement to formally document the change in Key Personnel. This formal modification may come at a later date. Sometimes the AO will wait to make several modifications together to cut down on paperwork, but this will not delay your ability to hire your new Key Personnel.

Human Resources Tips

Confirm that your organization has HR policies in place that address:

- recruitment,
- resignation, and
- termination

Put it in writing

Always document USAID approval in an email or formal letter. For example, if you discuss a personnel change with your AO on the telephone, follow up in writing via an email confirming verbal approval.

Avoid poaching

If you are considering hiring someone from another project or the host-country government, please discuss this with your AOR early, before even a conditional offer is extended. The issue of concern is "poaching," that is hiring someone away from another USG-funded project or the host-country government. It is not good practice.

In Your Agreement

The Key Personnel clause may be found in the Substantial Involvement section of the Schedule of your Cooperative Agreement. The clause contains both the terms of the requirement and the list of Key Personnel named in your Agreement.

Engaging Volunteers to Strengthen your Organization

Definitions

Volunteer—A person who performs a service or task willingly and without pay.

Volunteer Management—The process of recruiting, selecting, training, supervising, and supporting volunteers to enhance an organization's performance and results.

Three key areas where volunteers can benefit your organization are governance, programming, and resource mobilization.

References

[Idealist Volunteer Management Resource Center.](#)

Comprehensive site focusing on the role of the volunteer program manager from Idealist.org.

[What Your Volunteers Need to Be Happy.](#)

Volunteerism has changed and volunteer expectations have evolved. It's no longer enough to put out a generic call for volunteers and then treat them all alike once they show up. Volunteers expect to give in order to get something back.

Q. What do volunteers add to an organization, and how do we maximize their contribution?

A. By giving their time, energy, and talents, volunteers can generate enthusiasm, provide new skills, increase community engagement, serve as bridges to target populations, augment fundraising efforts, and complement the work of paid staff. They can be an especially vital resource for organizations with limited staff and budgets that are straining to meet the needs of beneficiaries. However, the degree to which they add value to your work and mission depends on how they are recruited, assigned tasks, trained, supervised, evaluated, and appreciated.

To make the most of volunteers and ensure they have a positive volunteer experience, it is important to manage them effectively. The following addresses how to maximize the value of volunteer support.

Getting Started: Key Questions to Ask

The value of your volunteers will be determined by the degree to which they meet your organization's needs. To assess this, carefully consider where you need help, what resources you have in place, and whether volunteers are the right solution. Here are some key questions to ask to determine whether you should and can engage volunteers:

- Do we have activities or tasks that are appropriate for non-staff to do?
- What kind of skills or knowledge does a person need to perform them?
- Are the activities or tasks specific and short term? Or are they ongoing ones, which require a longer term commitment?
- Will we need to train volunteers to ensure they are able to perform the tasks and maintain the quality standards of our organization?
- Do we have enough paid staff to train and support volunteers?
- Do we have the supplies that volunteers need for the tasks?

- How will we supervise and evaluate the work of volunteers?
- Once we have invested in training volunteers, how will we keep them committed to our program?
- How will we document time contributed by volunteers, either to meet our cost-share requirement or to demonstrate the community's support for our activities?

Recruit by Reaching Out to the Community

Once you determine that volunteers are right for your organization, and you know what you want them to do and what resources you need to support them, the next step is finding them. In general, people become volunteers at an organization one of two ways:

1. contacting an organization to offer their help, or
2. responding to recruitment efforts

For recruitment, think about the kinds of people you are hoping to attract to serve as volunteers, keeping in mind that people from within the local community are often the most invested and dedicated volunteers, because they have a personal interest in the work. Also consider finding volunteers from different gender, age, and ethnic groups (if appropriate) to create a diverse team.

Then develop a recruitment plan. This might include:

- *Enlisting staff, Board members, and other personal contacts:* Many volunteers start doing community work because a friend, family member, or neighbor asks them. People often respond positively if someone they know extends a personal invitation to them.
- *Going where the people are:* Instead of trying to get people to come to you, try going to them. To recruit volunteers, attend meetings of other groups and go to places and events where potential volunteers gather.
- *Getting the word out:* It is important to inform people that your organization exists and welcomes volunteers. Post information at markets, schools and community centers, on websites and in newsletters and other places potential volunteers might look.

Match the Volunteer to the Task or Activity

It is helpful to create an application for potential volunteers to fill out, so you can gather contact information, background, education level, skills, time available, and any additional information that may be relevant.

Upon receiving applications, review applicants' qualifications and consider whether their skills and abilities match the tasks and responsibilities you need them to do. You may want to invite selected applicants to your office for an interview, solicit and check references, and verify any important background information.

5 Common Misconceptions about Managing Volunteers

- 1. Volunteers are free.** In fact, volunteers require investments of time and money to be effectively utilized.
- 2. Anyone can manage volunteers.** Volunteer management is as much a skill as staff management.
- 3. You do not need much time to manage volunteers.** Volunteers need both supervision and support—as you know, this takes time!
- 4. You do not need staff to manage volunteers (volunteers manage themselves, volunteers will just show up).** To maintain the quality of your programs, you must assign staff to oversee the work of your volunteers.
- 5. Volunteer management is a luxury we cannot afford.** Not true! Managing volunteers helps you make them an asset.

Recognizing the work, time, and energy of volunteers... not only thanks people for their service, but also highlights the importance of their contributions and encourages them to continue their work.

If you have lots of volunteers at one time, create a chart that includes the potential volunteers' names, contact information, available days and hours, special skills, and what they are willing and not willing to do. This will help you keep track and match volunteers to positions that suit them.

Clearly outline for applicants the roles and responsibilities of volunteers. This can take the form of a simple discussion or a written agreement. Items you may want to address are:

- time commitment required (short term, long term or ongoing)
- specific tasks to be performed
- reporting
- location
- any training and supervision you will provide

By clarifying everyone's roles from the very beginning, you ensure that the volunteers and your organization have a shared understanding of what you can expect of them and what they can expect of you. This will help to prevent confusion or disagreements in the future.

Orient Volunteers to Your Organization

Just like staff members, volunteers need someone to orient, train, and manage them. You want to make new people feel welcome and explain your work, why you do it, and why their help is important. Many people function better when they see the "big picture."

Delegate a staff member to provide volunteers with a comprehensive orientation, introducing them to your organization, its staff, vision and mission, offices, activities, and structures. Not only will this orientation help them understand and perform their duties, it will provide them with valuable information to share with friends, family, and acquaintances. Remember that, by virtue of their work with you, volunteers become ambassadors of your organization within the community.

Training Volunteers Is Crucial to Success—Yours and Theirs

Often volunteers are ready and willing to work but may not be technically skilled or understand your organization's systems and procedures. Do not assume that new people will just "figure things out."

Consider creating a training binder that contains general information about your organization and information specific to what the volunteer will be doing. Also, develop a volunteer manual with relevant policies and procedures that can be given to each volunteer at the beginning of his or her service.

If you have a large cohort of volunteers, you may want to do formal training sessions; if there are just a few volunteers doing different tasks across your organization, you may find it more efficient to use individualized mentorship and coaching to train volunteers.

Supervise as You Would Paid Staff

Overseeing the work of volunteers is just as vital as overseeing the performance of staff. Here are a few essentials:

- *Use people's time wisely:* Keep time demands reasonable and clear. People like to know in advance what time commitment is needed.
- *Supervise volunteers:* A specific staff member, either a central volunteer coordinator or another staff member with whom they work closely, should supervise every volunteer. The volunteer and supervisor should check in regularly to address any questions or concerns each may have. Frequent and open communication between supervisors and volunteers helps to improve performance, ensure volunteers feel supported, and address any problems that may arise.
- *Monitor and evaluate volunteers:* Even though they are unpaid, volunteers represent your organization and their work can affect your reputation. Put in place measures to track attendance and punctuality, participation in project activities, and achievement of results.

Recognize Good Work and Reward It

Recognizing the work, time, and energy of volunteers is a crucial part of effectively managing and maintaining their interest. It not only thanks people for their service, it highlights the importance of their contributions and encourages them to continue their work. Some ways to demonstrate your appreciation include:

- certificates of service
- volunteer profiles in reports and other publications
- volunteer appreciation events
- small tokens that identify the volunteer with your organization, such as t-shirts, hats, or bags (which let volunteers show pride in their work and gives your organization a little extra visibility in the process)
- public acknowledgment during community events
- opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge through training and conferences
- leadership opportunities among the cohort of volunteers

Remember that, by virtue of their work for you, volunteers become ambassadors of your organization within the community.

A note of caution: Don't offer benefits to volunteers that regular employees receive. Remember, volunteers, by definition, are not monetarily compensated for their work.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to recognizing volunteers. Regardless of the size and set-up of your own volunteer program, the message is the same: Pay attention to your volunteers, make them feel included, and don't forget to say "thank you" as part of your day-to-day culture. Do this and you'll find yourself with happy and productive volunteers.

Program Management

4

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Managing a program well requires effectively balancing resources, people, money, and time. Programs funded by USAID require that the grantee specify in a workplan its activities, the resources it will use, and the expected results. To maximize those results, the NGO will likely work in partnership with others and thus, enter into and manage formal and informal relationships.

This section introduces the reports and approvals that USAID requires to run, report on, and close out programs it funds. The topics also offer tips on managing the range of an NGO's relationships, including those with subrecipients, community stakeholders, and donors. Faith-based organizations will also find information here that addresses their questions about partnering with the USG.

TOPICS

- 4.1 Using Your Workplan as a Management Tool**
- 4.2 Managing Subrecipients under a Cooperative Agreement**
- 4.3 You and Your USAID Team**
- 4.4 Managing Your Relationship with Your Donors**
- 4.5 Engaging the Community**
- 4.6 Requirements for Semi-annual Performance Reporting**
- 4.7 Faith-based Organizations and USG Funding**
- 4.8 Project Close Out: Timeline**
- 4.9 Project Close Out: Required Reports and Actions**

Using Your Workplan as a Management Tool

Q. How can we best take advantage of our approved workplan?

A. The transition from project planning to implementation is a challenging part of program management. If you use your workplan as a planning tool and as a management tool, the transition to implementation is much easier.

Assign each section of your workplan to appropriate individuals or teams. For example, assign the budget section to your finance staff, the section on targets to the monitoring and evaluation staff, the activities section to the program staff, and so on.

Each person assigned should review the actual implementation and monitor progress against the workplan and note:

- Are all the steps in the workplan being followed?
- Are additional steps necessary that were not planned for?
- Will these additional steps require additional funds or resources for the program to be successful?
- Were the time estimates realistic? Are things taking longer or going faster?
- Do any changes need to be made in light of your answers and do these changes require USAID approval (see sidebar on the next page)?

By giving ownership of each section to different project team members, the entire team is involved in keeping the plan on track and working together to make adjustments and improve program implementation.

A Model from Workplan to Implementation

As a service provider, your unique approach to your work is your implementation model. Your model describes how you do your work, the costs associated, and the expected results. All of these elements

Definitions

Workplan—Document that lays out your planned activities, the resources required, and the targets.

References

[UN Work Planning Guide for Managers](#)

[Work Plan Template](#)

What changes need to be approved by USAID?

Some changes to your program will require USAID approval, including:

- changes in key personnel
- changes in targets
- changes in geographic scope
- budget modifications

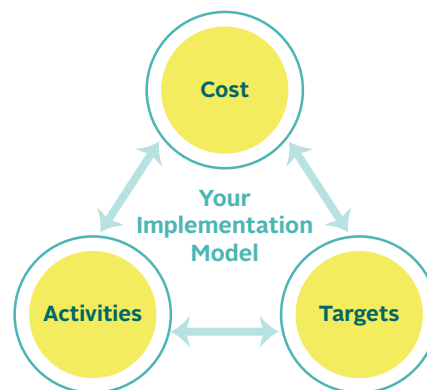
are captured in your workplan. By treating these as components of your implementation model, your team can focus on how to improve your results.

The three primary components of your implementation model are:

1. *activity descriptions* (how you go about providing your services)
2. *cost/budget*
3. *indicators and targets* (both the USAID indicators and other internally developed indicators, including process indicators)

When you link these three elements together, you can begin to see how changes in one will affect the other two. Your model may start simply, but you can expand it by adding more detailed indicators to allow you to manage and evaluate your program on various levels. As you grow, you could scale up targets in your implementation model. The workplan will be similar since you are doing the same type of activity, but it will have an impact on your budget, since you may need more staff or more equipment to reach more people with services and achieve the revised targets.

Three main components of your implementation model



On the other hand, if you decide to increase the types of activities you are undertaking (for example, you have a home-based care program and add an orphans and vulnerable children component) you will have to expand your workplan. You will require additional funds for implementation and you will also have a new set of indicators and targets that will need to be addressed. You should assess your organizational capacity to expand your program to ensure that the capacity exists to achieve the activities you indicate need to be done.

Next Steps

Meet with your team regularly to review progress made compared to the workplan.

- Is the project on time? On target? On budget?
- What adjustments have been or need to be made and why?
- How will you monitor the impact of those adjustments to make sure they are successful?
- Do any of the proposed changes require USAID approval?

Be sure to record the successes and failures and the decisions you make. This body of knowledge will become the foundation for your next workplan and future applications for funding. By continually monitoring your progress against your workplan, your workplan will evolve, continuously advancing your program and improving the services to beneficiaries.

4 Managing Subrecipients Under a USAID Cooperative Agreement

Definitions

Award—Financial assistance that provides support or stimulation to accomplish a public purpose. Awards include grants, cooperative agreements, and other agreements in the form of money or property in lieu of money made by the U.S. Government (USG) to an eligible recipient.

Prime Recipient—An organization receiving direct financial assistance (a grant or Cooperative Agreement) to carry out an activity or program.

Subrecipient—Rather than the grantor (that is, the grant-making agency) entrusting just one entity with carrying out a US Government program, sometimes multiple awardees will shoulder the responsibilities. In such cases, one entity—the one who submitted the grant application—will act as the prime and serve as a pass-through to the partnering entities, which are called subrecipients or subs. The government funding they receive to carry out their responsibilities is called subawards.

Q. What is the relationship among a prime recipient, a subrecipient, and USAID? What responsibilities does a prime recipient have regarding working with subrecipients?

A. USAID has a contractual relationship with the prime recipient. Under the Agreement, there are various requirements and provisions to which the prime must abide. These are specified or referenced in the Agreement.

The prime recipient has a similar relationship with a subrecipient. Since USAID does not have a direct relationship with the subrecipient, the prime is responsible for ensuring that all mandatory provisions and important clauses in the award flow down to the subrecipient.

The easiest way to do this is through a subagreement. The subagreement includes the requirements and practices to which the subrecipient must abide, and these are specified or referenced in the agreement between the prime and the sub.

The following covers major areas a prime partner needs to ensure are addressed when selecting and managing a subrecipient.

Subrecipient Selection Process

Selection Process. A prime will need to use its established selection process and properly document selection decisions. Suggested practices for selecting subrecipients include issuing a Request for Applications (RFA), formalizing existing informal relationships or soliciting bids from a smaller group of organizations that have a unique skillset. Subagreements should be awarded through competition unless specific conditions for restricting eligibility exist or competition is waived by the donor.

Pre-Award Assessment. Prior to making a final selection, a prime is required to evaluate a prospective subrecipient's financial and management systems and ability to implement a program. If possible, take the time to visit multiple finalists in your selection process.

Ensure the subrecipients organization has the capacity to manage funds and comply with all USG regulations.

USAID Approval. Because of the substantial involvement clause in your Cooperative Agreement, USAID must approve any subrecipient before it can receive funding. If a sub was named in your original proposal and budget, then it should be approved in your Cooperative Agreement; if not, seek approval from your Agreement Officer before signing a subagreement.

Agreement. When executing a subaward, the recommended agreements are the Standard Grant Agreement or the Fixed Amount Award. A valid Memorandum of Understanding or other less formal agreement is not a means of contracting a subrecipient because such agreements are not legally binding. Prior to entering into a contractual relationship, ensure that all parties understand the legal obligations involved, including provisions that flow down from a prime to a sub and any certifications or other documents required under the agreement.

Planning and Implementation

Requirements and Regulations. Check your award to see what provisions “flow down” to subs, and work with subs to review the requirements and USG regulations related to the type of agreement you use with them (standard grant or fixed amount award).

Examples

Procurement—Ensure subs are aware of cost principles and allowable costs and are properly documenting procurement actions.

Marking and Branding—Ensure subs understand the marking and branding requirements.

Cost Share. Any cost share that a subrecipient contributes may be aggregated and apply toward your cost-share contribution. Therefore, you should work with any subs to capture things such as volunteer hours and other in-kind contributions.

Reporting

Timelines. Give your subs deadlines that allow you to receive reports early enough that you can review and consolidate your reports for submission to USAID.

Audits. Determine whether subs will need to have an outside audit conducted. The threshold for Non-U.S. CSOs is \$300,000 or more in a given year. An annual audit is then required. In addition,

References

Subrecipient Monitoring and Management

2 CFR 200.330-332

Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Organizations

Mandatory Reference for ADS 300-303

Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards to Nongovernmental Organizations Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards to Nongovernmental Organizations

Mandatory Reference for ADS 303

<https://blog.grants.gov>

Working with Local Subrecipients

There are both financial and program factors to consider when deciding whether or not to use local subs. Organizations may choose local subs to build indigenous capacity or because local organizations operate at lower costs than international organizations.

Regardless, **primes are accountable for all activities and actions undertaken by subs.** If subs need a great deal of assistance, primes may need to have in-country staff on hand as well as mechanisms to ensure appropriate monitoring and support.

a close-out audit is required for all awards in excess of \$500,000. The threshold for U.S. CSOs funded is US\$750,000.

These threshold amounts include total funding from all USG sources—not just the USAID funding subs receive from your organization under your award.

Post-Award

Close Out. Subs must close out financially, complete all required deliverables, and clarify plans for any equipment or other inventory purchased with USAID funds. All of this must be done prior to your own close out. It is recommended that subagreements be closed three months prior to the close out of the prime award.

Records. Ensure subs are aware of what documentation must be maintained and for how long (typically three years after submission of the final report, but local laws may vary).

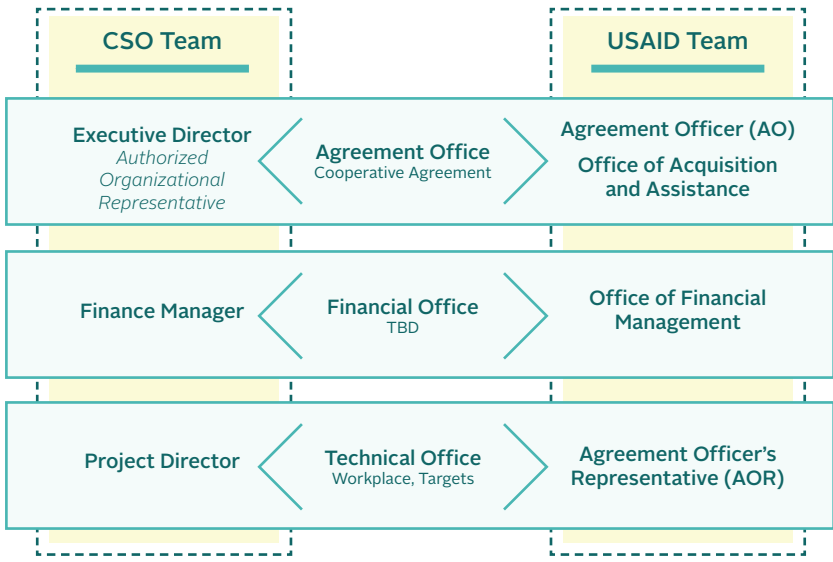
4.3

You and Your USAID Team

Q. Who is on the USAID team administering your award? What are their responsibilities? Whom do you contact with requests or reports?

A. During the life of your award, you will mostly deal with three kinds of offices at the USAID mission level: the agreement office, the financial office, and the technical office.

The chart below shows who in your organization is the likely counterpart for the individuals on the USAID team.



The *Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA)* is where you applied for funding, negotiated, and received your award. This office is responsible for managing issues related to compliance with the terms of your USAID award. Many major administrative issues and changes with your agreement will need to be approved in writing by the Agreement Officer (AO).

The AO's counterpart in your organization will likely be the Executive Director or Contracts Officer or someone in a similar leadership role with the authority to enter into legal agreements on behalf of the organization.

Definitions

Agreement Officer (AO)—The USAID official with the authority to enter into, administer, terminate, and/or close out assistance agreements and make related determinations and findings on behalf of USAID.

Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR)—The USAID official responsible for monitoring grantee progress toward achieving the agreement's purpose and for serving as technical liaison between the grantee and the AO. The AO will delegate authority for specific responsibilities to the AOR, who typically is named in your Cooperative Agreement.

Activity Manager—The USAID representative who may be designated to serve as your day-to-day point of contact.

References

- [2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#)
- [Federal Audit Clearinghouse](#)
- [Federal Financial Report SF-425](#)
- [Instructions to fill out Federal Financial Report SF-425](#)

The *Office of Financial Management (OFM)* is responsible for all aspects of financial management and works with technical offices to evaluate potential recipients' management abilities before an agreement is signed. OFM also closely reviews your expenditure reports.

In most cases, the *Technical Office* will be your primary, day-to-day point of contact. The technical office deals with all the program aspects of your award and is likely where your Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) or Activity Manager works.

USAID Agreements identify the AOR as the primary point of contact in the technical office (named in your Cooperative Agreement by the AO). However, the AOR may delegate day-to-day interactions to an Activity Manager. In this case, the Activity Manager will have all the same responsibilities as the AOR, except the ability to sign and approve certain documents and actions.

Although the AOR or Activity Manager will be your primary contact, you may need to contact other members of the USAID team to make specific requests or submit required reports.

[Online Training on How to Work with USAID](#)

Open and transparent guidance straight from USAID staff designed to answer some of the most frequently raised questions and concerns from organizations interested in partnering with USAID. This how-to training is designed to provide you with practical tips and concrete examples in topics ranging from researching potential funding opportunities to effectively putting together a proposal or application, budget, or monitoring and evaluation plan.

The following summary table contains general guidelines for which USAID offices and/or personnel are responsible for common requests, forms, and reports.

Request, Form, or Report	Office(s) and Individual(s) that Generally Handle the Issue: Name and E-Mail
Pre-Award Audit Response	Submit to the AO.
Annual Audit	Submit to the AO. Also check your agreement as to whether you must submit to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse.
Request for Advance or Reimbursement (SF-270)	Submit to the FM and copy the AOR. Your AOR may track your burn rate in order to make sure you have enough funds obligated.
Workplan	Submit to the AOR or as required by your Agreement.
Performance Reports	Performance reports are typically required on a quarterly basis to the AO and the AOR.
Final Reports	Submit to the AOR and the Development Experience Clearinghouse.
Requests for Vehicle Purchase Approval	Submit to the AO.
Request for Cost or Non-funded Extension	Submit to the AO.
Request for Additional Obligation	Submit to the AO.
Change to M&E Plan or Reduction in targets	Submit to the AOR.
Request for Budget Realignment	Submit to the AO.
Change in or Expansion to a new Geographical Location	A significant location change or expansion may involve a change to your approved program description.
Changes to the Program Description	Although changes to your workplan generally need AOR approval, changes to the program description—approved as part of your agreement with USAID—should be sent to the AO for approval.

Items to Consider

Q: Do you know all your USAID contacts? Do the members of your team know who their USAID counterparts are?

For easy reference, you may want to make a chart similar to the one in this article, filling in the names of staff and USAID contacts. Then you can share it with your team.

Q: Do you know who at USAID should receive your reports, requests, and other items related to your award? Do the appropriate members of your team know?

The names of your AO and AOR are found in your Agreement.

4 Managing Your Relationship with Donors

Definitions

Donor—Source of funding for an organization's program activities or operations. Typically, funding is for a specific intervention with a specific timeframe and budget. A donor may be:

- an individual or group
- a large agency, such as USAID
- a multinational agency, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- a corporation, such as Nike

Deliverables—Products or outputs that must be completed and presented to the donor under the terms of an agreement or contract.

Communication Protocol—A set of rules governing what information (finance, programs, technical) is to be shared, how (email, phone) it is shared, and who at the organization manages that interaction.

Q. How do we strengthen our relationship with donors?

A. Maintaining good relationships with donors is critical to the survival of your organization. If you are like most civil society organizations (CSOs), you need to secure sufficient resources to achieve your goals and fulfill your mission. This is an ongoing need that will likely be met by a number of donors over time. It is through your relationship with donors that your organization becomes connected with potential funding. The deeper the relationship, the stronger that connection and the more likely that donor will support your organization and its mission.

Just because a donor supported a program once, however, does not mean it will do so forever. Donor loyalty and trust must be earned again and again. How do you earn these? Comply with the rules for funding, demonstrate effectiveness of your interventions and communicate, communicate, communicate. Below you will find tips on communicating effectively to strengthen your donor relationships and maintain their support.

What Donors Need

Whether the donor is the U.S. Government (USG), a national or local government agency, a foundation or a business, a donor is an “investor” who helps you achieve your mission. Like you, donors are held accountable and must show results to their funding sources. Therefore, when you get results, donors do, too; when you succeed, they succeed.

When communicating with donors, keep in mind three main concerns because they shape a donor's perceptions and willingness to continue to support your program.

Donors want reassurance that your organization is:

1. *using its funds effectively and efficiently for the purpose originally intended,*
2. *effecting positive change in the lives of the individuals or communities the donor aims to serve, and*
3. *reflecting positively on the donor through a good image and reputation.*

References

[Fundraising for Success - A Guide for Small and Diaspora NGOs](#)

[The Resource Café](#)

Establish a Positive Relationship with Donors from the Start

Your relationship with a donor likely began with the development of a proposal. During that process, you demonstrated that you understood the issues and needs to be addressed and showed that you had feasible, cost-effective solutions and systems in place for managing financial resources. When you won that support, your relationship took on new meaning. There are a few basic steps that will help the relationship get off to a smooth start.

Conduct a Launch Meeting

It is good practice to hold a “launch meeting” with a donor as soon as possible to review the terms of your agreement; establish key contacts; discuss roles, responsibilities, and program activities; and share expectations. During this meeting, clarify terms of the agreement you find confusing. Ask questions. Where possible, share the timeframe for start-up activities, your initial program objectives, and solicit your donor’s feedback and questions. If both organizations have a clear initial understanding of each other’s expectations for the program, this will set a strong foundation for open communication and collaboration and may reduce the likelihood of future misunderstandings.

Build Regular Communication into your Workplan

Learn how the donor wants to hear from you and how often—monthly, quarterly, every six months. Ask what form of communication the donor prefers (email, phone) and what issues/results are of greatest interest.

Develop a Donor Communication Protocol

Create a list of the staff within your organization (finance, program, and technical) who may be called upon to communicate with a donor. You may wish to refer the donor to different people on your team to address specific issues, or you may decide that one person should be the gatekeeper for all donor communications.

As part of your larger Communication Plan, develop a set of rules (a protocol) stating what information is shared with donors, how it is shared, and who at the organization manages the interaction with donors. Once decided, create written guidelines to discuss and share with your staff. Present this information to your team to create mutual understanding and expectations about the donor.

*When you get results,
donors do, too; when you
succeed, they succeed.*

The initial stages of the donor relationship are crucial to establishing strong and open communication that will be important throughout your entire award.

Ten Tips for Maintaining a Strong Relationship with Donors

As with any mutually beneficial relationship, it is easier to nurture and build on an established connection than to start from zero. Below are a few tips to reinforce your rapport with major donors.

- 1. Communicate effectively.** Be as clear, direct, and honest in your communication as you can, verbally and in writing.
- 2. Follow up after donor meetings.** After key meetings or conversations between the leadership of your organization and the donor, send a written summary of key issues discussed and follow-up actions. This creates a record of the meeting and clarifies decisions and actions that will be taken in the future.
- 3. Be responsive to donor requests.** When a donor requests information, respond quickly. Ask questions to ensure you understand what is being requested and when it is due. If a request is unrealistic, be honest and explain why. If it will take you some time to compile the information requested, be clear about when you can submit it.
- 4. Make realistic promises and deliver on them.** Be careful not to compromise the quality of your work for the sake of speed. Thus, when facing a deadline, ensure you can deliver what you promise with a worthwhile product. If this is not possible, be honest about it.
- 5. Use donor funds as expected.** Implement your program as described in your proposal; that is what your donor “bought.” Notify the donor of any needed alterations (for example, changes in scope, location of work, or target audience) to your work right away to get guidance on how the donor would like you to proceed.
- 6. Submit accurate, complete program deliverables on time.** Reports and other deliverables document your program accomplishments and successes. Therefore, it is critical that deliverables are clear, well-written, and without errors so that they reflect well on your organization and may be shared with other funders and stakeholders. Emphasize quality over quantity. Meet the deadlines set by your donor. This demonstrates your professionalism, reliability, and responsiveness. Know your donors well enough to link their support with your organization’s activities, progress, and results they find most meaningful.
- 7. Do not surprise donors.** Be open and truthful about challenges and barriers in your program as well as successes throughout the period of performance. Setbacks and missteps are normal and most donors understand the challenging environment in which you work. If you maintain an open and collaborative relationship, there should be no surprises when your donor receives your deliverables.

- 8. Share your achievements.** Recognize and give credit to donors. Tell your organization's story and disseminate program results broadly and through a variety of media—newspapers, radio, websites, social media, conferences, meetings, and special events. Make sure your donor's support is always acknowledged in accordance with your marking and branding plan as necessary and always thank the donor for their support. In addition, you may wish to invite your donor to participate in events, conferences or meetings where you present program findings and results.
- 9. Take solutions a step further.** Suggest ways in which you can eliminate a problem and articulate how you can share new knowledge with other stakeholders to support lasting solutions. Identify gaps in your present program or interventions, and recommend a new direction or strategy for greater effectiveness. Also, take time to reflect on the approaches that did not have the intended result and note them along with other “lessons learned” that you can compile at the end of the program. These types of proactive approaches may influence donor priorities in future years.
- 10. Prepare for visitors and opportunities to showcase your program.** Your local and global reputation and image can be affected by the impressions made in planned and spontaneous interactions with high-level officials, international and local visitors, and new staff. A well-organized and informative introduction and site visit with program stakeholders is an important way to communicate your successes and needs. Always plan ahead and have strong spokespersons available to showcase your work to visitors, potential donors, and advocates.

When you communicate effectively, a donor will see you as a reliable and trusted partner and may become both an important advocate for your organization and instrumental in sustaining its long-term financial health. Building a strong relationship through open, two-way communication is key to making this a reality. The confidence people have in an organization has much to do with their loyalty to it and their willingness to support it.

Accountability and trust are keys to building relationships with donors who will sustain the long-term financial health of your organization.

4 Engaging and Connecting with Your Community

Definitions

Community—A group of people united by location or by common beliefs, values, or characteristics. Community also includes social interactions that promote:

- bonding around shared interests or characteristics
- a sense of belonging, purpose, and common good
- a high degree of cooperation and participation in working for common goals
- an interpersonal climate of mutual respect

Culture—A set of shared values, beliefs, and practices that characterize a group. Culture is learned through socialization and endures across generations. Shared culture, including gender roles, can be part of what unites a community.

Stakeholder—An individual, community, or institutional entity that will be affected by, or who can affect, your project.

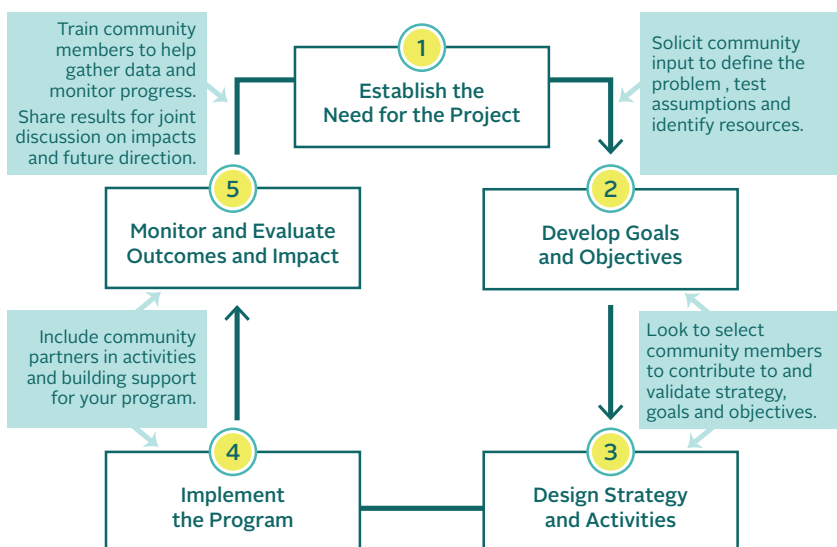
Beneficiary—An individual or institutional entity that is directly supported, improved, or helped by your project.

Q. What is community engagement? How does it work?

A. Community engagement is a process of building and maintaining relationships with beneficiaries and other stakeholders who will be involved with your organization in a variety of ways around a shared goal to the benefit of both the organization and community members. It means creating processes and structures that consistently involve community members in decisions about program direction, service quality, client satisfaction, and results. Community engagement takes time and energy. An investment in such a two-way process, however, often pays off in enhanced accountability, more sustainable outcomes and greater confidence in a community's ability to solve problems.

Community Engagement and the Project Life Cycle

The project life cycle follows a basic, logical sequence of steps that helps an organization move from identifying a problem, to developing solutions, to implementing activities, to evaluating results. Different organizations will use different planning methods to suit their needs, but involving the community at every stage of the project can contribute to lasting results and real social change.



Outreach vs. Community Engagement

Many people use the terms “outreach” and “engagement” interchangeably, but they are not the same. Here are some important distinctions.

Outreach

- Is primarily one-way, like a radio broadcast
- Focuses on talking to people, rather than listening
- Means approaching an audience or community with information
- Focuses on educating people
- Should be an important part of both a communication and community engagement strategy

Engagement

- Requires building ongoing, two-way relationships based on trust
- Involves listening to people
- Means working collaboratively to address community concerns
- Is integrated with an organization’s culture, strategy, and practices
- Means working with the community to identify solutions together
- Focuses on a conversation—an ongoing dialogue to develop understanding

In both cases, using local experts and consultants can help to ensure that you are reaching out to and engaging the community appropriately and effectively.

Source: The National Center for Media Engagement

Establish the Need for the Project

To help determine why an intervention is necessary, test your assumptions and check that your information is current and accurate by soliciting input from people who are most affected by the problem as well as those who can influence outcomes. Identifying needs and resources before starting a program means that you know from the beginning what you are dealing with and are less likely to be surprised later by something you didn’t expect.

Depending on the issue, you may want to consult formal and informal leaders, men and women, young people, old people, technical experts, teachers, and businesses. The more diversity among the people you engage, the more different opinions will likely be expressed and discussed; that means better decisions may get made.

Engaging your community will help your organization achieve long-lasting results and real change

References

Performance and Financial Monitoring and Reporting [2 CFR 200.328](#)

Develop Goals and Objectives

Analyze the input you gathered to ensure that the project's goals and objectives match the wants and expectations of the community. It may be important to address the community's priorities first to establish trust and show respect, even if you do not believe that those priorities are in fact the most important. Building relationships and credibility may be more important at the beginning of a long association than immediately tackling what seems to be the most pressing need. Among other things, community members' priorities may be the right ones: they may see underlying factors that you do not yet understand.

Engage the Community in Program Implementation

Promote sustained involvement over the life of the program. Ensure that the community has a role to play in both implementing and monitoring the program. Creating regular opportunities for the community to keep a program on track may increase the chances that program benefits can be sustained. For example, program staff may meet regularly with an advisory committee to share and discuss project results.

Identify community resources that can be used to inform the project, share information and implement activities. These resources include people, institutions, and other organizations active in the area. Establish ways for community members and program teams to learn, discuss and make decisions together.

Monitor and Evaluate Outcomes and Impact

Review progress together and build opportunities to gather and share results with the community at regularly scheduled intervals. Share results regularly and troubleshoot relevant problems together. Enroll and train community members to help with site visits, client satisfaction surveys, focus groups, and other monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes. Such participatory M&E, which both comes from and goes directly back to the people who are most deeply affected by the intervention, yields useful data and gives everyone a sense of ownership in the results.

Reporting Project Progress and Results

Q. What are program reports and how do we prepare them?

A. Under the terms of your USAID award, you will need to produce program reports to describe how your project is progressing and compare actual results with the targets laid out in your workplan. Program reports may also be required by host country governments. If you have a multi-country award, you may need to provide separate reports to each country.

Ten Tips for Preparing Your Program Reports

The following are designed to help you develop the best program reports possible.

1. Start by involving subrecipients and staff.

Writing program reports provides opportunities to talk to your staff and subrecipients about your program. To aid this process, provide subrecipients with a simplified reporting template and give them a deadline for submitting their contributions to the report. Gather your staff to discuss progress made over the reporting period. Be sure to allow sufficient time between the subrecipient's deadline and the submission date to consolidate and finalize your report.

2. Do not surprise your Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR).

When your AOR reads your report, there should be no surprises. Ensure that your AOR is aware of any major changes that affect your budget or targets (such as changes in subrecipients, geographic location, or key personnel) before they happen, since many require AOR and/or Agreement Officer approval. Do not wait to notify your AOR in the report. Your program report should document these changes and give updates on progress since these changes were put into place.

3. Take the time to do an honest evaluation.

With many day-to-day demands, it is tempting to reduce the effort put into the report. When evaluating your progress over the reporting period, there will be successes and challenges. A good performance report provides a balanced look at the program, both in terms of progress as well as setbacks.

Definitions

Indicator—A particular characteristic or dimension that will be used to measure change. Height is an example of an indicator.

Data—The actual measurement or factual information collected about an indicator. A measurement of someone's height at 5'7" tall is an example of a piece of data.

Baseline—Data collected about specific indicators before an intervention begins that will serve as the starting point against which to measure change.

Target—A specific, planned level of result for an indicator you expect to achieve within a defined period of time.

Unit Cost—The actual cost of your program divided by the actual number of targets reached. For example, a US\$100,000 prevention program that reaches 1,000 people has a unit cost of US\$100 per person reached.

Monitoring—Periodic tracking (for example, daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually) of your project's progress by systematically gathering and analyzing data and information about what you are doing, whom you are reaching, and whether your activities are being implemented as planned.

Workplan—A document that lays out your planned activities, resources, and targets.

4. Quantify your conclusions with data.

Although the bulk of your program report may be a narrative discussion of progress and setbacks, the core of your report is the data. You should be able to demonstrate the successes and challenges by looking at your data. This includes targets, financial performance, and the unit cost of a service (when applicable).

5. Use your workplan and budget as baseline data sources

The data that are driving your report come from your monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system and your accounting system (to show actual costs). However, to measure performance you must compare these data to the targets you laid out in your workplan and workplan budget. This shows whether your program exceeded, met, or fell short of your expectations.

6. Preview your next workplan.

Use the program report as a baseline for future activities. Challenges faced in the past year should be addressed in the next workplan. Preview various options your organization is planning in the next year to address these challenges.

7. Link to the in-country Strategic Objectives.

Your program is not a stand-alone effort—you are working as a piece of a much larger effort in the country where you are implementing. Your program links to other programs through referrals, building the capacity of local CSOs, participating in technical working groups, and demonstrating and sharing your successes with other CSOs. Your report should not just look at the performance of your program, but also show how your activity is linking with and contributing to the wider program targets in your country.

8. Keep documentation for your final performance report.

Performance reports and workplans tend to make us overly focused on the yearly segments of our programs. Your program is an ongoing effort, however. Above and beyond meeting targets and staying within budget, your staff are constantly refining a program model to address the challenges of the communities where you work to be more effective, more sustainable, and more efficient. As you refine your model, document your activities. This helps you write your final performance report. It also provides guidance should you want to expand your model in the future or try to replicate it elsewhere. It will allow you to avoid making the same mistakes that may have occurred in the past.

References

Performance and Financial Monitoring and Reporting [2 CFR 200.328](#)

9. Be aware of in-country requirements.

As you plan for your report, be sure to keep in mind requirements and deadlines of host country governments, in addition to those of USAID.

10. Share with subrecipients and staff.

You began this process by gathering input from subrecipients and your staff. Close the loop at the end of the process by sharing the final document with your team. Often, partners and staff become focused on their pieces of the puzzle. Sharing the overall program performance reports with everyone is an opportunity to keep your team engaged and focused on the bigger picture. Consider taking a few hours to share an overview of the report with staff including a preview of upcoming adjustments to be made in the coming year.

In Your Agreement

Typical USAID cooperative agreements list your program reporting requirements in Attachment A – Schedule, under section A.5.2.

4 Faith-Based Organizations and USG Funding

Definitions

Cost Share—The portion of project costs not covered by the USG. This may be in-kind or cash contributions.

Faith-based Organization (FBO)—NGO that self-defines itself as having a mission and operation guided by faith orientation.

Faith-based and Community Organization (FBCO)—NGO whose mission and operation are guided by either faith orientation or focus on a specific community or both.

In-Kind Contribution—Non-cash resources contributed to a project. This may include volunteer services, equipment, or property.

Non-governmental Organization (NGO)—A legally constituted organization created by private persons or organizations with no participation or representation of any government.

Q. What guidelines apply to faith-based organizations (FBOs) partnering with the USG?

A. An increasing number of FBOs are contributing to the success of various U.S. Government (USG)-funded programs in countries around the world. These efforts are coordinated through Center for Faith and Opportunity (CFOI) established in 2002 by U.S. Presidential executive order 13280.

The same rights and responsibilities that apply to prime FBO recipients also apply to FBO subrecipients. If you are managing FBO subrecipients, it is your responsibility to ensure they are aware of their rights and fulfill their responsibilities.

Your organization *does not* need to change:

- its name—if your organization has religious references or words in its name, they may remain
- its charter—if your organization has religious references in its charter or mission statement, they may remain
- its Board of Directors—there is no need to alter the make up of your Board of Directors, even if it is made up exclusively of members of your faith
- its workspace—if you provide services in a building that is also used for religious activities, you do not need to cover up or remove any religious artwork, signs or materials
- its hiring practices—if your organization wants to hire individuals who share the organization's faith, you may continue to do so

Note: Certain USG programs require beneficiaries or community leaders to have representation on the Board of Directors without regard to religious affiliation.

References

[USAID Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives](#)

Your Responsibilities

FBOs are required to follow these principles to be eligible to receive USG funding:

- They may not discriminate against anyone receiving their services based on religious beliefs or make participation in religious activities a condition for receiving their services.
- They must be accountable for the USG funds they receive and use them only for their intended purposes, with no USG dollars being used to support inherently religious activities such as worship, prayer, proselytizing, or studying religious or scriptural materials.

Example

If an employee works part time on your project and part time conducting religious activities for your organization, the employee's job description and time sheets should clearly reflect these separate responsibilities, and the funding for his/her paycheck should come from separate sources.

Non-discrimination in Service Provision: Make sure that potential beneficiaries clearly understand that they are eligible to receive your services regardless of their faith.

Separation by Time or Location: FBOs must take steps to ensure that the religious activities they conduct are separate from the USG-funded services they provide in either time or location.

Example

You are permitted to advertise your organization's other religious services. For example, a poster may announce an upcoming Bible study. However, it must be clear to the beneficiaries that they may receive the USG-funded services regardless of whether or not they choose to participate in the religious activity.

Separation in Organizational Practices: Your accounting records must show a separation between religious activities and USG-funded activities.

Example

If your project pays for palliative care training of home-based caregivers, you may conduct this training in a church, but it must be at a time other than during a worship service. Or you may choose to conduct the training at the same time as the worship service, but it must be in a different location (perhaps another room in the church).

Project Close Out: Timeline

Definitions

Non-Funded Extension (sometimes called a No-Cost Extension)—When the recipient requests an extension to the agreement's period of performance, either to complete program activities that were delayed through no fault of the recipient or to carry out additional activities within the project's scope using unspent funds. Having unspent funds near a project's end by itself is insufficient justification to request such an extension and there is no guarantee that USAID will approve. It is a best practice to request non-funded extensions from your AO 90 days before the end of the agreement date.

Documenting the successes and lessons learned during your program will help your organization, USAID and your local partners improve future activities.

Q. Our USAID Cooperative Agreement is coming to an end. What steps should we take to close out our award?

A. There are several important steps your organization is required to take during the final phase of your award. Because many of these steps take time and money, they must be planned, budgeted, and started well before the end date of the award. Other steps may be completed after the end date, but it is advised to complete them beforehand if possible because *project funds may not be spent after the award end date* and staff may move on to other projects. Below you will find a checklist of what is required when preparing to end a USAID cooperative agreement.

Close-Out Timeline

This timeline covers close-out tasks to be undertaken in the final 12 months of your award, plus key tasks that may be completed either before or after your award end date. Some of these items are required of all recipients, while others, such as reporting cost share, may only be applicable to certain recipients.

Items on this timeline are relevant to both prime recipients and subrecipients. Primes should work closely with their subs throughout the close-out process to make sure they understand and comply with their requirements.

References

Review your Cooperative Agreement for specific award close-out requirements.

- For general guidance consult [22 CFR 226.71](#)
- Close-out procedures or [2 CFR 200.343](#)

Time	Activity	Who	Details
12 months before end of award	Budget for close out (<i>required</i>)	Program Manager	Develop a workplan and budget for the project's final year that includes costs for all close-out-related activities.
9 months before end of award	Plan for continuity of services or other project-funded activities (<i>optional, but highly recommended</i>)	Executive Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the need for continuing your project's services or interventions and, if warranted, explore options for future funding. In consultation with partners, community leaders, beneficiaries, and donors, determine whether your organization will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the project with funding from new sources. Transfer management of the project or responsibility for services or interventions to a local partner who has alternate funding. Close out your activities because, for example, there is no ongoing need for the services. Create a plan that describes the steps necessary for a smooth transition.
6 months before end of award	Begin end-of-project evaluation (<i>optional</i>)	M&E Manager or Consultant	Conduct an evaluation of the project and document your experiences. This will help USAID and your local partners improve future activities.
	Request non-funded extension (<i>optional, as needed</i>)	Program Manager	Determine whether your program needs a non-funded or other type of extension. Then, begin discussions with your Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and/or Agreement Officer (AO). Review your pipeline and burn rates to determine whether you will have funds remaining at the end of your program. The USG officials will require an explanation of why you need the extra time and what you plan to achieve during the proposed extension period. A detailed budget for any expenditures to be incurred after the original award end date will be required for a cost or non-funded extension.
	Work with key staff on employment transition (as needed)	Executive Director	Discuss employment opportunities and end-of-project transitions with staff early. This should help to retain them as long as possible and also prepare you if a person chooses to leave before the end of the project period. Consult local labor laws to ensure you comply with all requirements.

You are required to retain all accounting records related to your award for at least three years following the submission of the final financial report.

In Your Agreement

When Does Your Agreement End?

Check your Cooperative Agreement to find out the exact end date of your award. If you have received an extension, you should have a modification of your agreement from your AO documenting the change that states the new end date.

Agreement End Date versus Program End Date

Your agreement end date may not be the same as your program end date. In many cases, organizations continue implementing their programs with new funding sources.

When USAID gives you a follow-on award to fund an ongoing program, it may be in the form of a modification or amendment to the original award, or it may be an entirely new agreement. If you receive a follow-on award from the USG that is a new agreement altogether, you must close out the original award.

It is best to have your subrecipients close out 90 days before the end of the award to ensure that all final costs and reports are complete.

Time	Activity	Who	Details
12 months before end of award	Develop close-out requirements for subrecipients (<i>as needed</i>)	Prime and subrecipient Program Managers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review close-out requirements with subrecipients and make sure they have the resources and help necessary to comply. 2. Set a deadline for when reports must be submitted to you to ensure you have ample time to incorporate them into your final report.
	Begin subrecipient close out	Subrecipient Executive Director	It is a best practice to have subs close out 90 days before the end of the prime award, so they can be sure that all final costs and reports are complete before the award end date. To achieve this you should begin close out discussions with your subs during this period.
3 months before end of award	Submit the final SF-270 request for funds	Financial Manager	Submit your final funding request or invoice to cover all final expenses. (If not operating on a quarterly advanced-funding basis, review the practices of USAID's Financial Management Office for SF-270 deadlines).
	Begin tracking accruals	Financial Manager	Keep a close eye on remaining award funds by tracking accruals during the last three months of your award.
	List administrative close-out tasks	Program Director	List all contracts, leases, insurance policies, and other items that will need to be canceled or transferred, as well as important dates and contract provisions to be considered.
	Submit inventory disposition request to your AOR	Program Manager	<p>Review the regulations regarding selling or using equipment outside of award-related activities.</p> <p>Create a detailed description of what you propose to do with the equipment or unused supplies when the award ends. Note that USAID has the final say over equipment disposition.</p> <p>Submit this to your AO who will either approve your proposals or provide further instructions as to what is to be done with the equipment. If you do not hear from the USG within 120 days of submitting the inventory report, you may sell the equipment and reimburse the USG for its share.</p> <p>(For more information, review the "Title To and Use of Property" provision in your Cooperative Agreement.)</p>

Time	Activity	Who	Details
End of award	Review information needed for financial and performance reports required by your donor	Executive Director, Financial Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cease incurring costs to be charged to the award (unless you have prior approval, which means the award date has been extended). 2. Begin financial close out, including demonstrating that you have met all the cost-share requirements and finalizing all award-related expenditures.
60 days after end of award	Collect subrecipient reports due to prime (<i>recommended</i>)	Subrecipient Executive Director	If your subs did not close out before the end of the award, collect their reports now to ensure adequate time to incorporate their contributions into your final report.
	After receipt of subrecipient reports, send close-out letter to subs		Send a letter formally ending your contractual relationship with your subrecipient(s).
90 days after end of award	Submit the final SF-425 Federal Financial Report (<i>required</i>)	Financial Manager	Submit the final SF-425 in accordance with the terms of your agreement covering the entire award period. Be sure it demonstrates that you have met any and all cost-share requirements and that your accounting system confirms your cost share, in case of an audit. Unspent funds must be returned to USAID.
	Submit final performance report (<i>required</i>)	Program Manager	Submit final performance report, which focuses on final outcomes and lessons learned throughout the entire award period to your AOR and the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), in accordance with the terms of your agreement.
	Submit final inventory report (<i>required</i>)	Program Manager	Submit final inventory report in accordance with the terms of your agreement including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A list of equipment costing US\$5,000 or more, with a useful life of one year or more, purchased with USAID funds. 2. A statement describing where the final inventory was disposed.
	Submit VAT (foreign tax) report (<i>required</i>)	Financial Manager	Submit the final VAT report, which covers taxes paid and reimbursed through the end of your award in accordance with the terms of your agreement.

Keep a close eye on all remaining grant funds by tracking accruals during the last three months of your award.

Time	Activity	Who	Details
End of your fiscal year after award close out	Submit final audit <i>(required)</i>	Auditor	Conduct a final audit covering the last year of your award. You may conduct this in sync with the end of your organization's fiscal year and submit as you would other audits in accordance with the terms of your agreement.
3 years following submission of final financial report	Maintain records <i>(required)</i>	Headquarters Office Financial Manager	Maintain all accounting records related to your award for at least three years following the submission of the final financial report. The USG retains the right to audit you or your subrecipient(s) at anytime during those three years. (For more information, review the "Accounting, Audit and Records" provision in your Cooperative Agreement.)

4.9

Project Close Out: Required Reports and Actions

Q. What are the final reports, required actions, and other key considerations related to project close out?

A. There are numerous tasks related to close out that cover every aspect of your organization's management, including finances and accounting human resources, inventory and property management, program management, record keeping, subrecipient management, and other administrative issues. What follows covers the reports, required actions and other key considerations related to each of these management areas.

Each of the items below applies to most, but not necessarily all, recipients and their subrecipients. Be sure to review the terms of your agreement to confirm which requirements apply to your award.

Finances and Accounting Reports and Forms

- **Final invoice or request for advance.** Submit a final invoice or advance payment request to the USG according to the arrangements laid out by USAID's Financial Management Office.
- **Final SF-425.** Submit 90 days after award end date. Your final SF-425 may be subject to NICRA adjustments based on either your own or a Federal audit. (For tips on completing the final SF-425, see the sidebar on the following page.)
- **Final VAT (Foreign Tax) report.** Submit a report to your Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) summarizing all foreign taxes paid to and reimbursed by the host government since the last tax reporting cycle. If you receive reimbursements at a later date, you must submit these funds to USAID.

Required Actions

- **Reimburse remaining funds.** Reimburse the USG any remaining unspent funds within 90 days of the award end date.
- **Conduct audit.** Conduct and submit the results of your annual audit as you normally would, but ensure the auditor also reviews the close out of your award.

Definitions

Incurring Close-out Costs—

An Agreement Officer (AO) may approve an organization's request to incur close-out-related expenses during the 90 days between the award end date and the submission of the final report. These expenses may only cover close-out-related costs. No implementation or other costs are covered. No additional funds are granted. Therefore, an organization must have sufficient funds remaining in its award to cover these costs.

Some organizations choose to close out with their subrecipients 90 days before the end of the award. This ensures that no costs are incurred by the subrecipient after the award end date.

References

Review your Cooperative Agreement for specific award close-out requirements.

- For general guidance consult [22 CFR 226.71](#)
- Close out procedures or [2 CFR 200.343](#)

Items to Consider

Final SF-425

Your final Federal Financial Report includes the final quarter of activity, all final transactions and expenditures and the cumulative totals for your entire award. This report is submitted using the same SF-425 form you use to submit your quarterly Federal Financial Report.

The regular and final reports are identical with the following exceptions:

- The final report is due 90 days after the end of the award.
- Block 6 indicates that this is a “Final Report.”
- Block 9, “Reporting Period Covered,” will include the dates for the entire award.

The calculations in the main body of the report, however, are the same. The calculations for the “current period” will include the final quarter of the award and the “cumulative totals” should equal the cumulative totals spent during the entire life of the award.

Please note that the *RECIPIENT SHARE OF OUTLAYS* section is where the USG will determine whether you have met your cost-share obligation, if applicable. Ensure that this section includes both your in-kind and cash contributions toward the program.

Key Considerations

- **Track accruals.** If your accounting system is cash based rather than accruals based, set up a special spreadsheet to track accruals during the last three months of your award to closely monitor remaining funds and outstanding costs.
- **Document cost-share contribution.** To ensure the cost-share requirement is met, document both in-kind and cash contributions. Some organizations attach a memo to their final SF-425 that summarizes their cost-share contribution, stating whether it was or was not met and why.
- **Finalize indirect cost rate.** If your organization has been granted a provisional indirect cost rate, it must be finalized before you submit your final invoice. Address this issue early with your AO. If the finalized cost rate is different from the provisional rate, you may have to reimburse USAID for overcharges.
- **Do not incur expenses.** You are not allowed to incur any expenses after the award end date. You can request prior approval from your AO if you foresee the need to incur expenses after the award ends.
- **Liquidate funds.** Though you cannot incur expenses after the award end date, you may still have outstanding obligations to pay invoices to vendors for costs incurred prior to the end date. You must pay all these expenses and reimburse the USG any remaining funds within 90 days of the award end date.
- **Reconcile advances.** If advances have been given to any staff or subs, be sure to have them submit final expense reports and reimburse you if there are any remaining funds.
- **Close bank accounts.** Close bank accounts that were set up specifically for this program when they are no longer needed.

Human Resources

Key Considerations

Reassign or Terminate Personnel

Review your staffing needs for programs that will continue to operate after the close of your program and end the employment of staff you cannot retain. Be sure to follow local labor laws when ending an individual's employment.

Inventory/Property Management

Reports

- Submit final inventory report with the final report 90 days after the end of the award. Submit a detailed list showing that items have been disposed of in accordance with your disposition plan as approved by USAID.

Key Considerations

- **Terminate leases (if appropriate).** Terminate leases on rented office space that you do not plan to use after the award.
- **Review USG equipment and property use regulations.** The USG has specific rules about the sale and use of USG-funded equipment and commodities. Be sure to review these restrictions closely to make sure your post-award plans for these items comply with the terms of your agreement.
- **Obtain permission for sale of property.** You must have prior approval from your AO to sell equipment and large stocks of unused commodities purchased with USAID funds.

Program Management

Reports

- **Submit final performance report.** Due 90 days after the end of the award. Ensure you submit reports to your AOR and the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) (<http://dec.usaid.gov>) as required.

Key Considerations

- **End-of-project evaluation.** Consider contracting an end-of-project evaluation to start no later than six months prior to the end of your award.
- **Close out with the community.** Meet with key stakeholders and beneficiaries in the communities where you are implementing programs to share information and gain feedback.

Record Keeping

Required Actions

- **Maintain records.** Maintain accounting records for your organization and documents submitted to you by your subs for three years after the submission of the final SF-425. Be aware that the USG may request to audit these records at any time during those three years.

Key Considerations

- **Subrecipient records.** Be sure your subrecipient(s) also maintain accounting and other award-related records for three years.

Subrecipients

Required Actions

- **Gather final report information.** You are required to incorporate your subrecipient's data into your final performance, financial, and inventory reports.

You are required to incorporate your subrecipient's data into your final performance, financial, and inventory reports.

Once close out is complete, send a letter to your AO confirming that key close-out activities have been completed; make sure to keep this letter on file.

Key Considerations

- **Close-out letters to subs.** Send a letter to subrecipient(s) to formally end the contractual relationship. This process ends your obligations and releases you from future liability.
- **Close out ahead of award end date.** Some organizations choose to close out with their subrecipient(s) 30–90 days before the end of the award so that financial close out, final invoices, property disposal and final reporting are all completed prior to the award end date. Doing this ensures that no costs are incurred by the subrecipient(s) after the award end date. Confirm that subs know that any costs incurred after the award end date will not be reimbursed.

Other Administrative Management Issues

Key Considerations

- **Insurance policies.** Cancel insurance policies no longer needed.
- **Terminate supply contracts, utilities, and service provider contracts (if appropriate).** Cancel all ongoing contractual arrangements that will not continue beyond the life of the project. Obtain a receipt from each vendor or provider indicating its acceptance of the notice of termination.
- **Close-out summary letter to funding agency.** Once close out is complete, send a letter to your AO confirming that key close-out actions have been completed, including submission of the final invoice, inventory and all other reports to appropriate parties, as well as closing out all subcontracts and subagreements. Keep this letter on file, since your funding agency may send a letter requesting an update on your close out, and you can resend the original letter.

Compliance

5

COMPLIANCE

An NGO, in addition to abiding by local laws and its own constitution or articles of association, must also comply with the terms and conditions of donors who want to ensure that award funds are spent wisely. By entering into an agreement with USAID, an organization agrees to guarantee that all aspects of its project implementation are in line with the Agency's policies, rules, and regulations. Not fulfilling these obligations can result in penalties. The terms and conditions of an organization's award are outlined in a Cooperative Agreement or other legally binding document the organization signs.

This section, combined with section 2 on Financial Management, offers ways to put into practice USG cost principles and standard provisions that may apply to an award. It also looks at the essential elements of a procurement system, requirements for travel and environmental issues under USAID-funded programs, as well as issues related to gifts to or lobbying USG employees.

TOPICS

- 5.1 Overview of Procurement Policies**
- 5.2 Procurement Processes and Allowability**
- 5.3 Procurement Solicitations and Selection**
- 5.4 Procurement Restricted and Ineligible Items**
- 5.5 Procurement Source and Vendor Restrictions, Geographic Codes, and Waivers**
- 5.6 Vehicle Procurement**
- 5.7 Excluded Parties and Terrorism Searches**
- 5.8 International Travel Planning and Requirements**
- 5.9 Travel Expenses and Reimbursement**
- 5.10 Gifts to and Lobbying USG Employees**
- 5.11 USAID Environmental Requirements**

Overview of Procurement Policies

Q. What policies governing purchasing goods, supplies, and services does our organization need to effectively manage USAID funds?

A. U.S. Government (USG) procurement regulations dictate what items award recipients can buy, where they can buy them, how to buy and ship them, what taxes are applicable and what documentation is required.

By entering into an agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), an organization commits to guaranteeing that all aspects of its project implementation are in line with USG policies, rules, and regulations. Not fulfilling these obligations can result in penalties. The terms and conditions of an award are outlined in a Cooperative Agreement or other legally binding document your organization signs.

The following is meant to help you develop policies, procedures, and practices for acquiring goods and services based on applicable regulations. (It is not a substitute for USAID *Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Organizations – Mandatory Reference for ADS 303.*)

Establishing Good Procurement Policies, Procedures and Practices

As a recipient of USG funds, one of your goals is to make sure this money is used to deliver needed services to beneficiaries as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. To do this, an organization needs an effective and efficient procurement policy, as well as procedures and practices to operationalize it. A sound procurement policy helps your organization:

- establish and maintain control procedures;
- maintain written standards of conduct addressing conflicts of interest;
- seek open competition to obtain the best value for the money;
- ensure that staff do not mishandle funds;

Definitions

Allowable Cost—A cost incurred specifically to support or advance the objectives of your award.

Procurement—The process of acquiring goods, supplies, and services in support of program activities.

Micro-Purchase Threshold—The amount your organization sets under which your procurement process may be simplified. For example, if your micro-purchase threshold is \$1,000, you may be required to secure a minimum of three bids on items above that amount but not on items equal to or below that amount.

Unallowable Cost—A cost the USG will not reimburse, either because of regulations or because the cost is not reasonable or appropriate.

- avoid purchasing dangerous or low-quality goods that could potentially cause more harm than good;
- avoid purchasing unnecessary items; and
- protect itself and its beneficiaries.

Policy Elements, Procedures and Practices

Standards of Conduct

Develop written standards of conduct for employees and officers in your organization involved in selecting and overseeing procurement. These standards of conduct should address:

- **Conflict of Interest**—Employees should not be involved in selecting, awarding, and/or overseeing procurements if there is a real or perceived conflict of interest. This includes situations where the employee, any member of the employee’s immediate family, or the employee’s partner has a financial or other interest in the business being considered or selected for an award. This includes any organization that employs or is about to employ the employee, family member, or the employee’s partner.
- **Gratuities**—Employees must not request or accept gratuities, gifts, favors, or anything of monetary value from subagreement contractors or vendors. However, you may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value.
- **Disciplinary Actions**—The standards of conduct must outline the disciplinary actions to be applied to employees who violate these rules.

Free and Open Competition

To encourage free and open competition to the maximum extent possible, be sure to take into account the following:

- **Unfair Competitive Advantage**—Vendors that help you develop statements of work should be barred from bidding on that work. Furthermore, noncompetitive contracts to consultants who are on retainer contracts should be avoided.
- **Unreasonable or unnecessary requirements**—placing unnecessary requirements on firms in order for them to qualify to do business should be avoided because it limits free and open competition.
- **Clear Evaluation Criteria**—Solicitations should be clear about what criteria your organization will use to evaluate bids. Be wary of specifying only a “brand name” product; always allow “an equal” product to be offered.

References

[USAID Acquisition & Assistance Policy Directives \(AAPDS\) and Contract Information Bulletins \(CIBS\)](#)

AAPDs serve as official sources for the latest updates in acquisition and assistance (A&A) policy and requirements. AAPDs provide information of significance including, but not limited to, advance notification of changes or implementation of new requirements to A&A regulations and procedures.

[Standard Provisions for US Nongovernmental Organizations](#)

[Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Organizations](#) Mandatory Reference for ADS 303

[2 CFR 200.317-325](#)

Established procurement standards required by the US Government

General Procurement Procedures

To help assure that you are managing your money well, include the following in your procurement policy:

- Consider both lease and purchase alternatives and select the most appropriate for your situation.
- Include in all solicitations:
 - * eligibility to participate in the procurement process;
 - * description of technical requirements;
 - * criteria to be used in evaluating bids;
 - * minimum acceptable performance standards;
 - * specific features of required items; and
 - * preference for energy-efficient items and products that conserve natural resources.

Procurement Instruments

Specify when to use various procurement instruments, such as fixed-price contracts, cost-reimbursable contracts, and purchase orders. Your policies should prohibit the use of “cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost” or “percentage-of-construction-cost” methods of contracting. A time and materials (T&M) contract may only be used after a determination that no other contract is suitable and if the contract includes a ceiling price that the contractor exceeds at its own risk.

Contractor Evaluation

Clearly state that you will only enter into contracts with vendors that you believe can successfully complete the work required. Your policy should consider contractor integrity, record of past performance, financial and technical resources, or accessibility to other necessary resources. Your policy should also include a process for ensuring suppliers are not listed on **System for Award Management (SAM)** (www.sam.gov).

Documentation Procedure

Include a process that records some form of price or cost analysis with every procurement action. The cost analysis should include the allowability test, which is covered in *Implementation Tips* issue Compliance 2: *Procurement Processes and Allowability*.

Micro-Purchase Threshold

You may wish to establish different procedures and practices under your policy for procurements of different financial amounts by adopting a micro-purchase threshold. This will allow you to have more rigorous treatment for larger purchases and simplified treatment for smaller purchases.

Items for Consideration

U.S. Small, Minority-, and Women-Owned Businesses

Prime U.S.-based recipients, when working in the United States, should try to use U.S. small businesses and minority- and women-owned firms. To achieve this, your policies should:

- Consider whether a firm intends to subcontract with small, minority-, or women-owned businesses in your evaluation process.
- Encourage contracting with consortiums of small, minority-, or women-owned businesses when a contract is too large for any single firm to handle individually.
- Use the services of various USG agencies and organizations, such as the Small Business Administration and the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency, in your solicitation process.

Procurement policies are meant to ensure that your organization does not mishandle funding or use it to purchase dangerous or low-quality goods that could potentially cause more harm than good.

For example, if your micro-purchase threshold is \$1,000, you may be required to secure a minimum of three bids on items above that amount but not on items equal to or below that amount.

According to USG requirements, the maximum micro-purchase threshold is \$3,500; however, your organization's micro-purchase threshold should be set as part of your overall procurement policy based on the local context.

Records for Large Purchases

At a minimum, keep records with the following information on all procurements that exceed your micro-purchase threshold:

- basis for contractor selection;
- justification for lack of competition when competitive bids were not obtained (often referred to as sole source procurement);
- documentation on terrorism searches; and
- basis for award cost or price (written quotations or proforma invoices collected).

Contract Administration System

Include a system for ensuring contractors meet the terms, conditions, and specifications in the contract. You should also have a process for evaluating contractor performance that documents whether the contractor met the terms, conditions, and specifications of the contract. Contracts should also include terms and conditions to protect your organization.

USG Pre-Award Review

If your organization does not have procurement policies in place that meet the minimum standards listed above (for example, if USAID issued pre-award survey findings to this effect), your funding agency may impose increased monitoring of your award procurements.

Procurement Processes and Allowability

Q. What is the process for purchasing goods and services using USAID funds? How do we know when a cost is allowable?

A. The U.S. Government's (USG) procurement regulations exist to ensure that a recipient of USG funding uses it to advance the purpose of the award, spends it wisely, and does not procure anything in conflict with the public's interest. To achieve this, recipients are required to carefully document their organizations' procurements and make sure that this process is in line with USG requirements.

The following describes the procurement process and the steps your organization must follow when purchasing items with USG funds.

Procurement Phases

The procurement process can be broken down into four phases:

- 1. Prior to Procurement**—Before you begin to procure an item, you must have an approved budget with a budget category appropriate to cover it. Then, check that the item passes the allowability test and is not a restricted or ineligible commodity before you begin the procurement.
- 2. Procurement Phase**—This is the process just before purchasing when you have the funding and begin planning for the specific purchase. Depending on the dollar amount, this may involve soliciting a minimum of three bids, requiring sealed bids and/or acquiring pricing information and reviewing different vendors. Your own internal procurement policy guides much of this process.
- 3. Final Purchase Process**—To ensure adequate segregation of duties, the person soliciting the bids should be different from the person selecting the vendor, and it is best practice (especially for larger transactions) for an evaluation committee to review the bids and select a vendor based on best price or best value in view of your organization's needs. Once the committee has made a decision and settled on a price, you must confirm that the vendor is not on the excluded parties list at www.sam.gov. Then, execute a purchase order, blanket purchase agreement or other

Definitions

Allowable Cost—A cost incurred specifically to support or advance the objectives of your award that the USG (or USAID) will permit to be reimbursed.

Procurement—The process of acquiring goods, services, and/or consultants in support of program activities.

Micro-Purchase Threshold—The amount your organization sets under which your procurement process may be simplified. [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\) 2.101](#) defines the micro-purchase threshold at \$3,500. (It is important to review the regulation to see if it has been updated).

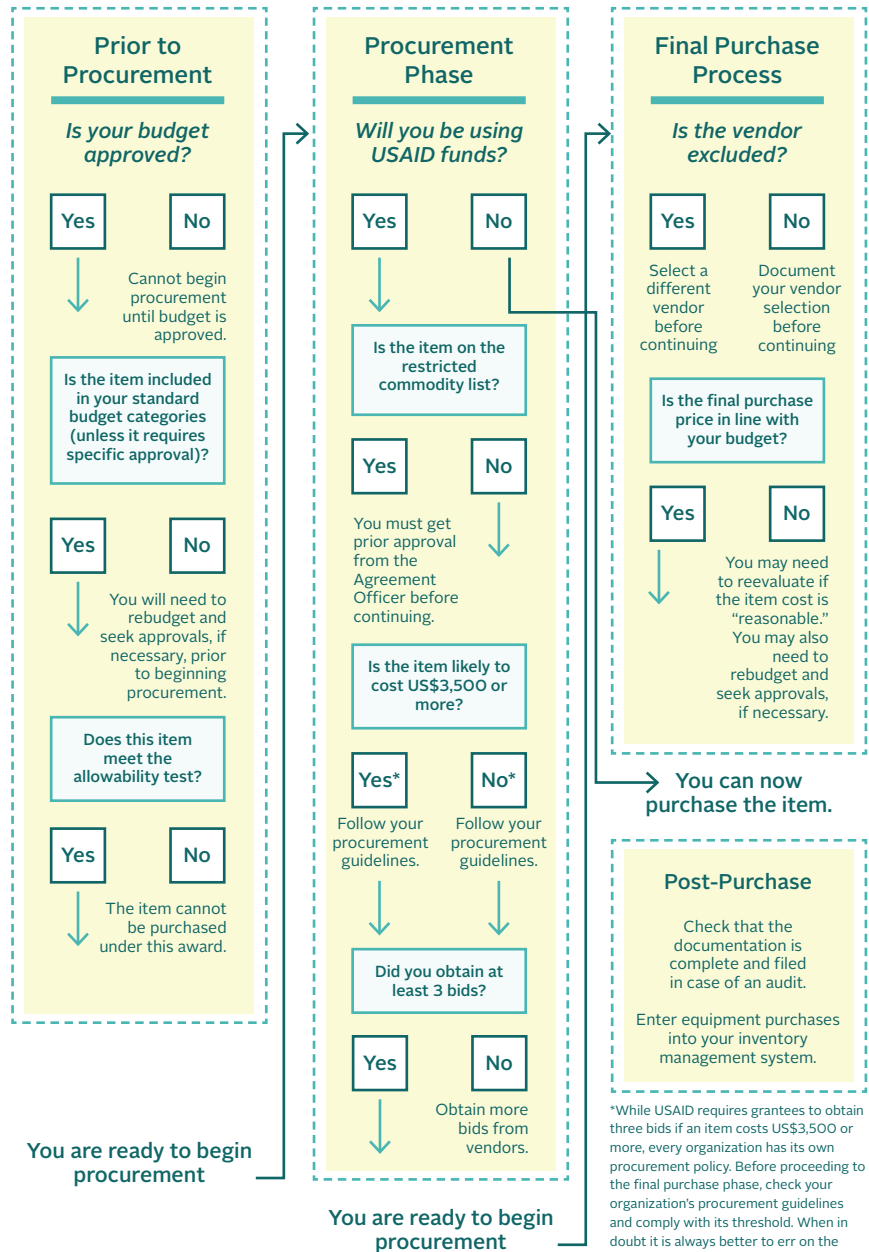
Organizations may set a more restrictive threshold. For example, if your micro-purchase threshold is \$1,000, you may be required to secure a minimum of three bids on items above that amount but not on items equal to or below that amount.

procurement method and ensure that the documentation of the selection process is in place.

4. Post Purchase—Upon receiving goods and services, certify completion through documentation, such as a goods received note or certification of completion. Enter the relevant information into your inventory tracking system, if applicable.

If you do not have a procurement policy, it is critical that your organization adopts one to ensure that all goods, services and/or consultants it procures will be allowable under your award.

The diagram below is a procurement process map. It summarizes and highlights the major steps in a procurement process. Depending on your organization's procurement policy, there may be additional and/or more detailed steps that you must follow.



References

[USAID Acquisition & Assistance Policy Directives \(AAPDS\) and Contract Information Bulletins \(CIBS\)](#)

AAPDs serve as official sources for the latest updates in acquisition and assistance (A&A) policy and requirements.

2 CFR 200 Subpart E

Procurement Standards (USG-wide)

ADS Chapter 312.

Procurement Procedures (specific to USAID awards)

SAM.gov

System for Award Management is a website housing USG contracting databases, including the Excluded Parties List System—a database of organizations that for one reason or another are not eligible to receive USG funds, even as a supplier.

Allowable, Unallowable, Restricted, and Ineligible Costs

The most important concept in procurement under USG-funded awards is to understand what costs are and are not allowable. Even though your budget has been approved, it does not mean that all of the line items in that budget are allowable.

A number of rules address what is allowed and what is not allowed, including U.S. laws, funding agency regulations, host country rules, and agreement restrictions.

Before procuring any goods or services under your award, make sure each item passes the allowability test. A good way to keep track of these is to develop lists of allowable and unallowable items. In addition you should customize your allowable list by adding any specific items approved by your agency and agreement.

Allowable costs are costs of things you are permitted to purchase or spend money on under your agreement. Allowable costs that are reasonable and necessary for the performance of your award include salaries, fringe benefits, travel, office support costs, and activity costs. (See [2 CFR 200 Subpart E](#).)

Unallowable costs are costs related to doing business that the USG won't reimburse as part of your award. Unallowable costs include alcoholic beverages, most forms of advertising, public relations and promotional materials for the organization (placing a job ad or RFQ in a newspaper is allowable, but placing an advertisement for your organization is not allowable), bad debts/losses, charitable contributions, political donations, entertainment (except where specific costs have a programmatic purpose and are authorized in the budget or approved by USG), buildings/land (unless authorized by USG), fines/penalties for failure to comply with the law, fundraising, interest expense/financing costs, membership in social organizations, and airfare costs in excess of basic unrestricted class (that is, "business class" or "first class." (See [2 CFR 200 Subpart E](#).)

USAID has defined a list of **restricted** goods that require written approval prior to procuring. Restricted items include agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, contraceptives and condoms, pesticides, used equipment, and fertilizer. (See [ADS Chapter 312](#).)

Finally, there is a list of **ineligible** goods and services that cannot be purchased with USAID funds under any circumstances. Ineligible or prohibited costs include military equipment, surveillance equipment, goods/services in support of police and other law enforcement activities, abortion equipment and services, luxury goods, gambling equipment, and weather modification equipment. (See [ADS Chapter 312](#).)

Procurement Best Practices

- Establish and follow your written procurement policies and procedures.
- Conduct annual procurement planning that includes office and program equipment, supplies, and services.
- Link procurement planning to budget and work-planning processes.
- Provide for open competition to the fullest extent possible.
- Obtain quotations, review quotations against established criteria, use evaluation committees, and justify vendor selection.
- Ensure vendors are not on the excluded parties list by checking www.sam.gov
- Issue goods received notes or certificates of completion indicating receipt of purchased goods or acceptance of services performed.
- Document every step in the procurement process.
- Keep an inventory of all equipment purchased and update it regularly, noting condition and location of items.
- Ensure that your subrecipient has an appropriate procurement policy in place prior to award if you are a prime.

Review your procurement policy and funding agency regulations closely to make sure that your staff and subrecipients understand them. Subrecipients are held to the same funding agency procurement requirements as prime recipients.

Note the first two are USG wide, and the last two are USAID specific.

5 Key Questions to Test Allowability

Can you use USG funds to purchase it? Apply these five questions to all costs associated with your award, including direct and indirect costs.

- 1.** Is the cost reasonable? Is the cost comparable to what other organizations or prudent businesspersons are paying for the same item or service? Have you followed your organization's procurement policy, for example, with regard to getting bids and reaching a fair price?
- 2.** Can you allocate the cost to this specific award? Is the cost required to advance the work under your award?
- 3.** Is the cost consistent? Have you been consistent in assigning costs across all the work your organization does, regardless of the source of funding? For example, do you pay the same consultants the same rates for similar activities under your USG-funded award as you do under projects funded by other donors?
- 4.** Does the cost conform to the rules and regulations of the award? Is the cost in compliance with limitations and exclusions contained in the terms and conditions of your award? Have the individuals responsible for the expenditure acted ethically in carrying out the procurement?
- 5.** Has the cost been adequately documented? Is there adequate supporting documentation and detail of the procurement to support the charges of the cost to the award? Be sure to document your answers to these questions during the procurement process. Create a form listing these questions along with a place to fill in the item, budgeted amount, date, and who in your organization filled out the form. Record the answers, making any necessary notes, and then file the forms for future reference in case of an audit.

Source/Nationality Regulations

Certain provisions in the U.S. Federal Acquisition Regulations (**FAR Section 25.701**) apply to grantees of most USG agencies operating overseas and restrict transactions involving the following countries as of April 2010:

- Cuba
- Iran
- Sudan
- Burma (Myanmar)
- North Korea

FAR regulations that apply to your organization are included in your Cooperative Agreement.

In addition, USAID partners will be assigned a “geographic code,” which designates specific countries from which you are authorized to procure.

5 Procurement Solicitations and Selection

Definitions

Procurement—The process of acquiring goods, services, and/or consultants in support of program activities.

- **Micro-purchases (currently \$3,500, although organizations may establish a lower threshold)** may be made without soliciting competitive quotations if the organization considers the price to be reasonable.
- Procurements **greater than the micro-purchase threshold** (currently \$3,500) **but less than the Simplified Acquisition Threshold** (currently \$150,000) require price or rate quotations to be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources.
- Procurements **over the Simplified Acquisition Threshold** (currently \$150,000, although organizations may establish a lower threshold) require the organization to perform a cost or price analysis in connection with every procurement (including modifications) and the organization must make independent estimates before receiving bids or proposals prior to the procurement.

Q. How does my organization ensure that its procurement process is transparent, impartial and equitable?

A. Whenever your organization buys goods or services or hires consultants using U.S. Government (USG) funds, it must take steps to ensure that the procurement process is objective and encourages fair and open competition. In addition to being a core principle underlying USG procurement regulations, competition promotes innovation, motivates vendors to perform better, drives costs down, and helps curtail fraud and waste. It is, therefore, in your organization's best interest to make the process of soliciting and selecting vendors as transparent, impartial, and equitable as possible.

While your organization should establish a procurement policy that works for your staff and country context, this article covers the best practices your organization can employ to achieve open competition. These include:

- preparing a competitive solicitation;
- gathering and logging proposals;
- establishing an evaluation committee;
- reviewing and evaluating proposals;
- documenting your selection; and
- issuing a purchase order or contract.

Preparing a Competitive Solicitation

Once your organization has gone through the necessary pre-procurement steps to determine that an item or service is covered in your approved budget and passes the allowability test, you are ready to solicit proposals or quotations from vendors or consultants. Depending on the estimated cost and the local context, your solicitation can be sent to a targeted group, advertised in the newspaper or posted on your website or elsewhere online. However you distribute a solicitation, make sure all of the information it contains is the same for all potential respondents.

The best solicitations:

- provide detailed information on exactly what you seek to buy;
- contain clear instructions for vendors on what to include in their proposals or quotations, how to submit them and by when; and
- list evaluation criteria.

The solicitation should begin with complete, concise terms of reference (TOR), also called a statement of work (SOW). It should also establish the essential selection and evaluation criteria, which should be determined at the beginning of the procurement process and not during the evaluation itself. This ensures that the selection is transparent and vendors know how they will be evaluated.

Sample Evaluation Criteria and Analysis

Criteria	Points
Technical Specifications	35
Past Performance/Experience	15
Timetable	10
Price	30
Warranty/Maintenance/Service	10
Total	100

If necessary, the evaluation criteria may be broken down into even smaller units to assist with scoring. For example, you can split the past performance/experience section into smaller sections, such as years of experience and reference checks.

Generally, proposals are evaluated on the basis of cost or value. If you are seeking the lowest cost, proposals that meet the minimum specifications listed in the solicitation are reviewed, and the one with the lowest price is selected.

If you are seeking the best value, proposals are evaluated on set criteria established in the solicitation—e.g., price, past performance, technical elements, timetable, staff qualifications of vendor, creativity, or any other criteria your organization deems a priority—and the most advantageous bid is selected.

Questions

If your solicitation indicates that you will answer questions, make sure to distribute the questions and answers the same way you distributed the solicitation, or by sending them to all of the parties that expressed interest in the procurement so that all potential respondents have access to the same information, ensuring the procurement process is fair.

References

[2 CFR 200.317-326](#) outlines the procurement standards that are required to be compliant.

[SAM.gov](#)

System for Award Management is a website housing USG contracting databases, including the Excluded Parties List System—a database of organizations that for one reason or another are not eligible to receive USG funds, even as a supplier.

5

Items to Consider

Segregation of Duties

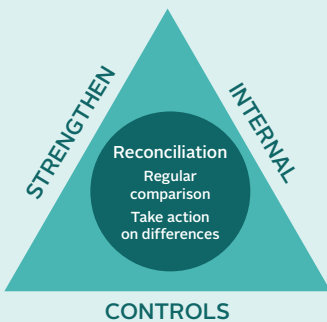
It is important to note that many of the tasks undertaken throughout the procurement process—specifically the approval/authorization of the purchase, the receipt/custody of goods and services, and the recording and reconciliation of expenses—should *not* be completed by the same person.

In addition, it is a best practice that the person requesting the quotes/bids, the selection of the vendor (either an individual or selection committee), and the one approving the procurement (purchase order or contract) should *not* be the same person.

By segregating the roles and responsibilities of staff and mandating that multiple people are involved in every financial transaction, an organization strengthens its internal controls and can reduce, prevent, and detect fraud and error in a timely manner.

APPROVAL / AUTHORIZATION

Approving transactions
Signature authority



CUSTODY

Physical possession

Physical control

RECORDING

Control of record-keeping

Control of computer processing

Gathering and Logging Proposals

Upon receiving a proposal or quotation, record the date and time in a log book and provide a receipt to the vendor. Consider all of the proposals confidential, keep them in a secure location, and do not share details of a proposal with anyone. There should also be a clear plan, consistently implemented, to address proposals received after the submission deadline.

Establishing an Evaluation Committee

Every organization should have a policy outlining when an evaluation committee is appropriate. For example, an organization can institute a policy where an evaluation committee is used every time a solicitation is issued publicly or every time a solicitation is over a specified value (e.g., \$50,000 or above).

While an evaluation committee needs at least two members, an odd number is best—for example three or five members. The committee should include staff who have experience with procurement or administration and at least one person who is familiar with the technical specifications of the goods or service being sought. If no technical expert is available on staff, you may want to invite someone from outside the organization. All members of an evaluation committee should confirm in advance that they have no real or perceived conflict of interest related to the particular procurement.

Reviewing and Evaluating Proposals

Committee members can review the proposals as a group or individually but should meet together at least once to discuss the procurement and analyze the bids. The first thing to look at is whether each proposal provides all the information requested in the solicitation and meets all the minimum criteria. If not, a bid should be deemed non-responsive and excluded from consideration.

The most important aspect of the review process is ensuring that evaluation is based on the specifications and criteria outlined in the solicitation and that do not change after proposals are received. If you decide to select the vendor with the lowest price, the selection process is relatively simple. If you are basing selection on best value, you must decide the weight of each of the evaluation criteria. An easy way to do this is to create a vendor analysis form that lists each criterion and assigns a point value reflecting its importance. (See sample displayed on the previous page.)

Documenting Your Selection

When you have made the final selection, the committee should fill out an evaluation form to document its recommendation and the justification for the selection. An evaluation form usually includes:

- the bid analysis/assigned scoring of the proposals by the criteria;

- an explanation for why each respondent was given a certain score;
- a clear statement on the advantages of the chosen respondent, justifying the selection (this may be only a sentence or two);
- documentation that the selected respondent is not an ineligible supplier; and
- the signatures of the evaluation committee members.

Along with supporting documentation to demonstrate that the vendor meets the source/nationality requirements and is not an ineligible supplier, the evaluation form should then go to the Project Director or the person who has the authority to authorize the procurement. This person will review the selection process and authorize the purchase.

Issuing a Purchase Order or Contract

Upon selecting a vendor or consultant and getting approval for the procurement, your organization should issue a written purchase order or contract. The purchase document should contain:

- contact information for the purchaser and the vendor;
- period of performance;
- description of goods or services provided;
- quantities;
- prices (clearly state if tax is included or excluded);
- payment terms, including if it is a fixed-price agreement or time and materials agreement. (Note: An organization may use a time and materials type contract only after a determination that no other contract is suitable and if the contract includes a ceiling price that the contractor exceeds at its own risk.)
- delivery terms and address as applicable;
- donor clauses (including specific donor clauses, such as antiterrorism clauses); and
- suspension/termination clauses in the event that the vendor does not deliver the goods or services in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

Review the document with the vendor to ensure that both parties are in full agreement and have a mutual understanding of the content; then have authorized individuals from both parties sign it.

Remember that most subawards require the approval of your AO.

Payment

When goods are received or services rendered, inspect and/or evaluate them carefully to confirm that they were received on time from the appropriate vendor or consultant, meet the specifications

The most important aspect of the review process is ensuring that evaluation is based on the specifications and criteria outlined in the solicitation and does not change after proposals are received.

It is in your organization's best interest to make the process of soliciting and selecting vendors as transparent, impartial, and equitable as possible.

and/or quantities listed in the purchase order/contract and have not been damaged or lost (in the case of goods). This may be documented on a Goods/Services Received Note, which serves as an important source of supporting documentation to the procurement process.

When the payment terms outlined in the purchase order/contract have been satisfactorily met and an invoice submitted, payment should be made. It is always preferable to pay in full after the delivery of goods and services, but some vendors may negotiate incremental payments of fixed amounts upon completion of certain tasks over the course of the period of performance. If incremental payment is agreed upon, it is good practice to specify that a significant amount will be withheld until the all goods and services have been rendered, to protect you and the vendor.

Procurement Restricted and Ineligible Items

Q. What limitations apply to procuring goods and services using U.S. Government (USG) funds?

A. Many conditions surround how USG funds may and may not be spent. These include limitations on:

- particular goods and services;
- where the item was manufactured or procured;
- who you can purchase goods and services from; and
- how you can ship them to your project site.

Restricted items are generally not allowable unless you receive specific written permission (for example, vehicles).

Ineligible items cannot be purchased under any circumstance (for example, military equipment or alcoholic beverages).

The following covers the most common types of restricted and ineligible items. Additional restrictions based on the source and origin of *particular* items, is covered. Consult your Agreement to clarify what specific regulations or restrictions based on the source and origin of particular items apply to you.

Restricted Commodities

The following seven restricted commodities may be purchased with USG funds but require **prior written approval** from the Agreement Officer (AO) who will issue a waiver:

1. agricultural commodities,
2. motor vehicles,
3. pharmaceuticals,
4. pesticides,
5. used equipment,
6. U.S. Government-owned excess property, and
7. fertilizer.

Definitions

Restricted Items—Goods or services that cannot be purchased without specific written permission in advance.

Ineligible Items—Goods or services that cannot be purchased under any circumstances.

Commodity—Any item that can be bought or sold, usually a product or raw material (lumber, wheat, coffee, metals, etc.). Note the following limitations:

- Agricultural commodities must be procured from the USA.
- Motor vehicles must be manufactured in the USA.
- Pharmaceuticals must be manufactured and procured in the USA.

Authority to issue waivers is delegated within USAID. A **waiver** is requested through your AO who will issue written authorization. If you procure the item prior to receiving written authorization, you risk paying for the item yourself. Two types of waivers are:

- **Pharmaceutical waiver**

A waiver provides authority to procure non-US manufactured and purchased items for some types of pharmaceuticals. HIV drugs and test kits are included.

- **Blanket waiver**

Blanket waivers currently include:

- authorization to procure non-US manufactured right-hand-drive motor vehicles;
- authorization to procure non-US manufactured two-wheel and three-wheel motorcycles.

Ineligible Items

The following *cannot* be purchased with USG funds under any circumstances:

- Military equipment—goods or equipment to be used to meet the cooperating country's military requirements;
- Surveillance equipment—equipment such as microphones, transmitters, and recording devices (does not include general use audio-visual equipment, as long as there is a clear purpose and need for that equipment in your program);
- Commodities and services for support of police or other law enforcement activities;
- Abortion equipment and services;
- Luxury goods and gambling equipment, including alcoholic beverages, jewelry, or expensive textiles; and
- Weather modification equipment.

Other Types of Restrictions

The above-described restrictions and prohibitions are applicable to most USG global health and development funding and are part of U.S. law and agency regulations. Further guidance is provided in *2 CFR 200 Subpart E "Cost Principles,"* which details rules for 55 specific goods and services, including when they can and cannot be paid for with USG funds. It is a good idea to scan this list and familiarize yourself with all items relevant to your program.

In addition, further restrictions may be included in your Cooperative Agreement. The best way to keep track of all restricted and prohibited items is to create a table and fill it out based on the

References

USAID ADS **Chapter 312** Eligibility of Commodities

ADS Chapter 312 includes:

- Motor Vehicle Source/Manufacture Waiver Request Guide
- Motor Vehicle Source/Manufacture Waiver Request Guide
- Template of Approval Request for Agricultural Commodity Financing Under ADS 312
- Pharmaceuticals

[USAID Standard Provisions for U.S.-Based Partners](#)

[USAID Standard Provisions for Non-U.S.-Based Partners](#)

[CFR 200 Subpart E "Cost Principles"](#)

agreements and guidance documents applicable to your program. If you receive funding through multiple grants, you may find different limitations on different funding streams. Be sure to note to which agreement each restriction applies.

Use of Private Funds

When private funds are used to procure restricted goods and services, they can contribute to your cost-share requirement. However, private funds used to purchase prohibited items (such as alcohol) cannot be counted toward your cost-share commitment.

However, in some circumstances, it is possible to use cost share creatively to use your funds more efficiently. For example, you may purchase a used non U.S.-manufactured vehicle with private funds and shift your USG funds to other program costs. If this results in significant rebudgeting, you will need to get approval first.

Requirements for Subawards

Almost all procurement limitations apply both to prime and subrecipients on an award. USAID requires that subagreements with procurements over US\$5,000 include certain procurement-related standard provisions.

Review your procurement-related clauses closely to ensure that your staff understand the limitations and that your subrecipients understand them as well.

In Your Notice

USAID Cooperative Agreements contain procurement-related requirements under the Standard Provisions. Focus on the sections entitled “Ineligible Goods and Services” and “Restricted Commodities.”

Consequences of Misuse of Funds

The USG reserves the right to refund any amount that is not spent in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award (that is, costs not allowable under the regulations). Be sure to keep records for at least three years after you submit your final report, in case of an audit.

Procurement Source and Vendor Restrictions, Geographic Codes and Waivers

Definitions

Commodities or goods—

Any material, article, supply, good, or equipment.

Source—The country from which a commodity is shipped (or the cooperating country itself if the commodity is located therein at the time of the purchase).

Origin—The country where a commodity is mined, grown, or produced.

Nationality—For purposes of USAID's procurement rules, nationality refers to the place of incorporation, ownership, citizenship, or residence of suppliers of goods and services.

System for Award Management (SAM)—

A searchable database that provides a comprehensive list of individuals, firms, and organizations that are not eligible to receive USG funds. Grant recipients are responsible for using this online database to check vendors prior to contracting for services or making any purchases.

Q. What restrictions apply to where (source) and from whom (vendors) an organization can buy goods and services using U.S. Government funds?

A. In general, U.S. Government (USG) funding comes with many conditions regarding how it may and may not be spent.

These include limitations on:

- *What* particular goods and services are allowable.
- *Where* the item was made (origin) and purchased (source).
- *From whom* you can purchase goods and services (vendor).

This issue covers where and from whom an organization may buy commodities and services.

General Source Restrictions

Organizations receiving USG funding and working within and outside the United States are subject to the Buy American Act and the Foreign Assistance Act, which give priority to U.S.-manufactured goods and services. These Acts primarily affect procurements made by a headquarters office located in the U.S. that is purchasing goods to be used domestically.

The principal Regulation that governs purchases made overseas is 22 CFR 228, Rules for Procurement of Commodities and Services Financed by USAID. The regulation can be found on the following [website](#) and the relevant agency policy is accessible in the [Automated Directive System ADS chapters 310–314](#).

The Procurement Puzzle

Refer to the Standard Provisions of your USAID Cooperative Agreement for applicable restrictions. The answers to the four questions below will help determine whether you can or cannot spend USG funds on a particular procurement.

The Procurement Puzzle



Geographic Codes

USAID grantees are assigned a “geographic code” in their Cooperative Agreement that designates specific countries from which they are authorized to purchase goods and services. There are three main geographic codes typically used: 937, 935 and 110.

Code 937

Geographic code 937 authorizes grantees to purchase goods and services from the United States, the recipient country, or other developing countries, but excludes advanced developing countries and prohibited source countries. Code 937 is typically assigned if the procurement element in the award is greater than \$250,000.

Code 935

Geographic code 935 authorizes grantees to purchase goods and services from any country except prohibited source countries. Code 935 is typically assigned if the procurement element in the award is less than \$250,000, if a waiver has been authorized or the award is funded from Development Assistance or similar program funds.

Code 110

Geographic code 110 authorizes grantees to purchase goods and services from the United States, the independent states of the former Soviet Union, or developing countries, excluding prohibited source countries.

Procurements under \$25,000

Waivers are not required for procurements of individual transactions that total less than \$25,000 (excluding procurements of restricted goods and from prohibited sources).

References

[Buy American Act](#)

[ADS Chapter 310](#)

Source and Nationality Requirements for Procurement of Commodities and Services Financed by USAID

[List of Developing Countries](#)

A Mandatory Reference for ADS 310

[List of Advanced Developing Countries](#)

A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 310.

[List of Prohibited Source Countries](#)

Mandatory Reference for ADS 310.

[System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)

[Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List](#)

[United Nations Security Designation List](#)

U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) [list of sanctioned countries](#)

USAID grantees are assigned a “geographic code” that designates specific countries from which they are authorized to purchase goods and services.

Rules and Waivers for Restricted Commodities

If your Geographic Code is 937, 935, or 110, you may purchase the goods and services in your approved budget with three exceptions. The following must be produced or manufactured in the U.S.:

- Agriculture commodities,
- Motor vehicles,
- Pharmaceuticals.

Within a limited scope, it is possible to request a waiver from your Agreement Officer (AO) to purchase these commodities if manufactured or grown outside of the U.S. However, you will need to provide a reason that is consistent with USAID policy for selecting a non-U.S. product.

Your AO might consider granting a waiver if a U.S.- manufactured product is not available on the local market, while an equivalent non-U.S. product is; to meet unforeseen circumstances or to promote efficiency in the use of U.S. foreign assistance. (Perhaps the additional shipping costs would dramatically increase the cost to purchase U.S.-manufactured products.) Prior to purchasing any of the above named commodities from other than a U.S. source, be prepared to document the reasons before contacting your AO.

In some circumstances, your AO may still require you to purchase U.S.-manufactured items despite any additional costs. This may be the case with certain pharmaceuticals, especially when there is a concern about the quality or safety of specific pharmaceuticals manufactured outside of the U.S.

Subawards and Geographic Codes and Local Procurement

The implementation of the source and nationality procurement regulations flow down to subawards; and, depending on if the organization is a U.S. or Non-U.S. organization, the relevant mandatory provisions will be applicable.

Vendor Restrictions

In addition to source, origin, and nationality, another set of procurement regulations restricts from whom you can purchase goods or services.

No procurement is allowed from any individual or entity that has an active exclusion on the System for Award Management (SAM). SAM contains a searchable list of those individuals and entities that the U.S. Government has suspended or debarred based on misconduct or otherwise determined cannot be trusted to safeguard USG funds.

Grantees must also not engage in transactions with, or provide resources or support to, individuals and organizations associated

Motor Vehicle Example

To purchase any type of “motor vehicle” (truck, car, bus, motorcycle, utility vehicle or motorized bicycle), you need the following written documentation from your Agreement Officer:

Prior approval to purchase the motor vehicle, because it is a “restricted” good.

A source and origin waiver prior to purchasing the motor vehicle if it is non-U.S. source and origin, because it is a “special source” good.

with terrorism including those individuals or entities that appear on either the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List maintained by the U.S. Treasury or the United Nations Security designation list.

Grantees must also ensure that they do not engage in transactions with parties subject to U.S. sanctions, which can include individuals, organizations, or companies or countries. The U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) maintains a searchable database of sanctioned programs.

Consequences of Misuse of USG Funds

The USG reserves the right to require you to refund any amount that is not spent in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award (that is, costs not allowable under the regulations). Be sure to keep your records for at least three years after submitting your final report, in case of an audit.

The most important aspect of the review process is ensuring that evaluation is based on the specifications and criteria outlined in the solicitation and does not change after proposals are received.

5 Vehicle Procurement

Definitions

Restricted Commodities—

Goods or services that cannot be purchased without specific advance written permission.

Vehicle—“...[S]elf-propelled vehicles with passenger carriage capacity, such as highway trucks, passenger cars and buses, motorcycles, scooters, motorized bicycles and utility vehicles” (22 Code of Federal Regulations 228.13 (b)).

Q. What steps are necessary to procure a vehicle with USG funding?

A. In many programs, procuring a vehicle is the largest single item in the budget. The following describes the key U.S. Government (USG) rules to consider before, during, and after procuring a vehicle.

USAID has very specific regulations covering vehicle procurement.

Purchasing a Vehicle with USG Funds

Even if you have the funding, do not move forward on your procurement until you have approval in writing from your Agreement Officer (AO).

For USAID grantees, vehicles—along with pharmaceuticals, agriculture commodities, pesticides, used equipment and USG-owned excess property and fertilizer—fall under the category of “restricted commodities.” Purchase of items under this category require specific approval.

A vehicle purchase is considered approved when

1. it is of U.S. source/origin;
2. it has been identified and incorporated in the program description, schedule of the award (initial or revisions) or amendments to the award; and
3. the costs related to it are incorporated in the approved award budget.

Source & Origin Rules for Vehicle Procurements

Vehicles are required by USAID to be made in the U.S. unless these are not available, are significantly more expensive—at least 50% more than a non-U.S.-made vehicle—or there is some other sound reason. In such cases you may request a waiver to purchase a vehicle made outside the U.S.

To request a waiver, write a letter to your AO and attach the price quotes and documentation gathered following your organization’s procurement procedure. Do not move forward with your purchase until you have written approval.

References

ADS Chapter [312.3.3.2](#), Eligibility of Commodities: Motor Vehicles

22 CFR Section 228, Rules on Source, Origin, and Nationality for Commodities and Services Financed by USAID.

[22 Code of Federal Regulations 228.13 \(b\)](#)

New vs. Used Vehicle Procurements with USAID Funds

Used vehicles are generally not approved by USAID. The primary concern is the risk of mechanical problems and inflated used vehicle prices.

However, there is no restriction on purchasing a used vehicle with cost-share or matching funds. If the used vehicle is purchased with cost-share funds, you can use the USG funds originally budgeted for the vehicle purchase for service delivery or other program costs. Check your Agreement terms for the re-budgeting process to determine if you need prior approval.

Post-Procurement Checklist

After you purchase the vehicle, do not forget to:

- Mark your vehicle in accordance with your approved marking plan, if applicable;
- Enter the vehicle into your fixed-asset management system;
- Have a policy for maintaining the vehicle on a regular schedule;
- Set a policy requiring the driver and all passengers to use seatbelts;
- Make sure you have proper insurance to cover the vehicle; and
- Set up a vehicle trip log that includes the starting mileage for the day, the name of the person using the vehicle, the reason for the trip, the destination and point of return and the distance driven (this should be signed by the driver at the end of each day).

Taxes and Duties

You may or may not be required to pay taxes or duties under local law.

Even if you have the funding, do not move forward on your procurement until you have approval in writing from your Agreement Officer (AO).

5 Excluded Parties and Terrorism Searches

Definitions

System for Award Management (SAM)—A searchable database that provides a comprehensive list of individuals, firms, and organizations that are not eligible to receive USG funds. Grant recipients are responsible for using this online database to check vendors prior to contracting for services or making any purchases.

Unallowable Costs—Costs the USG will not reimburse, either because of regulations or because the cost is not reasonable or appropriate.

Q. How do we know if a potential consultant, staff, vendor, or subcontractor is prohibited from receiving U.S. Government funds?

A. As a USAID-funded grantee, you are responsible for making certain that the consultants, staff, vendors, and subcontractors you use or contract with are not listed as ineligible suppliers, organizations, and individuals that have been formally excluded, blocked or disbarred from receiving U.S. Government (USG) funds. This also ensures that you do not provide material support or resources to any persons or organizations that are involved in terrorism. (For more information, see [Executive Order 13224](#) on terrorism financing.)

Where to Search for Ineligible Suppliers

Before purchasing goods and services or hiring staff and consultants with USG funds, you are required to check the following three sources and document the search results:

- 1. System for Award Management (SAM):** A searchable database of individuals, firms, and organizations that, for one reason or another, are prohibited from receiving USG funds, even as a supplier. Using this system to check vendors is part of your responsibility under the Terrorism Financing clause in the Special Provisions section (listed under Attachment A—Schedule) of your Cooperative Agreement: www.sam.gov.
- 2. U.S. Department of Treasury List of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons;** and
- 3. United Nations Al-Qaida and Taliban Consolidated List**

Threshold for Searching

It is up to each organization to determine a threshold at which these searches will be run and documented in payment records. A reasonable threshold might be all purchases above the organization's petty cash transaction limit.

References

[System for Award Management](#)

[Executive Order 13224 on Terrorism Financing](#)

[United Nations Al-Qaida and Taliban Consolidated List](#)

[U.S. Department of Treasury List of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons](#)

Conducting Your Search

While the search function on each of the three websites mentioned above is slightly different, it is easy to check if your prospective consultant, staff, vendor or subcontractor is ineligible. For example, to begin a search of the SAM (www.sam.gov), click on Search Records in the upper left section of the homepage (see image below).

SAM Home Page

The screenshot shows the SAM System for Award Management homepage. At the top right, there are fields for 'USER NAME' and 'PASSWORD' with a 'LOG IN' button. Below these are links for 'Forgot Username?' and 'Forgot Password?'. A 'Create an Account' link is also present. The navigation bar includes 'HOME', 'SEARCH RECORDS' (highlighted with a yellow arrow), 'DATA ACCESS', 'GENERAL INFO', and 'HELP'. The main content area is divided into three columns: 'CREATE USER ACCOUNT', 'REGISTER/UPDATE ENTITY', and 'SEARCH RECORDS'. Each column contains a brief description and a button to access the respective function.

You will then be brought to a new page where you will be able to search the list of banned parties by typing the name of the individual or firm you are investigating into the search bar.

Search Records

The screenshot shows the SAM Search Records page. At the top right, there are fields for 'USER NAME' and 'PASSWORD' with a 'LOG IN' button. Below these are links for 'Forgot Username?' and 'Forgot Password?'. A 'Create an Account' link is also present. The navigation bar includes 'HOME', 'SEARCH RECORDS', 'DATA ACCESS', 'GENERAL INFO', and 'HELP'. The main content area is titled 'Search Records' and contains instructions on how to use the search function. A search bar with the placeholder text 'Enter your specific search term' and a 'SEARCH' button (highlighted with a yellow arrow) is provided. Below the search bar is a 'Need Help?' button.

If you receive an exact match for the individual or firm you are investigating *with an exclusion tag*, you must find a new consultant, staff member, vendor or subcontractor. If you choose to continue procuring goods and services from this vendor or hiring this individual, the costs will be *unallowable* and you will not be reimbursed by the USG.

To verify that consultants, staff, vendors, and subcontractors are eligible to receive US Government funds, consult www.SAM.gov.

Current Search Terms: so and* so

Clear Search

Result page 1 of 1

Sort by Relevance Order by Ascending

SAVE PDF EXPORT RESULTS PRINT

FILTER RESULTS

Your search for "so and* so" returned the following results...

By Record Status

Active
 Inactive

By Functional Area

Entity Management
 Performance Information

Apply Filters

Note: Filters are case sensitive

Exclusion	John Tse So Ning	Status: Active
DUNS:		CAGE Code:
Classification:	Individual	View Details

Exclusion	Stacy M. Colburn	Status: Active
DUNS:		CAGE Code:
Classification:	Individual	View Details

Entity	BEDS AND SO FORTH	Status: Active
DUNS: 06280838a	CAGE Code: 6SP16	
Has Active Exclusion?: No	DoDAAC:	View Details

Entity	J F SATO AND ASSOCIATES INC	Status: Active
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If you receive a partial match, and it is clearly not the supplier you are considering, you may want to perform a more precise search. This time, place quotation marks around the name ("name") of the vendor in which you are interested. For example, if you search for So and So, the database will return a match of John Tse-So Ning in Louisiana. But when you place quotation marks around the name, such as "So and So," the database returns no results.

If you receive results that you are unsure of, you can go to the Service Desk (<http://www.FSD.gov>) to request additional help.

If you receive no matches or only green "entity" matches, then print the page and keep it in your files in order to document your search. This page shows the term you searched under.

SAM Results Page

Search Results

You can refine your search by entering new search criteria in the search box and using the Search In Results button. If you wish to per search use the Clear Search button. Using the Save Search button will allow you to run this search at a later time.

[Important message regarding exclusion searches.](#)

Current Search Terms: FHI* 360*

Clear Search

Result page 1 of 1

Sort by Relevance Order by

SAVE PDF EXPORT RESULTS

FILTER RESULTS

Your search for "FHI* 360*" returned the following results...

By Record Status

Active
 Inactive

By Functional Area

Entity Management
 Performance Information

Apply Filters

Entity	FHI DEVELOPMENT 360 LLC	Status: Active
DUNS: 968456694	CAGE Code: 6FoD7	
Has Active Exclusion?: No	DoDAAC:	View Details

Entity	FAMILY HEALTH INTERNATIONAL	Status: Active
DUNS: 067180786	CAGE Code: 3FJZ3	
Has Active Exclusion?: No	DoDAAC:	View Details

A similar process should be followed for the U.S. Department of Treasury's Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List and the UN Consolidated List.

5.8

Meeting USAID Branding and Marking Requirements

Q. What are branding and marking and how do we meet donor requirements?

A. *Branding* is the process of developing and using images and words, such as logos and slogans, to create an identity for a product or service. A brand is the representation (usually visual) of an identity that helps people distinguish it from another; for example, Coca-Cola from Fanta; USAID from SIDA.

Marking refers to applying graphic identities or logos to program materials, public communications, or project signage to visibly acknowledge contributors; it identifies organizations supporting the work.

Beyond simply identifying a program, marking also acknowledges who funds, supports, and implements your program. Proper branding and marking strengthens relationships between partners and credits donors for making the program possible. Not only is this a good idea, but USAID Cooperative Agreements require it.

Below is the Standard Graphic Identity (Identity) for USAID. It is to be used to mark all programs, projects, activities, and public communications that require acknowledgment of USAID.



All use and reproduction of the USAID Standard Graphic Identity must comply with all design guidelines found in the [USAID Graphic Standards Manual and Partner Co-Branding Guide](#).

USAID Branding and Marking Requirements

A grantee must submit a branding strategy and marking plan to USAID that describes how they will meet and apply the requirements spelled out in their Cooperative Agreement. The Agreement Officer's Representatives (AORs)/Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs) must review and approve this plan before executing an award.

Definitions

Brand—A name, term, design, symbol or other feature that helps people distinguish one organization, good, or service from another.

Branding—All of the ways used to establish an image of an organization, product, or service in its users' or customers' eyes.

Exception—An official decision, for programmatic reasons, to not require marking on a particular project's materials. Exceptions are usually approved pre-award in non-emergency situations.

Marking—Applying a graphic identity or logo to program materials, public communications, or project signage to visibly acknowledge contributors; it identifies organizations supporting the work.

Marking Plan—A plan that USAID implementing partners provide detailing the public communications, commodities, program materials, and other items that will visibly bear, or be marked with, the USAID Identity. It includes any requests for exceptions to marking.

Definitions, contd.

Public communications—

Documents and messages intended for distribution to audiences external to a grantee's organization. They include publications, studies, audio visual productions, and other informational products; press and promotional materials used in connection with USAID-funded programs, projects or activities, including signage and plaques; websites/Internet activities; and events such as training courses, conferences, seminars, press conferences, and the like.

Waiver—An official decision, for circumstantial reasons, to not require marking on a particular project's materials. Waivers are usually approved post-award in response to adverse circumstances such as compelling political, safety, or security concerns that affect implementation.

Required are:

- a **Marking Plan** that identifies the specific programs, projects, activities, public communications, or commodities that are to be visibly marked with the USAID identity, and
- a **Branding Implementation Plan (BIP)** that outlines how the USAID-funded program will be promoted to the public.

A Marking Plan should describe:

- What you will mark—all sites, documents, events, and commodities you procure or produce as a part of the Cooperative Agreement (for example, banners at events, stickers on equipment, etc.).
- How you will mark—the type of marking (for example, feature USAID and grantee logo on banner; insert jpeg of logos on notebook cover template).
- When you will mark—in the event that you might not mark an item permanently right away (for example, a project site that is being constructed), describe any temporary marking and plans for final marking.
- Where you will mark—describe the size and placement of the USAID brand.

Marking Program Deliverables

Program deliverables should be marked to identify and give credit to both donors and implementers. Note that deliverables will not all be marked the same way. High profile deliverables, such as a clinic, may be marked with the identity elements of all implementing partners and donors.

However, equipment procured for the program, such as computers or other office equipment, may only need to be marked with the logo of the donor who funded it. The following are examples of program deliverables that may be marked with your donor's logo or identity elements:

- project sites;
- electronic and printed documents—such as informational and promotional materials, audio-visual presentations, public service announcements, websites;

References

[USAID Graphic Standards Manual and Partner Co-Branding Guide](#)

ADS 320 [Branding and Marking](#)

[Logo files](#)

[Templates](#)

[2 CFR Regulations 700.16](#) (Marking)

[USAID's Photography and Video Style Guide](#)

To obtain access to video bumpers, please contact your relevant USAID person of contact on communications and branding matters.

- events—such as training courses, workshops, press conferences; and
- commodities—such as equipment, supplies, and other materials.

Sample Marking Plan

PROGRAM DELIVERABLE(S)	MARKING MATERIALS USED, PLACEMENT AND TIMING
Activity Sites	<p>USAID identity displayed on a board outside the premises of each site where activities take place.</p> <p>Timing: as activities take place.</p>
Printed documents, publications and promotional materials	<p>USAID identity printed on the bottom of the cover page.</p> <p>USAID public communications disclaimer included.</p> <p>Timing: as materials are produced.</p>

Marking Exceptions

There are situations where applying an identity element or logo does not make sense. You may not want to apply a logo when its use would:

- impair the functionality of an item;
- incur substantial costs or be impractical;
- offend local cultural or social norms or be considered inappropriate; or
- cause an increased security risk for volunteers, staff or beneficiaries.

Include any anticipated exceptions in your marking plan. If an unforeseen circumstance arises, you must request a waiver from your Agreement Officer via your Agreement Officer's Representative.

USAID Cooperative Agreements include standard provisions describing donor branding and marking requirements.

Special Requirements for USAID Partners

The AO may require a pre-production review of USAID-funded public communications and program materials for compliance with the approved marking plan. Contact your AOR before printing to ask if USAID would like such a review. You also must provide your AOR or Activity Manager with copies of all program and communications materials produced under the award.

A Branding Implementation Plan must explain:

- How the USAID identity is to be promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and host country citizens;
- How the organization plans to publicize the program; for example, through press releases, radio interviews, website;
- What key milestones are to be highlighted and publicized; for example, launching the program, announcing research findings, publishing reports, announcing project completion;
- How the donor will be identified; and
- How the donor will be acknowledged.

Subrecipient Requirements

Branding and marking requirements also apply to subrecipients. It is a good practice (and in many cases it is required) to include language in your subawards requiring that the donor's logo (and perhaps your logo as well) be included on program deliverables.

Travel Expenses and Reimbursement

Q. What are the USAID rules covering reimbursement of expenses when traveling for our project? Does our organization need a travel policy?

A. Travel in country or across borders—whether for a conference, field visit, workshop, or other purpose—is often necessary to implement your USAID-funded award. Accordingly, your cooperative agreement contains several travel-related requirements that should be reviewed before planning your trip. If your organization has its own written travel policy, you should also review its directives when making any travel arrangements. This article focuses on the value of having a travel policy, what it should address and the USG rules and regulations for travel *per diem*.

Why Put a Travel Policy in Place?

A well-thought-out travel policy defines procedures for authorizing official travel, helps control business travel costs and provides clear guidelines about the types and amounts of expenses that may be reimbursed. A written travel policy also helps ensure that all employees are treated fairly and equitably.

A travel policy should address:

- **Approval**

The process for an employee to request your organization's approval to travel, including the appropriate form to be completed by the traveler, the amount of time in advance that the form should be submitted, and to whom the form should be submitted.

- **Advances**

How advances of funds to be used for travel will be calculated. For example, some policies state that advances cannot be issued for more than a specific percentage of the total estimated travel costs.

When outstanding advances will be reconciled. It is good practice to allow only one outstanding advance at a time and to establish a deadline (for example, within two weeks to one month) by which employees must reconcile their advances upon returning from their trips.

Definitions

International Travel—Any travel between two countries

Per diem—The maximum amount of money that the USG reimburses per day to cover lodging and meals and incidental expenses when traveling in connection with your program

M&IE—Meals and incidental expenses

Incidental Expenses—Expenses incurred during travel, such as gratuities and tips for services, laundry, toiletries, etc.

Although your organization's policy regarding the maximum amount for which you may be reimbursed may differ from U.S. government (USG) policy, it is important to note that you will not be reimbursed by the USG for an amount above the maximum set by the USG.

• Reimbursement

The types of costs that will be reimbursed (for example, transportation costs, visas, lodging, currency conversion, telephone calls, Internet).

Whether expenses will be reimbursed on the basis of actual receipts or *per diem* or a combination of the two. If a *per diem* basis is selected, then a *per diem* policy needs to be clearly defined for both domestic and international travel.

How employees will account for their travel expenses upon returning from their trips. Many organizations create an expense report template using Microsoft Excel that employees fill out after every trip.

• Exchange Rates

What rate to use for changing foreign currency to local currency. For example, some organizations use official exchange documents as supporting documentation, while others use the exchange rate of a trusted online source, such as www.oanda.com.

NOTE: Once travel rules have been adopted, your organization's policy must be uniformly applied to both USG-funded and other activities, unless the specific contractual agreement under which the travel is being conducted calls for different procedures/requirements.

References

[U.S. State Department Foreign Per diem Rates](#)

[Federal Travel Regulations](#)

Items to Consider

USAID Missions overseas sometimes issue local Mission Orders that set maximum rates for *per diem* and travel expenses. Consult your AOR to see if your operating country has created such a policy.

Good Practice

Allow one travel advance at a time; do not issue any new travel advances until the outstanding travel expenses/reimbursement request and trip report have been submitted by the traveler.

What if an Organization Does Not Have a Written Travel Policy?

If you do not have a written travel policy, the standard for determining the reasonableness of reimbursement is the regulations published by the U.S. Department of State. Rates are published monthly by country (and cities within a country) at https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp.

Does a Traveler Need Approval/Authorization?

Your travel policy should require that travelers complete and submit a travel request form (specifying reasons for the travel, dates, estimated cost, etc.) to the supervisor.

May a Traveler Request a Travel Advance?

A traveler may wish to request funds in advance of a trip to cover the *per diem* (or actual expenses depending on organization policy) and any other business-related expenses. The amount of the advance and format for the request (for example, travel advance form) should be addressed in the organization's policy. Travel advances are not billable costs to USG awards; only actual travel expenses can be billed to the USG (post-travel).

NOTE: A common audit finding is that travel advances are not issued according to the organization's own policy.

What is *Per diem*?

A *per diem* is a daily maximum amount for which a traveler may be reimbursed for each day away from his or her regular workplace on official business.

The per diem allowance is usually composed of two parts:

- 1. Lodging**—a ceiling or maximum rate that may be reimbursed for lodging; lodging is always reimbursed based on actual cost incurred up to the maximum allowable USG rate. Remember: original receipts must be submitted when requesting reimbursement for all lodging costs.
- 2. Meals and incidental expenses (M&IE)**—a fixed daily rate for meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, and related tips and taxes) and incidental expenses (for example, gratuities and tips, laundry, toiletries).

Below is an example of the U.S. Department of State *per diem* rates for Botswana (accessed from https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp).

Country Name	Botswana	Botswana
Post Name	Francistown	Other
Season Begin	01/01	01/01
Season End	12/31	12/31
Max. Lodging Rate	US\$172	US\$103
M&IE Rate	US\$54	US\$44
Max. <i>Per diem</i> Rate	US\$226	US\$147
Footnote	N/A	N/A
Effective Date	12/01/2009	12/01/2009

If the city you are going to is not listed under the Post Name, use the “Other” rate (see column 2, above) that is published for that country. Also note the “Season Begin” and “Season End” columns and ensure that the rates used reflect the period in which the travel occurred.

NOTE: To get reimbursed for lodging and other travel-related costs of US\$75 or more, the traveler must save and submit all original receipts and invoices to document the expenses. It is a best practice to save all travel documentation, for example receipts under \$75 and boarding pass stubs as well. For meals and personal expenses that fall under M&IE, receipts are not required by the USG, but your organization's travel policy may require them.

The USG covers reimbursement of amounts up to but no more than the USG per diem rates established for the location. Any excess charge(s) would have to be paid by the traveler.

Good Practice

Advances should be accounted for shortly after completion of the related trip. Failure to reconcile travel advances may result in the travel advance being deducted from the pay of the traveler. (Although this is good business practice, it is important that this be according to the organization's policy.)

Travel Days

The M&IE allowance is calculated on a daily basis. On the day of departure and on the last day of travel, travelers are entitled only to a percentage (based on your organization's policy or the USG default amount of 75%, whichever is less) of the applicable M&IE rate of the authorized travel location. Employees on local day trips are only eligible to receive M&IE if the time away exceeds 12 hours.

What if a Meal is Provided Free of Charge (for Example, by Another Organization) during the Trip?

M&IE should be reduced if meal(s) are provided free of charge during one's travel for business purposes. The website for calculating reductions to the M&IE for the U.S. State Department *per diem* rates can be found at https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=114&menu_id=75

If you develop your own organizational *per diem* policy, it is recommended that it include language about how the M&IE will be reduced should breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner be provided free of charge. The amount generally should not be adjusted if complimentary meals are provided by common carriers (such as airlines or trains) or hotels (such as when the hotel rate includes breakfast).

What if Someone Travels to a Number of Different Cities/Countries on the Same Trip and Each has a Different *Per diem* Rate?

If a traveler visits more than one city/country on a trip, then the rate for each city/country should be used for the days in that city/country. The *per diem* reimbursement rate is determined based on where lodging is obtained. If lodging is not required, the applicable M&IE rate to be used is the rate for the location visited. If a traveler without overnight lodging visits more than one location in a single day, the location with the highest M&IE rate can be used.

What if the Actual Lodging Cost or your M&IE Costs Exceed the Maximum Allowable USG Rates?

Although your organization's policy regarding the maximum amount for which you may be reimbursed may differ from USG policy, it is important to note that if lodging or M&IE exceeds the USG *per diem* rates established for the location, the excess charge(s) will have to be paid by the traveler. The one exception to this is if you specifically request and receive USG approval in advance for "actual subsistence" at a higher rate, but this is granted only for special or unusual circumstances.

What if a Traveler Stays in The Home of a Friend or a Relative?

A traveler who stays in the home of a friend or relative while on official travel may not claim lodging expenses for reimbursement. When lodging is not required, the applicable M&IE rate to be used is the rate for the location.

How does a Traveler Calculate Expenses Incurred with Foreign Currency?

In the case of international travel, most if not all of the expenses will be in foreign currency. To calculate these expenses, the traveler must provide appropriate receipts with the currency rate(s) of exchange applicable for the period of time in country. To obtain the appropriate conversion rate, either use the rate provided at the time of exchange as documented in the exchange receipts or go to a reliable currency exchange website (such as <https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>). Be sure to document the exchange rate you use by printing out the web page and submitting it with your expense report.

5 Gifts to and Lobbying USG Employees

Definitions

Gift—Any gratuity, favor, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or other item having monetary value. It includes any service as well, such as a gift of training, transportation, local travel, lodging and meals, whether provided in-kind, by purchase of a ticket, payment in advance or reimbursement after the expense has been incurred.

Prohibited Source—Any person who is seeking official action by the USG employee's agency or does business or seeks to do business with the employee's agency.

Lobbying—Any person influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress, in connection with any USG action, including the award, extension, renewal, amendment, or modification of any USG contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

Q. May we send our Agreement Officer's Representative flowers?

A. Although your Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) oversees your project and is your advisor, advocate, and colleague, no matter how much she or he may deserve a big bouquet of flowers, this U.S. government (USG) employee probably will not be able to accept it.

As a recipient of funds from USAID, there are important ethical considerations that govern the relationship between the employees of your organization and employees of the U.S. Government, including your AOR and any other USG employees with whom you interact. You are also prohibited from using your USG funds to attempt to win or renew USG funding (see following page, Never Use USG Funds for Lobbying).

U.S. Government employees are expected to execute their work in an independent and impartial manner that maintains the public's confidence and the Government's integrity. To ensure that there is not even the appearance of inappropriate conduct, USG employees must abide by a very strict set of ethics rules, including specific regulations against accepting gifts, favors, entertainment, or any other thing of monetary value from any prohibited source, including any person who has or is seeking to obtain contractual or other business or financial relations with the employee's agency, or has any other interests with the employee's agency. As a USG-funded organization, you fall under the category of "prohibited source."

There are a few exceptions to these rules and even some variations among USG agencies. However, a simple guideline to follow is that your interactions with USG employees do not give the appearance of trying to inappropriately influence their actions with gifts or favors.

Exceptions to the Gift Rule

- Promotional or advertising items of nominal value, such as pens or note pads;

- Certain travel expenses, when provided as a service to the USG, while the employee is executing his/her official duties. For example, if your AOR is visiting your project site, it would be permissible to use your organization's vehicle to drive her/him to the site;
- Plaques or awards of nominal intrinsic value meant primarily for display purposes;
- Items of nominal value (less than US\$20), such as a greeting card;
- Snack foods or beverages when given as part of a widely attended event. For example, if you have a project site opening ceremony where you invite the press, local officials, employees of other CSOs, your staff and USG in-country staff and you serve refreshments to all attendees, including the USG staff; and
- A gift given because of a close family or personal relationship when the circumstances are clear that it is the relationship, rather than business, that is the motivating factor.

Examples of Prohibited Gifts

- Any item that otherwise may be allowed but is more than US\$20 in value. For example, an expensive promotional clock would not be allowed;
- Multiple, recurring items that might individually be allowed. For example, if a USG employee is working with you on site for a period of time and you provide her/him with meals and refreshments throughout her stay. Although each meal may be less than US\$20, the recurring nature of the gift is considered inappropriate; and
- Gifts, favors, or services to a USG employee's family, when given because of the relationship to the employee. For example, it would be inappropriate to hire a USG employee's family member if the only reason for hiring her/him is the relationship to the USG employee.

Never Use USG Funds for Lobbying

Your organization is prohibited by law from using any of your USG funds to pay for any efforts to influence USG employees or Members of the U.S. Congress to award, extend, renew, amend, or modify any USG contract, grant, loan or cooperative agreement. Any activities that may be considered lobbying may not be paid for with USG funds under any circumstances.

For example, you cannot use your USG funds to pay for members of your Board of Directors to travel to Washington, D.C., to meet with USG officials and Members of Congress to discuss your programs to try to improve your chances of securing follow-on funding after your award expires. You may, however, use private funds for these activities.

Conclusion

In the end, it is the USG employee's responsibility to make sure she or he complies with agency and USG ethical standards. But it helps if your organization's staff do not put your USG colleagues in the uncomfortable position of having to refuse a gift or meal—especially when your intention is simply to let them know you appreciate the help they have given your organization. A personal note or simple token, such as a photo of your staff, will mean more to them and will not be mistaken for an inappropriate gesture.

5.11

USAID Environmental Requirements: Environmental Impact Assessment

Q. What environmental compliance assessment and/or documentation is our organization required to complete to comply with USAID regulations?

A. Every USAID-funded program is required to comply with the U.S. Government's (USG's) environmental regulations (often referred to as "Reg. 216"). Reg. 216 outlines the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process that USAID has designed to identify potential effects—positive or negative—that a project or activity may have on the environment. The process is intended to prevent activities from taking place that are likely to cause significant environmental harm and to ensure that projects monitor and mitigate any negative effects on the environment. (For more information, see Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations and the administrative guidelines in Chapter 204 of USAID's Automated Directives System.)

Although USAID will sometimes conduct significant portions of the EIA process, an organization is typically responsible for assessing its project's compliance with Reg. 216 and submitting verification for USAID approval. This article will help you understand the EIA process and what you need to do to comply with USAID's regulations.

Scope of an Environmental Impact Assessment

To begin the EIA, your organization must screen all proposed activities for a project. During this initial screening, program activities are divided into four categories:

- *Exempt*
- *Categorical Exclusion*
- *Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) Required*
- *IEE Required & High Risk*

The requirements and scope of your EIA depend largely on the category/categories under which your proposed activities fall.

Definitions

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)—A systematic process to identify potential effects—positive or negative—that a project or activity may have on the environment. It includes establishing plans to monitor and mitigate any negative effects as well as ways to prevent activities that are likely to cause significant environmental harm.

Initial Environmental Examination (IEE)—A survey of reasonably foreseeable effects of a proposed project or activity on the environment. It is a simplified version of a more comprehensive examination of environmental impacts called the Environmental Assessment.

Environmental Assessment (EA)—A detailed environment analysis that is necessary when an initial review of the program indicates that at least some program activities are likely to have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

Continued on next page →

Definitions, contd.

Environmental Mitigation Plan (EMP)

—Often included in the IEE, the EMP (sometimes called an Environmental Mitigation & Monitoring Plan [EMMP]) is a document that identifies potential environmental impacts of program activities and lays out a specific plan to monitor any negative impacts as well as the methods chosen to diminish them.

Environmental Status Report (ESR)

—An annual report submitted to USAID examining a project's impact on the environment and describing what the organization has done to comply with its EMP.

References

- Mission-specific requirements and preferences for demonstrating Reg. 216 compliance may vary. Ensure that you prepare documents using the preferred approach and format and contact the Mission before beginning the documentation process.
- USAID is ultimately responsible for ensuring that an IEE is completed. In some cases, USAID will complete the IEE. In other cases, the partner organization will be responsible for completing the IEE.

Items for Consideration

- [Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 216 \(Reg. 216\)](#)
- [USAID ADS Chapter 204](#)
- [Environmentally Sound Design and Management for Partners and Programs in Africa: USAID Environmental Procedures Training](#)

Exempt

A small portion of USAID's activities are exempt from environmental documentation. These are generally limited to international disaster or emergency relief activities; however, exemptions may be provided under other special circumstances. If all your program activities are exempt, you will not need to provide environmental documentation to USAID.

Categorical Exclusion

USAID considers some types of activities to have such a low risk of adversely affecting the environment that they are categorically excluded from environmental review. Examples include: community awareness training, studies, and information transfers. For a complete list of categorically excluded activities, see Reg. 216.2(C)(iii). If all of your program activities fall under this list, contact your Mission to request the appropriate exemption forms.

IEE Required

If any of your program's activities are not exempt or categorically excluded, an IEE should be conducted. An IEE is a review of the reasonably foreseeable effects of a proposed project or activity on the environment.

USAID uses the IEE as the factual basis to decide whether to:

- require a more comprehensive analysis of the potential environmental impacts (called an Environmental Assessment [EA] by USAID); or
- proceed with the program using the plans to address and monitor any detrimental effects on the environment outlined in the Environmental Mitigation Plan (EMP), which is submitted with the IEE.

Please see below for how to conduct an IEE.

IEE Required and High Risk

USAID considers some types of activities to have such a high risk of adversely impacting the environment that those activities automatically trigger an Environmental Assessment. An EA is a detailed study of the reasonably foreseeable significant effects, both beneficial and adverse, of a proposed action on the environment of a foreign country or countries. Examples of such activities include: large-scale agricultural mechanization, use of pesticides and new land development. For a complete list of activities that always require an EA, see Reg. 216.2(d)(iii).

Capacity to Conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment

Using publicly available resources and sector-specific guidance, such as the material available at: <http://www.encapafrika.org>, implementing partners normally can conduct the initial screening of their programs and an IEE on their own. Should your program require an EA, you will most likely need to hire an expert to conduct that detailed scientific study. You should plan for the expense of an EA when preparing your proposal budget if you believe you will need to conduct one.

Environmental Impact Assessment Submission and Review Process

A typical USAID EIA process proceeds in the following manner:

- The implementing partner conducts an initial screening of all of its activities.
- Unless all of the activities are exempt, the implementing partner submits a draft IEE or categorical exclusion request to the Mission. (Typically, the Mission Environmental Officer [MEO] is responsible for reviewing the documentation. If your Mission does not have an MEO, you should ask the Mission to whom you should send the documents.)
- The MEO may suggest revisions before he or she sends the documents to the Regional Environmental Officer (REO) and/or Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO) for approval.
- If the IEE indicates that your activities will have significant adverse impacts on the environment and you are not able to mitigate those impacts, the REO/BEO is likely to require an EA. He or she may also recommend changes to the EMP or other portions of the IEE.
- In most cases, the IEE will be sufficient, and an EA will not be required. If an EA is not required, and you have made any necessary changes to the IEE and EMP, the REO/BEO will approve your plan and your project can begin.

Compliance under an Umbrella IEE

If a USAID-funded project has many small-scale activities that will be carried out by subgrantees not yet selected when USAID awards the funding to the prime recipient, an umbrella IEE may be used to expedite the compliance process. Under an umbrella IEE, subgrantees complete a condensed environmental review process. For more information on how to conduct this type of environmental review, see ENCAP's website.

Both prime recipients and subrecipients should keep in mind that USAID environmental regulations, just like other parts of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, flow down to all parties receiving USAID funds to carry out projects.

It is in your interest to complete the EIA process as soon as possible... USAID requires an IEE or a Categorical Exclusion Request to be submitted along with proposal.

Preparing the Documentation

Find plain language instruction on how to prepare the necessary documentation to comply with environmental regulations, from initial screening to impact monitoring, in the USAID Environmental Procedures Training Manual, produced by Environmentally Sound Design and Management for Partners and Programs in Africa (ENCAP).

Sector by sector guidance for preparing documentation can be found here.

Obligations during Program Implementation

Your responsibility to comply with USAID's environmental regulations does not end when your program begins. On an annual basis, you must complete an Environmental Status Report (ESR), detailing your project's impact on the environment, including how you monitored and complied with your mitigation plan. Based on the findings in your ESR, you may need to amend your approved environmental documentation.

In addition, since USAID requires that all proposed activities comply with its environmental regulations before the activities can be funded, your project will need to seek approval to modify any current activities or add new ones.

Monitoring and Evaluation

6

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is at the heart of an organization's capacity to manage its performance and understand its impact. Good M&E requires resources, skill and time. It is common in an NGO's early stages of development to lack clear program performance expectations and the systems and tools necessary to track progress. As the organization grows, it will likely establish systems to measure progress against its objectives but may not yet systematically use the information to improve its interventions or to inform future decision making.

This section provides insights into the steps needed to develop a good M&E system that uses evidence in every stage of the project life cycle to promote informed decision making and support achieving significant, sustainable change as a result of an intervention.

TOPICS

- 6.1 Using Evidence-based Project Planning**
- 6.2 Considerations for Your M&E System**
- 6.3 Managing Targets**

Using Evidence to Inform All Stages of the Project Cycle

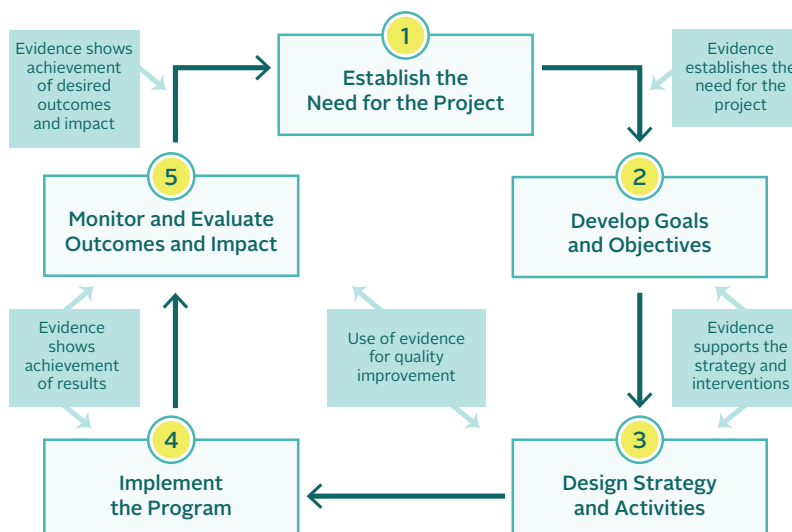
Q. What is evidence-based planning and how can it improve our project?

A. Evidence-based project planning is the use of objective information to reach the best possible outcome(s) when making decisions about your project. It involves integrating the best possible research evidence with project design experience, sector expertise, and knowledge of the needs of the target population.

Explore the data you have available, extract evidence from these data, and use this information to inform your interventions. Using evidence in every stage of the project cycle promotes informed decision making and helps achieve significant, sustainable change through project interventions. What follows describes how evidence may be used to inform a project at all stages of the project cycle.

Evidence and the Project Life Cycle

The project life cycle follows a basic, logical sequence of steps. It starts with identifying a problem and developing solutions for that problem. The cycle continues with implementing activities and concludes with evaluating project results. Different organizations will use different planning methods to suit their needs, but evidence can be used to inform decision making at every stage of the life cycle, as illustrated in the diagram below.



Definitions

Evidence—A range of tangible/factual information that can be used to support or contradict decisions made when planning interventions.

Indicator—A characteristic or dimension that will be used to measure change. Height is an example of an indicator.

Problem Tree—A tool or technique used to analyze the “causes” and “effects” of problems. The output is a graphical arrangement of problems differentiated according to causes and effects, joined by a core, or focal, problem. This technique helps demonstrate the context and interrelationship of problems and potential impacts when targeting projects, programs or interventions toward specific issues.

Stakeholder—An individual, community, or institutional entity that will be affected by, or who can affect, your project.

Goal—The long-term result that your project is seeking to achieve.

Objective—A shorter term achievement that contributes toward achieving the goal.

References

[Catholic Relief Services, 2004, Propack, The CRS Project Package](#)

[Pathfinder International, 2008, Evidence-based Planning for Sustainability of Government Reproductive Health Services.](#)

[Civicus Strategic Planning Toolkit](#)

[USAID's TIPS series.](#) Practical advice and suggestions on issues related to performance management and evaluation. These publications are supplemental references to the Automated Directive System (ADS) Chapter 203.

[USAID Learning Lab](#)

Establishing the Need for the Project

To start, you establish the need for an intervention. No matter how big or small your project is, you will need to collect and analyze information about the social, political, economic and/or health situation of your target group to make decisions about the real needs, priority problems, vulnerabilities and opportunities that affect the problem you want to address.

For example, if you are planning to improve the care and support of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), you will want to gather information about the number of OVC in the community, the characteristics of these children (and their families) and what resources are currently available in the community to help OVC. Once you have collected evidence, you can use tools such as a Problem Tree to define your core problem and map the causes and effects of the problem. (See the sidebar for guidance on the Problem Tree analysis.)

You can also get useful evidence to describe the dimensions of the problem and support the need for your intervention from studies from the Ministry of Health, research available online, academic publications, and/or speaking with community residents and other stakeholders. Ask questions of different types of people in your community, such as grandmothers and teachers, to gather insights about the problem, collect comprehensive information to feed into your project design, and establish the need for the project.

Developing Goals and Objectives

Use evidence to develop goals and objectives that are achievable. Look at existing interventions that tackle similar problems to develop realistic goals/objectives for the resources you have available.

Test your assumptions. For example, if you are providing OVC with school uniforms and materials, are you going to reach a goal to improve the level of education of OVC in your community? In reality, your project inputs might help more OVC go to school, and even stay in school, but there is no guarantee that they will learn once they are there. Review carefully what your project will actually do, and reflect critically on what results you can expect to achieve.

Designing Your Intervention Strategy

Once you have established your goals and objectives, begin to design the strategies most likely to be effective in your intervention. Keep an open mind. Analyze all the evidence you have collected before you design the best ways to respond to the problem. Review available reports or evaluations of previous related interventions to design a realistic approach, rather than one you think might work. Take

into account contextual factors such as cost or other actors in the environment, in addition to resources required to address intended and unintended consequences of project activities. Be sure to engage a range of stakeholders to ensure your strategies are realistic and address the specific problems identified in the cause–effect analysis in the Problem Tree. In the health sector, for example, strategies should be developed based on patients', providers', and other stakeholders' perspectives on the situation and need. In addition, agree with stakeholders on what indicators will be used to measure your success in the project and how often you will review these indicators.

Using Evidence in Project Implementation

It is simply not possible to manage the technical side of your project effectively without regularly monitoring your project's progress. This involves systematically gathering and analyzing information about what you are doing, who you are reaching, and whether activities are being implemented according to plan. Use your project indicators to not only measure progress, but also to make evidence-based decisions that can improve the project's impact. In some cases, monitoring data may show that interventions are not achieving their objectives. Use this information, along with discussions with stakeholders (service providers, the target population, program managers), to make project adjustments as necessary.

For example, if HIV-prevention activities in an OVC-support project fail to attract adolescent male OVC, the organization needs to find out why and adjust its strategies accordingly. In one example, the data revealed that adolescent male OVC chose instead to participate in competing activities, such as job training or sports activities. Consequently, the organization decided to offer its HIV-prevention activities at a time and place more appealing to this target group.

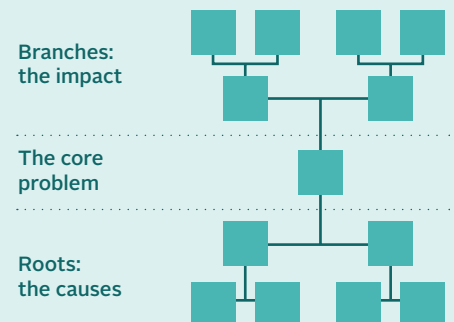
Evaluating Outcomes and Impact

Finally, evidence is critical to demonstrate program impact—that is, significant, sustainable changes in a target population or community after an intervention is completed. Impact differs from measuring outputs—for example, counting the number of people trained and/or the number reached with certain interventions.

Impact also differs from looking at outcomes, which are the short-to medium-term observable behavioral, institutional and/or societal effects of an intervention's outputs. Impact indicators are about change over time. Use indicators to measure whether your work is having an effect on the quality of life of your project's beneficiaries.

Problem Tree Steps

1. List all the problems that come to mind. Problems need to be carefully identified. They should be existing problems, not possible, imagined, or future ones. A problem is an existing negative situation; it is not the absence of a solution.
2. Identify a core problem (this is the trunk of the tree). It may require considerable trial and error before settling on only one core problem.
3. Determine which problems are “causes” (roots) and which are “effects” (branches).
4. Arrange the causes and effects in hierarchal order on your tree (in other words, show how the causes relate to each other—which one leads to the other).



Source: <http://web.mit.edu/urbanupgrading/upgrading/issues-tools/tools/problem-tree.html>

Tip: To make the most of this process, it is critical to involve all stakeholders in creating your Problem Tree. Your organization may even wish to invest in hiring a facilitator to guide the process to ensure you arrive at the best analysis.

6 Key Features of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Definitions

Indicator—A particular characteristic or dimension that will be used to measure change. Height is an example of an indicator.

Data—The actual measurement or factual information collected about an indicator. A measurement of someone's height as 5' 7" is an example of a piece of data.

Baseline—Data collected about specific indicators before an intervention begins that will serve as the starting points against which to measure change.

Target—A specific, planned level of result for an indicator you expect to achieve within a defined period of time.

Monitoring—Periodic tracking (for example, daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually) of your project's progress by systematically gathering and analyzing data and information about what you are doing, whom you are reaching, and whether your activities are being implemented as planned.

Q. Why invest in an M&E system?

A. An M&E system guides the process of collecting, analyzing, and using data for the purpose of measuring whether a project has been implemented according to plan (monitoring) and is having the desired result (evaluation). An M&E system is critical to carrying out a project effectively and efficiently and boosting accountability to beneficiaries, donors and other stakeholders. In particular, an M&E system helps you:

- determine whether your project is on track, on time, and on target;
- ensure that funds were used as intended and the project was implemented as planned;
- learn whether the project/intervention made a difference.

Setting up an M&E system is more than just building a spreadsheet or database. The following describes the components of an M&E system and provides you with a starting point for creating your own.

Monitoring or Evaluation?

Monitoring and evaluation are often mentioned as if they are one single activity. In truth, monitoring and evaluation are separate activities that have different purposes. What they have in common is that they seek to capture information about what you are doing and how you are doing it.

Monitoring is the collection of routine data to measure the progress of a project or activity. It can serve as a kind of early warning system that lets you know whether activities are being carried out as originally planned. If not, you can take measures to correct problems and adjust activities or the workplan as needed to be more effective. Monitoring provides the basic information and building blocks for evaluation.

Evaluation is a more in-depth assessment of performance and activities than monitoring. Evaluation enables you to assess the progress, quality and impact of your work against your program strategy, your targets, and your workplan.



Planning for M&E

Incorporate M&E into your project design early on—that is, when you are developing your project strategy and activities. Although data are needed for evaluation at the mid-term and end of a project, you should collect baseline data before the intervention starts. In addition, think about how information from your M&E system will be used internally to make decisions for your program, and externally to meet donor and government requirements. Ensure that appropriate information will be available for:

- annual project work planning and budgeting,
- mid-term and final evaluations,
- program reports,
- feedback to beneficiaries and key stakeholders, and
- other purposes such as marketing and proposal development.

Components of an M&E System

An M&E system comprises interrelated components, as described below.

Resources and Capacity Building – These are the resources you need to have to develop and maintain your M&E system. Ask yourself:

- What kinds of human resources are required for my M&E system?
- What kinds of activities/processes would require funding within the M&E system? (*Examples: evaluations, travel funds for monitoring trips, photocopying data collection sheets, training of staff in M&E*)
- What kind of training/capacity building is required for staff? Which staff? How often?

Plans, Guidelines and Operational Documents – These are the plans and other documents that guide staff in using your M&E system.

A well-designed M&E system should have an M&E Plan that describes in detail the methodology or processes for collecting and using data, including purposes/uses of the data collected; types of data to be collected (both qualitative and quantitative); and frequency of data collection. The M&E Plan should also specify the following:

- indicators to be tracked,
- meaning of key words,
- targets (mid-term and final),

Definitions, contd.

Evaluation—The comparison of actual project impact against agreed-on plans. Evaluation looks at what you set out to do, what you have accomplished, and how you accomplished it.

Workplan—A detailed narrative that lays out your planned activities, the resources required to implement them, and the targets you intend to reach.

Performance Management Plan (PMP)—A reference document that contains your targets, a detailed definition of each indicator, the methods and frequency of data collection for each of those indicators, and who will be responsible for collecting the data.

References

[Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkits](#)

[Preparing a Performance Management Plan \(PMP\)](#)

[Baselines and Targets](#)

[Data Quality Standards](#)

[Data Quality Assessments](#)

[Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation](#)

- what tools will be used to collect data,
- the personnel who will gather, record, and analyze the data (for example, beneficiaries and other stakeholders), and
- the types of reports that will be prepared, including for whom, why, and how often.

Data Collection and Management – Data collection is the key to good M&E. Collection methods should match the indicators developed for the project, be appropriate for the context, and be easy to use. Consider methods that allow for community-level participation and ensure that all analysis is shared with staff and beneficiaries both to improve decision making and to engender support for M&E tasks.

There are many different ways to collect data for M&E purposes, including questionnaires, client interviews, observation by experts, and focus group discussions. Before introducing new data-collection methods or tools, assess what data can be gathered from sources already in place. For example, can you adapt existing registers or attendance lists to get the data you need? If you develop new tools, for example, questionnaires or field worker reports, focus on making them user-friendly and ensure staff and stakeholders are trained to use them. Always keep in mind who your users are as you develop your tools. How literate are the data collectors? Do the tools need to be in local languages? How much time will a collector have to gather information?

Ensure that your data are accurate and truly reflect your outputs and outcomes by regularly undertaking data quality assessments of the data you collect. *(For more on data quality, see 4 and 5 noted in the reference box.)*

Finally, make sure that you have a secure place to store your data, and that it is clear to the team who is responsible for saving and maintaining project data.

Data Verification – Data verification includes going to the field and tracing your data from the original data collection sheet all the way through your reports to your donors, to make sure you are reporting accurately. It helps you identify potential gaps in your data collection and management, so that you can improve overall data quality.

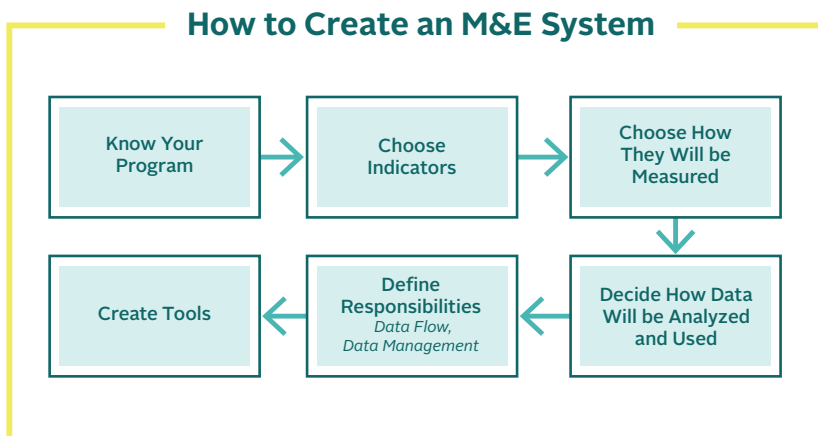
Data Quality Systems – These are the quality controls you need to have in place to make sure you are using and reporting the best quality data possible within your projects. Ask yourself:

- How will we make sure we are not duplicating data?
- How will we make sure that data collection tools are filled in properly?

Six Tips for Managing Your M&E System

1. Make realistic M&E plans.
2. Provide sufficient management support.
3. Ensure your staff understand and value M&E tasks.
4. Set aside enough time for M&E activities, including organizing and processing data.
5. Build M&E into planning cycles.
6. Present M&E data in time for them to be used in reports and for decision making.

- How will we make sure that donor and government reports are submitted on time?



Data Analysis and Use – This is often viewed as the step when you pull together your results and report them to your donors. However, the real fun—and perhaps most important purpose of this step—is to learn from your data and feed lessons back into your projects. On a regular basis, analyze the data you have collected by structuring and organizing it to get a sense of the trends and patterns emerging from the implementation of your project. This information will help managers determine whether the project is on track to achieve its objectives and inform changes if it is not.

Build in clear mechanisms for using the information from your M&E endeavors. For example, you may want to set up formal meetings to review monitoring data monthly, quarterly, or annually to check progress toward meeting your targets and objectives. This will allow you to modify your activities if necessary or have discussions with your donor if you have to change your targets.

USAID M&E Requirements

USAID recipients are usually required to document their M&E system in a Performance Management Plan (PMP). The PMP is a tool designed to help you set up and manage the process of monitoring, analyzing, evaluating, and reporting progress toward achieving your objectives. It serves as a reference document that contains your targets, a detailed definition of each project indicator, the methods and frequency of data collection for each indicator and who will be responsible for collecting the data. Your PMP will also provide details about how data will be analyzed and any evaluations that may be required to complement monitoring data.

6 Managing Targets

Definitions

Indicator—A particular characteristic or dimension that will be used to measure change. Height is an example of an indicator.

Data—The actual measurement or factual information collected about an indicator. A measurement of someone's height as 5'7" is an example of a piece of data.

Baseline—Data collected about specific indicators before an intervention starts that will serve as the starting points against which to measure change.

Target—A specific, planned level of result for an indicator you expect to achieve within a defined period of time.

Monitoring—Periodic tracking (for example, daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually) of your project's progress by systematically gathering and analyzing data and information about what you are doing, whom you are reaching, and whether your activities are being implemented as planned.

Q. How do we review targets and make adjustments?

A. As you monitor progress and report on actual beneficiaries reached by your project, you may uncover significant discrepancies between the targets set in your workplan and the actual numbers you are reaching. Do not panic! This is a normal part of project management, especially when you are implementing newly designed interventions or expanding to a new geographic area with new subrecipients.

Successful project managers will not shy away from these discrepancies. Taking the time to better understand the underlying reasons for target shortfalls and developing a plan to adjust your project and/or reset its targets is a normal part of the project cycle.

Discrepancies between Targets and Actual Results

Discrepancies between targets and actual results are to be expected. As the project manager, however, you need to decide whether a particular discrepancy is "significant" enough to warrant further investigation and action.

The first question to ask is, How dramatic is the difference between the target and actual result? Is it 10% more or less than expected? Is it 50% more or less than expected? You will need to decide what 'significant' means in the context of the target you are examining. For example, if your target is only 50 people for a particular indicator, a difference of 10% may well warrant further investigation. If your target is 500,000, you may require a higher percentage to trigger action.

In addition, other factors might impact your decision to investigate this discrepancy further. For example, how central is the specific activity that demonstrates the discrepancy to your overall project? Is the activity intimately linked to several other activities? Or is it a small, stand-alone piece? Based on this analysis, you will need to determine whether action is required or not.

Reviewing Targets

If you determine that actual results deviate significantly from the targets set, you will want to discover the reasons. While there are numerous possible causes, most fall into three areas:

- problems with faulty or mistaken intervention design assumptions,
- poor project implementation, or
- data quality errors.

These areas may be managed by different staff members—a technical lead for intervention design, a subrecipient for implementation, and an M&E specialist for data quality. The process for reviewing target discrepancies should include all these people, perhaps led by the project director.

Problems with Intervention Design Assumptions

When you designed your project, you made a number of assumptions. You also collected data about specific indicators before the intervention started to establish a baseline or starting points against which to measure change.

Your assumptions and baseline data were used to develop your targets. Factors taken into account likely included:

- demographic data, including population size, age distribution, and prevalence rates (for example, rates of HIV/AIDS prevalence, etc.),
- social and cultural factors, such as language, cultural appropriateness, and acceptance,
- project effectiveness estimates, such as estimates of the number of people who will change their behavior or be open to accepting your services.

In general, the more reliable the data used, the more accurate your targets. For new projects or projects expanding into new areas, however, the underlying demographic data and social and cultural assumptions may not be as reliable as for established projects. Therefore, you can expect discrepancies to arise between targets and actual results.

Problems with Implementation

Sometimes the source of the discrepancies is project implementation rather than design. This could include:

- slower than expected project start-up,
- budget problems, such as higher than expected costs or delays in securing matching funds,
- human resource problems, such as the inability to find qualified personnel or challenges recruiting and retaining volunteers, or
- training problems, such as an ineffective trainer or ineffective training materials.

Successful project managers take the time to understand the underlying reasons for target shortfalls and develop a plan to adjust their project and/or reset the targets.

References

[CIVICUS Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit](#)

[Preparing a Performance Management Plan \(PMP\)](#)

[Baselines and Targets](#)

["How-To Note: Conduct a Data Quality Assessment"](#)

[Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation](#)

If you are starting a new project or expanding a project into new areas, discrepancies between targets and actual results are expected to arise.

Data Quality Problems

What if your intervention design was sound and its implementation is going smoothly, but there are gaps between your targets and the actual performance data? The problem could be with the data itself. Examples of data quality problems include:

- *Under-counting results.* For example, volunteers do not record everyone reached.
- *Double-counting results.* Higher-than-expected results can occur from counting project beneficiaries multiple times.
- *Data entry problems.* Perhaps the data are being gathered properly but are somehow not getting accurately entered into your system.

Developing Solutions

Once you have identified discrepancies, you will want to look for the cause(s) and identify solutions.

If you find multiple reasons for the discrepancy, do not try to address all of them at one time. Focus on the one or two whose resolution will have the greatest impact; that is, generate the best return on investment of time, personnel, and resources. If possible, pilot test your changes before implementing them project wide.

If you must adjust your intervention, be sure to put processes in place to test and validate the adjustments. Also, closely monitor progress and document the changes made. If you are using an intervention also used by other subrecipients or recipients elsewhere, share your experience so everyone benefits from the lessons learned. Below are some suggestions about how to move forward to address specific types of issues.

Looking at Program Design

Target shortfalls due to intervention design problems are often the most difficult to pinpoint and can be the most challenging to resolve. Try to rule out all other problems first.

Making Implementation Adjustments

Sometimes, adjusting your implementation strategies can get your project back on track. To avoid pitfalls, consider the following:

- If you adjust your budget, get donor permission, especially to re-budget between budget categories.
- Pilot test your changes whenever possible. Give proposed fixes a few months to work before you try to speed things up to make up for target discrepancies. You can always request additional time later.
- Document adjustments so mistakes will not be repeated.

Addressing Data Quality Issues

Address any data quality issues you discover immediately. For example, if the problem is under-counting, start by ensuring everyone involved has a clear and shared definition of exactly what/whom to count for each indicator.

Ensure that your team understands the indicator. Sometimes indicators are clearly defined by USAID. Sometimes minimum standards are set by the local Mission. Sometimes your organization is expected to set its own minimum standard for when to count an individual as having been “reached.” If everyone on your team does not agree on who meets the threshold to be counted, miscounting the number of beneficiaries may result.

If you have reported results to USAID that may have contained errors, contact your AOR to discuss how the past reports might be corrected.

Adjusting Targets Upward

Although “discrepancies” generally refer to shortfalls between targets and actuals, your project may also require adjustments if your actuals are significantly higher than your targets. For example, higher-than-expected results could affect budgets or other related activities. In addition, higher actuals may be an indication that double counting is occurring. Therefore, keep an eye out for unusually high actuals and be prepared to investigate and adjust if necessary.

Adjusting Targets Downward

In some cases, your findings will leave you little choice but to adjust your targets downward. Because you are contractually obligated to reach those targets, you will have to work with your AOR to make these changes.

In doing so, consider some of the following:

- Will you be reducing your targets for the current year or reducing your overall targets (meaning, for the entire project)? Whenever possible, propose solutions to make up current shortfalls in future years.
- Do you have a good reason for reducing your overall targets? A shortage of time is not sufficient. Could a no-cost extension help you meet your original goals? If the answer is still “no,” you will want to develop a well-documented, evidence-based reason to support your reduction request.

If you find multiple reasons for discrepancies between targets and actuals, focus on the one or two whose resolution will have the greatest impact.

Your targets are likely tied to your budget. Therefore, when you propose adjusting your targets, you should also address the impact this will have on your budget.

When adjusting your targets, try to pinpoint the corresponding assumption(s).

Example: Your women's micro-lending project is underperforming and you believe that part of the reason is there are fewer eligible women in the catchment area than you assumed. Develop a formula that shows this and use it as the basis for a request to modify your targets.

In your workplan, you probably tied the proposed targets to your budget. Therefore, when you propose lowering your targets, you should also address the impact on the budget. If you cannot reach the proposed targets in one area, try to see if you can re-budget to increase your targets in another project area.

Conclusion

Reviewing targets, making project adjustments, and assessing data quality are natural and necessary parts of the project management process. Each time you refine your project model, applying lessons learned, you strengthen your project. As a result, the next time you implement in a new area or work with a new subrecipient, your assumptions will be better and your targets will be more accurate.

External Relations

7

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

How do you make your organization stand out? Many organizations do great work, but struggle with disseminating their results to stakeholders. Developing the capacity to communicate with and maintain effective relationships with beneficiaries, donors, potential partners, other stakeholders, and the public is key to an organization's ability to attract the support it needs to survive and thrive.

This section begins with communication planning, then describes how to connect more effectively with a range of key audiences including beneficiaries, partners, donors and media, through branding, pitching, writing success stories and other strategies and tactics.

TOPICS

- 7.1 Developing a Communication Plan**
- 7.2 Branding Your Program**
- 7.3 Meeting Donor Marketing Requirements**
- 7.4 Pitching Your Program to Prospective Partners and Funders**
- 7.5 Telling Your Success Stories**
- 7.6 Engaging Your Community**

Developing a Marketing Communication Plan

Q. Why does our Civil Society Organization (CSO) need a marketing communication plan?

A. The key to your organization's ability to attract the support it needs to survive and thrive is its ability to communicate with and maintain effective relationships with beneficiaries, donors, potential partners, other stakeholders, and the public. Many organizations do great work but struggle to disseminate their results to stakeholders. That is why a CSO needs a framework—that is, a marketing communication plan—to tell its story effectively and thus reinforce its value to its stakeholders.

Marketing Connects You to the Community

When we think of “marketing,” we often think of promotion and advertising products for sale. But marketing is much more than that. Whenever you are trying to connect with a group of people outside your organization, it can be considered marketing.

Marketing ranges from making client service more responsive, to street theater, to posting banners and applying logos. It is everything that contributes to your organization's public image, which, when developed effectively—and reinforced by the good work of your staff—helps earn the trust and confidence of beneficiaries, local leaders, and donors. Effective marketing can improve your organization's ability to attract funding, serve more beneficiaries, and advance your mission. It can help enhance your CSO's sustainability.

Developing Your Marketing Communication Plan

A marketing communication plan is a road map that provides direction on how to shape your image, create demand for your services, and build relationships with key target audiences. Putting communication in the context of marketing helps enlarge your thinking and opens up new possibilities. Like a project workplan, a marketing communication plan lays out:

- strategic objectives,
- activities or tactics to achieve those objectives,

Definitions

Communication—The process of transmitting ideas and information about the nature of your organization and the issues it deals with. An ongoing, core activity that is key to sustaining an organization.

Marketing—The overall processes and activities that contribute to your organization's public image, that, when developed effectively—and reinforced by the good work of your staff—helps earn the trust and confidence of beneficiaries, local leaders, and donors.

Promotion—A tactic other than paid advertising (for example, special events, posters, T-shirts, flyers) used by a marketer (for example, a CSO) to increase the awareness of a product, service, or idea among specific target audiences.

Stakeholder—Anyone, individual or group, that has an interest in your CSO and is affected by it. This usually includes people directly involved such as Board members, people you serve, donors, or foundations that give you grants. Other individuals or groups can be stakeholders too, even if they are indirectly involved, such as vendors where you purchase supplies or services.

- how these objectives and activities are supported, and
- expected outcomes (“targets”) against which you can measure the success of each activity.

Developing a marketing communication plan for your organization should involve a cross section of staff who participate in various activities, including program and financial managers. From the start, look beyond the beneficiaries of a single program and include communication with other groups, such as donors, other CSOs, and potential volunteers.

The plan defines what you want from your communication and what you need to do to get it. As with any planning process, it starts with answering some basic questions:

- Why do we want to communicate with our community? (goals)
- What do we hope to achieve? (outcomes)
- Whom do we want to communicate it to? (audience)
- What do we want to communicate? (message)
- Who will communicate the message? (messengers)
- How do we want to communicate it? (channels)

The answers to these questions become your action plan. The next steps involve developing effective materials, disseminating the message, evaluating your efforts, adjusting as needed, and sustaining the effort.

Defining Your Communication Objectives

When you create a program, the first thing you do is learn about the people and the problem your program is targeting. Similarly, in marketing, you also start by thinking about stakeholders with whom you wish to communicate, such as:

- beneficiaries (existing and potential),
- donors (existing and potential), or
- volunteers (existing and potential).

Take a hard look at your existing communication efforts, if any, and how you engage with your target audiences by talking with them. Learn what has worked and what has not. Next, write out in the simplest terms exactly what you want to communicate to each group. For example:

- what services we offer,
- why they need these services, especially how they will benefit from them, and
- who is making this work possible (that is, recognizing the donor or donors).

References

[Nonprofit Communication Plan Template](#)

Upleaf

[Developing a Communications Strategy](#)

Knowhow Nonprofit

These statements help define your communication goals. Much like the “strategic objectives” in your workplan, you will next want to develop one or more “activities” aimed at achieving each objective.

Creating Communication Activities

When thinking about each objective, consider how you can best get your message to the targeted group.

- What language(s) do they speak?
- Where and how can you communicate with them—in other words, what is the best way to “get in front of them” with your message?
- What cultural considerations should you be aware of?

Then, just as you do when creating a workplan, design “SMART” communication activities—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound. Do not forget to include budget considerations, sufficient staff to be effective, best practices, and regulations in your plan.

Expected Outcome

Much like creating “targets” in your workplan, be sure your plan includes expected outcomes with specific timelines. In addition, for each activity, assign responsibility for monitoring its execution and outcomes to a specific staff member.

Examples of expected outcomes:

- New beneficiary enrollment in our program will increase by 25% over the year as a result of our Services Promotion activity. Responsible person: Technical Lead.
- All donor-funded commodities will be marked according to the marking plan within one business day of receipt. Responsible person: Procurement Manager.

Next Steps

Once complete, share the marketing communication plan with your entire staff, walking them through the specific aspects related to their jobs. Giving each the means to communicate effectively about your organization will help reinforce your value to beneficiaries and other target audiences.

Every action taken, proposal written, sign posted, idea floated, word uttered, event attended, or meeting held is an opportunity for you to communicate and an opportunity for others to judge the value and worth of your information, knowledge, values, and goals.

- *The Blue Book: A Hands on Approach to Advocating for the MDGs*

Evaluate Your Plan

Once you establish a marketing communication plan, review it every six months to evaluate how well you are meeting objectives. Talk with staff responsible for each activity and revise your strategy and tactics as needed.

During your review, consider the following questions:

- Have we been communicating effectively with all targeted groups? Are there additional groups with whom we should be communicating?
- Are we meeting donor needs and/or requirements with our communication efforts?
- Is our overall communication effort enhancing our work as an organization?

Six Essential Laws of Communication*

From experience, you may have concluded that the communication process can be simple or very complex. There are, however, six fundamental laws of communication that apply across the board:

** Adapted from *The Blue Book: A Hands-On Approach to Advocating for the Millennium Development Goals*. UNDP, 2004.*

Law #1: Everything speaks.

Every action taken, proposal written, sign posted, idea floated, word uttered, event attended, or meeting held is an opportunity to communicate and an opportunity for others to judge the value and worth of your information, knowledge, values, and goals.

Law #2: Everything must speak the same message.

The only way to raise your organization's voice above the noise of others' is to sing in unison. Signs, posters, brochures, advertising, websites, proposals, and staff should all sing the same song.

Law #3: Everything must be repeated.

Effective communication is about persistence and repetition. Your message must be everywhere, coming from all directions (channels) and from a variety of sources (vehicles) to gain attention and make an impact.

Law #4: Everything must speak in turn.

Effective communication depends on effective orchestration. Planning, coordinating, and prioritizing messages and training messengers brings the power of a symphony to what would otherwise be a collection of individuals playing whatever they please on their instruments.

Law #5: The message is everything, everything is the message.

Effective communication depends on clear messaging.

Law #6: Stay on message until the message gains power and influence.

This is especially important because you and the staff may grow tired or bored repeating your message, but research shows that a message must be repeated over and over, often via different channels and vehicles, before a target audience absorbs it. (See Law #3.)

Connecting with Prospective Partners and Funders

Q. What does your CSO do? Why should donors and others care?

A. Can you answer these questions at a moment's notice? Can you deliver the answers so anyone can understand? If not, you need to develop a "pitch" that conveys your mission and purpose in a flash.

Yes, it takes time to nurture a relationship with prospective partners and donors, but situations also arise where you have a minute or less to make an impression; there just isn't time to deliver a full case statement. For example, you walk into an event and see a potential funder or run into a vendor who heads a local trade association. You sit next to a prospective partner at a church function or football match. In the brief exchange with these people, you realize that they could be very helpful to your organization... if only they knew about your good work.

A "pitch" is a brief, persuasive introduction to your program—a kind of first taste that leaves the listener wanting more. (Sometimes this is called an elevator pitch or speech. It is a quick, compelling summary of what your organization makes or does that takes no more time to present than an elevator ride, from 30 to 60 seconds.)

Pitching is an essential skill that can be learned. The following presents the basic components of a pitch and provides some tips on delivering one effectively.

What are the Basic Elements of a Pitch?

A pitch is not meant to be a detailed discussion of your entire organization—its strengths, weaknesses, staffing, future vision—but rather, a concise, purposeful statement that highlights the value of your program. Make sure the pitch is relevant to the intended audience. For example, a potential partner likely has different interests than a potential funder.

Definitions

Elevator Speech or Pitch—A brief, persuasive introduction to your program/organization that is no longer than 60 seconds. By design and delivery, it conveys the value of what you do and prompts the listener to want to learn more.

Pitching—Presenting the mission and purpose of your program/organization in a manner that is clear, concise, convincing, and compelling to your audience.

References

There are many resources online (at least 1000 YouTube videos) that explain and present elevator speeches.

[Elevator Pitch 101](#)
[The \(Perfect\) Elevator Pitch](#)

The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do."

- Thomas Jefferson

The 9 "Cs" Of An "Elevator Pitch"

Concise—An effective elevator pitch contains as few words as possible but no fewer.

Clear—Rather than being filled with acronyms and long words, an effective elevator pitch can be understood by your grandparents, your spouse, and your children.

Compelling—An effective elevator pitch explains the problem your solution solves.

Credible—An effective elevator pitch explains why you are qualified to see the problem and to build your solution.

Conceptual—An effective elevator pitch stays at a fairly high level and does not go into too much unnecessary detail.

Concrete—As much as is possible, an effective elevator pitch is also specific and tangible.

Customized—An effective elevator pitch addresses the specific interests and concerns of the audience.

Consistent—Every version of an effective elevator pitch conveys the same basic message.

Conversational—Rather than arriving to close the deal, the goal of an elevator pitch is to set the hook; to start a dialogue with the audience.

Source: Chris O'Leary. 2008.

Successful pitches are short, to the point.

A pitch should answer four key questions (not necessarily in this order):

1. Who are we and who are the people/population we serve?
2. What do we do? What is unique about us?
3. Why should the listener fund/work/partner with us?
4. What are we seeking?

- **Who are we and who are the people/population we serve?**

You cannot be all things to all people; neither can your speech. Keep the audience in mind as you describe in clear, precise language who you serve.

- **What do we do? What is unique about us?**

In one, short sentence, describe your organization's core service. Think critically about what separates your organization from others working in the same field. For example, your organization may be the only one in the community that employs retired nurses or relies mostly on youth volunteers or reaches a critically underserved population.

- **Why should someone fund/work/partner with us?**

Know your target and his or her needs. Another way of phrasing this question is: What is it that this person needs or wants that my organization alone can provide?

There may be many other organizations that do similar work with similar populations—explain why your organization is a better choice than the others. In business terms, what is your organization's competitive advantage? Remember, not everyone listening will respond the same way. Choose those things you know are of most interest to your listener—what your organization can do for him or her.

- **What are we seeking?**

In crafting your pitch, keep in mind the purpose of your conversation and what you want to achieve. For example, when speaking with a potential donor, your goal might be to request a meeting where you can share more about your programming and why your organization should receive funding. With this goal in mind, you might end your pitch with: "This is just some of what our organization accomplishes (or hopes to accomplish). I would appreciate meeting with you to discuss this further... what is the best way to contact you?"

Additional tips for improving your pitch

- **Tell a story.** A pitch should be like telling a story; it should intrigue your audience and keep them captivated for 30 to 90 seconds. Don't simply share facts; make sure you engage your audience and hold their attention.
- **Consider your “hook.”** A “hook” is an interesting aspect that engages the listener and prompts him or her to ask questions. For example, you might start with a statement like, “Last year my organization saved 4,000 lives.” Or, “My CSO is changing the way children view school.” Or, “Our approach to HIV prevention has touched 15,000 children's lives across South Africa.” Your hook should catch the listener's attention and make him or her want to hear more about your organization.
- **Know your audience.** Your pitch should explain why your audience should care about what you do. Think about what an individual donor might want to hear versus a potential partner. Think about what information might change, depending on the audience.
- **Always be prepared.** Practice your pitch until it sounds conversational, not stiff. Consider rehearsing it in front of a mirror, or in front of colleagues or friends until it sounds natural, not memorized. Remember, you have only one chance to make a good first impression.
- **Always follow up.** After you have delivered your pitch and reached your goal, make sure you follow through. If you requested a business card, then email the contact immediately to set up the meeting and bring up details you discussed so they can recall the discussion.

Keep your pitch short and engaging—tell your listener what is unique about your organization without getting bogged down in details.

Sample Pitch for a Chance Meeting with a Business Owner

Set up: Mary Smith, Executive Director of MY CSO, while shopping at the local market, runs into the head of a small business

Target: Well-known business owner

Immediate goal: Start a conversation that will lead to a meeting

End goal: Partner and place trainees in business

SAMPLE TALKING POINTS	RATIONALE
<p>Hello, my name is Mary Smith with MY CSO. For the last three years we've changed the lives of hundreds of HIV-positive teenagers who live in OUR TOWN.</p> <p>We provide counseling, schooling, and job training for young people who once were unemployable and often turned to begging.</p> <p>Our funding comes from USAID and the local department of health.</p>	<p>Tell your story and use a "hook." Introduce unique aspect of mission—works with teenagers.</p> <p>Know your audience when describing what organization does— trains capable workers.</p> <p>Keep it simple. Do not use jargon (for example, OVC or sustainable solutions).</p> <p>Breathe. Listen. Look for nonverbal cues, adapt as necessary.</p>
<p>I have some interesting ideas for your business that I'd like to discuss at a more convenient time. What is the best way to schedule a meeting?</p>	<p>Aim for an immediate goal, but keep the end goal in mind.</p> <p>Now is not the time or place for a long conversation. Aim to start a dialogue that will lead to a meeting, not to place a trainee.</p>
<p>How may I contact you? By phone or email? May I have a business/visit card?</p>	<p>Ask for contact information—a phone number or email address.</p>
<p>Thank you.</p>	<p>Always be courteous.</p>
<p>We all meet so many people every day, to help you remember our organization, I wanted you to know that three of our trained seamstresses designed and made all the uniforms for the local ABC primary school.</p>	<p>Before parting, mention something hard to forget that reinforces the organization's mission and accomplishments.</p>
<p>Here is my card. I will follow up in a few days. It was a pleasure meeting you.</p>	<p>Before handing over your card, write a short note on the reverse— for example, "trainees made ABC school uniforms"—as a reminder to the recipient.</p>

Sample Pitch for a Chance Meeting with a Reporter

Set up: Mary Smith, Executive Director of MY CSO, while attending a local council meeting runs into a reporter for local media.

Target: Local newspaper, radio or TV station or website.

Immediate goal: Start a conversation that may lead to a feature story.

End goal: Positive media coverage.

SAMPLE TALKING POINTS	RATIONALE
<p>Hello, my name is Mary Smith with MY CSO. For the last three years we've changed the lives of hundreds of HIV-positive teenagers who live in OUR TOWN.</p> <p>We provide counseling, schooling, and job training for young people who once were unemployable and often turned to begging.</p> <p>Perhaps you have heard of "Our Town United"...That is our afterschool football club—one of the ways we work with hard-to-reach young men.</p>	<p>Tell your story and use a "hook." Introduce unique aspect of mission—works with teenagers.</p> <p>Know your audience when describing what organization does—looks for interesting local news.</p> <p>Keep it simple. Do not use jargon (for example, OVC or sustainable solutions). Tell your story and use a "hook." Introduce unique aspect of mission—works with teenagers.</p> <p>Breathe. Listen. Look for nonverbal cues, adapt as necessary.</p>
<p>The team has won three of four games this season. But that's not all, they have also learned about how to make good decisions on and off the field, especially about how to prevent HIV. For a change, here is a good news story about our youth.</p>	<p>Aim for an immediate goal, but keep the end goal in mind. Since this is not the time or place for a long conversation, aim to start a dialogue that will lead to a meeting.</p>
<p>How may I contact you? By phone or email? May I have a business/visit card?</p>	<p>Ask for contact information—a phone number or email address.</p>
<p>Thank you.</p>	<p>Always be courteous.</p>
<p>Before you go...we are so excited that [Name of local soccer hero] has agreed to coach the team.</p> <p>I hope you will consider coming to practice to see how we combine soccer and HIV prevention so you can share this story with your readers (or listeners, or viewers).</p>	<p>Before parting, mention something hard to forget that reinforces something about the organization's mission and accomplishments.</p> <p>If the reporter says he doesn't cover health, sports, or human-interest stories, ask for the name of a colleague who does, then, follow up by contacting him/her.</p>
<p>Here is my card. I will follow up in a few days. It was a pleasure meeting you.</p>	<p>Write a short note on the reverse—for example, "soccer and HIV prevention"—as a reminder to the recipient.</p>

Telling Success Stories to Demonstrate your Impact

Stories and photographs are powerful ways to educate donors, prospective partners, and the public about your programs and demonstrate their value to the community.

Q. What is a success story and how do we develop one?

A. A success story shows how your organization is making a difference in people's lives. More than a list of events or activities, it describes a positive change and shows how that change helps your beneficiaries and the people of your community.

Telling your story should be an important part of your organization's communication and marketing plan. Why? Because stories and photographs are powerful ways to educate donors, prospective partners, and the public about your programs and demonstrate their value to the community. In the process, telling your story lets you give credit to donors and reach a wider audience of potential supporters. Consider developing and disseminating at least one or two success stories about each program you implement.

There are many different types of success stories. The most common type enables the reader to empathize with the problem or challenge that your organization's beneficiaries face. However, success stories may also highlight a specific event or discuss an innovative tool or approach your program has employed. A good success story complements or expands on information provided in your technical reports, repackaged for a wider audience.

The key to many good success stories is your ability to turn the data that provide evidence of your program's results into an engaging personal story. For example, in Jordan, Carnival Play & Learn, a unique woman-owned business, helps mothers and young children who live in an industrial community thrive by stimulating their intellectual curiosity and creativity. The story puts a human face on the impact of the USAID Jordan [Local Enterprise Support \(LENS\)](#) project.

References

CIVICUS Toolkit

[Writing Effectively and Powerfully](#)

K4Health

[Communicating your Mission through Photography](#)

USAID

[Success Story Guidelines](#)

Finding a Good Story

Successes and ideas for stories may come forward at any time during implementation, so it is a good practice to jot them down as they arise and keep a file that you can refer to later when you draft the story. Some ways to find good stories include:

- asking your staff and subrecipients to suggest beneficiaries of your program whom you might include in a success story;
- documenting an innovative approach your program used that allowed you to reach new people or address a need that was previously unmet;
- discussing an event that allowed you to exceed your targets;
- building on pieces of good news about your program that are passed around your office and energize staff; and
- elaborating on a story you often tell colleagues or donors that grabs their attention.

Writing the Story

A good success story is short, rich in detail, and memorable. Although there is no formula you must follow, there are elements that make a story engaging. You do not have to include them all, but here are some that can make your story more interesting.

Use quotes and photos. Using the words and pictures of the people in your story can make it much more personal and engaging to the reader. (See sidebar “Ask for Permission.”)

Talk about the Before, After and the Future. A great way to demonstrate impact is to explain the problem your program hoped to address by sharing a view of what life was like before your program started. Your story then shows how you addressed that challenge by describing what happened after your program was in place. You may also want to talk about the future, too, for plans to expand or sustain your program.

Do not forget the data. Though these stories often focus on an individual or group of people for the “story” aspect, do not completely leave out the bigger picture that your data show. Remember, the story gives a human face to the evidence of your program’s impact, so you may want to include data as well. Consider using a graph or a chart to make your quantitative data more meaningful for the reader.

Give credit. Your program would not be possible without the support of the host government, donors, partners, and staff of the organization. Make sure to give credit to those who have supported your program. This can be done in the narrative or by putting the logos of donors and other organizations involved on the printed or electronic presentation of the story.

Items to Consider

Ask for Permission

Using the names, words, and photos of the people in your story makes it more meaningful. Although people are usually happy to share their stories, it is important to respect the privacy of the individual(s) in your story. Always tell people exactly how you intend to use the story (post it on the Internet or share it with local press, donors, or others) and request their written permission by having them sign a release form authorizing you to use their names and photos.

Coordinate with the Donor

As you begin to draft the story, contact your AOR or Activity Manager. Some donors may want to review the story before it is distributed, and they may have other requirements for publicly documenting the programs they fund. This process gives donors a chance to be involved in the story. After all, just as you are proud of your program’s success, they too are pleased to be supporting good work.

Success Story Examples

There are a number of success stories posted on the Web to help you think about what you might want to say about your program and how other organizations have told their stories. For examples, visit [USAID Extreme Possibilities](#): *Stories to inspire an end to extreme poverty.*

Provide contact information. Success stories are often short—one or two pages (200 to 500 words). Therefore, there is likely a lot of information you do not have room for in your story. Providing contact information allows others who are interested in your story to follow up with you for more details.

Promoting the Story

Once the story is written, share it with a number of different audiences to communicate your successes as widely as possible. Start by sharing the story with your donors. (See sidebar, “Coordinate with the Donor.”) Then, share the story with your partners, your beneficiaries, the host government and the general public.

Consider the following strategies for sharing your story:

- Post the story on a website—yours, your partner’s, and/or donor’s.
- Create a news release and share the story with local media.
- Print copies and post the story and photos at program implementation sites (if appropriate).
- Provide copies to local government officials.
- Submit your story to CSO conferences and forums where you might be asked to share more details about your program with other implementers.
- Use the information as the basis for presentations at technical conferences.
- Share the story with your partners and staff. This is a great way to solicit more stories from your team.

Inclusive Development

8

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

USAID defines inclusive development as “the concept that every person, regardless of identity, is instrumental in the transformation of their own societies and their inclusion throughout the development process leads to better outcomes.” There is growing evidence that inclusion of all social groups is important for development across sectors. Integrating inclusion into programming begins with design and planning and should remain consistent through the implementation, evaluation, and learning phases of a program.

This section of *Implementation Tips* provides information on how to comply with USAID inclusion policies, how to integrate inclusion principles both internally and externally, and considerations for engaging specific marginalized communities. The tips are categorized into six topics—inclusive development, persons with disabilities, older people, inclusive monitoring & evaluation, gender, and youth. SCS Global engaged with consortium partners Humanity and Inclusion, HelpAge USA, Social Impact, and Women for Women International to prepare *Implementation Tips* under specific topics.

TOPICS

- 8.1 Inclusive Development**
- 8.2 Persons with Disabilities**
- 8.3 Older People**
- 8.4 Inclusive Monitoring & Evaluation**
- 8.5 Gender**
- 8.6 Youth**

Inclusive Development

TOPICS

- 8.1.1 Introduction to Inclusion and Inclusive Development
 - 8.1.2 Introducing an Inclusive Civic Engagement Project to the Community
 - 8.1.3 Gender-Sensitive and Socially Inclusive Facilitation
 - 8.1.4 Supporting Gender- and Socially-Inclusive Public Service Delivery
-

Introduction to Inclusion and Inclusive Development

Definitions

Marginalized groups: People who are typically denied full access to legal protection or social and economic participation and programs (such as police protection; political participation; or access to healthcare, education, employment) in practice and/or in principle for historical, cultural, political, or other contextual reasons.

Inclusion: Ensuring equal access to social, political, and economic opportunities for all people, regardless of differences in personal characteristics or identities.

Barriers: Social, political, economic, or other dynamics that prevent the full and equal participation of a certain group in a program or a social benefit.

Gender: The socially defined set of roles, rights, responsibilities, entitlements, and obligations of females and males held in societies. These definitions of what it means to be female or male vary among cultures and change over time.

LGBTI: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex. These terms refer to people whose sexual orientation or gender identities differ from traditional expectations of males or females in particular societies. They are also referred to as sexual and gender minorities.

Continued on next page →

Q. What is inclusion and why is it important?

A. USAID defines inclusive development as “the concept that every person, regardless of identity, is instrumental in the transformation of their own societies and their inclusion throughout the development process leads to better outcomes.”¹ There is growing evidence that inclusion of all social groups is important for development across sectors. For example, research has found a positive relationship between gender equality and progress in socioeconomic development for all members of society.² Research also has found that stigma, discrimination, and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people harm a country’s economic performance by preventing LGBTI people from contributing their labor and unique strengths to a country’s economy.³ In sum, inclusion is good for development because it allows all members of society to contribute to the common good.

Diversity vs. Inclusion

Understanding inclusion first requires an understanding of diversity. Diversity refers to the ways people differ, including internal and external characteristics and identities. Differences may include gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, ethnic or religious background, and other characteristics. Inclusion involves ensuring equal access to social, political, and economic opportunities for all people—regardless of personal characteristics or identities. It also involves harnessing the strengths of different groups to benefit an organization, community, or broader society.

Respect for diversity is a key prerequisite for inclusion. Certain identity groups are often marginalized or excluded from legal, social, political, or economic opportunities due to stigma and

¹ USAID, [Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations](#)

² Lawson-Remer, T., [Gender Equality Matters for Development Outcomes](#)

³ Badgett, M.V.L., Nezhad, S., Waaldijk, C., and Rodgers Y. vander, [The Relationship between LGBT Inclusion and Economic Development: An analysis of emerging economies](#)

discrimination that may be deeply rooted in historical and cultural norms. Meaningfully advancing a country's development requires establishing an equal playing field for all people, including groups that face marginalization and exclusion.

Inclusion and Civil Society

CSOs are an important channel through which citizens from traditionally marginalized or vulnerable communities can engage in governance processes, realize their rights, and advance their welfare. CSOs are often uniquely well-positioned to assess the needs of vulnerable people in their communities and the barriers that prevent them from accessing rights and services available to other members of society.

Some CSOs are dedicated to representing and advancing the interests of specific marginalized groups. Others focus on broader functional or sectoral missions and may identify and engage vulnerable groups in their work. For example, a CSO focused on community health may assess unique health problems facing women and seek solutions to address their needs. An organization providing workforce development services may assess disproportionate economic disadvantages facing a minority ethnic community and provide targeted assistance to members of that group.

Integrating Inclusion into Your Work

Integrating inclusion into your work should involve all stages of the program cycle—design, planning, implementation, evaluation, and learning.

- **Designing** an inclusive program requires understanding the barriers—including discrimination and exclusion—that can prevent individuals from participating in a program or benefiting from its intended services or outcomes.
- **Planning** an inclusive program requires outlining concrete steps to engage marginalized communities in program activities in a smart, sensitive, and safe manner.
- Throughout **implementation**, organizations should regularly assess the degree to which marginalized communities are being reached, how they are benefiting from a program, and if they are experiencing unintended consequences. If needed, programs should adapt to ensure marginalized groups are meaningfully and positively engaged in the program.
- **Evaluation** should include another round of inclusion analysis to assess the program's experiences and outcomes for marginalized groups.

Definitions, contd.

Ethnic Minority: A group of people of a particular ethnicity, race, or nationality living in a country or area where the majority of people are of a different ethnicity, race, or nationality. Although a country or area may have multiple ethnic minorities, a dominant ethnic group typically comprises the majority of the population.

Disability: Long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Resources

[USAID's Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle in Mission Operations](#)

[USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#)

[USAID Disability Policy Paper](#)

[USAID's Youth In Development: Realizing the Demographic Opportunity](#)

[USAID's LGBT Vision for Action](#)

[The Transforming Agency, Access, and Power \(TAAP\) Toolkit](#)

[CDA Conflict-Sensitivity and Do No Harm Resources](#)

- Drawing on evaluation findings and information collected during implementation, organizations should facilitate **learning** that informs adaptations to better include diverse communities during implementation. See the Resources section for additional guidance and tools on integrating inclusion and inclusion analysis into your work.

Key Principles

Consider these two key principles for including marginalized groups in programs:

- **Do no harm:** CSOs should consider that efforts to engage marginalized groups could have unintended consequences, including negative effects. Accordingly, it is important for organizations to understand and address those consequences to ensure that their activities do not cause any unintentional harm—physical or psychological—to any individual or group. The “do no harm” principle should be incorporated throughout the program cycle, including preliminary inclusion analysis to inform program design and to identify and mitigate potential risks during implementation.
- **Nothing about us without us:** Inclusive approaches feature consultation with marginalized groups to understand their unique barriers, needs, and priorities. These groups should be involved in inclusion analysis and engaged as program staff or advisors.

8.1.2

Introducing an Inclusive Civic Engagement Project to the Community

Q. How can I gain community support for a civic engagement project that incorporates gender and social inclusion principles?

A. Development projects that seek to advance gender and social inclusion in civic or political life may encounter resistance from people who perceive such change as a threat to their culture or positions within the community. Gaining support from the community, and particularly from traditional and religious leaders, can be critical to achieving the project's outcomes. However, doing so without compromising principles of inclusion can be difficult. Several tactics—such as framing inclusive civic engagement projects as a “best practice” and emphasizing mutual gains of inclusive citizen participation—can be helpful in encouraging community support and minimizing the potential for backlash. This Implementation Tip provides guidance for securing community support for inclusive civic engagement projects.

USAID programming and inclusive development

USAID projects are expected to promote gender equality, women empowerment, and social inclusion. Inclusive approaches ensure that all members of the community—regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or other personal identities or characteristics—will benefit from the project. These priorities are reflected in various USAID policies and guidance documents on inclusive development, gender equality, youth development, disability, and others. For more information on USAID policies for inclusive development, see the Implementation Tip on Inclusion and Inclusive Development.

Encountering opposition to gender and social inclusion

To be successful, projects supporting civic engagement need “buy-in” from the community/ies where they work. This support may be difficult to achieve in places where the concept that all community

members meaningfully participate in civic life presents challenges to traditional gender norms and power structures that exist within the community. For example, in communities where the word “gender” is seen as referring only to women, projects emphasizing the gender-related aspects of a project may be perceived as benefitting women to the detriment of men. These misperceptions may lead men to believe that a project will decrease their power, and they may therefore voice opposition to it. People who respond negatively to a project and attempt to sabotage it may be considered “spoilers.”

Opposition may come from any member of a community but gaining support from traditional and religious leaders is often especially difficult if they hold more conservative attitudes about the participation of women and marginalized groups in public life. As a result, project staff should take intentional approaches to gain the support of traditional and religious leaders without undermining principles of gender and social inclusion. Important opportunities for seeking support may include meetings with community leaders during project start-up and efforts to recruit participants or to engage members of the community

Engaging religious and traditional leaders in project start-up

When starting a new civic engagement project, it is often necessary to approach religious and traditional leaders who act as “gatekeepers” and may control access to a community. It is important to gain their support during project start-up and maintain communication throughout a project to secure the participation of community members who may not feel comfortable participating in activities unless they have been endorsed by local leaders.

On the other hand, directing projects through these leaders may also reinforce the exclusion of women and other marginalized groups. Religious and traditional leaders may not be willing to engage all members of the community—such as women; youth; people with disabilities; or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people—in decision-making processes. Such leaders often choose their own supporters or members of their own identity group to represent the “community” in a priority-setting meeting. This may in turn undermine principles of inclusion, democracy, and citizen participation. Reflecting this concern, the *2012 United Nations Report of the Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights* suggested that relying on the support of religious and traditional leaders may be a human rights violation. The report emphasized the need to take measures to remedy structural discrimination by ensuring that communities are not exclusively represented by people who are traditionally vested with power or authority (most of whom are male). The report notes that relying on the support of traditional

and religious leaders may allow diverse subcultures or groups—such as youth, ethnic minorities, migrants, women, and others that either do not accept or do not live according to the norms prescribed by the dominant group—to be ignored or completely silenced.

If project staff members choose to work extensively with traditional and religious leaders, it is important to ensure that all members of the community can participate equally. The following recommendations may allow for constructive engagement of traditional leaders in project start-up meetings without undermining gender and social inclusion principles.

Tips for Engaging Traditional and Religious Leaders in Project Start-up Meetings

- **Ensure that women and men from majority and minority social groups attend meetings about the project or community decision making.** This requires intentional efforts to find marginalized groups and persuade their members to attend.
- **Address power imbalances between traditional leaders and women and non-majority groups.** This may require providing targeted training to women and non-majority groups to build their confidence and skills to fully and equally participate in meetings with traditional leaders and members of majority groups.
- **Provide special training to meeting and activity facilitators.** This type of training prepares facilitators to conduct a meeting in a way that respects religious and traditional leaders but prevents them from dominating the meeting.
- **Establish clear ground rules for the meetings and enforce them equally.** The facilitator must establish ground rules (such as prohibiting interruptions and respecting time limits for speakers) and enforce them to ensure that the voices of marginalized groups are heard.
- **Meet with the traditional and religious leaders beforehand to clarify expectations.** It may be useful to meet with the traditional and religious leaders prior to a meeting to establish respect and ensure they are aware that the purpose of the meeting is to learn about the needs and interests of all members of the community—not just those the leaders may represent.

Securing broader community support

The following tactics can be useful to encourage support for and participation in a project by local leaders and other members of the community.

Tips for Securing Community Support for Inclusive Civic Engagement

- **Gender-sensitive programming is a best practice.** Rather than highlighting gender and inclusion aspects of programming, frame your approach to the community as crucial to achieving project outcomes. For example, achieving improvements in local government service delivery requires that both women and men from diverse social groups participate in activities that prepare them to engage productively with their local government, express their distinct service delivery needs, and work with government to improve the provision of those services. Efficient public expenditures must account for the different service needs and interests of diverse community members. Providing services that are not based on all citizens' needs is inefficient and poor governance. This approach enables project outcomes to benefit both women and men without focusing on the term "gender."
- **Use a mutual gains approach.** If community members believe they will benefit from a project's outcomes, they will be much more likely to offer their support or participation. Using a "mutual gains" approach—or an approach that emphasizes a project's benefits for all community members—can help foster support for a project. This entails explaining the benefits that women's participation in civic life can have on improving service delivery; efficient public expenditure; and improving the lives of women, their children, and communities. It emphasizes that gains for women do not come at the expense of men, but often produce benefits for both women and men that further flow down to children, families, and communities.
- **Recognize gender as one social difference among many.** Communities comprise various social groups, including women and men; old and young people; people with disabilities; people of different ethnic and religious groups; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex (LGBTI) persons. Broadening a discussion about gender to one about inclusion of all social groups is not only essential for inclusive development; it may also prevent men from feeling threatened by the prospect of including women in public decision-making processes.
- **Point out that cultures always change.** Community members may also resist an inclusive project approach if they perceive it as a threat to local culture or identity. "Spoilers" might claim that the project is the product of development agencies imposing "foreign" ideals on their community. One response to this critique is to point out that cultures are constantly changing. Ask community members to provide a few examples of things they can do now that their parents could not do or to discuss how they have benefited from changes in society. You may point to new innovations such as cars,

References

[United Nations' Report of the Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights](#)

[Youth Power's Technical Brief: Making the Pitch for Youth Engagement](#)

new medical facilities, or wells, and ask the community if these innovations have changed their culture and if those changes are positive or negative.

- **Engage “spoilers” with respect.** In any community, there may be people who remain wary of change—and especially change that might bring about shifts in power between men and women or between different social groups. Such individuals may act as spoilers by attempting to sabotage an inclusive civic engagement project. It is important to handle these people with respect and, ideally, to provide opportunities for them to voice their opposition in front of the community and for the community to hear the project staff’s response. The key is not to assume that the “spoilers” have all the power in the community. An inclusive approach that engages a greater and broader number of citizens has the power to outweigh people who oppose the project.

Gender-Sensitive and Socially Inclusive Facilitation

Definitions

Marginalized groups: People who are typically denied full access to legal protection or social and economic participation and programs (such as police protection; political participation; access to healthcare, education, employment, etc.), whether in practice or in principle (or both) for historical, cultural, political, or other contextual reasons.

Inclusive Development:

The concept that every person, regardless of identity, is instrumental in the transformation of their own societies and that their inclusion throughout the development process leads to better outcomes.

Q. How can I ensure that representatives of women and marginalized groups can attend and participate meaningfully in project activities, public meetings, and civic engagement activities?

A. Proactive community engagement, careful planning, and targeted capacity building can facilitate more inclusive attendance and participation in project activities, public meetings, and community activities. Ensuring equal opportunity for all citizens to participate in a civic engagement project—or simply a public meeting held by a civil society organization (CSO) or government—is critical to achieving effective community decisions, efficient use of public resources, and positive outcomes for civic engagement projects. The importance of inclusive participation is reflected in various USAID policies and guidance documents on inclusive development, gender equality, youth development, disability, and others. See the *Implementation Tip* on [Inclusive Development](#) for more information on USAID policies for inclusive development.

Even if a CSO invites a diverse group of citizens to a public meeting or other civic engagement activity, women and members of marginalized groups may not feel comfortable attending due to the social, political, and other barriers that commonly exclude them from civic and political life. Often, the norms that exclude these groups also make them feel that they do not have the right to demand that the community or the state meets their needs or furthers their interests. In many places, the longstanding dominance in leadership positions by men and members of majority ethnic or other social groups has prevented women and men in marginalized groups from thinking about their own distinct needs and interests, let alone voicing them in a community forum. Women and members of marginalized groups may also fear that traditional community leaders will not consider their input seriously, or worse, will demean or retaliate against them if they share perspectives that run counter to the interests of dominant groups. Marginalized groups may also feel that they lack the skills and agency to articulate their needs and interests in a formal community setting.

For public meetings and civic engagement activities to be more inclusive, recruitment and meeting facilitation must be conducted in a way that ensures that women and marginalized groups feel confident attending, believe they will be able to participate freely without fear of intimidation, and trust that their opinions will be heard respectfully and meaningfully considered. The following actions can help secure more inclusive attendance in public meetings and activities.

Coordinating Invitations and Advertisements

- Ensure the meeting is scheduled at a time that is convenient and safe for all groups to attend. For example, take into account the different work schedules of both women and men and consider holding the meeting at a time when women have access to some form of child care.
- Identify women and key members of marginalized groups to serve as champions by having them recruit other members of their social group to attend and participate.
- Attempt to co-organize the meeting with a CSO representing marginalized groups and ask them to bring their members to the meeting. If co-organizing the event is not possible, coordinate with organizations representing marginalized groups to ensure there is no scheduling conflict.
- Plan to recruit at least a critical mass (33 percent) of women and representatives of marginalized groups for the meeting or activity. This will encourage more members of these groups to attend.
- Announce the meeting via information channels that are used by women and marginalized groups. For example, certain community radio stations may be popular and/or accessible to specific ethnic or socioeconomic groups.
- Consider using multiple means—such as posters, radio announcements, etc.—to alert people to the meeting. Ensure the invitation is appropriate for low-literate audiences by using oral invitations as appropriate.
- Coordinate with groups serving the needs of women (such as community mothers' groups) and marginalized groups to tell their members/clients about the meeting.
- Follow up on written invitations by phone, email, or in person to further encourage participation.

Meeting Preparation and Setup

- Arrange for women to sit in the front of the room or as a group alongside men. People with a sight or hearing impairment should be seated in the front of the room.

What to include in the Invitation

In addition to general information, invitations should include:

- The purpose of the meeting and why it's important for women and members of all social groups to participate.
- Instructions to CSOs and other community organization to bring women and members of marginalized groups.
- Information on provided accommodations and contact information for attendees to request additional accommodations.
- Co-sponsorship information.
- Meeting agenda and/or information on how the meeting will be conducted.

Utilizing the data collected during the meeting

To get a better understanding of meeting's impact, organizers should do the following after the meeting:

- Analyze the sign-in sheet to determine how many men, women, and members of marginalized groups attended.
 - Analyze the data collected by the meeting observer to determine:
 - What was the ratio of speaking time between men, women, and members of marginalized groups?
 - Were women and members of marginalized groups interrupted or did men from dominant groups speak more often and for longer periods?
 - Were the inputs from women and marginalized groups received respectfully?
 - If it was a priority setting meeting, were women's and marginalized groups' priorities voiced and recognized?
 - If the meeting or activity is part of a USAID-funded project, include data on attendance and participation in project reports and monitoring evaluation databases.
 - Evaluate the data gathered and discuss what changes might be made to improve stakeholder attendance and increase the number of inclusive outcomes.
- Use sign-in sheets that capture gender and other relevant demographic information for participants, such as age.
 - Before the meeting, speak with traditional and community leaders who often lead such meetings to establish a common understanding that the meeting or activity must allow participation by all members of the community. If necessary, explain why it is valuable for people to speak freely without fear of being intimidated by other people or social groups.
 - Arrange to have specific women and members of marginalized groups in the audience ask questions and/or speak up.
 - If needed, provide information to women and marginalized groups about the subject matter of the meeting that will help prepare them to participate equally. For example, if it is a public meeting about delivery of public services, provide information on the service delivery decision-making process, opportunities to influence the process, and the government's service delivery obligations.
 - Gather members of marginalized groups and help them identify their own needs and interests through guided facilitation. For example, women (who often are responsible for the cooking and cleaning) may want better access to clean water. Geographically marginalized groups may want better access to schools or primary health facilities. Persons with disabilities may want better access to technologies that would allow them to participate in community activities.

Conducting the Meeting

- Set strict ground rules for the meeting and ensure that the facilitator enforces them equally. These might include:
 - Do not allow interruptions.
 - Respect time limits for speaking.
 - Establish zipper lists for speaking so every other person recognized is a woman or member of a marginalized group.
 - Pose specific questions to people who are not participating and do not move on until they have answered.
 - Prohibit efforts to intimidate other participants.
- When opening the meeting, explain the value of equal participation by attendees.
- Provide rotating opportunities for women and members of marginalized groups to serve in different roles such as facilitating, note taking, and speaking on certain subjects.
- If note taking is done on a flip chart, make sure the suggestions and inputs of women and marginalized groups are all taken down.

- Identify someone to observe the meeting and record information about who spoke and for how long, whether or not they were interrupted, what issues were raised, and how different issues and messages were received by different participants.

After the Meeting

- If meeting minutes or another type of report is developed after the meeting, ensure that issues raised by women and representatives of marginalized groups are included.
- Share the outcomes of the meeting among all participants and interested community stakeholders, including organizations representing women and marginalized groups.

Additional considerations for supporting active, inclusive participation in civic activities

Provide training as needed before the meeting. Due to social and gender norms, women and members of marginalized groups are not always comfortable stating their needs or speaking in public. Therefore, it may be important to provide these groups with training—on such topics as issue identification, using evidence for decision making, public speaking, rules and procedures for meetings—and conduct advocacy with them ahead of the meeting so they feel more comfortable and are able to participate fully. If there are videos of prior meetings, it may be helpful to share them so that participants have a better idea of what to expect.

Make efforts with community leaders to establish the value of inclusive participation. It may be useful to make the argument that the mandate of a publicly-elected official is to provide services that all community members want, need, and will use. Additionally, providing services and programs that are only demanded or used by majority groups is a waste of precious public resources. If leaders and dominant community groups work with women and marginalized groups to understand their unique needs and interests, they can use public resources more efficiently. See the *Implementation Tip* on [How to Engage Community Leaders in Inclusive Projects](#) for more information.

Create space in the meeting agenda to discuss the “elephant in the room.” Public meeting agendas often do not include time for open discussion of citizens’ views and interests. This can discourage women and members of marginalized groups from voicing their priorities. For example, participants may not raise the need for separate bathrooms for boys and girls (to allow girls to practice menstrual hygiene management) due to lack of time in an agenda or discomfort raising the issue in public. The meeting organizers and facilitator must find a way to place such topics on the meeting agenda (or allow them to be introduced) and create an environment in which participants feel comfortable discussing them.



Ensure the facilitator(s) are trained in gender-sensitive and socially inclusive facilitation. Even in contexts where gender and social norms are not conducive to mixed-sex meetings with members of both dominant and marginalized social groups, it is important to hold meetings with diverse community members. It can be transformative for members of dominant groups to hear women and marginalized groups speak about their rights and interests. For such meetings to have a positive impact, however, the facilitator must ensure that community leaders and members of dominant groups do not speak over or drown out the voices of women and members of marginalized groups. Facilitators must be skilled in setting and enforcing ground rules for respectful and equal participation and to allow all participants to present their needs as community interests—rather than having the meeting be a zero-sum game that benefits one gender or social group. Additional resources on inclusive facilitation are included in the Resources section of this *Implementation Tip*.

Resources

[How Facilitators Can Infuse Diversity and Inclusion into Everything We Do](#)

[Anti-Oppressive Facilitation for Democratic Process: Making Meetings Awesome for Everyone](#)

8.1.4

Supporting Gender- and Socially-Inclusive Public Service Delivery

Q. How can I work with service delivery oversight committees to achieve more inclusive delivery of public services?

A. Civil society organizations (CSOs) and other community actors can facilitate the planning and delivery of public services that meet the needs of all community members by: stressing to service delivery oversight committees their formal mandates; facilitating critical reflection on gender and social norms and biases; supporting the use of sex-disaggregated data; and carefully recording the needs and perspectives of women and members of marginalized groups.

Service delivery oversight committees—such as school management committees, water user groups, and neighborhood health committees—play important roles in making community decisions about what kinds of services a government provides, how, and to whom. In many places, decision making in these committees is dominated by traditional and religious leaders who may have conservative or discriminatory views about the participation of women and marginalized social groups in public life. As a result, women and members of traditionally marginalized groups are often excluded from decision-making processes about critical public services and therefore miss important opportunities to voice their unique service needs. Women and members of marginalized groups who attempt to influence the delivery of public services may face backlash from traditional leaders and other committee members who have vested interests in maintaining the status quo. The steps below can assist CSOs to strengthen the meaningful participation of women and marginalized groups in community decisions about public services.

- **Reacquaint traditional and cultural leaders with the official mandate of the oversight committee.** Most countries have guidelines or mandates for service delivery oversight committees that outline their purposes and functions. Such guidelines usually outline what the committees are expected to do, as well as how

Definitions

Marginalized groups:

Refers to people who are typically denied full access to legal protection or social and economic participation and programs (such as police protection; political participation; access to healthcare, education, employment, etc.), whether in practice or in principle (or both) for historical, cultural, political, or other contextual reasons.

they should conduct meetings and engage with members of the community. Despite these guidelines, traditional and religious community leaders may overstep the official mandate of a committee and lead it in a way that benefits them or their social group—or even take on issues that are beyond their official purview. Reinforcing committee members' knowledge of their official mandate may help them distinguish their responsibilities from other leadership roles they may have within the community and help ensure a committee does not overstep its intended purpose.

- **Work to transform the gender attitudes of traditional and religious leaders or ensure their views do not influence their actions on oversight committees.** The actions of traditional and cultural leaders on service delivery oversight committees are likely to reflect their own traditional views and closely held norms about gender and social relations. Engaging committee members in critical reflection on their own gender norms can encourage them to separate their personal views about gender from their public responsibilities.
- **Explain the value of inclusive decision making.** The concept of inclusive and participatory decision making may be new to traditional and religious leaders who may be used to making decisions on behalf of their constituencies. In such cases, it is important to explain that inclusive decision making is critical for the efficient delivery of public services that are needed, used, and appreciated by community members.
- **Support the use of information and data to inform decision making.** Leaders may often make service delivery decisions based on what they think women and members of minority groups want, rather than on actual data from these groups about their service needs. Supporting oversight committees to collect data from women and marginalized groups about their service needs and their satisfaction with existing services can enable oversight committees to plan and deliver services more efficiently and effectively.
- **In public meetings, utilize observers and note takers to record the voices of women and marginalized groups.** If the views and recommendations of different members of the community are recorded on paper, oversight committees may face greater pressure to integrate them into decision making. See the *Implementation Tip* on [Gender-Sensitive and Socially Inclusive Facilitation](#) for more information on how to ensure women and marginalized groups can attend and participate meaningfully in meetings.

Resources

[Inclusive Public Sector Reform](#)

[The Transforming Agency, Access, and Power \(TAAP\) Toolkit](#)

Persons with Disabilities

TOPICS

- 8.2.1 Providing Accessible Services
 - 8.2.2 Improving Inclusion in the Workplace and Human Resource Practices
 - 8.2.3 Partnering with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities for Inclusive Local Development
 - 8.2.4 Advocating for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
-

Providing Accessible Services

Definitions

Accessibility and access to services:

The ability for all individuals to access programs, facilities, and amenities that are necessary to fully participate in society. These services may include education, health, livelihoods, and more. Access to services is optimized when users, authorities, and service providers collaborate. To ensure optimization, services should be accessible, particularly in terms of geography (road systems, transport and its inter-modality, proximity to centers of population and immediate surroundings), to all individuals.

Assistive technologies:

All tools (non-human) designed to help a person perform everyday activities: mobility aids (for example, wheelchair, walking stick, tricycle); positioning aids (specific chairs, standers); daily living aids (responsive covers, shower seats, handles); visual aids (large print books, white canes, braille, computer screens); hearing devices (amplified telephones, visual systems, hearing aids); communication aids (communication board); and cognitive aids (lists, diaries).

Social services for persons with disabilities:

Services (both specialized and mainstream) that contribute to the enforcement of basic social rights and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Q. How can my organization provide accessible services for persons with disabilities?

A. Access to basic services (both public and private) by citizens in general, and the most at-risk in particular, is a major area of concern for development partners—be they funding bodies, national decision-makers, local authorities, devolved state entities, civil society organizations, or service providers. Being able to access and use one's environment freely, without assistance, is necessary for maintaining the personal autonomy that is crucial for self-empowerment and self-determination. Individuals are considered to be in “disabling situations” when the interplay between personal and environmental barriers prevents them from accomplishing their life goals. For this reason, to ensure accessibility, organizations and their programs must focus not only on the individuals they employ and serve, but also on their own environments. (See also the *Implementation Tip* on [Improving Inclusion in the Workplace and Human Resource Practices](#).)

Actions to improve accessibility may modify not only the physical environment but also the means of communicating and providing information. Barriers may include inaccessible buildings; lack of accessible transportation; inadequate health, education, and employment standards; and/or lower levels of services and funding for those services. The environment must be adapted to the person.

What is Accessibility?

Accessibility is a precondition for persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society.¹ Without access to *the physical environment, transportation, information and communication (including information and communication technologies and systems), and other facilities and services open or provided to the public*, persons with disabilities do not have equal opportunities for participation in their respective societies.

To accommodate the needs of specific individuals, accessibility of existing premises and services may be improved through *reasonable*

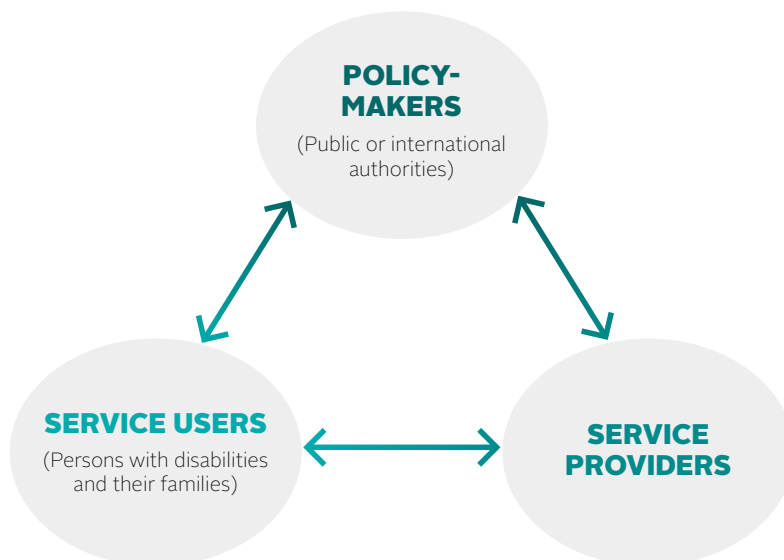
¹ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' general comment on Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (see Resources).

accommodations, while the accessibility of infrastructures, services, products, or systems being planned may be ensured by following the principles of *universal design*. The two concepts are defined further in the column on the left.

Accessible Services

Persons with disabilities often need to access a wide spectrum of services in the community—from early detection of any disability and early intervention, to education, vocational training, health and rehabilitation services, leisure, and transportation. Continuity of services and maintenance of their accessibility are both necessary. An *inclusive system* ensures that both mainstream and specialized services are accessible to persons with disabilities. Accessibility depends heavily on effective interaction among three categories of actors, as illustrated in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1. Three types of actors interact to ensure accessibility



Approaches for achieving accessibility

A number of concepts are integral to ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to the services they need and can engage in the activities important to their lives on an equal basis with others.

A twin-track approach means efforts to improve access take place on somewhat parallel pathways. One is developing initiatives to enhance the empowerment of persons with disabilities. The other is developing or adapting services to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. This “twin track” is necessary to ensure the full and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in public life (see Figure 2).

Definitions, contd.

Unbroken chain of movement:

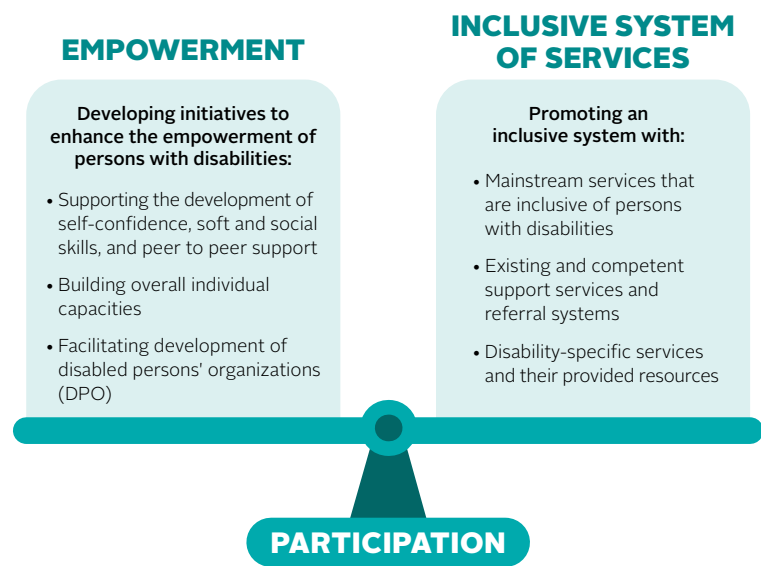
A chain of movement that allows people to access all places and services through the basic RECU steps (Reach, Enter, Circulate, Use) without encountering obstacles or barriers. This chain of movement must be unbroken. If one of the links is missing, efforts to provide access through the remaining links may nevertheless fail.

Mainstream and Specialized Services

Mainstream services: Services intended for general use rather than for use entirely or primarily by persons with disabilities.

Specialized services: Services that aim to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.

Figure 2: Twin-track approach to achieve accessibility



Source: Humanity & Inclusion.

Reasonable Accommodations and Universal Design

Reasonable accommodations, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, refer to necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden on providers—*where needed in a particular case*—that are made to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy or exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others.

Universal design means the design of products, environments, programs, and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Products are usually created to fit what producers perceive to be the abilities of the majority of the population, but universal design aims at accessibility from the start in order to avoid the need for adaptation.

Both reasonable accommodation and universal design cover infrastructure, transportation, communication, and information.

RECU steps and unbroken chain of movement refer to the process of maintaining accessibility of all points in any potential journey—so that all places and services can be accessed without encountering obstacles or barriers. An unbroken chain of movement is a prerequisite for access to services. If one of the links is missing, the chain is broken, and the overall journey may be impossible. There are four basic types of links, abbreviated as “RECU.”

- **Reach:** Being able to move around the community from home to any needed service—affected by pathways, linking pathways, slopes, transport systems, signage, and tactile floor surface
- **Enter:** Being able to get inside a building—affected by steps, ramps, handrails, door widths, and door handles
- **Circulate:** Being able to move about inside a building—affected by corridors, thresholds, door widths, resting places, signage, and dimensions
- **Use:** Being able to use services and facilities—affected by dimensions and design of internal furniture and communication (such as height and type of furniture, signage, and emergency evacuation procedures)

Accessibility in terms of *chain of movement* can be approached in a comprehensive manner through a pilot project (in a well-defined area) that ensures all the places and services to be made accessible are connected seamlessly. For example, around a central district square, this might mean linking the local mayor’s office, primary school, public library, health center, private clinic, religious center, and communication facilities, such as internet cafes. This would allow all users to take part in the activities offered by the district in that central location.

Accessibility and communication by disability type

Focus on six general categories of disability when conducting an accessibility analysis and/or planning improvements to an existing environment or a new design.

Physical: Are the infrastructure and equipment accessible and to what extent? These include external areas, entrances, common spaces, toilets, circulation spaces, working spaces, evacuation system, and so forth. Is the location easy to reach for people with mobility disabilities? Is the furniture usable by everyone? Adaptations to improve accessibility might include:

- ramps and elevators instead of stairs
- desks that can be lower to the ground
- automatic doors (for all spaces, including bathrooms)
- assistive devices such as keyboards and writing materials
- curb cuts

Hearing: Are information/communication techniques accessible to all? Are services, meetings, and workshops accessible to people who are deaf? Would a deaf person be able to learn when an emergency occurs that requires evacuating the building? Are staff able to communicate with people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing? Would a deaf person be able to discuss work with his or her supervisor? Adaptations to improve accessibility might include:

- qualified sign language interpreters
- printed material (posters, flyers, or billboards), dependent upon literacy
- amplification systems such as loud speakers or microphones at workshops
- instructional videos
- provision of paper and pen, so people can write down or draw their questions or requests
- pictures and visuals
- captions on TV programming

Visual: Are information/communication techniques accessible to all? Is information provided for people who are blind or have low vision? Would a person be able to use a screen reader to access files? Are the printed materials used accessible to a person with low vision or who is color blind? Adaptations might include:

- alternative formats such as braille, large print, or electronic formats that can be read by assistive technology such as Job Access With Speech (JAWS)
- assistive devices such as white canes, guide dogs, glasses, or assistive technology
- high contrast materials
- sighted guides, visual and audio descriptions, or audio messages
- radio announcements

References

[Accessibility: how to design and promote an environment accessible to all?](#)

[Conduct an Accessibility Audit in Low and Middle Income Countries](#)

[Job Accommodation Network](#)

[World Development Report: Making Basic Services Work for Poor People](#)

[United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner](#)

[United States Access Board](#)

[International Organization for Standardization's Guide for Addressing Accessibility in Standards](#)

Intellectual: Are information/communication techniques accessible to all?

Would a person with an intellectual disability be able to find an office or meeting space without asking for help? Would he or she be able to use essential equipment without support? Adaptations might include:

- “easy read” written materials (clear and simple messages supported by pictures)
- radio announcements
- personalized support

Psychosocial: Are services and policies accessible to all?

Do your programs take into consideration people who have mental disabilities? Is attention paid to non-apparent or invisible disabilities? It is important for an organization to consider:

- flexible schedules
- access to quiet and dark spaces
- support people or animals
- counseling or therapy options, if requested

Chronic pain, disease, or illness: Are services and policies accessible to all?

Do your programs and services consider individuals who are in constant pain or are experiencing a debilitating disease? It is important for an organization to consider:

- access to medication and treatment
- flexible and forgiving schedules
- access to information and referrals

Partnerships can be an important aspect of ensuring that services are accessible. Organizations might also decide if they will be involved in advocacy actions to improve access to services or to support actors involved in advocacy actions (see also *Implementation Tip* on [Advocating for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)). When planning partnerships, consider giving priority to DPOs (see also *Implementation Tip* on [Partnering with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities for Inclusive Local Development](#)).

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner Humanity & Inclusion for drafting the content for this *Implementation Tip*.

Improving Inclusion in the Workplace and Human Resource Practices

Q. How can I make my organization's workplace and human resource practices more inclusive for persons with disabilities?

A. Organizations that include persons with disabilities on their staff enjoy competitive advantages, an increased number of skilled workers, and increased workplace diversity. To ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities, the workplace must provide accessibility through accommodations that make sure employees can work fully and independently. An accessible workplace does not just refer to the physical space where employees work. Accessibility and inclusion have implications for the pre-hire process (recruitment, hiring, and onboarding) and while employed (performance, retention, and advancement). To begin understanding how to improve workplace accessibility, ask yourself: Is your workplace fully accessible? Conduct an accessibility audit to find out! Workplaces should provide both employees and potential employees with *reasonable accommodation*. This includes services, tools, an environment, and procedures that allow a person with a disability to participate equally. It is also important to remember that not all disabilities are visible, and that an individual may choose not to disclose his or her disability.

Below are five suggestions to help your organization start thinking about reasonable accommodation.

Suggestion 1: Set your accessibility objectives

Consider these preliminary questions:

- Does our organization want to address all aspects of accessibility (infrastructure, tools, information/communication, and information technology) at the same time or set some priorities?
- Do we want to aim for the best possible results from the beginning or do we want to proceed step-by-step, planning a progressive improvement of the level of inclusion/accessibility? If the latter, over the course of how many years?

Definitions

Accessibility: A precondition for persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society. Without access to *the physical environment, transportation, information and communication (including information and communication technologies and systems), and other facilities and services open or provided to the public*, persons with disabilities do not have equal opportunities for participation in their respective societies.

Reasonable Accommodation: Necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden on providers—*where needed in a particular case*—to ensure persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others.

Source: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

Keep in mind that policies and laws vary by country, region, and community

Ensure your organization/program is in compliance with the laws applicable to you. While the United States has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD),¹ the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides legal protection for USAID employees in the United States.² In countries that have ratified the CRPD, implementers of USAID projects should refer both to this legally-binding document and to specific national policies.

¹ [United Nations, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

² [USG, Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

- Do we want to target all the spaces of the premises at once, ensuring that all areas are physically accessible? Or do we want to prioritize certain areas to make them accessible first?
- Do we want to accommodate only the needs of specific staff members who we are already hiring? Or do we want to think about the future and plan accommodations for different kinds of disabilities so that we will be able to hire more persons with disabilities, moving forward?
- If we have several offices, do we want to address the issue(s) in all of them at the same time, or begin/test in one office and then expand to the others?
- Are we willing to appoint dedicated full-time human resources for this process, or do we want to use existing staff members as part-time resources?
- Are we willing to invest financial resources for this process or not? If yes, how much and for how long?
- Are there partners in our community whose expertise we could tap so we are not reinventing the wheel (e.g., Organizations of Persons with Disabilities [OPDs], nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], and service providers)?
- What policy or legal framework must we follow to ensure that we are in compliance? (United Nations CRPD, ADA, and International Organization of Standardization)

Suggestion 2: Conduct an internal assessment

Focus on these five areas when conducting an internal accessibility assessment:

Office premises: Is the infrastructure accessible and to what extent?

Is the office easy to reach for people with mobility disabilities? Infrastructure includes external areas, entrances, common spaces, toilets, circulation spaces, working spaces, evacuation plan, etc.

Office equipment: Is the equipment in the office accessible and to what extent?

Is the furniture usable by everyone? Would a person with an amputated arm be able to use our work equipment or the computers? Would a person with intellectual impairments manage to find an office within the building without asking for help?

Office information/communication techniques: Are they accessible to all?

Are our meetings accessible to deaf people? Are our internal conferences accessible to blind people? Are receptionists at the entrance of our building able to communicate with individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing? Would a deaf person be able to communicate with his or her supervisor?

Office information/communication tools (internal and external): Are they accessible to all?

Would a blind person using a screen reader be able to access the files that we share? Would a deaf person know immediately when there is an emergency requiring that the building be evacuated? Are the printed materials that we use accessible to a person with low vision or to a person who is color blind?

Office culture: Are there practices to encourage the inclusion of persons with disabilities?

Do hiring pipelines engage with groups that support people with disabilities? Does the hiring process encourage applicants with disabilities to apply? Are there required trainings for all employees to better understand challenges and stigmas that co-workers with disabilities may face?

If the answer to any of the above is “no,” what is our capacity to anticipate and rapidly respond to accommodation needs?

Do we know what suppliers to contact if we need a specific keyboard or mouse for a person with a disability? Do we know how long it would take to acquire those and how much they would cost? Do we know a taxi company that can accommodate people using wheelchairs? Do we know what hotels close to our office have rooms that are accessible for visitors with disabilities? Do we have a list of accessible meeting rooms where we could rapidly organize a meeting if we could not provide an accessible meeting place in our office?

Suggestion 3: Create an accessible work environment

Organizations should ensure that they provide an accessible workplace so that all staff can perform their duties (see also *Implementation Tip* on [Providing Accessible Services](#)). OPDs, NGOs, service providers, and others can help assess individual and environmental accessibility and provide corresponding disability-specific services and environmental adaptations. Most importantly, organizations should provide *reasonable accommodations throughout the recruitment and employment process*.

Suggestion 4: Attract qualified job seekers

Persons with disabilities are often unable to apply for jobs they are qualified for because recruitment processes are inaccessible. Information about job opportunities may not be shared in accessible formats. Ideally, organizations should work with OPDs to identify hard-to-reach candidates with disabilities for suitable employment opportunities and provide advice to ensure recruitment processes are accessible. (See also *Implementation Tip* on [Partnering with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities for Inclusive Local Development](#).) If this doesn't fall under an organization's mandate, mission, or priority list, the organization can instead identify and

What does “reasonable” mean, in terms of accommodation?

- Accommodation is considered “reasonable” if it does not create an undue burden.
- A reasonable accommodation good practice is to keep a centralized reasonable accommodation fund (e.g., at the human resources level) to meet any reasonable accommodation requests.

Guiding Questions that can be used in an internal accessibility assessment

- How do our employees work? What equipment or tools do they use? What are the spaces they use the most?
- What are the essential job functions or work tasks for each role? How might people with different types of disabilities face barriers to completing these tasks?
- In what other activities do our employees engage (eating, socializing, relaxing, or exercising)? How might these activities be difficult for those with different kinds of disabilities?
- What could be done to reduce these barriers?

What is a disability ambassador?

Disability ambassadors in the workplace are people with disabilities who share their experiences and work with employers to create and promote an accessible and inclusive workplace.

References

[Best Practices in Developing Reasonable Accommodations in the Workplace: Findings Based on the Research Literature](#)

[Good for Business: Promoting Partnerships to Employ People with Disabilities](#)

[Job Accommodation Network](#)

[How to Design and Promote an Environment Accessible to All](#)

provide referrals to other local agencies who understand the resourcing requirements of organizations or businesses.

Especially in low- and middle-income countries, OPDs often register community members with disabilities or otherwise know where persons with disabilities in the surrounding communities live and work. OPDs can also act as centralized bodies that provide referral services to connect persons with disabilities to suitable job opportunities. Where an OPD serves a large network of persons with disabilities, that organization can be a great partner in building inclusive talent pipelines or helping businesses to identify qualified job seekers with disabilities.

Suggestion 5: Cultivate commitment to inclusion and address attitudinal barriers through awareness sessions

One of the most important factors in creating an inclusive workplace is commitment by leaders. Top management should initiate and drive changes in an organization—starting with the internal accessibility assessment (see Suggestion 2) to understand current knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Based on this assessment, an organization should create and implement an inclusion action plan. When working to change the internal inclusion culture, an organization should create a diversity policy and then work towards a broad workplace transformation. Organizations should:

- Invest in disability sensitization and awareness programs for all staff to support the recruitment of persons with disabilities and help to break the myths and unconscious biases towards disability employment. Include persons with disabilities and OPDs to create content and run weekly or monthly disability awareness sessions.
- Provide specific training for key individuals across departments, such as human resources (HR), general services, and management.
- Appoint disability ambassadors to share good practices on disability inclusion.
- Support a disability focal point or employee resource group (ERG)/employee working group (EWG) to ensure that information reaches all areas of the organization and to support workers with disabilities.

Illustrative solutions to accessibility challenges:

Please note that accommodations will vary based on context. The solutions listed below are examples of good practices for consideration in a range of different contexts.

Partnering with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities for Inclusive Local Development

Q. How can my organization identify and work with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) to advance inclusive local development?

A. OPDs are organizations made up of persons with disabilities and their allies, working to advance the rights of persons with disabilities by raising awareness in society and advocating for equal rights as citizens. In many low- and middle-income countries, OPDs are community-based organizations operating on the grassroots level and strongly integrated into their local communities.

Different OPDs have different mandates, just like NGOs, businesses, and other organizations. The mandates of some OPDs center on advocacy and promoting citizen participation. Other OPDs aim to help with service referrals and provide linkages between the disability community and economic development stakeholders.

Identifying OPDs

OPDs exist in nearly every community around the globe. Some OPDs are more robust than others; they have different levels of capacity, visibility, and experience. Some OPDs distinguish themselves by focusing on specific disabilities; some have members and mandates focusing on a broad range of disabilities. Strong OPD networks exist in certain communities, with organizations working together to advocate for the common goal of advancing the rights of all persons with disabilities.

Regional OPDs include member organizations from different countries. They can serve as helpful mechanisms for identifying and connecting with individual country- or community-specific organizations. Important regional OPDs include:

- African Disability Forum (ADF)
- Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities

¹ [International Disability Alliance](#)

² United Nations, [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#)

Definitions

Decentralization: A transfer of certain responsibilities and corresponding resources from the central government to local authorities—usually in terms of managing local taxes, city planning, infrastructure, and construction, as well as social services such as water and sanitation, housing, transportation, education, primary health care, culture, and sports. Local-level authorities enjoy decision-making autonomy - within the bounds of existing legislation and national strategies and policies - and manage their allocated budget for the transferred responsibilities. This makes them accountable to the citizens who live within the boundaries of the local authority's mandate.

Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs): Representative organizations that are run by persons with disabilities, working to advance their rights by raising awareness in society, and advocating for their equal rights as citizens. In many low- and middle-income countries, OPDs are community-based organizations operating on the grassroots level and strongly integrated into their local communities.

Definitions, contd.

Inclusive local development: a development model that promotes equality and the widest social participation at the grassroots level. It is based on the key notions of decentralization and local citizen participation and the principle that inclusion leads to better outcomes. Under this model, development policies and programs are designed, planned, implemented, and evaluated in ways that allow all people—including those with disabilities—to contribute to the transformation of their societies.

- Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS)
- Pacific Disability Forum
- ASEAN Disability Forum

Global OPDs can also connect members around the world. Examples include:

- World Blind Union
- Inclusion International
- Down Syndrome International
- World Federation of the Deafblind

All of these OPDs are members of the International Disability Alliance (IDA),¹ a network of global and regional OPDs that promotes the effective and full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).² IDA also works to ensure that the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are CRPD-compliant. The network is an excellent resource and mechanism for identifying OPDs around the world.

Why is it important to partner with OPDs?

- Partnering with OPDs on programs encourages greater participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities into mainstream international development initiatives. OPDs can increase a program's focus on issues affecting persons with disabilities, advise implementers on how to make their programming more accessible, and identify persons with disabilities to participate in activities.
- It is important to include OPDs in all parts of the program cycle in line with the disability rights slogan, "nothing about us without us."
- OPD mandates vary. Focusing on the purpose of your program will help guide you in selecting which OPDs will be appropriate partners.
- Implementers can promote meaningful and inclusive social change and increase the voices of persons with disabilities in civil society by intentionally including disability issues within community-based development initiatives.

How can organizations work with and support OPDs?

- Fund OPDs to conduct awareness-raising campaigns on topics relevant to persons with disabilities such as rights, issues, and concerns at the community level and to promote the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities throughout public life.

- Assist organizations to register as official OPDs in their districts; registration gives OPDs the agency and recognition to formally conduct activities and work in collaboration with local, national, and international stakeholders.
- Help build OPD capacity by supporting preparation of an annual work plan—with the participation of all members—that clearly outlines plans for institutional development and program activities.
- Help build the capacity of OPDs to conduct disability sensitization workshops for government and non-government agencies.
- Establish small grants for OPDs to implement activities.

What is inclusive local development and why is it important?

Inclusive local development (ILD) is a development model that promotes equality and the widest social participation at the grassroots level. It is based on the key notions of decentralization and local citizen participation and the principle that inclusion leads to better outcomes. ILD means that development policies and programs are designed, planned, implemented, and evaluated in ways that allow all people—including those with disabilities—to contribute to the transformation of their societies. ILD allows persons with disabilities to enjoy the same rights as any other members of society and to provide knowledge and expertise toward the design and implementation of policies.

ILD programs typically seek to improve the welfare and inclusion of persons with disabilities in community life. Specific objectives should be determined in consultation with local communities, including local authorities and civil society—especially OPDs. The objective of ILD programs is typically to increase participation of persons with disabilities in different sectors and geographical areas. For example, they may seek to advance the rights of persons with disabilities, improve accessibility of community spaces and activities, or amend public policies and programs so that they are more inclusive. In urban areas, where resources are often greater and OPDs, service providers, and authorities are more clearly identified, ILD programs are often included in decentralization processes and programs. ILD therefore encourages local authorities to develop a sense of responsibility and the capacity to address disability issues. In rural areas, where services are often limited and decentralization processes may be less advanced, ILD initiatives mobilize local development stakeholders—including local authorities, NGOs, public and private service providers, and others—to promote social change through the inclusion of disability issues in community-based development initiatives.

Balancing Advocacy and Service Delivery Roles is Key

When partnering with OPDs, it is important to be aware that an OPD may run the risk of a conflict of interest. Some OPDs are both the service provider and advocate for persons with disabilities. While both roles are necessary, a conflict may arise when advocacy focuses on funding for service provision. If an OPD has received money from a government to provide services, their independence and ability to challenge government authorities may be limited. Conversely, some government funding may include requirements for advocacy as part of their work. Whenever possible, advocacy and service delivery functions coexisting within the same organization should be managed independently to avoid conflicts of interest and be consistent with any regulations.

Main objectives of ILD programs	Examples of expected results from ILD programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the capacity of OPDs to increase their participation in development processes and local governance. • Facilitate networking of local OPDs to increase collaboration and build a common vision to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities • Promote implementation of a local participatory needs assessment focused on persons with disabilities. • Create links and partnerships among OPDs and local authorities by facilitating forums for dialogue between local authorities and civil society actors to promote the development of inclusive policies and programs, and funding. • Create a crosscutting network of local inclusive services and facilitate effective systems for referral and information. OPDs often act as referral mechanisms, connecting their members to necessary services such as inclusive health, education, and employment opportunities. • Educate and train local stakeholders on disability issues, supporting them to adapt their practices to meet the needs, interests, and priorities of persons with disabilities. 	<p>ILD programs focus on analyzing and modifying local practices regarding disability issues and effective implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities. Expected results might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities and other local stakeholders give greater consideration to disability issues and recommendations made by OPDs when drafting and implementing policies and actions. • Persons with disabilities gain improved access to local services, enabling greater social participation. • Persons with disabilities are more aware of existing services and can access them more easily. • The individual and collective capacities of persons with disabilities are strengthened, particularly in terms of constructive advocacy vis-a-vis local authorities.

How can organizations support OPDs to advance ILD?

Programs that focus on ILD should work with OPDs and local authorities to ensure inclusive and participatory design of local development priorities and plans. Working with OPDs ensures that programs are implemented in a truly inclusive manner and benefit persons with disabilities. Relatedly, by working with both OPDs and local authorities on ILD, implementers are advancing inclusive and more effective local governance and development.

There are many ways that stakeholders—including those from the private sector, government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), technical and vocational training organizations, financial services, and others—can partner with OPDs to promote meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in local development. Keep in mind the following as you consider partnering with OPDs to promote ILD:

- OPDs can help implementers better understand and respond to specific needs of persons with disabilities in the target communities.
- OPDs can help identify individuals with disabilities so they can access services and benefits from the program.
- Partnering with OPDs focused on advocacy and disability rights is important to advance inclusion efforts at the local level.
- Implementers can invest in helping to create coalitions of local OPDs to focus on a common view and create a better understanding of disability among local authorities. Coalitions and their representatives help authorities to be more responsive to the needs of citizens with disabilities, while creating a stronger and unified OPD network.
- When implementers partner with OPDs, they can help create and promote policies and legislation that are inclusive of persons with disabilities and that meet their specific needs. These partnerships help amplify messaging to authorities.

Resources

[Inclusive Local Development: How to implement a disability approach at local level](#)

[Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals By, For and With Persons with Disabilities: UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development 2018](#)

[Support to Organizations Representative of Persons with Disabilities](#)

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner Humanity & Inclusion for drafting the content for this *Implementation Tip*.

8.2.4

Advocating for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Definitions

Advocacy: A collaborative action that works to influence policies, laws, or institutional and governmental regulations and norms to achieve meaningful improvement in the living conditions and well-being of people and groups.

The Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG):

A United Nations city group established under the United Nations Statistical Commission to address the urgent need for cross-nationally comparable population-based measures of disability. Its mandate is to promote and coordinate international cooperation in the area of health statistics focusing on disability data collection tools suitable for censuses and national surveys.

Medical model: A model that seeks only medical/rehabilitation systems and special services to “repair the broken”: the individual with impairment is seen as the problem to be solved and responsibility for disability lies with the person who must be ‘fixed’.

Social model: A model that assumes that persons with disabilities are disadvantaged not because of their individual characteristics but as a result of limitations imposed on them by environmental and external barriers. Disability is thus a result of how society is organized.

Q. What tools and resources exist to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities?

A. Advocacy for the rights of persons with disabilities is a collaborative action that works to influence policies, laws, or institutional and governmental regulations and norms to achieve meaningful improvements in the living conditions and well-being of people and groups.

An **advocacy goal** is the desired long-term result of an advocacy effort; it is the change you want to see, such as improved access to education for children with disabilities.

An **advocacy objective** is a specific, short-term result that contributes to a goal, such as raising teachers’ awareness of challenges facing children with disabilities and how to improve accommodation.

The following table provides an overview of advocacy for inclusion and recommended factors to consider in developing an advocacy plan.

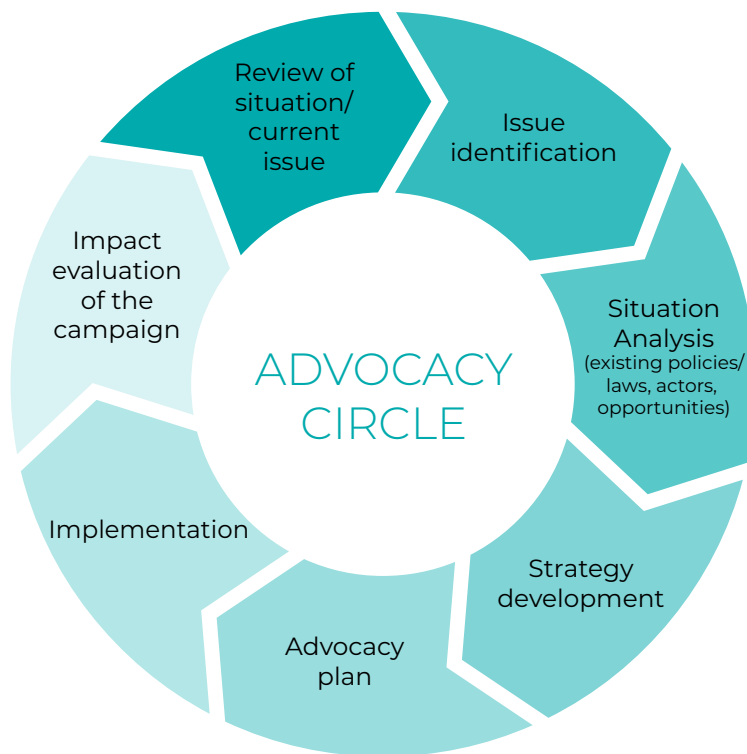
PROGRAM ELEMENT	ADVOCACY FOR INCLUSION
Level of intended change	Policies, laws, programs, or practices—and their implementation
Target group	Decision makers, policy makers, and/or influential individuals
Objectives	Change policies, laws, programs, and/or practices
Strategies	Focus on policy makers, high-level meetings, public events (e.g., debates or gatherings), and/or media coverage
Indicators of success	Improved quality of life: enhanced participation, access to services, and/or implementation of laws, policies, or practices that enable inclusion

What is the process for advocacy?

The advocacy circle (Figure 1) shows different steps to navigate the process of advocacy. The starting point is the identification and in-depth analysis of a clear problem or issue—backed up with the collection of evidence—before designing a strategy, implementing activities, and monitoring and evaluating the activities' impact.

It is important to note that advocacy is not a linear process, but should be approached systematically, encompassing the steps in the figure below. Organizations must react and adapt to changing external environments, particularly when advocating in complex situations or in difficult political contexts. Approaches must be flexible to seize opportunities as they appear. However, each step should be planned and analyzed as part of an overall advocacy strategy.

Figure 1: Advocacy Circle



Practical international frameworks to advance disability rights advocacy

Existing international policy and legal frameworks (see Box 1) can and should be used as tools to advance advocacy efforts related to persons with disabilities. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Agenda 2030 set international standards that can inform advocacy plans.

Box 1: International policy and legal frameworks and fora

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): a legally binding international convention that addresses universal human rights in the context of persons with disabilities.

The Conference of States Parties (CoSP): The United Nations hosts this conference for governments to consider any matter with regard to the implementation of CRPD. Governments share reports on their implementation and civil society provides a shadow report.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030: All of the goals within Agenda 2030 apply to persons with disabilities and reflect the guiding principle of Agenda 2030: leave no one behind. In addition, 13 of the 17 Goals are particularly related to persons with disabilities.

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF): The forum, which is hosted by the UN each year, includes reviewing national and sub-national reports on progress towards implementation of the SDGs. These reports are called **Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)** and are aimed at sharing successes, challenges, and lessons learned to support more effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Civil society organizations have the opportunity to write their own shadow reports, which are presented alongside the VNRs.

Civil society can raise awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities and advocate for their rights by:

- Using the CRPD as an advocacy tool, reminding governments that are treaty parties to follow internationally-recognized standards of disability rights and inclusion.
- Participating in SDG forums and platforms, including the HLPF.
- Using reporting and monitoring mechanisms—such as the VNRs, the Universal Periodic Review, and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities—to hold governments accountable to commitments made in the SDGs and to human rights treaties they have ratified.

At the country level, as stakeholders, persons with disabilities have a role in the oversight of government commitments to the SDGs.

Partnerships for advocacy

Creating partnerships as part of your advocacy efforts can strengthen your efforts by creating a stronger voice. Sharing expertise with other organizations and individuals can fill existing gaps in your advocacy efforts. It is important to make sure your organization's partnerships include persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) to make sure you are amplifying their voice rather than speaking on their behalf. For more information on partnering with OPDs, see the *Implementation Tip* on [Partnering with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities for Inclusive Local Development](#). Separately from OPDs, below are two examples of partnerships and their benefits.

PARTNERSHIP	POSSIBLE BENEFITS
Partner with government ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases access to justice through legal proceedings for protection and defense of disability rights • Increases knowledge of country-level national laws and disability policies • Promotes awareness of gaps in laws and policies that can assist in the creation of stronger legislation • Helps to ensure that CRPD is being properly implemented and that the SDGs and Agenda 2030 are in compliance with the CRPD
Partner with civil society organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables you to identify existing programs in your communities to avoid duplication and strengthen collaboration • Organizations can partner with disability-focused organizations working on similar topics to ensure their programs are being inclusive and being accessed by persons with disabilities

Your organization can also pursue partnerships and collaboration on advocacy through various structures, defined as follows:

- **Coalitions** often have formalized structures and involve joint work by a disparate group of civil society organizations or other actors around a single major event, a set of related issues, or a broad campaign. A coalition usually involves long-term relationships and an agreement by members on a platform.
- **Alliances** generally involve shorter-term relationships between members and focus on specific objectives. Since they are limited in terms of duration and goals, alliances tend to be less demanding on members and less formalized than coalitions.
- **Networks** tend to be loosely organized, flexible associations of people or groups that come together around a common concern or interest or undertake periodic joint initiatives. They foster the sharing of information and ideas.
- **Peer Groups** may work together as members of a community towards a common goal. They may include adults, children, or those with a common interest/concern.

Advocacy through data collection

Accurate data is critical for analyzing needs and promoting change. Governments require quantitative evidence to realistically assess the number of people that may not be accessing services. Collecting quantitative data may lead to the identification of a higher number of persons with disabilities which could motivate governments and other actors to assess the needs of persons with disabilities and include them in programs and services.

CRPD Article 31 on statistics and data collection requires states to collect information (including quantitative data) to form and implement policies. The SDGs also stress the importance of data disaggregation—including by type of disability. For the first time in history, persons with disabilities are clearly included in a universal and ambitious plan of action.

However, data is often still not being collected or disaggregated by disability, mainly due to a lack of standardized methodology (logistical) and lack of understanding (attitudinal). Organizations can use questions from the Washington Group on Disability Statistics to ensure data is collected appropriately and disaggregated by disability.

What is the Washington Group on Disability Statistics?

The Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG) is a United Nations city group established in 2001 under the United Nations Statistical Commission. Its goal is to develop and test tools to collect internationally comparable disability statistics and help actors to better identify persons with disabilities. The Washington

Resources

[BRIDGE CRPD-SDGs Training Initiative](#)

[The 2030 Agenda—Introductory Toolkit for Persons with Disabilities](#)

[Toolkit for DPOs—Voluntary National Reviews](#)

[Inclusive Local Development: How to implement a disability approach at local level](#)

[Disability Data in Humanitarian Action](#)

[The Disability Data Portal](#)

[Women Enabled International's Accountability Toolkit](#)

[Women and Young Persons with Disabilities: Guidelines for Providing Rights-Based and Gender-Responsive Services to Address Gender-Based Violence and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights](#)

[Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\) Training Package on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

Group Questions (WGQs) were designed to generate reliable and comparable data on persons with disabilities during national-level data collection exercises. In humanitarian actions, the WGQs can be used to identify persons with disabilities to ensure their inclusion in all programming.

Introduction to the different question sets

The group has developed several tools, including standardized questions about disability.

- **The Washington Group Short Set (WGSS)** consists of six questions and is the most widely used set (see Figure 2).
- **The Washington Group Short Set Enhanced (WGSSE)** includes the short set questions and three questions on upper body functioning, anxiety, and depression.
- **The Washington Group Extended Question Set on Functioning (WGESF)** includes 39 questions. It expands on the WGSS with questions regarding the use of assistive devices/aids, functioning with and without the use of devices/aids where applicable, and additional domains of functioning such as upper body, anxiety, depression, fatigue, and pain.
- **The Washington Group Module on Child Functioning (WGCFM)** is specific to the needs of children aged 2-17 and was developed in conjunction with UNICEF.

Figure 2: Washington Group Short Set



Potential benefits of incorporating the WGQs

Beyond supplying critical data, the process of implementing the WGQs can foster a better overall understanding of disability and inclusion in an organization. It increases field staff's knowledge of the social model of disability (see Definitions) and promotes a rights-based approach to programs that is more beneficial to those with disabilities.

Guidelines for using the WGQs

The following guidelines are important when using the WGQs in data collection:

- Ensure that enumerators are prepared to interact with individuals. Make sure they are familiar with the questions and understand them clearly.
- Ensure that all project staff understand when the questions can be used appropriately and their purpose. For example, the questions should not be used to diagnose disability.
- Ensure that staff know that currently there are shortcomings in identification of psychosocial disabilities. A question set on mental health is being developed.
- Ensure that staff have the contextual understanding of the WGQ.
- Ensure that enumerators use the questions exactly as they are written and never skip a question or guess the answer. Similarly, never use a screening question and/or refer to “disability” or “medical condition.” Detailed information on how to administer the question sets appropriately is available on the [WG website](#).
- Always use questions verified on the WG website; translations of the questions are available.
- Ensure that your data collection tools and management information system can be adapted to use the WGQs.
- When training staff on the WGQs, ensure that you provide training around disability awareness and inclusion. Learning resources on WGQs are available on [Humanity & Inclusion’s website](#).
- Ensure that data collectors are trained to ask questions sensitively.
- Ensure that data analysis is adequately planned and supported.
- Promote the participation of and accountability towards persons with disabilities and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in efforts related to data collection and decision-making processes.

**SCS Global thanks
Consortium Partner
Humanity & Inclusion for
drafting the content for
this *Implementation Tip*.**



Older People

TOPICS

- 8.3.1 Older People in International Development
 - 8.3.2 The Rights of Older People
 - 8.3.3 Humanitarian and Emergency Response
 - 8.3.4 Livelihoods and Social Protection
-

Older People in International Development

Definitions

Older People: A term used to describe someone in later life, which can vary depending on a country's life expectancy. For statistical purposes, age 60 and over is frequently used to describe older people.

Life Expectancy: Reflects the overall mortality level of a population and is calculated as the average number of years that a newborn is expected to live during a given period.

Global Aging: The number of older people is growing faster than the number of people in any other age group, resulting in an increase in older people as a percentage of the total population around the globe.

Older People's Associations (OPAs): Community-based organizations that mobilize older people to improve their own lives and to contribute to the development of their communities across multiple domains.

Older Citizens Monitoring (OCM): An activity where groups of older people monitor access to essential services and advocate for improvements based on their findings. It promotes dialogue between older people, civil society, governments, and service providers.

Continued on next page →

Q. How will population aging shape the future of international development?

A. The world's population is aging more rapidly than ever before, with over one billion people over the age of 60—and this number is expected to double by 2050. Globally, the proportion of older people is growing, even as the total population continues to increase. This reflects improvements in life expectancy and an ongoing decline in the worldwide fertility rate (which has decreased 50 percent since 1965). In 2018, for the first time in human history, people over the age of 65 outnumbered children under the age of five.¹ This demographic shift will have an undeniable impact across the world on economies, healthcare systems, and the communities and families who care for older people.

Historically, the majority of older people have lived in high-income countries—with the largest percentages living in Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, and parts of East Asia. However, in the coming decades, the fastest growth in populations of older people will take place in low- and middle-income countries. By 2050, it is estimated that 80 percent of all older people will live in those countries.² Several regions are projected to age significantly over the next several decades. For Latin America and the Caribbean and for East, West, and Southeast Asia and North Africa, the proportion of the population aged 65 years or over is expected to at least double between 2019 and 2050. In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of people over the age of 65 is expected to increase by 60 percent.³

It is also important to note the gender dimension of the demographic transition. Women now outlive men in most countries of the world by an average of 4.7 years.⁴

Population aging reflects tremendous advances in health and overall quality of life in societies across the world. But the social and economic

1 United Nations, [World Population Prospects 2019](#)

2 United Nations, [World Population Prospects 2019](#)

3 United Nations, [World Population Prospects 2019](#)

4 Rodin J and de Ferranti D, Universal health coverage: The third global health transition?

implications of this phenomenon are profound— extending beyond the individual older person and immediate family, touching broader society and the global community in unprecedented ways. On the positive side, an older population opens up new markets and brings more experienced workers, a growing cadre of custodians of culture, and caregivers of grandchildren. These benefits are often referred to as the “longevity dividend.” But at the same time, an aging population presents major challenges to social safety and health systems, which will be increasingly strained as a result of the demographic shift.

What are the primary issues that older people face and why should my organization be concerned with these issues?

People in developing countries face significant challenges as they age, including increasing poverty, ill health and mobility issues, exclusion from programs and policies, and other forms of discrimination.

Inclusion

Challenges and Issues

Despite global aging trends, older people in low-income countries continue to be excluded from many aspects of international development, from project and research design to implementation— covering all major issue areas ranging from health and social protection to gender-based violence and humanitarian emergencies.

A primary reason for this exclusion is the use of age caps in data gathering to monitor poverty, inequality, work patterns, and access to health services. For example, none of the 17 poverty indicators supplied by the UN Statistics Division in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) includes data for older segments of the population.⁵ Depending on the indicator, data excludes women over 49 and men over the age of 49, 54, or 59. In practical terms, this means that program implementers do not know if women older than 49 are experiencing domestic violence, or men over 49 practice high-risk sexual behaviors. Excluding people from data collection based on their age eliminates the ability to understand their needs and develop solutions based on evidence—whether regarding gender-based violence, health, income, or civic participation. Programs do *not focus* on targets that are *not known* to be problems. And progress (or failure to progress) toward targets cannot be measured if there are no baselines.

Another overlooked aspect of inclusion is making programs accessible to older people with disabilities. Mobility, sight, and hearing issues can exclude older people from programs or community events, such as public awareness campaigns, food distribution, voter education, feedback mechanisms, or social service provision.

⁵ HelpAge, [Global AgeWatch Insights 2018](#)

Definitions, contd.

Ageism: Stereotypes (how we think), prejudices (how we feel), and discrimination (how we behave) with regard to older people and the process of aging. Ageism can be directed at others or at ourselves.

Long-term Care: Refers to a range of services required by persons with a reduced degree of functional capacity (physical or cognitive) and who are consequently dependent for an extended period of time on help with basic activities of daily living (ADL). It frequently includes a combination of “personal care” and “nursing care” (help with wound dressing, pain management, medication, and health monitoring), as well as prevention, rehabilitation, or services of palliative care. Long-term care services can also be combined with lower-level care related to “domestic help” or help with instrumental activities of daily living (IADL).

Source: OECD Health Policy Studies

Life-Course Approach: A life-course approach recognizes the importance of timing and circumstances in understanding causal links between exposures and outcomes across a person's life.

A global campaign to combat ageism

Ageism can be defined as the stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination towards people on the basis of age. Ageism is highly prevalent and, unlike other forms of discrimination, including sexism and racism, it is often considered socially acceptable and usually unchallenged.

In 2016, the WHO developed the Global Campaign to Combat Ageism. Since then, the WHO has invested efforts into three key areas:

1. Gathering evidence on ageism (i.e., what it is, how it is experienced, how it is measured, its consequences, and strategies to tackle it), and how to develop campaigns to tackle ageism (i.e., what works, what doesn't work);
2. Building a global coalition of stakeholders to lead the way towards a non-ageist world; and
3. Raising awareness about the need to tackle ageism.

See the Resources section for more information on ageism.

Actions and Recommendations

- **Collect data on people of all ages that may be affected by a problem.** At a minimum, data needs to be disaggregated by sex, age, and disability. Data on older people shouldn't be analyzed as a single cohort, for example, over 50 only, as it masks large inequalities among age groups. Ideally, data should be disaggregated in five-year age bands where possible, otherwise in 10-year age bands.
- **Make better use of existing data** (such as World Health Organization (WHO)'s Study on global AGEing and adult health (SAGE) data⁶) and eliminate age caps from monitoring frameworks and survey collection when possible and relevant.
- **Ensure that older people are consulted and engaged in programmatic and policy initiatives.** Older people's experiences and roles as community leaders are an important but often untapped resource that can help address humanitarian and development challenges. Older people's perspectives can be ascertained through surveys or by working through Older Person's Associations (OPAs) that are run by and for older people in their communities.
- **Support advocacy initiatives that increase older people's political participation and inclusion in civil society.** Older people represent a growing constituency, are among the most reliable voters in some countries, possess strong knowledge of their communities' history and social fabric, and want to be heard.

Rights

Challenges and Issues

Fundamental human rights that are protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—such as the right to health, social protection, and equal protection from discrimination and abuse—are routinely violated in later stages of life. Furthermore, the existing human rights mechanisms and legal frameworks do not adequately protect the rights of older people and leave gaps where their rights can be denied. According to national survey data from 133 countries, only 41 countries have fully enforced national laws to prevent violence, abuse, and neglect of older people.⁷ Older women are particularly vulnerable, as they suffer from decades of gender discrimination in addition to age discrimination.

Actions and Recommendations

- **Support the establishment of a UN Convention on the Rights of Older People and leverage existing regional human rights treaties on the rights of older people.** This can be accomplished through advocacy work with national governments and partnerships with local civil society organizations. Both the

⁶ WHO, [Study on global AGEing and adult health \(SAGE\)](#)

⁷ WHO, UNODC, UNDP, [Global Status Report on Violence Prevention](#)

Convention and current regional human rights treaties present opportunities to engage older people in your organization's network—as constituents, beneficiaries, or partners.

- **Review your human rights advocacy agenda and network of stakeholders** to assess how older people fit in and determine if there is a way to include older advocates to engage government ministries or departments on policy change benefiting all generations.
- **Ensure that information your organization provides about rights and entitlements is accessible to older constituents**, recognizing the many barriers that older people face in terms of physical access and exclusion.

For more information, see the *Implementation Tip* on [The Rights of Older People](#).

Livelihoods and Social Protection

Challenges and Issues

Among the most urgent concerns of older people worldwide is income security.⁸ As people age in low- and middle-income countries, they face multiple barriers to financial security. These include declines in health and mobility that may force them to stop working, fewer opportunities to gain training and skills, and widespread age discrimination. In many countries, people are denied access to jobs, capital, and credit because of their age. The majority of older people who are poor work in the informal sector. As a result, they have little or no access to social protection systems and are therefore more vulnerable to increased poverty in old age. Older people are also at risk of catastrophic health expenditures and face greater difficulties recovering their livelihoods after a disaster or crisis.

Older women tend to be more marginalized and disadvantaged than older men, with data showing higher rates of poverty among older women in both developed and developing countries. Inequalities in income, access to education and decent work, and health challenges faced across the life course accumulate and expose many women to poverty in old age. This risk is exacerbated by barriers to social security entitlements and, in some cultures, lack of control over financial resources and denial of the right to own and inherit property.⁹

Actions and Recommendations

- **Support universal social pensions.** These can be powerful tools to reduce chronic poverty and stimulate investment in physical, human, and social capital. Evidence-based studies indicate that even minimal pension plans and/or small-sum loans to older people make a significant difference in the wellbeing of their households. Older people often invest in their families and communities—

⁸ UNFPA and HelpAge, [Ageing in the Twenty-First Century: A Celebration and A Challenge](#)

⁹ UNDP, AARP, and HelpAge, [Ageing, Older Persons, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)

Resources

Global Aging:

[Ageing in the 21st Century](#)

[UN World Population Prospects 2019](#)

[Global Age Watch Insights 2018](#)

[Ageing, Older Persons and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)

[WHO Global Strategy & Action Plan on Ageing and Health](#)

Inclusive Data Practices

[Inclusive Data Charter](#)

[Washington Group](#)

[How Data Systems Leave Older People Behind](#)

Organizations

[Global Alliance on the Rights of Older People](#)

[HelpAge International](#)

Combating Ageism

[WHO's Global Campaign to Combat Ageism](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions: Ageism](#)

including supporting adult children and grandchildren. Older people are generally highly responsible borrowers and have higher rates of paying back small loans than other age groups.¹⁰

- **Include older people in income-generating activities** and support age-friendly income-generating programs that include skills trainings. Support lifelong learning opportunities for older people. All of these enable older people to remain independent and productive members of their communities.

For more information, see the *Implementation Tip* on [Livelihoods and Social Protection](#).

Health

Challenges and Issues

In recent years, the increase in life expectancy has gone hand-in-hand with a shift in the global pattern of disease. A smaller proportion of deaths is due to infectious diseases (such as childhood diarrhea and pneumonia) and a greater proportion of deaths is due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancers. NCDs have a disproportionate impact on older people. In 2011, people aged 60 and over accounted for an estimated 75 percent of deaths from NCDs in low- and middle-income countries.¹¹ Older people also suffer from higher rates of multiple morbidities. As people age, they are more likely to experience more than one chronic condition at a time.

The health-related challenges represented by the high rates of NCDs and multi-morbidity in older people are often accompanied by the need for more support with tasks of daily living to sustain independence and autonomy. This in turn leads health and social care to become increasingly complex and interdependent. Health, care, and support systems have so far failed to address this complexity. In fact, the political declaration of the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage in 2019 noted that “many health systems are not sufficiently prepared to respond to the needs of a rapidly ageing population.”¹² The demographic and epidemiological (morbidity and mortality) transitions require health systems to adapt to a new reality, moving away from the vertical structures that address specific diseases towards more integrated and coordinated services that respond holistically and include provision for long-term care support.

¹⁰ United Nations General Assembly, [Report of the Secretary General on follow up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing](#)

¹¹ HelpAge, [Global Age Watch Insights 2018](#)

¹² United Nations, [Political Declaration of the High Level meeting on UHC](#)

Actions and Recommendations

- **Advocate for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as part of the SDGs**, because it provides a potential pathway for the adaptations needed to meet the demands of the demographic and epidemiological transitions taking place in low- and middle-income countries.¹³
- **Support policies and programs that promote healthy lifestyles, assistive technology, medical research, and rehabilitative care** as well as training of home- and community-based caregivers and health professionals to ensure that those who work with older people are well trained.
- **Develop health programs and services that take a life course approach**¹⁴ as recommended by [WHO's Global Strategy on Ageing](#). Support health promotion throughout the life span, enabling people to maintain independence for as long as possible.
- **Ensure that programs work with the informal and formal health sectors** to include the prevention, management, and treatment of NCDs and address the need for long-term care solutions.

Humanitarian Settings

Challenges and Issues

Older people are disproportionately affected by emergencies and face a higher risk of mortality in disasters. Those with physical challenges such as limited mobility, visual and hearing impairment, and reduced muscle strength are particularly vulnerable in emergency situations. They are often unable to flee and may not be able to access assistance. Furthermore, their specific needs related to diet and nutrition, access to NCD medicines, and mobility devices are rarely accounted for in emergency planning and responses.¹⁵ As a result of these factors, as well as others, older people are generally more likely to die in emergency situations.

Actions and Recommendations

- **All humanitarian actors should follow the Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and those with disabilities** that have been developed for emergency planning, response, and recovery efforts.
- **Include and consult older people throughout the humanitarian response**, as well as during disaster risk-reduction initiatives.
- **Ensure that older beneficiaries are included in humanitarian information management systems**, including post disaster surveys and data collection.

For more information, see the *Implementation Tip* on [Humanitarian and Emergency Response](#).

¹³ HelpAge, [Response to UN high level meeting on UHC](#)

¹⁴ See Definitions section and [WHO reference to life course](#).

¹⁵ HelpAge, [What older people say about their experiences in humanitarian situations](#)

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner Humanity & Inclusion for drafting the content for this *Implementation Tip*.

The Rights of Older People

Definitions

Older People: A term used to describe someone in later life, which can vary depending on a country's life expectancy. For statistical purposes, age 60 and over is frequently used to describe older people.

Older People's Associations (OPAs): Community-based organizations that mobilize older people to improve their own lives and to contribute to the development of their communities across multiple domains.

Older Citizens Monitoring (OCM): An activity in which groups of older people monitor access to essential services and advocate for improvements based on their findings. It promotes dialogue among older people, civil society, governments, and service providers.

Ageism: Stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel), and discrimination (how we behave) with regard to older people and the process of aging. Ageism can be directed at others or ourselves.

Multiple Discrimination: Discrimination based on more than one characteristic, such as gender and age (referred to as intersectional discrimination) or taking place on more than one occasion over time (cumulative discrimination).

Voice: Older people with voice can access information, participate in decisions that affect their lives, express their opinions and have those opinions heard, and meet and debate with others.

Q. How are the human rights of older people at risk, and how can we protect their rights?

A. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights holds all people equal in terms of dignity, rights, and freedoms. However, fundamental human rights—such as the right to health care, social protection, and equal protection from discrimination and abuse—are routinely violated in later stages of life. Millions of older adults endure ageism (see Definitions) in the workplace, are denied access to health care, and face abuse in their homes and institutional-care settings. Elder abuse (psychological, financial, physical, and sexual) affects one in six people age 60 and over globally.¹ Intersectional or multiple discrimination (see Definitions) against older people who are women, have a disability, or have lost a spouse generates even greater threats to basic human rights for these groups.

Gaps in Existing Human Rights Frameworks

Existing human rights mechanisms and legal frameworks leave gaps where older people's rights can be denied. For example, only one of nine existing international human rights instruments explicitly prohibits age discrimination.² Specific provisions on issues that are critical to fundamental rights and freedoms in old age—including prevention of elder abuse and provision of long-term care and palliative care—also are absent from existing international human rights standards. Inadequate attention to older people's rights at the global level has led to failures at the national level to protect older people's rights via legal systems and public policies. According to survey data from 133 countries, only 41 have fully enforced national laws to prevent violence, abuse, and neglect of older people.³

While the rights of women, children, prisoners, and people with disabilities are all protected through special international conventions or standards, no such human rights instrument exists for older people, despite their specific vulnerability to violations. A United Nations (UN) convention that codifies the rights of older people

1 *The Lancet Global Health*, [Elder abuse prevalence in community settings: A systematic review and meta-analysis](#)

2 HelpAge. [As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approaches 70, it is about time to address ageism](#)

3 WHO, UNODC, UNDP, [Global Status Report on Violence Prevention](#)

in a universal human rights framework is necessary to ensure that human rights are protected for everyone in later stages of life. As life expectancy increases globally, more must be done to ensure that everyone has basic rights, regardless of age.

What can my organization do to protect the rights of older people?

Strengthen the protection/inclusion of older people in human rights frameworks

Support a UN Convention on the Rights of Older People

A UN Convention on the Rights of Older People is needed to provide a comprehensive, systematic framework to promote and protect human rights in older age, globally. It would codify older people's rights in a single document and require ratifying governments to collect data, set indicators, and pass laws that protect human rights for older people. Civil society organizations (CSOs) can support a UN Convention in the following ways:

- **Advocate:** CSOs interested in advocating for the rights of older persons should first assess their national government's position on a UN Convention on the Rights of Older People and determine which department(s) is responsible for engagement at the UN. For more guidance on advocating for a UN Convention, please see the FAIR Guidelines (see Resources).
- **Consult and involve older people:** Contact Older People's Associations (OPAs)—community-based groups that are founded and led by older people—to better understand the human rights situation of older people in your country and work with their members to map stakeholders and determine an advocacy approach. A UN Convention on the Rights of Older People presents an opportunity to engage older people who are present in your organization's network—whether they are constituents, beneficiaries, or partners. One example of how CSOs and OPAs have come together to advocate for a UN Convention is [Age Demands Action](#), a grassroots campaign spanning 60 countries.
- **Build the advocacy capacity of OPAs:** Determine common priorities and activities that are mutually beneficial both for your CSO and OPAs. For instance, CSOs with strong advocacy expertise can provide training to OPAs on how to develop advocacy goals, engage with government officials, and measure progress. Improving the advocacy skills of OPA members not only increases older people's political participation in the movement for a UN Convention and as civic actors generally, it can also mobilize them to advance inclusion and equality.

Case Study

In Uganda, HelpAge has worked with Uganda Reach the Aged Association (URAA) to train newly elected older people's representatives and leaders of OPAs in 36 districts. Training has focused on advocacy skills and OCM activities. Older leaders have often been elected as chairs for district-level committees. Increased representation of older people in district-level government has resulted in improved delivery of health services and older people's inclusion in multiple poverty-alleviation programs.

Efforts to promote older people's rights to political participation in Uganda led the Ugandan government to allocate 5 percent of its 2019–2020 social development budget to supporting district councils for older people. Opening a platform for older people to engage on matters of public concern is also serving the interests of the community at large—with older people now jointly advocating with youth, women, and disability rights groups for inclusive policy changes.

Resources

Older People and Existing Human Rights Treaties

[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

[Inter-American Treaty on the Rights of Older People](#)

[African Union Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons](#)

[On a UN Convention for the Rights of Older People](#)

[Strengthening Older People's Rights: Towards a UN Convention](#)

[FAIR Guidelines: How to participate in advocacy for older people](#)

[UN Open-Ended Working Group](#)

Organizations

[The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People](#)

[HelpAge International](#)

Leverage Existing Regional Human Rights Treaties

Regional human rights instruments have been developed in Africa (African Union [AU] Protocol on the Rights of Older People) and the Americas (the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Rights of Older People). Both explicitly articulate older people's rights and lay out obligations for governments to uphold them.

However, the levels of protection set forth in these instruments differ and are only binding if ratified by national governments. Only seven of the 35 countries in the Organization of American States have ratified the Inter-American Convention.⁴ In Africa, 12 countries have signed the AU Protocol on the Rights of Older People, but only two have ratified it.⁵ Despite the challenges inherent in these regional frameworks, CSOs can utilize them to advance older people's rights in the following ways:

- **Monitor the implementation of regional treaties in countries where they have been adopted.** In Latin America, for example, long-term policies that protect older people's rights have been hindered by election cycles and changing administrations. Civil society is instrumental in building and sustaining political will to pass and enforce legislation on older people's rights. Through Older Citizen Monitoring (OCM) (see Definitions), older people can be integral partners in these activities, from monitoring adoption of social protection policies to documenting human rights abuses.
- **Spur dialogue on older people's rights, even in countries that have not yet ratified a regional human rights instrument.** Civil society actors should assess ways to foster exchange between countries and regions on best practices for advocacy, evidence-gathering, partnering with older people, and mobilizing broad coalitions of support. The experiences of organizations that have successfully advocated for ratification of a regional treaty can serve as valuable case studies for civil society actors that are still in earlier stages of advocacy.
- **Engage people of all ages.** The rights of older people should concern everyone, as we all hope to be old someday. The youth of today have a right to a sustainable pension system that will be there for them as they age.

Equality and non-discrimination in old age will not be possible unless older people themselves are a central, driving force in the global movement for their human rights. CSOs can elevate the voice of older people in the following ways:

- **Review your human rights advocacy agenda and network of stakeholders to assess how older people fit in.** For example,

⁴ Organization of American States, [Inter-American convention on protecting the human rights of older persons \(a-70\)](#)

⁵ African Union, [List of countries](#) which have signed, ratified/acceded to the protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons.

if your organization advocates on behalf of women, consider the needs of older women and how their voices are being included in your work. Older advocates can also serve as strong partners to engage government ministries or departments on policy change that benefits all generations.

- **Foster collaboration between OPAs and civil society actors involved in securing rights for women, youth, and the disabled.**

Identify common advocacy interests and set agendas that push for government policies and accountability mechanisms that are inclusive of all.

- **Create and fund platforms for older people to represent themselves on issues directly affecting their health, wellbeing, and security.** This can involve inviting representatives from a local OPA to speak at an upcoming meeting with district-level representatives; organizing round tables with public health administrators for older people to recount experiences of ageism in health clinics; or advocating alongside older people for a dedicated government representative or office that is accountable to serving older constituents. Being heard is a fundamental part of equality and human rights. Look for ways that your organization can elevate older people's voices in public spheres.

- **Ensure information your organization provides about rights and entitlements is accessible to older constituents.** If your organization delivers human rights education or increases awareness of public services, review your materials and communication channels to identify potential barriers to older people receiving this information. For example, information about support services for victims of sexual and gender-based violence may only be provided at forums frequented by younger people or distributed by health providers who assume older people are not affected. Another barrier would be the distribution of information in a format that an older person with a disability can not access.

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner HelpAge USA for drafting the content for this *Implementation Tip*.

8.3.3

Humanitarian and Emergency Response

Definitions

Older People: A term used to describe someone in later life, which can vary depending on a country's life expectancy. For statistical purposes, age 60 and over is frequently used to describe older people.

Protection: Ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of relevant bodies of law—i.e., human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law. Human rights and humanitarian organizations must conduct their activities in an impartial manner (free from discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, or gender).

Barriers: Factors that prevent a person from having full, equal access and participation in society. Barriers can be environmental (physical, attitudinal, or communication-related), or institutional (such as policies that can lead to discrimination against certain groups).

Enablers: In the context of humanitarian inclusion, enablers are the factors that facilitate access and participation in society for older people with disabilities.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR):

A systematic approach that prevents new risk and reduces existing risk (particularly socio-economic vulnerabilities) as well as environmental and other hazards.

Continued on next page →

Q. How can we ensure that humanitarian and emergency response is inclusive of older people and their needs?

A. The Situation of Older People in Crisis

Older people (defined by the United Nations as people ages 60 and over) are the world's fastest growing demographic group. By 2050, one in five people will be "older." Eighty percent of this group will live in developing countries, where disasters are more likely to occur.

Humanitarian principles mandate that assistance be provided to everyone in need, without discrimination. In humanitarian crises, however, older people are often the last to receive support and the most routinely overlooked. Distant aid centers and long lines prevent those who have difficulty walking or standing from accessing relief; washing facilities and toilets are rarely adapted for those with limited strength and mobility; and essential medicines for non-communicable diseases (NCDs)—which disproportionately affect older adults—are always in short supply, as are assistive devices. Indeed, access to critical services, including food, shelter, protection, psycho-social support, health care, and water/sanitation/hygiene (WASH) are often more difficult to access for those who are older.

Barriers also exist that prevent older people from participating in decision making and accessing information that directly affects their well-being and security in a crisis. Data from humanitarian situations consolidated from rapid needs assessments in seven countries showed that 79 percent of older people had not been consulted by humanitarian agencies about services provided to them, and 70 percent did not know how to report an issue with humanitarian assistance.¹ When older people are left out of consultations, emergency responses often overlook their needs.

Gaps in humanitarian financing pose another significant barrier to older people in crisis. In a study of 1,900 funded humanitarian

¹ HelpAge International, Consolidated Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) data from Philippines, Indonesia, NE Syria, South Sudan, Malawi, Mozambique (Sofala), Mozambique (Tete), Zimbabwe

projects, only five were dedicated to addressing the needs of older people.² Mortality rates, however, indicate that older people are highly vulnerable in a crisis: 75 percent of those who died in Hurricane Katrina in the United States (2005) were over the age of 60; 56 percent of those who died from the Tsunami in Japan (2011) were over the age of 65;³ and 40 percent of those who died in Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines (2013) were over the age of 60.⁴

Humanitarian systems tend to design, fund, and deliver responses based on existing humanitarian data—which is a major reason older people (who are often not included in information gathering) remain neglected. Existing data, such as some sector-specific indicators for WASH, nutrition, and protection, are not systematically disaggregated by age. This also obscures the specific needs and challenges of older people.⁵

Why is it important for us to consider age and include older people in humanitarian programs?

Older people are more vulnerable in times of disaster (such as climate-related shocks and violent civil conflict) and face greater challenges recovering their livelihoods. The intersectionality (see Definitions) of old age, gender, and disability also places older adults at higher risk during a humanitarian crisis. Those with physical challenges are less able to flee during an emergency and can easily be separated from their families. Older women, especially those living with disabilities, are disproportionately affected.

Embedding age-inclusive practices in humanitarian programming has broad-reaching benefits. Such practices also make communities safer, equitable, and more resilient. Older people can contribute significantly to emergency planning and mapping; many have accumulated coping techniques and knowledge of environmental hazards over the course of their lives. Input from older people in assessments has improved the speed and reach of food distribution, as well as the accessibility of shelters and latrines.

Increasing access to humanitarian relief for older adults benefits younger generations as well—not least because today’s young are tomorrow’s old. In disaster-prone regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, it is common for older people to be responsible for dependent children. A rapid needs assessment in Sofala, a province in Mozambique affected by Cyclone Idai in March 2019, found that 81 percent of older people surveyed were caring for an average of three children.⁶ Research has indicated that “skipped generation” households (households consisting of grandparents and

Definitions, contd.

Intersectionality: The interaction of multiple factors—such as disability, age, and gender—which can create multiple layers of discrimination as well as legal, social, or cultural barriers. This interaction can further hinder a person’s access to and participation in humanitarian action and, more generally, in society.

Older People’s Associations

(OPAs): Community-based organizations that mobilize older people to improve their own lives and contribute to the development of their communities across multiple domains.

Voice: “Voice” means ensuring people can access information, participate in decisions that affect their lives, express their opinions and have those opinions heard, and meet and debate with others.

Protection Clusters: Protection clusters are groups that bring together partners (humanitarian agencies and other NGOs) that have necessary expertise, resources, access, and capacity to work towards common humanitarian objectives. They exist at the inter-agency, regional, country, and field levels and are coordinated through UNHCR, the global cluster lead agency for protection. See: [Global Protection Cluster](#) and [UNHCR Protection Clusters](#)

2 HelpAge, [End the neglect: a study of humanitarian financing for older people](#)

3 HelpAge, [Displacement and older people: the case of the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami of 2011](#)

4 HelpAge, [More at risk: How older people are excluded in humanitarian data](#)

5 HelpAge, [Older people in displacement: Falling through the cracks of emergency responses](#)

6 HelpAge, [Rapid needs assessment of older people cyclone Idai, Sofala Province, Mozambique](#)

grandchildren, where no parent is present) have a markedly higher incidence of poverty and are therefore more vulnerable during and after an emergency.⁷

How can my organization make humanitarian programs more age-inclusive?

Ensure older beneficiaries are included in humanitarian data systems

- **Collect and analyze data disaggregated by sex, age, and disability.**

Data on older people should be collected, analyzed, and reported in all humanitarian information management systems. This should occur at every stage of humanitarian response—from initial rapid needs assessments to post-response evaluations. Because the prevalence of disability increases with age, identifying older people with disabilities in humanitarian settings is crucial for responders to provide accessible services. The Washington Group Questions are an important resource for disability-inclusive data practices.⁸ For more information on the Washington Group Questions, see the *Implementation Tip* on [Advocating for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).

- **Remove the use of upper age limits in surveys of people affected by humanitarian crises.** Data gathered for important indicators such as violence and abuse in humanitarian settings often exclude people over the age of 49. When data are available, they may not be disaggregated by age. These practices lead to the design of policies that do not account for older adults in prevention strategies and critical social services. Lack of information about older people also perpetuates false assumptions about their situations and behaviors.

- **Set inclusive data indicators.** Humanitarian actors should assess to what extent current indicators of performance and success include older people. Consider incorporating specific indicators and targets that measure accessibility—such as the percentage of older people who can use available latrines or collect distributed food. When developing indicators, consider measuring the barriers and enablers (see Definitions) to access across human needs, such as health, nutrition, WASH, and shelter.

Promote meaningful participation

- **Consult older people and ensure they are aware of and can access feedback mechanisms.** Humanitarian practitioners should consult with older people at each phase of the humanitarian process and take steps to integrate their feedback into program

⁷ Barrientos, A., [Ageing, poverty, and public policy in developing countries: New Survey Evidence](#)

⁸ Age and Disability Capacity Program, [Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities](#)

Resources

Humanitarian Inclusion

[The Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities](#)

[Humanitarian Action and Older Persons: An Essential Brief for Humanitarian Actors](#)

[Age and Disability Capacity Program](#)

[Protecting Older People in Emergencies: Good Practice Guide](#)

[Missing Millions: How Older People and People with Disabilities are Excluded from Humanitarian Response](#)

Inclusive Data Practices

[Inclusive Data Charter](#)

[Washington Group on Disability Statistics](#)

[How Data Systems Leave Older People Behind](#)

design and implementation, whether that involves integrating their feedback into assessments, collaborating with partners for technical support, or coordinating targeted outreach to affected communities. Older People's Associations (OPAs) are a valuable channel through which to collect feedback and input from older people.

- **Strengthen older people's capacity and leadership in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.** Support older people as participants and speakers in coordination mechanisms (such as protection clusters and working groups) as well as sector-specific assessments (such as focus groups on responding to gender-based violence). Contact a local OPA to connect with older people about attending these forums. If no OPA exists, coordinate with humanitarian partners and older people in the affected community to establish an OPA or group where older voices can be heard. Actively seek and create opportunities to strengthen the voice (see Definitions) of older people in humanitarian contexts.
- **Consider ways older people can contribute to disaster risk reduction (DRR) initiatives (see Definitions).** With the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters, many countries are realizing the importance of disaster preparedness and response planning. Older people are an underutilized resource in DRR, due to the prevailing misconception of older people solely as aid recipients, rather than as active contributors to emergency planning and risk mitigation. If your organization contributes to or promotes DRR, make sure older people are explicitly referenced in disaster management and climate policies—to mainstream their inclusion in planning, budgeting, training, and response.⁹

Improve access to humanitarian services

- **Conduct an audit on accessibility of services and facilities.** Identify where barriers exist for older people—particularly related to freedom of movement, service utilization, social stigma, and communication—and needed accommodations for physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities as well as low literacy. Identify partners among non-governmental organizations, community groups, United Nations field protection clusters (see Definitions), and government ministries that can help mitigate barriers to access.
- **Train staff and volunteers in including older people and people with disabilities.** People from all levels and disciplines of the humanitarian workforce should be trained on the importance of inclusion, barriers faced by marginalized groups, and best practices for delivering interventions that are age- and disability-inclusive. Training should enable participants to confront their own

⁹ HelpAge, [Disaster Risk and Age Index](#)

Case Study

In Turkana, Northern Kenya, ongoing drought has put older people at risk of food insecurity. In order to improve the effectiveness of cash grants to older people, HelpAge International introduced a “help desk committee” as a component of its humanitarian response. Committees consist of volunteers from the local community who handle feedback and complaints and then liaise with project staff and partners to find solutions. The consultations with older people facilitated by the help desks have led to improved security and transparency of grant distributions. In response to feedback provided by older people, larger, lump sums have been introduced so that households can better meet financial obligations.¹

¹ HelpAge, [Help desks in Kenya](#)



internalized biases about older people and address the implications of intersectional discrimination based on gender, age, and disability. The Resources section lists sources that can be used for providing training on inclusion.

- **Ensure that health services, products, and medicine that support older people's health and functioning are available.**

In humanitarian crises, older people's health and well-being can deteriorate quickly in the absence of access to health services for chronic conditions (NCDs) such as cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, and dementia. Older people may also require rehabilitation, assistive devices, or palliative care. Build partnerships and/or communication channels between humanitarian and development actors that improve older people's access to holistic, person-centered care. In situations involving internally displaced people or refugees, health and social services may be located outside camps and in host communities.

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner HelpAge USA for drafting the content for this *Implementation Tip*.

8.3.4

Livelihoods and Social Protection

Q. What are the drivers of poverty in old age and how can my organization help respond to them?

A. Those who have endured a lifetime of poverty often face even greater income insecurity in old age. Opportunities for work decline in later life, especially for people engaged in informal or unskilled labor, while health care costs and other expenses may increase.

Systemic inequality in our labor markets, societies, and health and education systems can exacerbate poverty in old age.¹ Socioeconomic disparities—such as those rooted in gender, race, and disability—have a cumulative impact over the life course, leading to lower levels of savings and poorer health status in old age. These factors directly contribute to income insecurity.

Lack of affordable social services (including medical treatment and long-term care²—see Definitions) can also drive older people and their families into poverty. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)—conditions that account for 90 percent of the disease burden among older people in low- and middle-income countries³—can take a devastating toll on financial security. In Africa, NCDs annually drive over 100 million people into poverty.⁴ Over 60 percent of patients with NCDs in studied low- and middle-income countries have experienced catastrophic health expenditures⁵ (defined by the World Health Organization as “out-of-pocket spending for health care that exceeds a certain proportion of a household’s income with the consequence that households suffer the burden of disease”⁶). Furthermore, NCDs often result in disabilities that make it difficult for older people to work.

Older people face greater challenges recovering from economic shocks, such as financial losses related to climate disasters or an unexpected, costly health care bill. Existing government programs designed to

Definitions

Older People: A term used to describe someone in later life, which can vary depending on a country’s life expectancy. For statistical purposes, age 60 and over is frequently used to describe older people.

Social Protection: The set of policies and programs, sometimes referred to as social security, designed to reduce and prevent poverty across the life course.

Long-term Care: Refers to a range of services required by persons with a reduced degree of functional capacity (physical or cognitive) who are consequently dependent for an extended period of time on help with basic activities of daily living (ADL). It frequently includes a combination of “personal care” and “nursing care” (help with wound dressing, pain management, medication, health monitoring), as well as prevention, rehabilitation, or services of palliative care. Long-term care services can also be combined with lower-level care related to “domestic help” or help with instrumental activities of daily living (IADL).

Source: OECD Health Policy Studies

Voice: Older people with voice can access information, participate in decisions that affect their lives, express their opinions and have those opinions heard, and meet and debate with others.

Continued on next page →

1 United Nations, [Economic Inequalities in Old Age](#)

2 OECD Health Policy Studies, [A good life in old age? Monitoring and improving quality in long-term care](#)

3 WHO, [Raising the priority of non-communicable diseases in development work at global and national levels](#)

4 WHO, [NCDs, Poverty, and Development](#)

5 Jan, S, et al., [Action to address the household economic burden of non-communicable diseases](#)

6 WHO, [Distribution of health payments and catastrophic expenditures methodology](#)

Definitions, contd.

Older People's Associations

(OPAs): Community-based organizations that mobilize older people to improve their own lives and to contribute to the development of their communities across multiple domains.

Older Citizens Monitoring

(OCM): An activity in which groups of older people monitor access to essential services and advocate for improvements based on their findings. It promotes dialogue among older people, civil society, governments, and service providers.

Pension: A policy instrument whereby a state or national government provides regular cash transfers to older citizens. It is commonly utilized to reduce poverty among older people and their dependents and increase older people's access to services.

protect against income insecurity in older age are often inadequate, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. For example, pensions (a fundamental policy tool for combatting old age poverty) may be difficult to access, particularly for women. Pension coverage is also lower in less developed parts of the world (such as sub-Saharan Africa, where only 23 percent of older people receive a pension⁷).

Old age poverty rates are higher among women than men, due to the socioeconomic disadvantages faced by women—such as lower labor force participation, lower earnings, and higher rates of informal employment and unpaid domestic work.⁸ These disadvantages accumulate over the life course and can also prevent older women from being eligible for certain pensions—especially contributory pensions (see Definitions).

What exactly do we mean by social protection and why is it important?

Social protection (or social security) systems refer to the set of policies that provide cash or in-kind benefits for nine broad areas of human needs: health care, sickness, old age, unemployment, employment injury, family and child support, maternity, disability, and survivor's support.⁹ For the purposes of this document, the term social protection refers to the public benefits targeted to people in older age, which include pensions and health insurance.

Among the various social protection mechanisms designed to promote income security in older age, universal social pensions are a powerful tool to reduce chronic poverty—stimulating investment in physical, human, and social capital, which benefits all generations.¹⁰ Universal social pensions (referred to hereafter as “social pensions”), are effective because they establish a social protection floor—a minimum standard or guarantee of basic income that reaches everyone, including those who are commonly excluded from contributory pension benefits (see Definitions for different types of pensions).

Strengthening inclusion in social protection has multi-dimensional benefits that go beyond the goal of reducing poverty. Social protection supports older people's access to affordable health services and gender-equitable pension plans can reduce inequalities between women and men.¹¹ Social pensions that support older people also have a positive ripple effect on families, as older people consistently invest in the health and education of dependents (such as grandchildren) as well as income-generating activities that support

Resources

Social Pensions

[Pension Watch \(HelpAge Social Pensions Database\)](#)

[Pensions at a Glance 2017: OECD and G20 Indicators](#)

[Older Citizens Monitoring Voice and Accountability in Social Protection](#)

[Older Citizens Monitoring Guidelines](#)

Organizations

[HelpAge International](#)

[International Labor Organization—Social Protection](#)

7 International Labor Organization, [World Social Protection Report 2017–2019: Universal social protection to achieve the sustainable development goals](#)

8 United Nations, [Ageing, Older Persons, and the 2030 Agenda](#)

9 International Labor Organization, [Social Security Minimum Standards Convention No. 102](#)

10 HelpAge, [Age and security: How social pensions can deliver effective aid to poor older people and their families](#)

11 International Labor Organization, [World Social Protection Report 2017–2019: Universal social protection to achieve the sustainable development goals](#)

the whole household. For example, research among rural households in Brazil showed that school enrollment among children between the ages of 10 and 14 was significantly higher for households that received pensions compared to those that did not. In South Africa, girls living in households with a pension recipient grew 1.2 to 1.6 inches taller than girls of the same age in non-pension-receiving households.¹²

How can my organization promote social protection systems that are inclusive and accessible to older adults?

Voice and accountability in social protection

Achieving adequate social protection for older people will not be possible without the participation of older people themselves. In low- and middle-income countries, older people can play critical roles in advocating for social pensions, improving government accountability, and monitoring impact. Your organization can work with older people to promote social pensions in the following ways:

- Advocate for inclusive social protection systems:** Partner with Older People's Associations (OPAs)—community-based groups founded and led by older people—to elevate the voice of older people in policy forums on social protection, poverty alleviation, and inequality. Coordinate with OPAs and older advocates to make inroads with government ministries and hold them accountable for policy change. Work with OPAs to increase representation of older people at national, regional, and local levels in public convenings on social protection. OPA representatives serve as persuasive, insightful speakers on the transformative impact of social protection and the barriers that older people in the community may face to accessing social protection programs.
- Build the capacity of OPAs to conduct Older Citizens Monitoring (OCM):** OCM is an activity conducted through OPAs, with the support of a civil society organization (CSO), in which older people monitor delivery of social services (including pensions) and use evidence collected to advocate for policy change. OCM is a critical advocacy tool because it facilitates older people's participation and generates evidence on the impact, reach, and effectiveness of social pensions. The process of OCM also generates dialogue about social services and entitlements, informing older people about social protection programs they might not have known about and clarifying information about benefits. CSOs can work with OPAs to monitor social pensions and train older citizen monitors on best practices for data collection, survey design, and interviewing. In addition, CSOs can work with OPAs to leverage insights from OCM advocacy activities that inform stakeholder mapping and the development of advocacy agendas.

¹² HelpAge International, [Why pensions are needed now](#)

Myanmar Electronic Cash Transfer Pilot Project

HelpAge Myanmar initiated a pilot program to test the feasibility of electronic delivery of cash transfers. The pilot demonstrated that e-payments can be operationalized in Myanmar, but it also highlighted important challenges. Older people were almost entirely dependent on proxies to access electronic pension payments. Learnings from the pilot will inform the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement's plan to expand social protection nationally.

Monitoring the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) Program for Older People

HelpAge worked with local partners and 23 OPAs to strengthen older people's voices and government accountability in Uganda. OPAs were trained on OCM—how to collect data, advocate for policy change, and facilitate meetings. Monitors found that older people had difficulty reaching the pension distribution sites. This information led the government to increase the number of pay points so that no beneficiary would have to travel more than 7 km to collect a payment.

- For example, in Zanzibar, CSOs that collaborated with OPAs on OCM activities helped mobilize older people to register for the Zanzibar Universal Pension Plan and guided the government in improving feedback mechanisms for older people to voice complaints and get help. Through sustained engagement from OPAs and civil society, Zanzibar's Department of Elderly and Social Welfare has begun developing a management information system and exploring a legal framework for the pension plan to protect its long-term future.¹³
- **Support older people in accessing information about social pension programs:** Many older adults may not be aware that social protection programs exist or know whether they are eligible and how to apply. Organizations can increase access to information in myriad ways. Advocacy groups have leveraged mass media channels such as radio and TV to inform older people about social pension programs. CSOs can also work with OPAs to organize awareness sessions and door-to-door outreach, especially through OCM activities. Consider how your organization could help make information more accessible—for example, by ensuring it is available in the language older people speak and accommodating for sensory disabilities and low literacy. Before undertaking any activities, older adults should be consulted through an OPA or community group to determine their needs and concerns.

Build evidence and bridge gaps in research

- **Improve data collection on income security in older age:** Lack of data on older people and poverty can lead to the exclusion of older people in policy formulation and programming. Data collection should include all relevant groups and results should be disaggregated by sex, age, and disability. Further, to truly understand the financial status of older persons, data must go beyond the household level and incorporate measures on individuals. Data should ideally capture the inequalities within a household in terms of access to resources, burden of unpaid domestic work, and differing spending patterns between household members, to give a more accurate picture of each individual.
- **Support pilot programs:** Pilot programs can play a critical role in determining how to scale pension programs and what policies are most effective. Pilots help to determine what delivery methods work well, clarify roles of different stakeholders, and test the efficacy of accountability and feedback mechanisms. CSOs can support pilot programs by lending technical expertise or coordinating with OPAs on OCM activities to implement pilots (such as feasibility tests for electronic payments, as mentioned below).

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner HelpAge USA for drafting the content for this Implementation Tip.

¹³ HelpAge, [Voice and accountability in social protection: Lessons from social pensions in Africa](#)

Inclusive Monitoring & Evaluation

TOPICS

- 8.4.1 Inclusion in Monitoring and Evaluation
 - 8.4.2 Integrating Adaptive Management into Projects
 - 8.4.3 Integrating Learning into Projects
 - 8.4.4 Understanding the Political Economy Analysis Approach
 - 8.4.5 Civil Society Capacity Building Indicators
-

Inclusion in Monitoring and Evaluation

Definitions

Inclusion: Ensuring equal access to social, political, and economic opportunities for all people, regardless of differences in personal characteristics or identities.

Inclusive Development: The concept that all people, regardless of identity, are instrumental in the transformation of their own society, and their inclusion throughout the development process leads to better outcomes.

Marginalized Groups: People who are typically denied full access to legal protection or social and economic participation and programs (such as police protection; political participation; access to healthcare, education, or employment) in practice and/or in principle, for historical, cultural, political, or other contextual reasons.

Inclusive Development Analysis: USAID tool to identify marginalized stakeholders affected by a project.

Q. How can M&E further inclusion and at the same time be more inclusive?

A. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and inclusion (see Definitions) are both key elements of a project, and each is important to reinforce and advance the other.

On the one hand, M&E activities can provide valuable information that enable you to advance inclusion in your project. For example, by ensuring you collect, disaggregate, and analyze data on different marginalized groups (such as women, youth, people with disabilities, and minority groups), M&E can help you better understand and respond to inclusion and exclusion issues and power dynamics. Also, M&E activities can help you understand how your interventions affect specific groups within the overall target population for a project; this is critical to identify and mitigate potential negative effects (e.g., reinforcing existing inequalities).

On the other hand, evaluation practitioners must include marginalized people (who are often excluded from providing feedback) in M&E processes—i.e., design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination—to ensure that M&E results are valid and valuable to your program. M&E systems are intended to identify outcomes and lessons learned, which often vary among stakeholder groups. Practicing inclusive M&E helps ensure that effects on all groups are captured, so that effectiveness can be maximized for all potential beneficiaries. When stakeholders from marginalized groups are involved in and own evaluation processes, the chances improve that the needs of all stakeholders will be addressed and that findings will better inform effective development interventions.

How can M&E be inclusive?

Inclusion involves ensuring equal access to social, political, and economic opportunities for all people, regardless of differences in personal characteristics or identities. (For more information see the *Implementation Tip* on [Inclusion and Inclusive Development](#)). Inclusion efforts can take many forms, as illustrated in the Inclusion

Continuum (see Figure 1). While you should aim to advance to the highest level of inclusion in M&E by empowering stakeholders to make decisions and identify desired outcomes, your team will need to determine what level of inclusion is possible and appropriate for different M&E activities.

Below are suggested ways to incorporate inclusion across M&E processes and activities. Don't forget to incorporate inclusion efforts in your budget.

Identifying marginalized groups: Before M&E activities begin, identify marginalized groups in the project area and use this information to plan how you will include them in your M&E processes and activities. A desk review or stakeholder consultation can help identify these groups. To guide this process, USAID's inclusive development analysis tool¹ provides a set of key questions and six domains of analysis² for each marginalized group identified. The analysis can be used to understand visible and invisible inequities and exclusion dynamics across interventions. A list of sample questions adapted to focus on M&E can be found to the left.

Planning and implementing M&E activities: Involve relevant stakeholders, including representatives of marginalized groups you identified, when developing the purpose and plan for your M&E activities (see Figure 1). The M&E team should also ensure that the identities and experiences of all key stakeholder groups, including

Figure 1. Inclusion Continuum



Inform. Tell stakeholders the evaluation is taking place and how they might be involved.

Consult. Ask stakeholders for input at specific points in the evaluation process.

Involve. Work directly with stakeholders and consider their input throughout the process.

Collaborate. Engage stakeholders in key activities and decisions during the process.

Empower. Give stakeholders the tools and authority to make decisions as leaders in the process.

Graphic is adapted from: <http://tompkinscountyny.gov/tccp/publicparticipation>

1 USAID Learning Lab, [Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations](#)

2 Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices; cultural norms and beliefs; roles, responsibilities, and time use; patterns of power and decision making; access to and control over assets and resources; personal safety and security

Sample Inclusion Analysis Questions

- Which groups of stakeholders face exclusion, stigma, and discrimination?
- What does identity-based inequality look like in the area where the M&E activities will take place?
- What are the structural barriers faced by marginalized groups that might prevent them from participating in M&E activities?

Key principles of working with marginalized groups

“Do no harm”: Ensure that activities do not put any individual or marginalized group at increased risk of harm. The choice to withdraw consent must always be available.

“Do nothing about them without them”: Consult with marginalized groups to understand their needs and priorities. That might prevent them from participating in M&E activities?

Resources

Fostering inclusion in M&E must be intentional and can require non-traditional approaches, such as participatory methods. Below are several tools and resources that can be used to promote more inclusive evaluation:

- [USAID's Inclusive Development Analysis Matrix](#)
- [Participative Ranking Methodology: A Brief Guide](#)
- [Empowerment Evaluation](#)
- [The Barefoot Guide on Mission Inclusion](#)
- [Reflections on Applying Principles of Equitable Evaluation](#)
- [USAID's Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations](#)
- [Breaking Barriers in Participation and Inclusion in Peacebuilding Evaluation](#)

marginalized groups, are represented during data collection to capture the range of perspectives. When planning M&E activities, the team should work closely with marginalized stakeholders to build trust and ensure that these groups are able to participate fully. The team should also consider the needs of different groups when planning activities—including the invitation, location of the activity, the room set-up, and facilitation style.

Disaggregating data: When appropriate, in addition to disaggregating monitoring data by sex, disaggregate data by different marginalized groups identified in your community. Disaggregation will allow you to track results for these different groups, identify trends, and conduct comparisons across subgroups. Disaggregation can also hold the project accountable to these groups and ensure the experiences of members of these groups are represented. However, when making the decision about how to disaggregate data, consider the potential implications of maintaining datasets that include sensitive data and whether potential (or accidental) disclosure of that data could harm affected groups or individuals (e.g., data on LGBTQI individuals in a country where homosexuality is illegal).

Analyzing data: Key stakeholders should have an opportunity to participate in the interpretation and validation of findings. This will ensure that all perspectives are adequately captured. When involving different stakeholders in interpretation and validation, keep in mind that structural inequalities might inhibit full participation of non-dominant or marginalized groups. To capture multiple interpretations and a more complete analysis, you might want to present and discuss data with different stakeholder groups separately.

Disseminating evaluation findings: It is important to define who the audience and expected users are of different results and products and ensure the products and means of dissemination consider their needs—especially the needs of marginalized groups. Organizations should aim to share results and products with as many concerned stakeholders as possible, and should consider using non-traditional formats such as community and small group meetings, to reach marginalized groups.

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner Social Impact for drafting the content for this Implementation Tip.

8.4.2

Integrating Adaptive Management into Projects

Q. What is adaptive management and how can it be integrated into projects?

A. USAID defines adaptive management as “an intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context.”¹ As the definition implies, adaptive management is not a “one and done” type of activity; rather, it is a continuous way of working that is reflective of and responsive to emergent knowledge. Adaptive management can be supported by formal checkpoints throughout project implementation and by informal, *ad hoc* opportunities to adjust implementation based on incoming evidence.

Some suggest adaptive management is a way of “making it up as you go along.” Instead, adaptive management is an intentional approach for reaching development goals when the pathways of change—the steps required (and their relationships to each other) for a desired change to occur—are uncertain. It involves calculated risk taking, questioning, testing of assumptions, and an openness to changing implementation approaches midstream so that goals can be reached more effectively. In this Implementation Tip, we discuss how adaptive management fits into a Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) approach (see Implementation Tip on [Integrating Learning into Projects](#)); when it is appropriate to use an adaptive management approach; the benefits of this approach; and how organizations and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems can support the use of adaptive management.

Adaptive Management as a CLA Activity

In response to the need for a more systematic and intentional approach to project learning, USAID developed the [CLA framework](#) and built it into the Program Cycle. CLA is a set of practices that help improve development effectiveness by encouraging stakeholders to reflect on and respond to evidence generated through MEL activities so strategies can be adjusted to improve outcomes.²

¹ USAID, [ADS Chapter 201: Program Cycle Operational Policy](#)

² USAID Learning Lab, [CLA Toolkit - Understanding CLA](#)

Definitions

Monitoring: Periodic tracking (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually) of your project’s progress by systematically gathering and analyzing data and information about what you are doing, whom you are reaching, and whether your activities are being implemented as planned.

Evaluation: The comparison of actual project impact against agreed-on plans. Evaluation looks at what you set out to do, what you have accomplished, and how you accomplished it.

Adaptive Management: An intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context.

Source: USAID ADS 201

Goal: The long-term result your project is trying to achieve.

Context Monitoring: The systematic collection of information about conditions and external factors relevant to the implementation and performance of a strategy, project, and activities. This includes monitoring local conditions that may directly affect implementation and performance or external factors that may indirectly affect implementation and performance.

Source: USAID ADS 201

Continued on next page →

Definitions, contd.

Indicator: A quantifiable measure of a characteristic or condition of people, institutions, systems, or processes that may change over time.

Source: USAID ADS 201

Network Analysis: An analytical approach that tracks and identifies relationships across various stakeholders within a system.

Source: USAID Learning Lab

Pause and Reflect:

A component of learning and adaptive management; the act of taking time to think critically about ongoing activities and processes and to plan for the best way forward.

Source: USAID ADS 201

Scenario Planning: Identifying existing and emerging trends that may affect programming, determining plausible outcomes or scenarios, and taking steps to monitor and mitigate risks

Theory of Change: A description of the conditions and actions that will allow a project to achieve a long-term goal. A theory of change should include: 1) the context in which the development problem is situated; 2) the project's long-term goal and the intermediate outcomes (or preconditions) that need to be met to reach that goal; 3) the assumptions aligned with each step of the pathway of change; 4) the interventions that will be implemented to achieve the stated outcomes; and 5) indicators to monitor progress throughout implementation

Source: USAID How-To Note: Developing a Logic Model

(For a lengthier introduction to the framework, see Implementation Tip on [Integrating Learning into Projects](#).)

Adaptive management is the translation of learning into action for development activities. If learning is the act of collecting evidence, testing assumptions, and exploring opportunities for enhancing outcomes, then adaptation is the act of testing approaches and continually refining implementation based on that learning.

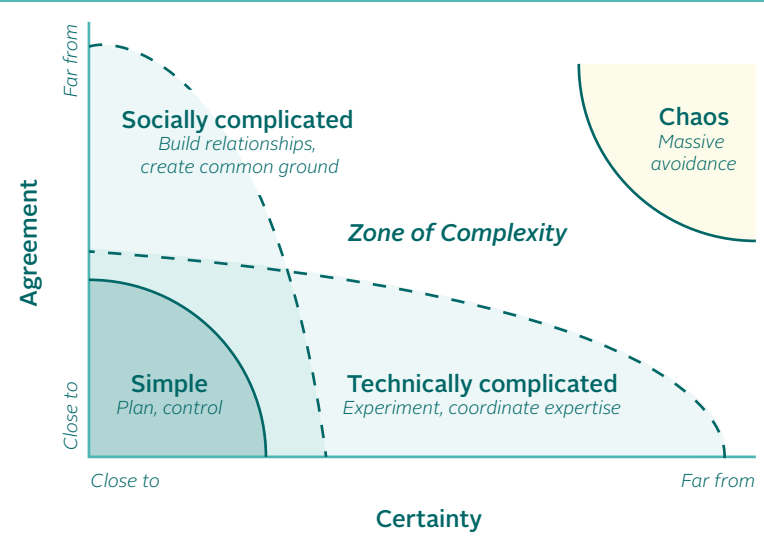
Development problems that call for adaptive management

When considering which projects might call for an adaptive management approach, consider the following questions:

Is the development problem being addressed simple or complex?

As shown in the Agreement and Certainty Matrix (Figure 1), a simple problem is one for which the pathway to change is clear (high level of certainty) and there is widespread agreement on the long-term goal. A complex problem, on the other hand, is dependent on context, has an unpredictable pathway of change (low level of certainty), and lacks straightforward relationships among inputs, outputs, and expected outcomes. Importantly, an intervention that may initially seem simple can easily become complex when implemented in an unstable or fragile operating environment.³ Adaptive management approaches are well suited to address complex development problems. They enable greater flexibility and responsiveness to uncertain and evolving conditions.

Figure 1: Agreement and Certainty Matrix



Source: Patton, M.Q. (2011). Development Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use. New York: The Guildford Press.

3 USAID Learning Lab, [Discussion Note: Complexity-Aware Monitoring](#)

Are there aspects of the project that are innovative or experimental?

When testing an intervention strategy that has not yet been applied in a given context or sector, adaptive management approaches can be useful for refining the intervention to improve its effectiveness and capability to meet long-term goals.

Benefits of managing adaptively

Intentional adaptive management grounded in learning allows implementers to be more responsive to shifting realities throughout a project and can make achieving longer-term outcomes and goals more likely. Adaptive management yields the following benefits:

- Proactive and timely use of MEL data—Because effective adaptive management relies on responsiveness to changes and testing of approaches, MEL data are more likely to be used for learning rather than purely for reporting purposes.
- “Failures” become opportunities for learning and adaptation—When well managed through early detection and responsive action, failed implementation approaches can inform development of new or adjusted interventions that yield more positive results and contribute to the longer-term goal.
- Experimentation and innovation—Rather than applying “cookie-cutter” approaches to solving development challenges, adaptive management allows for testing new approaches and adjusting interventions so they fit different contexts. A continuous improvement approach strengthens the effectiveness of development.

Using MEL for adaptive management

MEL systems for adaptive management (MEL4AM) are more complex than those for projects in which the pathways of change are clear. MEL4AM should enable project managers to look outside the “line of sight” of the project to observe changes in the surrounding context; unintended outcomes resulting from implementation; the various relationships among different levels of change and outcomes; differing perspectives of stakeholders affected by the project⁴; and the validity of the assumptions and pathways posed by the initial theory of change. These MEL4AM objectives require examination of how MEL methods and approaches are deployed, the frequency of MEL activities, and how evidence is used to inform adaptation. While traditional MEL systems use a “sense-analyze-respond” approach—in which data is collected, interpreted, then acted on—adaptive MEL systems use a “probe-sense-respond” approach—in which implementers experiment and test interventions, gather information, and then refine an intervention for further testing.⁵

4 USAID Learning Lab, [Attending to Interrelationships, Perspectives, and Boundaries: A Complexity-Aware Monitoring Principle](#)

5 USAID Learning Lab, [Discussion Note: Complexity-Aware Monitoring](#)

Adaptive MEL components

The following is a (non-exhaustive) list of potential components of an adaptive MEL system. Implementers should select those best aligned with the needs of the project and the organizational culture.



Theory of Change—Your project's theory of change⁶ should articulate the project's long-term goal, the intermediate outcomes (or preconditions) that must be met to reach that goal, and the assumptions aligned with each step of the pathway of change. An adaptive management approach suggests assumptions must be revisited throughout the life of the project, and the pathway of change may need to be adjusted so the long-term goal can be reached. When developing a theory of change using an adaptive management approach, a project team should:

- Clearly identify where there is uncertainty in the theory of change due to a dynamic (or unstable) operating environment or limited availability of information.
- Acknowledge that while higher level outcomes and the long-term goal may remain consistent, the lower-level outcomes should be illustrative in nature (or left undefined) to allow for adjustment.
- Build a monitoring approach that tests assumptions and the pathway of change.



Pause and Reflect Opportunities—These formal checkpoints serve as intentional times to think critically about ongoing activities and plan the best way forward.⁷ Project implementers may wish to use these times to discuss adaptations needed in light of:⁸

- Implementation challenges and successes
- Changes or shocks in the operating environment or context
- Shifts in stakeholder interests or priorities
- Emergent opportunities aligned with long-term goals
- Unintended outcomes of programming (both positive and negative)

⁶ USAID Learning Lab, [How-To Note: Developing a Project Logic Model](#)

⁷ USAID, [ADS 201](#)

⁸ USAID Learning Lab, [Discussion Note: Adaptive Management](#)



MEL Plans—Strong adaptive management practices often require accessing information outside regular indicator reporting activities. Project implementers can include learning questions in their MEL plans to fill information gaps so these questions are considered as part of the MEL processes. Examples of learning questions for adaptive management include: “What interventions (or set of interventions) are most effective with my target beneficiary group?” and “What are the unintended negative consequences of my intervention?” MEL plans should also articulate the mechanisms for making adaptive management decisions (e.g., regular pause and reflect activities).



Context Monitoring—Monitoring for changes in the operating environment acknowledges that programming is affected by the context in which an intervention takes place. Changes in the operating environment can trigger the need for a pause and reflect activity, which may result in a shift in implementation approaches. Decisions about what aspects of the operating environment to monitor should be linked to the types of changes that: 1) are most likely to occur; and 2) would have the greatest effect on programming efforts. Scenario-planning activities can also inform the type of contextual monitoring that needs to take place. (See Implementation Tip on [Integrating Learning into Projects](#).)



Thinking and Working Politically—Sensitivity to the political context of an intervention requires constant awareness of who holds power, what their interests are, and how they can be involved in designing and implementing development solutions.⁹ This awareness, or approach, is aligned with adaptive management; it emphasizes “best fit” over “best practice” and promotes as-needed adjustments to programming based on rapid cycles of feedback and relationship building. (See Implementation Tip on [Political Economy Analysis](#).)

⁹ DFID, [Political Economy Analysis How To Note](#)

Resources

- [USAID Adaptive Management Discussion Note](#)
- [USAID CLA Toolkit](#)
- [USAID CLA Maturity Spectrum](#)
- [USAID Complexity Aware Monitoring Discussion Note](#)
- [USAID Discussion Note: Systemic Thinking for Monitoring](#)
- [USAID How-To Note: Developing a Project Logic Model](#)
- [USAID Tips on Learning from Context: Formal and Informal Approaches to Understanding the Local Political Economy](#)
- [ODI's Scenario Testing and Visioning](#)
- [ODI's Making Adaptive Rigour Work](#)
- [DFID Political Economy Analysis How-to Note](#)
- [Bond's Adaptive Management – What is Means for CSOs](#)
- [Center for International Development at Harvard University's Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation Toolkit](#)



Tracking and Documenting Adaptation—An important aspect of rigorous adaptive management is tracking significant changes made to a project and the evidence base for these changes. Documenting adaptation serves not only as a mechanism for accountability and transparency in communicating why changes occurred, but as a record of the intentional decision making and evidence base for each change.

Enabling environment for adaptive management

An organization's culture and processes heavily influence the ways in which a project is able to adapt. The list below includes several characteristics of a positive enabling environment for adaptive management:

- Staff feel they can challenge the *status quo* and propose alternative approaches.
- Staff are willing to admit that implementation approaches are not working and need to be changed.
- There is acceptance of uncertainty and risk in programming.
- Teams demonstrate strong communication and collaboration practices across functions.
- Leadership supports adaptive management approaches.
- Project managers are held accountable for achieving progress on higher-level outcomes and evidence of learning, rather than their ability to implement as planned.
- Staff time is made available for learning and reflection through regular workshops or reflection meetings.
- Field staff and project managers close to day-to-day implementation activities are empowered to make decisions on programming shifts.
- Hiring practices look beyond years of experience to consider candidates' curiosity and inquisitiveness.
- Processes (e.g., budgets, procurement, reporting, MEL) allow for flexibility in implementation approaches.

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner Social Impact for drafting the content for this *Implementation Tip*.

Integrating Learning into Projects

Q. What is learning and how can it be used to improve M&E and program implementation?

A. Learning is a practice undertaken by an organization to intentionally and systematically gather lessons and knowledge for the purpose of improving program implementation. Adoption of a learning approach adds value because it prompts organizations and projects to look for, detect, and adapt to changing needs—thereby allowing them to operate more effectively in complex environments. Learning is often driven by a learning agenda, composed of learning questions, learning activities, and learning products.

By adopting a learning mindset, project managers can actively identify gaps in knowledge, prioritize information needs, and set up Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems and activities to address these gaps and needs. Project managers can then use the learning generated to make decisions and programmatic adjustments to increase the effectiveness of implementation. Learning efforts provide the foundation for adaptive management. (For more information on adaptive management, see the Implementation Tip on Adaptive Management.)

Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting

In response to the need for a more systematic and intentional approach to learning, USAID developed the **Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) framework** and built it into the Program Cycle. CLA is a set of practices that help improve development effectiveness by encouraging stakeholders to reflect on and respond to evidence generated through Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) activities so strategies can be adjusted to improve outcomes.¹ The CLA framework describes the elements that comprise a holistic approach to CLA (see figure 1).

The left-hand side of the framework indicates activities that can take place throughout the program cycle to facilitate CLA. A CLA approach to learning includes:

Definitions

Monitoring: Periodic tracking (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually) of your project's progress by systematically gathering and analyzing data and information about what you are doing, whom you are reaching, and whether your activities are being implemented as planned.

Evaluation: The comparison of actual project impact against agreed-on plans. Evaluation looks at what you set out to do, what you have accomplished, and how you accomplished it.

Adaptive Management: An intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context.

Source: USAID ADS 201

Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA): CLA involves strategic collaboration, continuous learning, and adaptive management. CLA approaches to development include collaborating intentionally with stakeholders to share knowledge and reduce duplication of effort; learning systematically by drawing on evidence from a variety of sources and taking time to reflect on implementation; and applying learning by adapting intentionally.

Source: USAID ADS 201

Continued on next page →

¹ USAID Learning Lab, [CLA Toolkit - Understanding CLA](#)

Definitions, contd.

Context Monitoring: The systematic collection of information about conditions and external factors relevant to the implementation and performance of a strategy, project, and activities. This includes monitoring local conditions that may directly affect implementation and performance or external factors that may indirectly affect implementation and performance.

Source: USAID ADS 201

Indicator: A quantifiable measure of a characteristic or condition of people, institutions, systems, or processes that may change over time.

Network Analysis: An analytical approach that tracks and identifies relationships among various stakeholders in a system.

Source: USAID Learning Lab

Outcome Harvesting: An evaluation technique that starts with programming outcomes and works backwards to determine whether and how an intervention contributed to these outcomes.

Source: BetterEvaluation

Pause and Reflect: A component of learning and adaptive management: the act of taking time to think critically about ongoing activities and processes and plan for the best way forward.

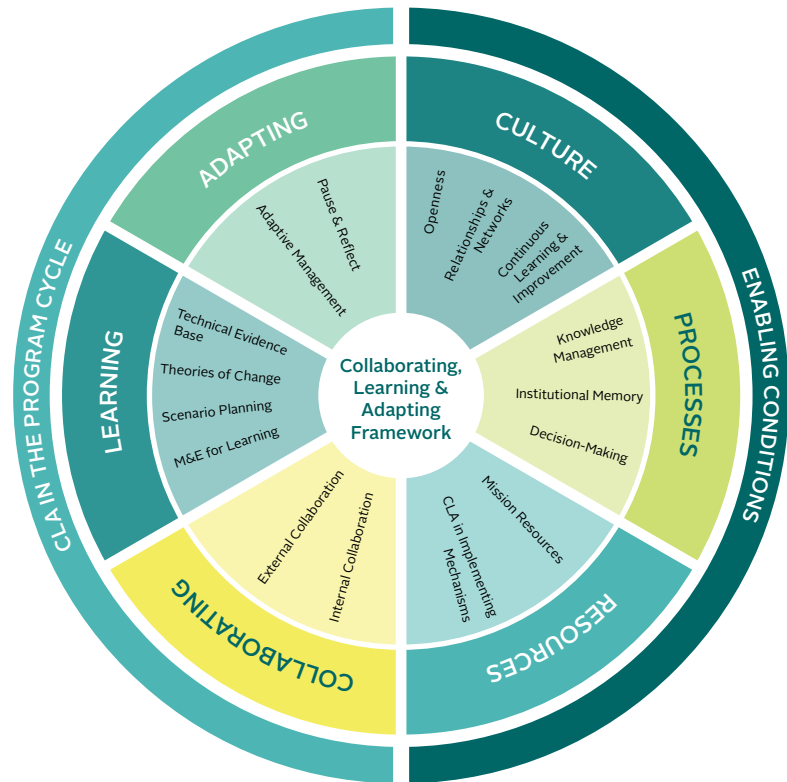
Source: USAID ADS 201

Rapid Assessment: A structured evidence review that often includes key informant interviews and desk research. The scale of a rapid assessment is much smaller than an evaluation, allowing the assessment to be completed within a shorter timeframe (days or weeks instead of months).

Source: BetterEvaluation

Continued on next page →

Figure 1: CLA Framework



- Using an M&E system for continuous learning (rather than solely for accountability of results agreed upon with donors).
- Considering existing and emerging trends that may affect programming; determining plausible outcomes or scenarios; and taking steps to monitor and mitigate risks and/or detect and expand on opportunities (scenario planning).
- Using theories of change to articulate and test causal linkages and assumptions
- Leveraging diverse knowledge sources to build an evidence base for decision making.

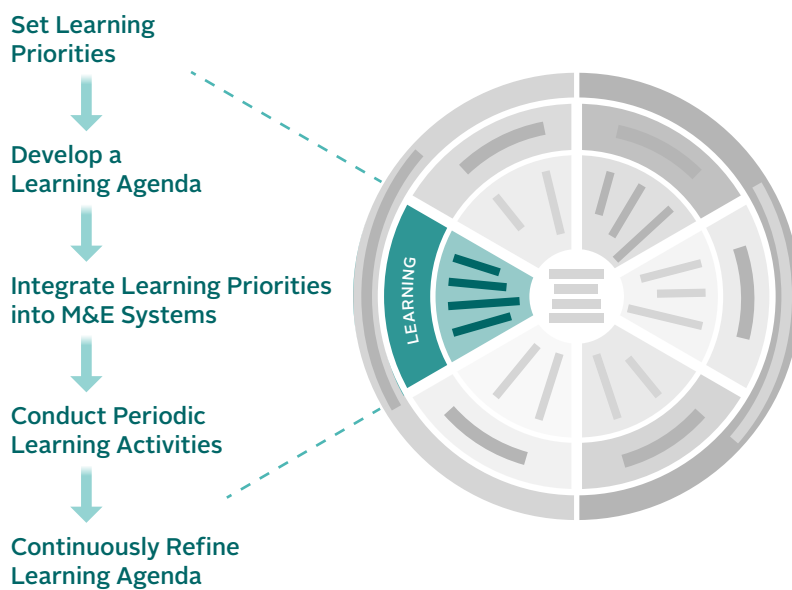
The right-hand side of the framework describes the organizational conditions that can support CLA—the culture, processes, and resources that enable effective collaboration among stakeholders; the gathering and use of learning; and programmatic adaptation in light of emerging evidence. Learning approaches should take into account the enabling conditions present in your organization and how you can make use of existing processes and tools to embed learning in your organizational culture.

The CLA framework can also be used as a conversation starter—to help think about and discuss ways in which your organization can more fully embrace learning. The CLA framework is accompanied by a maturity tool, which describes what CLA looks like at different stages of organizational maturity for each of the 16 elements of the CLA framework.² Your organization can use the tool to self-assess its current CLA practice as a basis for discussing what changes it would like to invest in to support deeper CLA integration.

The role of learning in improving implementation

Learning sits at the center of CLA. It is a response to the needs of stakeholders and informs programmatic shifts through adaptation. As such, learning is a set of activities that convene stakeholders around evidence so that they are better equipped for decision making. Figure 2 below shows how learning can be systematically approached in your organization.

Figure 2: Steps to Embedding Learning



Setting learning priorities

Learning priorities are the topics or questions of most interest to key stakeholders, articulated to promote intentional reflection on programming to improve implementation strategies and effectiveness. Identifying learning priorities gives project managers and implementers greater returns on their M&E efforts. By addressing learning priorities, M&E systems can generate data that directly inform decision making for management purposes, course

Definitions, contd.

Stocktaking: A structured review and assessment of ongoing efforts and options going forward.

Source: USAID ADS 201

Scenario Planning: Identifying existing and emerging trends that may affect programming, determining plausible outcomes or scenarios, and taking steps to monitor and mitigate risks.

² USAID Learning Lab, [Collaborating, Learning and Adapting \(CLA\) Maturity Spectrum](#)

correction, and future planning. The ideal time to set learning priorities is during the planning or start-up phase of a project, although priorities can be established or adjusted at any time during implementation.

When establishing learning priorities, consider the following questions:³

1. What are we trying to achieve? What are the intended results? How will we know if we have achieved those?
2. What theories of change and assumptions do we need to test to ensure we achieve our intended results?
3. What do we not yet know that may affect the level of our achievement?
4. What do we want to learn? What additional learning activities are needed to better understand our context or development challenges?

Learning agendas

A learning agenda describes how a project's learning priorities will be pursued throughout project implementation. Designing and acting on a learning agenda enables implementers to take a structured and evidence-based approach to learning that informs decision making and adaptation. Learning agendas have three key components:⁴

1. *Learning questions:* These are the questions that will help you make better, more informed decisions and work more effectively. Learning questions should be tied to your learning priorities and serve to test assumptions, fill knowledge gaps, and explore opportunities and unintended outcomes.
2. *Learning activities:* These are the means for generating, analyzing, and synthesizing learning to answer the learning questions. Think through whether any M&E activities (e.g., evaluations, assessments) are scheduled and identify additional activities (both continuous and one-time) that can complement these processes and fill in gaps as necessary. Learning activities are often linked to an M&E plan but may also include additional activities such as literature reviews, rapid assessments, and workshops.
3. *Learning products:* These are the “outputs” of learning—the infographics, reports, blogs, meetings, etc., that result from learning activities. When determining which learning products to generate, consider the desired audience (i.e., the individuals who will be using the information presented) and how they can receive it in a way that best prompts them to take action for adaptive management.

³ USAID Learning Lab, [CLA Toolkit - M&E for Learning](#)

⁴ USAID Learning Lab, [CLA Toolkit - Learning Agenda](#)

Integrating learning and M&E

Your M&E system plays an instrumental role in embedding learning in your organization and projects. Your learning agenda helps you identify how you can use the information from M&E to answer learning questions and whether you need to collect any additional information.

There are several entry points for integrating learning in your M&E system:

ENTRY POINT	STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING LEARNING
Project Design	Identify your learning priorities and questions. Determine whether your learning questions should be answered with monitoring data, through an evaluation, or through a targeted study.
M&E System Development	Develop indicators that provide data relevant to your learning questions and ensure that they are collected frequently enough to inform decision making. Develop evaluation questions that are aligned with learning questions and ensure data collection efforts will encompass these (e.g., baseline studies, indicator data) to provide the evidence needed. Ensure the M&E system is also designed to test the causal linkages and assumptions in the theory of change.
Learning Agenda Development	Identify the products for learning, as well as the ideal timeline for implementing them.
Periodic Reflection	It is essential to hold formal reflection points throughout the life of a project to ensure that learning occurs in an intentional way. Formal reflection points can be integrated with annual reviews or can be standalone activities such as pause and reflect. Ahead of these reflection points, take stock of the evidence available to answer learning questions and identify any knowledge gaps that can be filled through special studies such as rapid assessments, network analyses, and desk reviews.

If you are integrating learning into your M&E system after it has already been designed, you will want to assess how the current system is being used for learning and identify ways it can be further aligned to your learning priorities. Key questions to consider include:⁵

- Does the project have the right set of indicators? Who is using them? For what purpose?
- Are indicator data helping to understand if higher-level results are being achieved?
- Are monitoring data being used to reflect performance and inform adjustments?
- Are evaluations being utilized to inform current and future programming?

⁵ USAID Learning Lab, [CLA Toolkit - M&E for Learning](#)

Resources

- [USAID CLA Toolkit](#)
- [USAID CLA Maturity Spectrum](#)
- [ODI Scenario Testing and Visioning](#)
- [Learning Agenda Guidance and Template](#)
- [Demystifying Social Network Analysis in Development](#)
- [Stakeholder and Social Network Analysis](#)

- When was the last time a key decision was made based on M&E data? How often does this happen?
- Do the data provide enough evidence to validate the theory of change or any of its key programmatic assumptions?

Learning activities

Your organization's particular learning needs and priorities will drive the ways in which learning is pursued and facilitated. Below are some suggested learning activities that can be adapted to your organization's culture and learning needs.⁶ (See also the Resources section.)

- Conduct a targeted literature review or rapid assessment on an area/sector of interest to increase your technical evidence base ahead of a programmatic decision.
- In developing your theory of change, include stakeholder consultations to increase understanding of context and include diverse perspectives.
- Use activities such as stakeholder consultations and outcome harvesting to test assumptions articulated in the theory of change and modify theories as needed.
- Share learning (through meetings, knowledge-sharing events, or learning products) with other implementing partners and donors to assist with their own planning and design activities.
- Develop scenario-planning narratives that describe existing and emerging trends that may affect programming; monitor the project for early warning signals that the current scenario "fit" is shifting.
- Use context monitoring to detect shifts in the operating environment that indicate adaptation is necessary.
- Host learning workshops following evaluation fieldwork to reflect on preliminary findings and conclusions and develop recommendations jointly with the evaluator.
- Conduct after-action reviews after major project activities (e.g., evaluation, pilot test of implementation approach, baseline study) to identify what was supposed to happen, what did happen, and what can be learned for future activities.
- Hold pause and reflect sessions to take stock of existing learning, identify gaps, and make programmatic adaptations based on incoming evidence.

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner Social Impact for drafting the content for this *Implementation Tip*.

⁶ USAID Learning Lab, [Collaborating, Learning and Adapting \(CLA\) Maturity Spectrum](#)

Understanding the Political Economy Analysis Approach

Q. What is political economy analysis?

A. Political economy analysis (PEA) is an approach to understanding why things work the way they do within a system. PEA identifies the incentives and constraints of different actors and how these influence their behavior. The purpose of PEA is to help development practitioners understand the political, economic, social, and cultural influences at play within a system to guide adaptive management of programming efforts. (See Implementation Tip on [Integrating Adaptive Management into Projects](#).) PEA is not intended to be a one-off activity; rather, PEA findings are meant to be continually updated as the context changes or in response to emergent needs and information.

PEA also aids in "thinking and working politically"¹ by providing insight into how change can occur and who needs to be engaged. There is increasing recognition that development work is inherently political and that the questions of who holds power, what their interests are, and how they are incentivized should influence how development solutions are designed and implemented.² Though the goals of a project may not be explicitly political, a politically-aware approach to development allows implementers to design interventions that are grounded in political and contextual realities. Politically-aware approaches to development can be contrasted with more traditional approaches in that they emphasize "best fit" over "best practice", use rapid cycles of learning and reflection to adjust programmatic approaches frequently, and focus more on relationship building and collaboration.³

Definitions

Context Monitoring: The systematic collection of information about conditions and external factors relevant to the implementation and performance of a strategy, projects, and activities. This includes monitoring local conditions that may directly affect implementation and performance or external factors that may indirectly affect implementation and performance.
Source: USAID ADS 201

Pause and Reflect: A component of learning and adaptive management—the act of taking time to think critically about ongoing activities and processes and plan for the best way forward.
Source: USAID ADS 201

Political Economy Analysis: A structured approach to examining power dynamics and economic and social forces that influence development.
Source: USAID Thinking and Working Politically through Applied PEA

Scenario Planning: Identifying existing and emerging trends that may affect programming, determining plausible outcomes or scenarios, and taking steps to monitor and mitigate risks.

Continued on next page →

¹ This term was originally coined by the Thinking and Working Politically Community of Practice. For further information see the [TWP Community of Practice website](#).

² DFID, [Political Economy Analysis How To Note](#)

³ USAID, [Thinking and Working Politically Through Applied Political Economy Analysis: A Guide for Practitioners](#)

Definitions, contd.

Theory of Change: A description of the conditions and actions that will allow a project to achieve a long-term goal. A theory of change should include: 1) the context in which the development problem is situated; 2) the project's long-term goal and the intermediate outcomes (or preconditions) that need to be met to reach that goal; 3) the assumptions aligned with each step of the pathway of change; 4) the interventions that will be implemented to achieve the stated outcomes; and 5) indicators to monitor progress throughout implementation.

Source: USAID How-To Note: Developing a Project Logic Model

Thinking and Working Politically:

An approach to working with development actors and the “operating environment” that encourages active engagement with context and design of programs aligned with a domestic support base in order to generate reform momentum, along with a willingness to work with partners to help navigate political obstacles.

Source: Thinking and Working Politically Community of Practice

Adaptive Management: An intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context.

Source: USAID ADS 201

Components of PEA

PEA can contribute to development practitioners' understanding of a range of issues affecting the successful delivery of interventions. Activities include:

- Mapping state and non-state actors to understand who can effect change, how change happens, and where opportunities for partnership exist
- Identifying potential obstacles and constraints that key actors face and how proposed interventions can help mitigate these obstacles
- Exploring how external influences, such as natural disasters, trade concerns, and corruption, influence key actors' decision-making processes

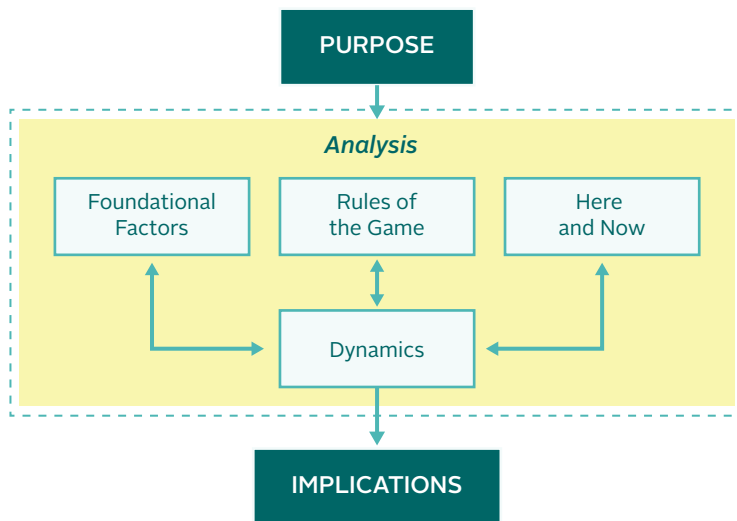
Figure 1: Example of PEA questions

- How do political economy dynamics affect service delivery?
- What contextual factors may pose a risk to our implementation approaches?
- Who are the potential champions and critics of our proposed approaches? What are their levels of influence?

USAID developed an **Applied PEA Framework** to provide guidance on the kind of information that is gathered during a PEA.

- The purpose of a given PEA exercise identifies the main questions that the approach seeks to address.
- PEA questions guide exploration of the analytical factors that affect the political dynamics of programming. These include:
 - Foundational Factors: Deeply embedded aspects of an operating environment that shape the political and socio-economic system. These include history, geography, class or caste structures, and natural resource dynamics. Foundational factors are aspects of an operating environment that are unlikely to change during implementation.
 - Rules of the Game: Formal and informal rules and norms that influence the behavior of actors (both organizational and individual). These can include legal frameworks, cultural norms, social networks, and the ways in which organizations (e.g., civil society organizations, private sector) work.
 - Here and Now: Current events that can affect programming, such as leadership changes, crises, and natural disasters.
 - Dynamics: Analysis of how the previous three factors interact with each other and the extent to which these interactions present opportunities or constraints for programming.

Figure 2: USAID's Applied PEA Framework



- The *implications* for programming inform decisions about the specific interventions and implementation approaches selected and about how the analytical factors may affect programming.

When selecting team members for a PEA exercise, look for a mix of country, sector, and methodological expertise. Project implementers can be involved alongside independent consultants; this can yield a number of benefits. Being involved in the primary data collection gives implementers on-the-ground insights that can be rapidly applied to intervention strategies. Including local staff and/or consultants in the PEA process is also critical because they will likely be most adept at going beyond surface-level responses to understanding drivers of behavior.¹

The PEA approach uses a variety of different methods, dependent on the PEA questions to be explored. Most frequently, methods will include: 1) a literature review to synthesize existing knowledge and identify gaps for further research; 2) key informant interviews to explore the PEA questions in greater depth and gather diverse perspectives; and 3) a workshop with key stakeholders to share the PEA findings, collectively interpret the data, and refine implications. (Several resources, including an illustrative interview guide, are available from [USAID's Learning Lab](#).)

¹ DFID, [Political Economy Analysis How To Note](#)

Embedding PEA in projects

A formal PEA exercise can be helpful early in a project. The analysis and insights gained can inform many aspects of implementation, including selection of target areas or beneficiaries, stakeholder engagement strategies, identification of opportunities and risks, and adjustments to the theory of change (see Definitions). To take full advantage of the methodology, however, project implementers should continually revisit the PEA dynamics throughout the project to test implementation approaches, learn from them, and refresh their understanding of the political economy dynamics. PEA findings reflect a specific moment in time; the process is therefore useful as both a “starting point” and as a reference for gathering additional information as the operating environment changes. Implementers can do this in a number of ways:

- Conduct regularly-scheduled PEA updates: This would involve repeating the PEA process at regular intervals (e.g., annually or every two years) to gauge changes in the political environment and update project understanding of the PEA dynamics.
- Include questions that prompt “thinking and working politically” in project updates, pause and reflect opportunities, and reviews: This approach allows project managers to use regularly scheduled meetings to include PEA dynamics in ongoing decision-making processes. Questions might include the following:
 - Who are the main players?
 - How would they respond to what we are proposing?
 - What are their incentives? Can these be influenced?
 - Does anyone oppose what we’re proposing? How can we work with them?
 - Where can we have influence?
- Collect data related to PEA dynamics through the MEL system: Context monitoring can provide valuable information on changes in the operating environment. Monitoring and evaluating unintended consequences can alert project implementers to emerging opportunities and risks.

Putting PEA results into action

The findings, implications, and conclusions resulting from a PEA exercise and associated activities should be translated into actions that make programming more effective. By the end of a PEA exercise, implementers should also have an idea who the main players are—a next step would be to identify which ones to engage with and the entry points for engagement. Additional next steps include:

PEA Dynamics Explored		Adaptive Actions
1 Mapping the main players and their interests	→	Identify with whom to engage and how
2 Identifying potential “trigger” events that could affect programming	→	Develop response scenarios for “trigger” events (scenario planning)
3 Greater understanding of cultural norms and how they affect decision making or service delivery	→	Design interventions that either work effectively within cultural norms to advance long-term goals or seek to change cultural norms
4 Deeper awareness of contextual factors and their influence on political economy	→	Integrate contextual understanding into problem analysis to describe constraints and opportunities

Civil Society Capacity Building Indicators

Definitions

Indicator: A quantifiable measure of a characteristic or condition of people, institutions, systems, or processes that may change over time.

Output Indicator: An indicator that captures the immediate result of an activity. “Number of people trained” is an example of an output indicator.

Outcome indicator: An indicator that measures longer-term change, such as in effectiveness or partnership building. “Percent of organizations with a 1/3 increase in funding” is an example of an outcome indicator.

SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound

Q. What indicators can be used to measure progress on capacity building for organizational development of civil society organizations (CSOs)?

A. A large variety of tools and approaches are available to measure the impact of civil society capacity-building initiatives focused on organizational development. However, identifying indicators that adequately capture desired changes can be challenging. There is no one “right” set of indicators to measure change across areas of organizational development, nor is there one “right” way to adapt existing indicators. This *Implementation Tip* is a guide to different types of indicators that might be used to measure capacity at each of the three stages of organizational maturity and considerations for indicator development (see Table 1). It builds on the 2018 publication, *Capacity Development Interventions: A Guide for Program Designers*.¹

What should indicators measure?

Indicators for capacity-development interventions have traditionally focused on the *output level* associated with organizational development as defined in organizational capacity assessment tools. These may include increased knowledge and skills, changes in organizational structure, and adoption of new policies and procedures. However, this approach measures only the first steps towards organizational change. *Performance measurement*, on the other hand, addresses an organization’s ability to achieve its targets, learn, and adapt—to sustain itself within a changing context.² For example, is the organization able to earn more business because of their increased capacities, are they able to expand their service offerings, or can they win contracts by themselves rather than being a subcontractor? The targets and goals of each organization are different, but these are some examples of performance measurement. The assumption is that increasing institutional capacity will result in improved performance

¹ USAID, [Local Capacity Development Suggested Approaches](#)

² *ibid.*

outcomes.³ Output-level indicators are important and feed into performance-level outcomes. But outputs should not be the only indicators of capacity-building efforts for organizational development.

Donors may provide standard indicators of organizational development for reporting purposes. However, customized indicators that reflect CSO buy-in and alignment with the organization's own level of development are critical. Actively involving CSOs in developing their own indicators of success, reflecting CSOs' own goals, increases CSO ownership and improves the chances they will be met. Indicators for your organization's capacity development initiative should be adapted to reflect the change(s) your organization seeks.

Organizations in different stages of maturity may have different indicators. While nascent organizations may focus on output indicators using tools such as USAID's Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) (see Resources), emerging and mature organizations will focus more on indicators that assess their ability to measure and inform intervention strategies and their ability to address underlying causes of problems when developing interventions.⁴ Mature organizations will also prioritize strong coordination and collaboration, including inter-organizational measurement.

First, identify what change you want to see in your organization and frame it as a goal or outcome. Then search for existing indicators (such as donor-required indicators) related to this goal or outcome (see Resources for ideas) and adapt those to the specific change(s) you want to see in your organization. Consider your organization's level of maturity to help select and develop indicators that will create a basis for realistic expectations around capacity development and suggest feasible benchmarks.

Potential indicators of capacity building for organizational development

The table on p. 3 provides examples of indicators (both output and outcome) to measure progress of capacity-building efforts across the three stages of organizational maturity. This is not an exhaustive list of indicators (or related resources), but rather provides examples for identifying and then tailoring output and outcome indicators to specific capacity-building interventions. The list starts with indicators geared more towards nascent organizations at the top and then to indicators geared towards more mature organizations as you move down the list. Indicators may measure changes at the individual level, all the way up to the system level—depending on an organization's

³ Dubois, et al, [The Organizational Performance Index: A New Method for Measuring International Civil Society Capacity Development Outcomes](#)

⁴ FHI 360, Social Impact, and USAID, [Capacity Development Interventions: A Guide for Program Designers](#)

Resources

- [Capacity Development Interventions: A Guide for Program Designers](#)
- [World Bank Institute's The Capacity Development Results Framework](#)
- [International NGO Training and Research Centre's Tracking Capacity Change](#)
- [United Nations Development Programme's Measuring Capacities: An Illustrative Catalogue to Benchmarks and Indicators](#)
- [USAID Learning Lab's Organizational Performance Index Measurement Tool](#)
- [USAID Learning Lab's Organizational Capacity Assessment](#)

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner Social Impact for drafting the content for this Implementation Tip.

objectives for change and its capacity- building strategy. See [Capacity Development Interventions: A Guide for Program Designers](#) for a full set of suggested skillsets for each stage of organizational maturity.

Organizations at all stages of development should consider using the Organizational Performance Index (OPI) measurement tool, which measures organizational *performance* (or outcomes) across four domains—effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability—at any stage using a four-tier scale.⁵ It has been validated and endorsed by USAID (See Resources).

5 Dubois, et al, [The Organizational Performance Index: A New Method for Measuring International Civil Society Capacity Development Outcomes](#)

Table 1: Indicator Examples Across the Organizational Maturity Spectrum

SKILLSET/ DOMAIN	POTENTIAL INDICATORS	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES OF TAILORING
Financial Management	Internal and external auditing of the financial management process is happening according to agreed schedule (World Bank).	This indicator measures a key part of a strong financial management system.	# of finance employees trained annually to conduct internal audits (output) % of annual internal audits that happen according to schedule (output but could be compared across years to show change)
Standard Operating System	Operating policies, procedures, and systems are written, and written guidance on client support and provision of goods and services is good and consistently followed (USAID OCA).	OCA or pre-award survey scores determine readiness to manage USAID awards. This indicator is taken directly from the OCA.	# of operational policies reviewed (and revised if needed) annually (output) % of case managers who adhere to case management procedures manual 10% of the time (unless approved for an exception) over the course of a year (outcome)
Performance Management Systems	Service delivery standards/targets are established (NGO Connect, 2018).	This indicator measures an organization's ability to measure the performance of an intervention.	% of programs with established service-delivery standards based on best practices before intervention is implemented (output)
Strategic Thinking, Strategic Planning	Organization proactively scans its internal and external environments for relevant innovations to improve its processes, products, and strategies (World Bank).	This indicator measures one activity organizations can engage in to continuously improve strategy.	% of annual strategy updates influenced by new innovations identified through employee contact with external partners (outcome)
Effectiveness (OPI) ⁶	Organization measures and analyzes outcome-level results to best serve beneficiaries (OPI Index).	This OPI Index indicator is a sub-domain of the program effectiveness criterion that can be measured using the OPI Index Guide (see Resources).	% of outcome-level targets for programs and services that are met by the end of the program (outcome)
Policies, Laws, and Regulations	New policies and strategies are implemented (NGO Connect, 2018).	This indicator measures the extent to which policies or strategies that are adopted are then implemented.	% of new community engagement strategies that are implemented across programs within two months of adoption (output) % increase in community members participating in programming six months after new community engagement strategy implemented (outcome)
Partnerships/ Collaboration	Inter-institutional coordination meetings are organized (NGO Connect, 2018).	This indicator measures the extent to which an organization collaborates with others.	# of coordination meetings organized with at least four organizations or government entities in the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector each month (output) % of WASH sector partners who are actively utilizing WASH sector standardized data collection forms (developed jointly) within three months of development (outcome)

6 Dubois, et al, [The Organizational Performance Index: A New Method for Measuring International Civil Society Capacity Development Outcomes](#)

Gender

TOPICS

- 8.5.1 Men's Engagement Program
 - 8.5.2 Designing and Implementing an Effective Gender-based Violence (GBV) Program
-

Men's Engagement Program

Definitions

Men's engagement is a process to recruit men as allies in women's empowerment by providing opportunities for them to improve their knowledge about issues that negatively affect the situation of women. This definition is grounded in the idea that women and men are partners who should work hand-in-hand to achieve gender equality.

Gender equality involves providing the same treatment of all people, regardless of gender identity; simply pursuing equality fails to recognize the ways that gender identity informs needs, aspirations, priorities, and sensibilities.

Gender equity involves creating across all genders and identities. It involves working in response to people's gender, not despite their gender.

Social norm is pattern of behavior in a particular group, community, or culture that is accepted as normal and to which an individual is expected to conform.

Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale measures attitudes towards gender norms to provide information about the prevailing norms in a community as well as a baseline for measuring the effectiveness of any program that hopes to influence them.

Q. How do I design, plan, and implement an effective men's engagement program to support gender equity?

A. Men's engagement is a process to recruit men as allies in women's empowerment by providing opportunities for them to improve their knowledge about health, social, and economic issues that negatively affect the situation of women. This definition is grounded in the idea that women and men are partners who should work hand-in-hand to achieve gender equity.

By educating men about women's rights and exploring issues related to masculinity and gender roles, men can play a positive role in improving their own and women's lives. When men see the benefits of men's engagement programming in other men's lives (for instance, better relationships with their wives and peace in the home) they are often motivated to join. In this view, women's empowerment is not solely the domain of women, but a social change effort that involves both men and women.

Follow men's engagement principles

Consider the following principles and approaches to include as part of a men's engagement program:

- Use an approach that promotes participation and a reflective process, rather than "top-down" teaching.
- Engage with community leaders to create structural change, since they are usually committed to upholding traditional norms.
- Consider a multisector approach, where different sectors from the community come together to work towards a common goal.
- Create positive profiles of masculinity that include images of men involved and collaborating in childcare and fatherhood. Programs should talk about how gender equality benefits men as well as women.
- Use male role models since they have influence in the community.
- Bring men and women together (e.g., in couple dialogues), providing an opportunity for men and women to talk about issues together in a facilitated manner.

- Pair programming with services because this helps equate gender quality with skill-building activities.
- Optimal program length is one 2- to 3-hour session every week for 10 to 16 weeks.
- Focus on behaviors and attitudes, not knowledge alone, since changing behaviors and attitudes will have more impact and over a longer time. Programming should move from short-term gender sensitization to longer-term gender norm transformation.
- Use peers as instructors so that (male) participants can relate to them and instructors will not be seen as “outsiders.”
- The best age to introduce programming is with youth, but engagement at all ages is important.

Research on men’s engagement and social norms

The most effective men’s engagement programs include the following elements:

- Extend the length and intensity of the programming; this provides opportunities for more regular engagement for a longer period, thus increasing the impact of programming.
- Ensure the curriculum promotes benefits to men of gender equality, and particularly through fatherhood, because when men are involved in their children’s lives, they are not constrained by only so-called “masculine” roles and can explore other aspects of their personality.
- Engage men and women in discussion and reflection sessions in a gender-synchronized way (separately as well as together).
- Engage diverse community and institutional stakeholders and work at the institutional level to create more sustainable change.¹

As an example, Promundo—a non-governmental organization (NGO) that promotes gender equality and prevents violence by engaging men and boys in partnership with women and girls—designed a program called Program H (named after the words for men in Portuguese and Spanish). The program has been used in more than 34 countries and targets young men ages 15 to 24 to encourage critical reflection about rigid norms related to manhood. The Program H methodology supports group education sessions combined with youth-led campaigns and activism to transform stereotypical roles associated with gender (such as issues related to sexual and reproductive health and gender roles). Program partners usually implement 10 to 16 activities (one a week, over a period of several months) together with community awareness campaigns led by the youth. The program’s toolkit includes a manual with recommendations for implementing the different modules.

¹ ICRW Research, [Gender Equity and Male Engagement: It Only Works When Everyone Plays](#)

Resources

[How to Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan](#)

[Gender Equity and Male Engagement: It Only Works When Everyone Plays](#)

[Promundo Program H](#)

Measuring attitudes, behavior, and social norm change

To measure attitudes toward gender norms in intimate relationships or differing social expectations for men and women, the GEM Scale has respondents rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements across different domains (violence, sexual relationships, domestic chores, etc.). The number and type of statements may be adapted for specific countries and contexts.

Some example statements:

STATEMENT	RATING SCALE
DOMESTIC CHORES AND DAILY LIFE	
A woman's role is taking care of her home and family.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree
Changing diapers, giving kids a bath, and feeding the kids are the mother's responsibility.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree
A man should have the final word about decisions in his home.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND DISEASE PREVENTION	
It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree
Men should be outraged if their wives ask them to use a condom.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree
VIOLENCE	
There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree
A woman should tolerate violence to keep her family together.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree

Design, plan and implement a men's engagement program

When designing a men's engagement program consider the following practical steps:

- 1. Community assessment:** Conduct a community assessment and explore the following issues: Is the community ready and willing to participate? Who are the main power holders in the community? How is the community comprised (in terms of ethnicity and religion)? If the community is interested in participating, what are the topics that concern them? (Ask them what their main issues are so the program is relevant to them.)
- 2. Partner analysis:** Consider if there are other local organizations working on men's engagement so that you can build on each other's efforts. If there is another organization already doing this work in the community, consider whether or not you want to work in another community or with another group.
- 3. Program design:** Decide topics to be included in the program, effective approaches (discussions, role plays, activities), length and duration of the training (how long will they meet, how often will they meet, when men are available), and whether or not a stipend or some other incentive will be included (like transportation allowance or refreshments).
- 4. Design curriculum:** Once the topics are decided, design a curriculum that is context specific and relevant to the community. For instance, if you are working with a community in which religion plays a significant role, work with religious leaders to identify religious texts/references that support gender equality. The training should be a mixture of new information, skills and capacity building, exercises/discussion or a lecture, and an assignment to be done outside of the training session.
- 5. Develop M&E plan:** A robust M&E plan includes a logic model and theory of change; indicators; roles and responsibilities of each staff member in M&E data collection; and a reporting and dissemination plan. When designing a men's engagement program, it is especially useful to use the GEM Scale. The scale includes indicators to measure attitudes, behaviors, and social norm change (see left column).
- 6. Hire staff/facilitator:** Choose the right facilitator for the program—someone whom the community respects and who understands the local context. The facilitator should believe wholeheartedly in the message of gender equality and women's empowerment. The facilitator should create an open and respectful environment in which the participants can feel comfortable sharing their own experiences and can learn from each other. The facilitator should not tell men how they should or should not behave, but rather encourage them to question and analyze their own experiences, attitudes, and behavior and come to their own conclusions.

- 7. Selection:** Consider whether it will be helpful to first engage with male community leaders and train them (and they can in turn train other men), or more beneficial to train male leaders and community members together. Decide how the men will be selected. Will it be based on their roles in the community, whether or not they have the time and interest, or are the most influential members?
- 8. Roll out of activities:** Once you have decided how often you are going to meet, decide the best time to meet based on people's priorities and schedules. Decide on an appropriate location and time of the year. For instance, if you are working in an agricultural community, avoid the harvest season when many men will be busy.
- 9. Monitoring and reporting:** Collect data based on your planned timeline and according to your planned format for data collection and team responsibilities. The M&E plan should include plans for internal learning and discussion between the program and M&E teams, so you can make any changes to the program based on the results. Plan how to disseminate your learnings to wider audiences, including like-minded NGOs, donors, and other stakeholders, to exchange lessons learned and improve the program and impact.

Click [here](#) for more information on the GEM Scale and its use.

Examples of effective men's engagement programs

Below are three examples of men's engagement programs that address health, women's economic empowerment, and gender-based violence.

SASA - which means "Now" in Kiswahili and is an acronym for the four phases of the approach: Start, Awareness, Support, Action—is a great example of a men's engagement program that combines prevention of violence against women (VAW) and prevention of HIV. It uses a strong community-based model. The program follows a participatory approach through awareness raising, bringing together a wide range of community members who work together and take concrete action to tackle gender inequality.

CARE and Promundo's Journey of Transformation program is a 16-week program in Rwanda involving men in women's empowerment. It includes components on women's economic empowerment (such as business management) and incorporates men's engagement programming into Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) trainings. The program includes both group discussions and training and involves separate meetings for men and women, as well as bringing them together



Women for Women International (WfWI) engages with men to address underlying societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality. WfWI's program is specific to each country where it is implemented, with activities and training tailored to the cultural and religious contexts. All trainings promote participatory learning, include local facilitators, and are usually led by local community leaders. WfWI places particular focus on obtaining buy-in and support from community leaders (including religious, traditional, military, and civil society leaders) so they can use their influence to promote women's rights and gender equality. While topics vary based on the country, trainings always include modules on gender equality and prevention of GBV.

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner Women for Women International for drafting the content for this *Implementation Tip*.

Designing and Implementing an Effective Gender-based Violence (GBV) Program

Q. How do I plan, design, and implement an effective GBV program?

A. Assess your organization's capacity and follow GBV principles. If your organization does not have the following principles related to GBV in place, then consider whether or not you are best placed to carry out a GBV program.

- **Staff capacity and technical expertise:** Consider whether staff are adequately trained and have the technical ability to work on GBV; GBV is sensitive and difficult to address and encompasses issues of safety and security.
- **Survivor-centered approach:** A survivor-centered approach means giving the power back to the survivor of GBV, recognizing that each person has the right to decide the course of his or her own life. It includes active listening and creating a supportive environment that respects the survivor's rights, while maintaining confidentiality.
- **Multisectoral:** Since both prevention and response services are needed, organizations must work together to address survivors' needs. Effective prevention of and response to GBV calls for collaborative, coordinated action among health and social services actors, legal and security actors, and the community.
- **Effective referral systems:** Responding to survivors of violence in a systematic, confidential, and consistent way requires maintaining relationships with organizations that provide services and support to survivors.

Understand the types of GBV programs

Although GBV can take several forms, we specifically focus on VAW throughout this section—particularly when providing examples—since it is the most prevalent form of GBV.

There are two main types of GBV programs: response and prevention programs.

Definitions

Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence that is directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex or gender identity and includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse; threats; coercion; taking away someone's right to make decisions; and economic deprivation—whether occurring in public or private life.

Violence against women (VAW) is the most prevalent form of GBV. VAW is violence directed at women because they are women. It is associated with how women are seen and treated in their societies. VAW is endemic across the world, affecting on average one third of all women globally in their lifetimes.

Prevention programs focus on preventing violence in the first place by addressing its root causes. A gender-based analysis is needed to identify the root causes of GBV. Such an analysis typically identifies women's low status, the imbalance of power, and rigid gender roles.

Response programs focus on providing direct services to survivors of violence—through psychosocial support (counseling) or the provision of shelter, legal aid, or health services.

Resources

[A Guide to Programming Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Activities](#)

[Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Gender-Based Violence Interventions Along the Relief to Development Continuum](#)

[United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally](#)

[Violence Against Women and Girls: A Compendium of Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators](#)

[SASA! Outcome Tracking Tool](#)

[UN Women, The Multi-Sectoral Model](#)

[UN Women, Survivor-Centered Approach](#)

[Referral Systems—A Summary of Key Processes to Guide Health Services Managers](#)

[The CARE International Advocacy Handbook](#)

[How to Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan](#)

[WHO Fact Sheet: Violence Against Women](#)

- **Response programs** focus on providing direct services to survivors of violence—through psychosocial support (counseling) or the provision of shelter, legal aid, or health services.

Some examples of response programs include the following:

- * **Providing shelter:** Often a survivor's most urgent need is immediate safety, requiring leaving the place where the abuse occurs. Some countries have shelters for abused women. But it is often difficult for women to get to these, due to limited resources, lack of awareness, and access issues.
- * **Legal aid:** If survivors of violence are trying to leave abusive relationships or marriages, they often need legal aid and assistance, which may be difficult to find due to lack of awareness and resources.
- * **Health services:** A survivor of violence may have gone through severe physical, emotional, and verbal abuse, requiring urgent medical assistance. Obtaining this assistance is challenging for a survivor who may not have access to a health facility, the resources to pay for treatment, or even the ability to leave where they are in order to seek help.
- * **Psychosocial support:** Counseling by trained mental health professionals is important to address the trauma experienced by survivors of violence. Lack of resources or the availability of such services, especially in countries affected by conflict, make it challenging for survivors to find this assistance.
- **Prevention programs** involve addressing potential root causes. Preventing violence successfully over the long term requires addressing it in a comprehensive and holistic manner at all levels of society—through training and education programs and community sensitization/awareness. Primary prevention for violence against women involves:
 - * a legal and policy environment that supports women's rights
 - * a culture in the community that promotes non-violence
 - * relationships based on equity
 - * individuals who take a personal and public stand against abuse

Some examples of prevention programs include the following:

- * **Holistic social and economic training:** Training programs that combine awareness of women's rights, health, and connections to networks—along with practical and technical business and vocational support—are essential to women's empowerment.

- * **Engaging with men:** Confronting the social norms and the environments that allow abuse to be accepted is critical in addressing the root causes of violence. One approach is through men's engagement programming. The approach is based on a recognition that men must confront social norms regarding their own practices, and harmful patriarchal norms that support toxic masculinity, in order to create an enabling environment for women's social and economic participation. For more information, see the *Implementation Tip* on [Men's Engagement Program](#).
- * **Advocacy at the community or national level:** We can also address social norm change through advocacy efforts. Advocacy is the deliberate process of influencing those who make decisions about developing, changing, and implementing policies. It includes leading public awareness campaigns or concerted efforts that lead to concrete policy changes.

Design, plan, and implement your GBV program

The practical steps a civil society organization (CSO) should take to design and plan a GBV program include the following:

- 1. Conduct a mapping:** When designing a GBV program, it is important to conduct a mapping of organizations working in the area to see what your CSO's role could be and to ensure you have strong partnerships in place so you can refer survivors of GBV to them if necessary. Mapping should include gathering basic information about the different organizations.
- 2. Partner analysis:** After conducting a mapping, your CSO should consider if and how it might coordinate with other CSOs working in the area, especially for referrals. Factors to consider are:
 - * **Alignment of values:** The organization has similar values to those of your CSO, such as using a survivor-centered approach when working with survivors of GBV.
 - * **Target group:** The organization is working with the same or complementary target groups (geographic, demographic, etc.).
 - * **Past performance:** The organization has delivered significant results to the community in terms of sustainable change.
 - * **Trustworthiness:** The organization has a proven track record with other relevant donors or partner organizations in carrying out its work.

Some of the lessons learned from WfWI's USAID GBV Prevention Program in Rwanda

Women for Women International (WfWI) is implementing the USAID-funded TWICECEKA Activity ("Let Us Speak Up" in Kinyarwanda), which aims to do the following:

- Strengthen the ability of Rwandan CSOs to engage with the Government of Rwanda and the community in the fight against GBV.
- Increase awareness of GBV in Rwanda.
- Advocate through evidence-based data to address gaps in GBV policies and programs.
- WfWI is implementing the project in partnership with seven local CSOs who received USAID-funded subgrants following a three-month capacity building training program and a three-day GBV Mapping and Advocacy Conference.

Following the conference, CSOs developed advocacy and accountability projects to address the identified gaps. The CSOs have been working with local communities, with a special focus on teen mothers, male leaders, local community leaders, and parents. The CSOs learned the following lessons:

- Collaboration with local authorities and school leaders contributed to the success of the interventions.
- Working as a consortium improved synergy and the learning of best practices.
- Beneficiaries found solutions to challenges when they were involved from the beginning.

Some of the lessons learned from WfWI's USAID GBV Prevention Program in Rwanda (cont.)

CSOs provided the following recommendations for more long-term change and sustainability:

- Allocate more time and resources to ensure impact and sustainability of the project's achievements. Behavior change is a long-term process (at least 3 to 5 years).
- There is a need for more holistic socioeconomic empowerment programs for women and teen mothers.
- There is a need to continue to increase awareness and support for access to justice for GBV survivors, since most community members are not aware of government policies and programs.
- A program is needed to involve more families in GBV prevention and response, and more training opportunities are needed for teachers and headmasters so that all sectors of the community are engaged for long-term impact.
- Survivors need more access to psychosocial support because counseling sessions help give survivors hope.
- There is a need to strengthen existing community structures for GBV prevention and response and provide clear roles within the community.

- 3. Engage the community and partner organizations in program planning:** Community buy-in and support for your program is critical, as is their input on what is really needed in the community. If community members support your project (especially influential members including men), it will be easier to gain the community's acceptance and participation.
- 4. Design your project:** Your project design will vary depending on whether it is a direct-services program or a prevention program. Major factors/decisions will include where the project is located, who the intended beneficiaries are, what the greatest community needs are, what the level of community support and buy-in is, what the program will accomplish (its outputs and outcomes), how to measure its effectiveness, and what staff with particular technical skills are needed to implement the project.
- 5. Develop monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan:** Develop an M&E plan based on your GBV program design to help track and assess intervention results throughout the life of the program. For a variety of reasons, it is very difficult to measure and report on GBV. If your team is not trained in GBV data collection, consider working with a partner organization that has this expertise.

Tips for developing your M&E Plan:

- Consider your GBV goals and objectives—Are you aiming to change a law or provide shelter to survivors? Be clear about the change you are seeking.
- Include a logic model or theory of change—Map how your activities will help you achieve your GBV goal.
- Be sure to include indicators and a plan for data collection—Consider using the “F indicators” related to GBV that are required by U.S. State Department and USAID if they fund your project:
 - * Number of laws, policies, or procedures drafted, proposed, or adopted with U.S. Government (USG) assistance designed to improve prevention of or response to GBV at the regional, national, or local level
 - * Number of people reached by a USG-funded intervention providing GBV services (e.g., health, legal, psychosocial counseling, shelters, hotlines, other)
 - * Percentage of target population that views GBV as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming

- 6. Hire staff:** Hire staff who have expertise in GBV programming or who have experience working with survivors of GBV—either in providing legal aid, delivering health services, or providing psychosocial support through counseling. The staff must believe wholeheartedly in gender equity and women’s empowerment.
- 7. Select beneficiaries or partners:** For a prevention program (whether training, men’s engagement, or advocacy) consult with the community and local partners and select the beneficiaries you want to work with based on criteria you establish. Selection criteria depend on the nature of the program. For a direct services program, select the partners you want to work with and carry out a public awareness campaign to make sure other organizations (such as legal aid organizations, police, and health clinics) know about your services.
- 8. Implement and monitor:** As you implement and monitor your project, ensure you adapt program activities based on feedback from beneficiaries and partners.

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner Women for Women International for drafting the content for this *Implementation Tip*.



Youth

TOPICS

- 8.6.1 Engaging Youth Across the Program Cycle
 - 8.6.2 Developing Tailored Youth Activities
 - 8.6.3 Fostering Relationships with and Among Youth
 - 8.6.4 Creating a Supportive Enabling Environment
 - 8.6.5 Inspiring Youth to Civic Action
-

Engaging Youth Across the Program Cycle

Definitions

Youth voice: Ensuring youth voice requires creating opportunities for youth to share their needs, ideas, and opinions with others.

Enabling environment: An environment that develops and supports young people's assets, agency, access to services, and opportunities and strengthens their ability to stay safe, secure, and protected and live without fear of violence or retribution. An enabling environment encourages and recognizes youth, while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive. The term "environment" should be interpreted broadly and includes: social (e.g., relationships with peers and adults), normative (e.g., attitudes, norms, and beliefs), structural (e.g., laws, policies, programs services, and systems) and physical (e.g., safe, supportive spaces).

Source: [Youth Power, Youth Engagement Measurement Guide](#)

Meaningful youth engagement: An inclusive, intentional, and mutually respectful partnership between youth and adults whereby power is shared, respective contributions are valued, and young people's ideas, perspectives, skills, and strengths are integrated into the design and delivery of programs, strategies, and policies that affect their lives.

Source: [Youth Power, Positive Youth Development \(PYD\) Framework](#)

Q. Why and how can we engage youth throughout the program cycle?

A. Youth have become the largest population in most developing countries.¹ As the number of young people increases, so will their influence on their country's economic, political, and social context. Therefore, we need to prioritize thinking about how we create informed youth who contribute positively to their environment. One important way to do so is to engage youth in the different phases of an organization's programs. Involving youth throughout the program cycle is beneficial for the youth themselves, for the program, and for the broader community. By participating in programs, youth gain knowledge and soft and technical skills that they can use outside the program. In addition, young people often bring innovative ideas and positive energy that could increase the impact of the program. Organizations that elicit and incorporate youth input and feedback into programs ensure that their activities reflect beneficiary needs. Improving youth engagement also creates stronger bonds between youth and older generations, which can lead to a more positive environment in the community.

What is meaningful youth engagement?

There are a few different models that are commonly used to explain the levels of youth engagement and the progression from viewing youth as solely beneficiaries to youth as partners in decision-making and then as leaders.² Youth engagement in a program is a continuum: at the beginning, the program should focus on creating space and opportunities for youth to share opinions; and by the end, the program is enabling youth to take the lead by initiating and implementing their own ideas. Where on the continuum

¹ Foreign Policy, [Here Come the Young](#)

² There are various definitions and tools to describe the progression of youth participation. For example, [Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation](#) describes participation as 8 steps beginning with youth being invited to contribute but not having their opinions valued; the highest forms of participation include youth-led action and joint decision making between youth and adults. [DFID](#) uses a three-lens approach which highlights the different roles youth can play in a project: as beneficiaries, as partners who are consulted on development interventions, and as leaders.

the organization's efforts to engage youth will depend on the program being implemented or what stage it is in within the program cycle; it may not be feasible for an organization to currently implement the highest level of youth engagement for all aspects of a

program cycle. Rather, it is more important to view each of the steps as a building block, determining where the organization is currently and how it can reach the next level of youth engagement. Below is a simplified version of youth engagement that incorporates the main principles behind of youth engagement into four building blocks:

1. **Youth Voice** – Programs working with youth should create opportunities to listen and understand youth needs, ideas, opinions, and perspectives; and provide effective platforms for youth to express themselves.
2. **Youth in Decision-Making** – Programs should provide youth with opportunities to participate in decision-making and allow them to gradually take on greater decision-making roles.
3. **Youth as Contributors and Change Agents** – When youth are empowered, they can become advocates for themselves and for others. Contribution may include advocacy efforts on the sub-national or national level, volunteering in the community, problem-solving issues in the community, etc.
4. **Youth as Leaders** – This is the highest level of youth engagement, where youth are initiating and implementing activities independently or with high levels of autonomy.

Engaging youth as leaders is the ultimate goal, but important groundwork is needed to ensure that young people become successful leaders:

- Youth need to be prepared with the skills and voice to advocate for themselves and others and empowered to own program goals and activities.
- Involved adults need to value youth voice and accept youth as actors and partners in development.
- Organizations and projects should ensure youth can meaningfully engage at all these levels, by offering opportunities for youth-led or youth-driven activities, on topics that are meaningful to them. It is crucial that youth see their participation as valuable and that organizations are careful not to create an environment of tokenism, where youth are included in discussions but their input is not internalized into the organization's ideas or actions.

Resources

[Youth Engagement in Development: Effective Approaches and Action-Oriented Recommendation for the Field](#)

[Youth Engagement Measurement Guide](#)

[Youth Engagement in PYD Programs](#)

[Youth Participation Guide: Assessment, Planning, and Implementation](#)

[Youth in the Program Cycle: Activity Design & Implementation](#)

[Roger Hart Ladder of Participation](#)

[Putting young people at the heart of development: The Department for International Development's Youth Agenda \(UK aid\)](#)

[Youth Involvement in Evaluation and Research](#)

[Supporting the Design and Implementation of Youth-Led Research Projects](#)

[Participatory Action Research: A 'how to' guide for use with adolescents in humanitarian contexts](#)

Engaging youth in each phase of the program cycle

Design Phase

Why? Engaging youth in the design of an organization's program ensures that the organization incorporates into the design the perspectives, context, and needs of the youth beneficiaries it is trying to serve. Youth often contribute innovative ideas that may be appealing to both their peers and donors. By providing space for youth to participate in program design, an organization creates greater youth ownership of the program, increasing the likelihood of young people's active participation in activity implementation and ensuring better program results.

How? Youth can be involved in multiple aspects of designing programs and activities, including participating in or leading assessments, analyzing results, and brainstorming ideas.

Youth-led or youth-inclusive needs assessments are an effective tool for engaging youth in project design. Through these assessments, organizations can ensure stronger youth voice by including a diverse segment of youth as part of focus groups and key informant interviews. (For more information on engaging different segments of youth, see the *Implementation Tip* on Developing Tailored Youth Activities.) Organizations can move beyond engaging youth as assessment participants to including them in *decision-making* around how assessment questions are defined and how key informants are identified.

In addition, methodologies such as [Community Youth Mapping](#) (CYM) encourage youth to become *key contributors* to the program and the community by identifying and documenting resources, needs, and opportunities in their communities and sharing the findings with key stakeholders in the organization and community. As part of this process, youth should be trained on soft and technical skills so they are prepared to engage with different members of the community and to analyze and present the data they collect. CYM findings can be used to inform program design and help youth identify activities that they want to initiate, implement, and lead on their own.

Implementation Phase

Why? Continuing to engage youth during program implementation ensures that the program continues to reflect youth interests and needs. Allowing youth to act as leaders during program implementation also increases the youth retention rate, as young people are better positioned to motivate their peers to attend and participate in activities; enhances youth skill building; extends program reach and impact. If youth are involved in implementing the program – particularly as partners and not just as beneficiaries – they may also help find ways to make the program more sustainable so they can continue the activities even after funding has ended.

Tip for including youth in design

Create an environment where youth feel comfortable contributing new ideas. This includes empowering youth through a soft skills training that teaches communication, problem solving, critical thinking, and presentation, as well as preparing adults in the room to actively listen to youth suggestions.

How? Youth can take a variety of roles when implementing programs, ranging from providing input on how to implement activities to participating in programmatic and organizational decision making.

- **Input on program activities** – Provide opportunities for youth to voice their opinions on ongoing program activities. Lower levels of contributing to program activities (i.e., on Roger Hart's Ladder) include providing youth with a few options on program time/place or activities and asking them to make a selection within a limited set of choices. These activities may then be led by staff or, more ideally, by the youth.

Higher levels of youth contribution include shared decision-making, in which youth provide the choices and/or staff and youth work together to brainstorm and select program activities.

The highest level of engagement is providing youth with opportunities to brainstorm and select which activities to implement, such as setting up new clubs or creating community service opportunities, and then having the youth initiate and lead activity implementation.

- **Youth advisory board** – Create an advisory board that gives youth a mechanism to participate in decision-making through which they can continuously influence program activities. This advisory board may use platforms to aggregate youth beneficiary feedback on the program and share this feedback with the staff. The board should also be engaged any time that the program staff are designing new activities or adapting ongoing ones and, at the highest level of engagement, could be engaged when making budgetary or resource allocation decisions.
- **Youth mentoring and peer education** – Motivate youth to become contributors by providing older youth or program alumni opportunities to mentor their peers, be they younger youth or others in their group. This approach can help provide vulnerable youth with additional support as they undertake new activities. It may also empower older youth to contribute to their community as leaders as they volunteer to help their peers.
- **Youth council** – Empower young people to be key contributors in their community by setting up a youth-run council through which they identify priority issues in the community and participate in decision-making at the community level. This may also include youth participating in local governance bodies.
- **Youth staff** – Capitalize on young people's skills and assets by hiring youth as staff. This builds youth capacity and also contributes to a more enabling environment for young program participants who might find it easier to relate to and communicate with staff closer to their age.

Tip for involving youth in implementation

Invest time and resources to train young people on how to actively contribute to the program, organization, and community. This may start with small steps, such as asking youth for input on a set of choices, then building to having youth provide the choices for staff to implement, and then building to youth-led initiatives with staff support, and finally expanding to the launch of initiatives that are completely led and implemented by youth.

Monitoring and Evaluation Phase

Why? Providing youth opportunities to monitor and evaluate programs builds their skill set while creating a strong feedback loop in which youth can provide input on activities. Youth Participatory Evaluations (YPEs) build young people's soft and technical skills, increase their involvement in the organization and/or community, and can serve as a base for future advocacy efforts.³ The more nuanced perspective of the involved youth can also provide the organization with additional information that may not otherwise have been available.

How? There are different ways to involve youth in monitoring and evaluation, including engaging youth in providing feedback and suggestions for current or past programs, participating in (or leading) the creation and utilization of data collection instruments, and analyzing data:

- **Youth feedback loops:** Give youth a voice in monitoring and evaluating programs by providing set opportunities whereby youth can provide feedback and suggestions on activities.
- **Youth participatory evaluation:** Provide opportunities for youth to be involved in assessing programs or activities they are involved in. This may involve adults requesting information/data from youth participants through surveys or focus group discussions (low level of youth engagement) to youth validating tools or assisting in creating the evaluation tools (medium level of youth engagement) to youth designing and administering the evaluation instruments and analyzing results (high level of youth engagement).⁴
- **Youth audit or scorecard:** Engage youth in decision-making by asking a group of youth to lead an assessment of youth inclusion and engagement across an entire organization and its programs, including systems, people/staffing, programs, and governance. Elevate youth as leaders by training them on the methodologies and providing them an opportunity to design the questions and structures of the tools, use them during data collection, and then analyze the findings.⁵
- **Hire youth data collectors and/or researchers:** If hiring outside data collectors, consider hiring youth and training them in the necessary skills.

Tip for involving youth in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

If M&E work is new to the youth, provide them with simple monitoring tools, such as scorecards or checklists, so that they know exactly what information they are looking for and how the data should be recorded. Always ask for youth feedback on the tool and adapt accordingly. If youth are already comfortable with M&E, they may provide feedback on tools as they are created or even create the tools themselves.

³ Search for Common Ground, [Supporting the Design and Implementation of Youth-led Research Projects](#)

⁴ Act for Youth, [Youth Participatory Evaluation](#)

⁵ Youth scorecards and audits can also be integrated into the implementation of programming as opposed to as a separate M&E activity. For example, in a civic engagement program, youth may lead the scorecard process to determine to what extent service delivery is being implemented.

Developing Tailored Youth Activities

Q. How can I effectively engage different segments of youth in my activities?

A. USAID recognizes youth as a life stage that is not finite or linear based on specific ages; however, for the purposes of its programming, USAID has identified youth to be between 10–29 years of age. This is a broad timeframe during which young people go through a number of significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. The needs and interests of a 10-year-old are very different than those of a 29-year-old. Therefore, it is crucial that organizations tailor their youth activities to take into consideration the specific needs, characteristics, and interests of different youth segments. The context you're working in and the objectives and planned activities for your project could affect which segments are most relevant, but typically youth segments take into consideration some of the following characteristics: developmental stage, gender, level of vulnerability, school status, or disability.

Developmental characteristics

Regardless of context or objectives, implementers are encouraged to consider developmental characteristics in defining how to segment youth and design programs based on the unique characteristics of that period of life. USAID distinguishes between segments of youth based on four major developmental stages, as shown in Figure 1. These stages have been defined by developmental psychologists, but programs and implementers might choose different age groupings based on other factors such as major school transitions, cultural norms, particularly as they relate to initiation rites, legal age of employment, age of marriage, or age of becoming a parent, among others.

Figure 1: Developmental Stages

Stage	Age Range
Early Adolescence	10–14 years
Adolescence	15–19 years
Emerging Adulthood	20–24 years
Transition into Adulthood	25–29 years

Source: USAID Youth in Development Policy (see Resources)

Definitions

Life-cycle approach: This approach takes into consideration major developmental stages in a person's life, such as a young person's current emotional and physical state and their interests.

Sex: the classification of people as male or female. At birth, every infant is assigned a sex based on a combination of biological characteristics, including: chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs, and genitalia.

Gender: the socially defined set of roles, rights, responsibilities, entitlements, and obligations of females and males in societies. The social definitions of what it means to be female or male vary among cultures and change over time.

How should programs address these age segments differently?

Regardless of how a program decides to segment youth, programs should consider the developmental characteristics of each youth cohort to ensure that interventions are age appropriate. Interventions should be designed based on an understanding of the characteristics of each developmental stage and designed to leverage youth's interests and capacities. The following provides a description of the major developmental characteristics of each stage and the types of programming and implementation strategies that could be most effective for each cohort. Since local context and culture may impact how youth experience each developmental stage, strategies may need to be adapted.

CHARACTERISTICS	ACTIVITIES
Early Adolescence (10–14)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This a period of rapid physical growth and maturation of sexual organs; this occurs earlier for girls than boys. • Young adolescents have higher levels of emotional sensitivity, have broad mood swings, and are at greater risk of depression and self-harm. • Young people's identity is heavily influenced by peers; they place a high value on being accepted or belonging to peer groups and can be highly social. • Young teens are curious. They may have many interests but can be easily distracted so prefer hands-on learning that is relevant to their lives. Young teens may argue to clarify their thinking. • Youth are becoming less ego-centric and are thinking more about others. They are beginning to develop their own personal values. They can be idealistic and have a strong sense of fairness, but they may also push back against rules and limits. • The brain begins a period of pruning of neurons by making those parts of the brain that are used stronger and faster; unused neurons may wither away and die, making it an important time for youth to continue school and be exposed to a variety of learning and skill building opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help youth understand the physical changes they are undergoing by teaching them about their changing bodies in a safe environment, building knowledge relating to sexual and reproductive health and awareness and gender-based violence, and promoting good eating habits and healthy behaviors. • Embrace youth's natural social interests by using group learning, and connecting them to youth groups, clubs, student government, and other activities that provide an opportunity for social interaction and skill building. Establish clear standards of behavior that prevent bullying and enhance social skills and understanding of diversity. • Help youth to be aware of and to manage emotions, to begin thinking about future goals, and to prioritize tasks and effectively manage time. • Teach critical thinking and problem solving to promote cognitive growth and expose youth to different types of learning opportunities (e.g., academic, music, social-emotional, etc.); provide support with planning, time management, and other executive function skills; and encourage youth to stay in school and begin thinking about their future. • Promote ethical development by providing opportunities for youth to define their own values and their sense of right and wrong, debate points rather than accept ideas as fact (e.g., give voice to diverse perspectives), and engage in community service.
Adolescence (15–19)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls have completed their physical growth, while boys continue to grow. Physical appearance becomes very important for boys and girls. • Youth's capacity for abstract, critical, and meta-cognitive thinking increases. Youth are increasingly critical and argumentative. Their ability for planning and organization has improved. • Risk taking behaviors emerge (e.g., experimenting with tobacco, alcohol, drugs, unprotected sex, and reckless driving) and youth still lack impulse control although they have higher capacity for emotional regulation than in early adolescence. • Teens have intense self-involvement, alternating between high expectations and poor self-identity. • Peer relationships remain important, yet youth are increasingly concerned for the well-being of others. Youth have more intimate relationships as they experience feelings of love and passion and have increasing interest in sex. • Teens tend to distance themselves from their parents and have a continued drive for independence. • Youth continue to develop values and morals and are capable of pondering more complex issues. They continue to be idealistic and focused on personal dignity, ethics, and rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the potential for risky behaviors increases, promote knowledge about sexual reproductive health and how to access family planning advice and services. Encourage youth to take healthy risks in safe settings by engaging youth in decision-making, community activities, sports, arts, debate, and other novel and challenging activities. • Introduce learning activities that promote solving complex, real-world problems and provide opportunities for debate, criticism, and persuasion to promote critical thinking in formal education and second chance learning programs. • Provide opportunities for youth to build social and emotional competencies, including positive self-concept, empathy, and higher order thinking skills, and explore and refine their current and future identity (e.g., self-assessments/goal setting and career exploration). • Provide opportunities for advocacy, community service, and other activities that allow youth to debate and address real-world problem-solving and allow for greater independence and responsibility. • Expose youth to different career and income-generating opportunities.

CHARACTERISTICS

ACTIVITIES

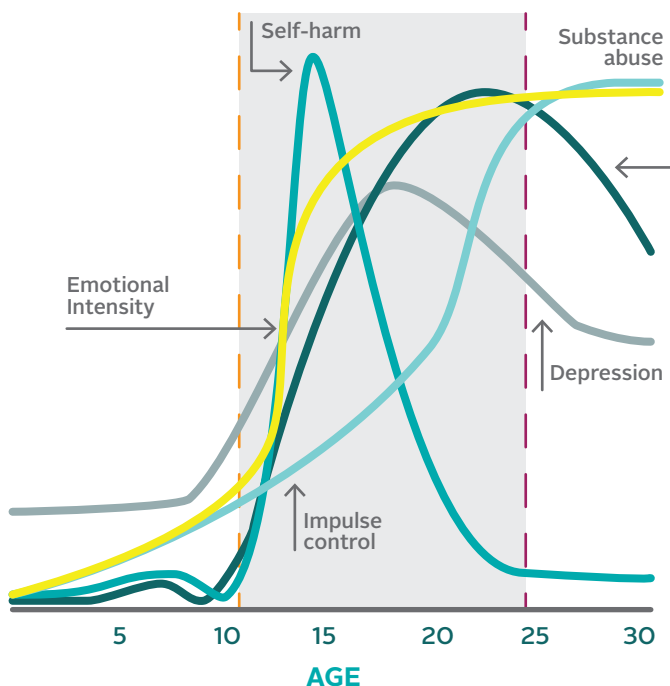
Emerging Adulthood (20–24)

- As young people enter their 20s, girls complete their physical development while boys may continue to grow.
 - Cognitive abilities have improved. Youth are more capable of thinking through ideas from the beginning to the end, are able to delay gratification, and have increased concern for the future and continued interest in moral reasoning.
 - Youth have a firmer sense of identity, including sexual identity; have increased emotional stability, concern for others, and independence and self-reliance. They still place importance on peer relationships while they develop more serious relationships and regain some interest in social and cultural traditions
 - Youth who have not yet started a family may feel pressure to marry and begin a family.
 - Youth become increasingly focused on income generation, career development, and achieving independence from families.
- Support youth to make positive and constructive decisions and weigh the consequences of those decisions.
 - Ensure that youth programs focus increasingly on economic opportunities, citizenship, life, and leadership skills, as well as reproductive and maternal health and family support.

Transition into Adulthood (25–29)

- Pressure to marry and have children will likely increase and youth may have greater obligations as their own family expands.
 - The pressure for income generation, career building, and creating or providing for one's own home increases.
- Programming will no longer be focused on developmental issues and will continue with the following types of activities:
- Link youth to employment, entrepreneurship support, and access to financial services. Offer on-the-job training.
 - Promote opportunities for civic and political participation and continued support to address reproductive health services, maternal health, and parenting.
 - In post-conflict situations, it may be necessary to provide accelerated learning opportunities and psychosocial support programs.

Integrating a Life-Cycle Approach into Program Design



In addition to considering how to support different youth cohorts, program design should take a life-cycle approach and consider when to intervene to prepare youth for major transitions and to reduce vulnerabilities to negative outcomes such as school drop-out, risky behaviors, or early pregnancy. For example, programs seeking to reduce teen pregnancy among adolescents should begin earlier by helping early adolescents entering puberty to understand reproductive health. The graph above provides a timeline of when youth are likely to exhibit some of the more challenging aspects of adolescence and young adulthood; it is important to engage appropriately prior to peak periods of vulnerability.¹

¹ Adapted from graphic developed by George Patton, University of Melbourne.

Gender and social inclusion

Why should programs incorporate gender concerns for different youth programs?

Gender plays a dynamic role in the lives of youth and can directly impact their thoughts, actions, and emotions. The role of gender will vary from society to society but will always have an impact on how youth behave, as well as their interest in and ability to engage in programs. Ultimately, gender can play a vital role in the potential effectiveness of a program. If gender dynamics are considered and incorporated appropriately into programs, the program will likely have a more positive impact.

With the onset of puberty, gender differences become more pronounced as social roles and expectations start to change. The ways in which young people manage the multi-dimensional aspects of the transition from childhood to adulthood have enormous implications for their gender and sexual identity, choices relating to work and livelihoods, health-related behaviors, decisions related to family formation, and the way they relate to and engage in their community. Pubertal changes occur differently in each sex, with girls experiencing these changes 12 to 18 months earlier (on average) than boys, and the timing of pubertal maturity can influence the development of a young person differently.²

Gender stereotypes of masculinity and femininity can have a negative impact on all youth, leading to risky behaviors such as alcohol and drug use, violence, and early sexual debut. Societal norms such as early marriage and childbearing put girls and young women at high risk for maternal mortality and morbidity and can cut off opportunities to complete and succeed in primary and secondary education, leading to reduced economic opportunities and perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Gender norms can have a significant impact on how young people make decisions relating to their career choices and decisions relating to when and whom to marry, as well as the size and timing of their families. Gender-based violence (GBV)—including domestic violence, school-related violence, and sexual violence—can impact both young women and young men in profound ways. For more information on GBV, see the *Implementation Tip* on [Designing and Implementing an Effective GBV Program](#).

How can programs integrate gender considerations for youth?

Youth programs should consider the different norms, roles, and responsibilities that influence the ways that males and females experience adolescence and young adulthood when deciding how to target and segment youth. Programs should consider whether programs should be segmented by sex and the different factors that affect girls' and boys' abilities to participate in programs, including family support, domestic and economic responsibilities, and the time and location of program offerings.

Resources

[Developing Adolescents: A Reference for Professionals](#)

[The Adolescent Brain: A Second Window of Opportunity, A Compendium](#)

[UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti](#)

[USAID Youth in Development Policy](#)

Given strong cultural norms regarding gender, youth programs may also need to address norms at the community level and/or with parents and spouses—particularly for females, since family members may limit girls' abilities to participate in the program and influence other decisions that will impact youth and program outcomes.

Young people are often open to challenging gender and social norms, making adolescence an opportune time to promote gender equitable attitudes, roles and responsibilities in their families and communities. Programs should therefore seek to address gender norms in age-appropriate ways beginning in early adolescence as the impact of gender stereotypes becomes more pronounced.

Why should programs incorporate social inclusion considerations for youth?

Some youth are particularly vulnerable because their gender/sexual identity, sexual orientation, gender expression, and sexual behavior do not conform to the expectations of what it means to be a girl or a boy in a particular context. LGBTQ youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience challenges such as bullying, teasing, harassment, physical assault, and suicide-related behaviors.

How can programs integrate social inclusion considerations for youth?

Programs should consider whether barriers exist to accessing programs or feeling comfortable participating in activities. For example, if staff notice that youth from certain minority or marginalized groups are not actively participating, they should seek their input and opinions during or after the activity. The program should include activities that help youth understand where stereotypes originate from, and why they are not true and/or hurtful.

8.6.3

Fostering Relationships With and Among Youth

Q. Why are healthy relationships important, which types of relationships are important, and how can programs promote healthy relationships?

A. As young people begin to form their own identities and transition into adulthood, relationships take on a critical importance. Youth programs should seek to improve the quality of youth relationships and, ideally, expand the nature and number of positive youth relationships. The Search Institute, a leading youth research organization, has developed a *Developmental Relationship Framework* which defines a developmental relationship as a close connection between a young person and an adult or between a young person and a peer that powerfully and positively shapes the young person's identity and helps the young person develop a thriving mindset.¹ Youth can have developmental relationships with many different types of adults, including mentors, coaches, religious leaders, parents and other relatives, employers, and teachers, to name a few. While it has been proven that youth thrive best with multiple relationships, evidence confirms that when a young person has at least one caring adult that provides consistent care, s/he can more successfully transition into adulthood. Youth researchers also point to the importance of promoting strong, supportive, and caring relationships between youth peers, which contributes to a climate of inclusion and acceptance. As noted by the Search Institute, though relationships with adults can affect skills development in powerful and positive ways, so can close connections with friends, siblings, and other peers. This *Implementation Tip* describes the different types of developmental relationships that a young person may have and provides tips to ensure a healthy relationship.

Common developmental relationships for youths :

Parents: The parent-child relationship, usually a child's first relationship, can either establish a child's trust in self and others or establish lifelong patterns of insecurity and self-doubt. Research has recently placed increased focus on the role of parents in youth development. For example, a healthy relationship with a parent has been linked to delay

¹ Search Institute, [Developmental Relationships Framework](#)

Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework (2016) stresses five recommendations for adults to build strong, supportive, consistent, and reciprocal relationships with youth including:

- 1. Expressing care** – showing youth that they matter
- 2. Challenging growth** – pushing youth to keep getting better
- 3. Providing support** – helping youth complete tasks and achieve goals
- 4. Sharing power** – treating youth with respect and giving them a say
- 5. Expanding possibilities** – connecting youth with people and places that broaden their perspectives

in sexual debut and the quality of that relationship is more important than communication about sexual and reproductive health. In many countries, parents have a limited understanding of youth and how to communicate and support their children at different stages.

Tips to increase and improve parental involvement in youth development:

- Educate parents on adolescent development, parenting strategies, role-modeling, activities to build youth social and emotional skills, and the importance of giving youth more responsibility and voice in the family (understanding the family household budget, assuming responsibilities and projects at home, and participating in decision-making).
- Create parent support groups, conduct home visits, or form parent-child clubs with structured activities for parents and youth to promote inter-generational dialogue.
- Adapt off-the-shelf programs for local context and nuanced social and cultural norms around parent-youth relationships.

Source: WHO, [Helping Parents in Developing Countries Improve Adolescents' Health](#)

Peers: Most youth are socially motivated and heavily influenced by peers, making opportunities for social interaction an incentive for participation. Peer influences can be both positive and negative and youth programs should seek to foster positive peer-to-peer relationships by creating a climate of inclusion and acceptance, modeling appropriate communication, and creating structures that foster deeper connections and understanding of others. Relationships between peers allow for reciprocal learning, which occurs when students form learning partnerships to help each other reach certain goals. Peer-to-peer interactions also provide “safe spaces” for youth to show their vulnerabilities and fears, which they often hide from adults.

Tips to promote positive peer relationships:

- Create spaces to allow for positive peer-to-peer interactions (e.g., youth clubs, recreational and interest group activities, community service, etc.).
- Design activities that require youth to collaborate with their peers, such as group work or social activities outside of formal settings; use strategies to promote a sense of community among youth participants.
- Develop activities and instruction on how youth should give and receive feedback, listen actively, demonstrate respect, resolve conflict, and engage in other forms of positive social interaction and communication.
- Promote activities such as sharing circles and personal storytelling to create trust and connections among members.
- Teach youth about positive and negative impacts of peer relations and how to say “no” to negative influences.
- Help youth manage group work challenges, such as is communication, in productive ways.

Youth Workers: Youth workers guide and support young people in their personal, social, and educational development to help them reach their full potential in society. Youth workers support youth in different ways: they could be teachers in schools, counselors in youth-serving organizations, or social/health workers in health service facilities. Evidence has shown that learning is most effective when it occurs within the context of strong, supportive relationships that allow youth to securely engage in new activities and safely try out roles and behaviors.

Tips to promote positive relationships among youth workers and youth :

- Select staff who demonstrate respectful behavior towards youth and an understanding of young people. Staff should value youth's participation and what they bring.
- Clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of youth workers in the program with a code of conduct and policies to facilitate positive staff-youth relationships; assess adherence to the code of conduct and staff-youth relationships as part of staff performance evaluations.
- Train youth workers on adolescent and youth development methodologies, techniques, and strategies to communicate with and support youth. Adults may also need training in experiential learning and pedagogical strategies to foster soft skills in specific areas of expertise, such as HIV prevention education.
- Create opportunities for program staff and participants/peers to meet on an informal basis.
- Help staff understand the importance of modeling expected behavior, setting high expectations, and providing positive reinforcement; use coaching to enhance youth mastery, self-esteem, and critical thinking.
- Try to keep low staff/volunteer-to-youth ratios to allow youth workers to be as responsive as possible.
- Allow for structured times for youth to interact with staff in a confidential way.
- Dedicate time for sharing stories and facilitating bonds among program staff and youth.

Community supports: Members of the community can also be a source of positive adult relationships and supports. Mentors, coaches, tutors, relatives, religious leaders, and others can all be sources of positive youth-adult relationships. As youth get older, these relationships with adults become increasingly important; there is strong evidence that positive and meaningful youth engagement in and connection to their schools and communities enhances young people's physical and psychological well-being overall. Exposure to adults from different backgrounds can introduce youth to new career or livelihood opportunities and open young minds to different gender roles and visions for their future.

Tips to enhance youth relationships within communities can include:

- Implementing a mentor program and training mentors and other adult volunteers on youth development.
- Inviting community residents to share a skill, hobby, or profession with youth.
- Sponsoring activities that bring young people, parents, and other adults together around cultural activities, community campaigns, etc.
- Supporting opportunities for youth to demonstrate their capacity, interests, and perspectives to adults.
- Structuring opportunities for young people to contribute to community activities.
- Engaging adult volunteers to contribute to community and school youth activities.

Creating a Supportive Enabling Environment

Definitions

LGBTQ: An umbrella term that refers to various sexual and gender identities. The acronym stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning/queer.

Developmental relationship: A close connection between a young person and an adult or between a young person and a peer that powerfully and positively shapes the young person's identity and helps the young person develop a thriving mindset. *Source:* [Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework](#)

Enabling Environment: An environment that develops and supports young people's assets, agency, access to services, and opportunities, and strengthens their ability to avoid risks and to stay safe, secure, and protected and live without fear of violence or retribution. An enabling environment encourages and recognizes youth, while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive. The term "environment" should be interpreted broadly and includes: social (e.g., relationships with peers and adults), normative (e.g., attitudes, norms and beliefs), structural (e.g., laws, policies, programs services, and systems), and physical (e.g., safe, supportive spaces). *Source:* [Youth Power Positive Youth Development \(PYD\) Framework](#)

Q. How do you create a supportive enabling environment for youth?

A. Research on youth development points to the importance of the enabling environment in advancing positive youth outcomes. USAID's Positive Youth Development Framework identifies five features of the enabling environment: (1) healthy relationships; (2) having a sense of belonging; (3) positive social norms, expectations, and perceptions; (4) safe spaces for youth; and (5) integrated youth services.

This *Implementation Tip* provides a brief description of four of these features and some guidance for advancing them. For information regarding healthy relationships, see the *Implementation Tip* on [Fostering Relationships with and Among Youth](#).

How do programs create a sense of belonging for youth and promote inclusion?

During adolescence, having a sense of belonging is particularly important to one's identity, self-esteem, and connection to one's larger community. Youth programs can promote belonging through activities that promote teamwork, a sense of community, and cross-cultural social skills; staff practices that promote inclusion by identifying and supporting youth who might be excluded; and intentional recruitment strategies to ensure that the program is inclusive in its selection criteria.

Program recruitment. When defining the youth population it seeks to support, the program should aim, to the extent possible, to engage a diverse range of youth and be intentional in planning outreach to hard-to-reach groups, such as marginalized and vulnerable youth. Programs should have a clear idea of which populations they are trying to reach, set informal diversity goals to consider the multiple types of diversity [e.g., gender, youth with disabilities, orphan or vulnerable children (OVCs), minority groups], and develop plans to ensure they can proactively reach those goals. Organizations should engage youth and staff for ideas on how to reach more marginalized youth and use both a variety of outreach methods (e.g., social

media, bulletin boards, and flyers) and appropriate languages during outreach.

Activities to promote understanding and acceptance of others. In addition to ensuring diversity among participants, youth programs should have structured activities and policies to promote acceptance of others, understanding of different stereotypes and their impact, and learning about and valuing people from different backgrounds. Group work, team building, and social activities can all enhance youth's sense of belonging within the program.

Develop policies and staff training to ensure staff promote inclusivity within the program. Youth programs should have specific policies and codes of conduct that prioritize treating youth with mutual respect and inclusion of other religions, ethnicities, genders, and abilities. Staff should be trained on topics relating to different types of diversity (e.g., gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion). The training should enable staff to promote socially equitable attitudes and behaviors and recognize their own attitudes and expectations of different social groups. Using real-life scenarios and/or role plays can help youth understand different perspectives and practice using strategies to reduce possible tensions among youth from different backgrounds.

Develop strategies to identify youth with unique challenges that impede their participation. Program staff should identify youth who might have challenges such as transportation issues, trouble in school, financial hindrances, or special needs. Staff should also be trained to recognize special needs (e.g., prior exposure to trauma or abuse), provide basic psycho-social support, or refer youth to specialized services.

How can programs promote positive social norms, expectations, and perceptions of youth?

Youth programs, much like organizations, have their own organizational culture and norms that influence how youth experience them. Research suggests that adolescents' perceptions of social norms have immediate and lasting effects on their behavior¹. By promoting positive social norms within the program setting, youth will learn positive norms and values that they should apply in everyday life. Youth programs should define the social norms they wish to infuse throughout the program and work with youth to develop strategies to do so. Involving youth in defining norms and values, expectations of behavior, and consequences for violating them enhances ownership and agreement and is another form of youth engagement (See the *Implementation Tip* on [Youth Engagement Throughout the Program Cycle](#)). These norms should be promoted throughout the

¹ National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*

Resources

[Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework](#)

[YouthPower Action Guiding Principle for Building Soft Skills Among Adolescents and Young Adults](#)

[WHO Helping Parents in Developing Countries Improve Adolescents' Health](#)

[Preparing Youth to Thrive: Promising Practices for Social and Emotional Learning](#)

organization via posters and other communications materials and reinforced through activities and staff modeling.

Staff and youth participants should be oriented on the organization's norms and expectations and asked to indicate their agreement upon joining the program.

Youth-serving programs should also promote positive social norms among family members, teachers, community leaders, religious leaders, and other people that influence norms on issues that affect youth such as gender-based violence, gender norms, and age of marriage. Youth can also be involved in promoting the change of norms in their own communities by participating in behavior-change activities, acting in skits, or creating their own messages and media to reach other youth.

Adult perceptions of youth, whether they are conscious or not, influence how they interact with and treat young people. Staff training should include opportunities for staff to reflect on their own biases, stereotypes, or perceptions of youth that could negatively affect their expectations of and relationships with youth. Negative perceptions of youth as lazy, stubborn, rebellious, or unreliable impacts how youth are treated. Such perceptions are often created and reinforced by all types of media – traditional, new, and social. Youth programs can work to realign perceptions, expectations, or norms around youth by highlighting youth voice through storytelling, promoting youth leaders who have succeeded in overcoming social barriers, and supporting youth media campaigns that showcase youth ideas and potential. Youth programs can also work with adults to shift perceptions through intergenerational dialogue and youth engagement in the community; in this way, adults can experience the competence of youth first-hand and begin to perceive young people as legitimate, crucial contributors.

Why is it important to make youth feel safe and how can programs promote safe spaces?

For young people to experience a program as safe, they must feel personally safe – both physically and emotionally. Physical safety means that young people feel safe from physical or bodily harm and confident that surrounding adults will protect them and assist them if peers or other adults threaten them. Emotional safety means that young people feel secure that they will be valued and accepted; that they can participate without fear of teasing or harassment; and that individual differences such as race, culture, or gender identification will be accepted by others and will not impact their ability to participate.

In such environments, where physical and emotional safety are promoted, youth will be more willing to try and fail because positive risk-taking is supported and making mistakes is accepted as part

of growth. When youth have opportunities to learn and express themselves without fear, they are more likely to engage with their parents, peers, and communities. They gain self-esteem and become positive role models. Similarly, research on resiliency identifies the experience of physical and emotional safety as critical to supporting young people's healthy development and ability to learn important life skills and competencies they will need in adulthood. Recent research into brain function reveals that a sense of safety is an important component of a person's readiness to learn.^{2,3}

Identifying and creating a safe space. Youth-serving organizations should involve youth and family members to determine whether a space is safe. Safe spaces can mean different things to different segments of youth. Safe spaces must be utilized or set up with a clear understanding of the specific segment(s) of youth they aim to target (see the *Implementation Tip* on [Developing Tailored Youth Activities](#)) and understand the specific attributes and characteristics of that age group. Special attention should be given to the needs of OVCs, victims of bullying or prior trauma, young people with stigma such as former gang members, LGBTQ (see Definitions), or refugees. In environments with violent conflict or persecution, identifying a safe space will require additional considerations to ensure safety both getting to the program as well as at the program site. Programs should consider venues or facilities that are centrally located and easy to access. For young people who are fearful of being seen accessing support services—e.g., a health services provider or school counselor—a safe space may need to be more private so they can access information and support without fear of being judged or having to face the consequences of disclosure. This fear may be based on their own or others' negative experiences or inaccurate perceptions and beliefs of what they may encounter.

Developing policies to protect youth. Youth-serving organizations should develop policies and protocols for child and youth protection that define abuse and ill treatment—including physical, sexual, or emotional abuse; child labor and exploitation; human trafficking; and neglect. These policies and protocols should be disseminated and systems should be put in place to ensure enforcement. Organizations should train youth and adults to understand the policies, know how to recognize symptoms of abuses, and understand the protocols to be followed to report abuse. Programs should ensure that there are opportunities for private and confidential reporting of alleged abuses and that all youth and any adults—including employees, volunteers, mentors and other adults who interact with the program—document their agreement to follow these policies.

² Jensen, E., *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*

³ Caine, R. and Geoffrey, C., *Making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain*

Promoting physical safety within program settings. Programs should develop, implement, and share approved security and safety plans and procedures with youth, staff, and families to promote a strong sense of shared ownership and responsibility for following the plan. The plan should ensure that the space is free of all foreseeable safety hazards. Programs should also ensure that the space is accessible to individuals with multiple types of disability.

Creating emotional safe spaces. Programs can develop ground rules for group processes (e.g., listening, turn-taking, decision-making, and sharing of emotions) that are co-created with youth and develop activities that help youth build good communication and social skills to ensure positive interactions. Staff should ensure they do not discriminate among youth and promote inclusion to demonstrate that all youth are different, equal, and important. Programs should create structured opportunities for youth to share their personal stories and feelings and to listen to others as they share similar stories.

Creating a stable environment with structure that has consistent routines, activities, and procedures. This provides a sense of predictability and safety for youth. Applying clear and consistent expectations of behavior is also associated with positive developmental outcomes.⁴ Youth programs will need to balance the need for structure and consistency with allowing for greater opportunities for youth to manage their own behavior. Younger adolescents will need greater structure than older adolescents who might resist too much control. Organizations should provide youth with greater levels of responsibility and independence to allow them to grow and take on new roles over time.

How do we ensure there is integration among youth, families, and service providers to ensure communication and a continuum of care for youth?

Youth outcomes are impacted by a large number of people—their families, teachers, health care providers, police, community leaders, and others. Youth programs should communicate with family members to ensure information flow and a cohesive approach to supporting a young person. By working with family members and service providers, a youth-serving organization or program can promote more consistent support and modelling for youth. Programs aimed at behavior change are more impactful when messages are consistent and reinforced at home, school, in the community, and by service providers.⁵

⁴ National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*

⁵ *ibid.*

Outreach to families. At a minimum, programs should communicate with youth participants' parents so that they understand the types of activities their child is participating in and to ensure that parents understand the rules and expectations of participation. Ideally, there is regular communication between program staff and family members on the well-being of the young person, particularly with younger adolescents. Programs can also encourage family participation within youth programs through meetings with parents, family days or events that bring family members into the program setting, and involving parents in planning or even as board members to ensure parental input into decision-making. Programs can also set up parent support groups or provide parent education or other types of training to help parents understand how to care for adolescents, support their education, and understand their nutritional and health needs. Organizations could also create parent-youth programs to enhance inter-generational dialogue. Where feasible, programs could provide parents with additional training and support that impacts the family's overall well-being, such as adult education and training programs to address income generation, literacy, or social-emotional skills.

Outreach to communities. Programs can establish partnerships with community organizations that provide opportunities for youth to engage more actively in the community and for the community to become more aware of program events. By establishing partnerships with other community organizations, youth programs can share information and resources and collaborate on community initiatives. Partnerships could include guest speakers and mentorships, as well as provide opportunities for youth to participate in community service, campaigns, or advocacy initiatives.

Communication with service providers. Youth program staff should be trained to identify youth with special needs and know how to connect these youth to the appropriate local services providers (e.g., health providers, legal services, welfare services, etc). Protocols should be in place to track referrals to other service providers and staff should maintain communication with those providers to monitor youth needs and progress.

Inspiring Youth to Civic Action

Definitions

Civic Education: The provision of information and learning experiences to equip and empower citizens to participate in democratic processes.

Source: [Youth Power Civic Education](#)

Civic Engagement: Working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.

Source: [Civic Responsibility and Higher Education](#)

Project Based Learning: A teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge.

Source: [PBLWorks](#)

Civic Spaces: The political, legislative, social, and economic environment which enables citizens to come together, share their interests and concerns, and act individually and collectively to influence and shape new policies.

Source: [Civic Space Watch](#)

Q. How do you turn civic education into civic action?

A. While many countries include a civic education curriculum in their educational system, research does not find a clear link between knowledge/skills learned in the classroom and an increase in youth engagement in civic practices in their community. Civic education curriculums often include civic knowledge (understanding the political system and citizen responsibilities), civic skills (analyzing and evaluating issues and participating in political processes), and civic disposition (citizen traits such as tolerance, critical thinking, conflict management); civic education may be a mandatory school course or an optional after-school or extracurricular program.¹ Civic education curriculums often do not include opportunities for youth to practice new skills in the real world, however.

The goal of these curriculums should be to lead to greater civic engagement in the community and the nation. Civic engagement can be defined as “working to make a difference in the civic life of one’s community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.”² Civic engagement may include volunteering in the community, service-learning opportunities, political activism, and voting, among other activities.

Young people in particular have the potential to contribute significantly to their communities, which makes youth civic engagement particularly valuable. [OXFAM Australia’s Theory of Change Resource](#) recognizes that the current youth generation is “more connected and more educated than any previous generation... [with youth] challenging restrictive gender norms and utilizing technology to mobilize civil society in new ways.” To increase young people’s positive contribution to their society, organizations and government institutions need to consider how to build the civic and leadership skills among the youth population, as well as create an

¹ Rietbergen-McCracken, J., [Civic Education](#)

² Ehrlich, T., [Civic Responsibility and Higher Education](#)

environment in which adults value youth input and encourage their involvement in decision-making.

For more information on the importance of youth engagement, see the *Implementation Tip* on [Engaging Youth Across the Program Cycle](#).

Below are some ideas on how to help youth put the skills they learn into practice in their communities. It is important to choose age-appropriate activities when incorporating these into your program—for more information, see the *Implementation Tip* on [Tailoring Activities for Youth](#).

Complement civic engagement curriculum with hands-on experience

Evidence suggests that programs that combine skills-building and practical civic engagement opportunities can have positive outcomes for young people. Therefore, it is important to add opportunities such as project-based learning activities for youth to practice the skills learned throughout the civic engagement curriculum, as well as to increase their excitement and motivation around using the skills. Project-based learning can include mini-projects that youth undertake in a classroom or an organization, or activities that happen in the community. Below are some activities that can complement in-classroom learning:

- *Create activities that mimic spaces for civic engagement in the community* so that young people can practice their new skills in a safe environment. Examples include role plays; initiating a student government through which youth learn about campaigning and the right to vote; having youth read newspaper articles about a controversial topic and then participate in a debate; holding mini-town halls where students or youth participants can provide their feedback or concerns to their school or organization; or creating complaint boxes that are reviewed by a joint student-teacher-parent committee on a monthly basis.
- *Organize activities in the community*. Examples include volunteer events such as helping clean a park or interning with an organization or government entity to gain a better understanding of how these institutions operate. Younger cohorts (ages 10 – 14) may participate in simple or one-time activities, like visiting the sick. Older cohorts (ages 15+) should have more substantive activities that allow them to design and lead the engagement activity and learn more about its background, such as a field trip to a government institution or a town hall to understand how government operates.
- *Pair each new skill or methodology they learn with an activity* that allows them to internalize the concepts and gauge the skill's or methodology's benefits and challenges. Examples include following an introduction to advocacy, having youth create campaigns or identify existing campaigns in the community and analyze their accuracy and effectiveness, or asking youth to design skits that motivate their peers to vote or be change agents.

Resources

Civic Responsibility and Higher Education by Thomas Ehrlich

[Civic Education](#)

[Youth Leadership Programmatic Review Final Report](#)

[New and Innovative Forms of Youth Participation in Decision-making Processes](#)

Youth in Nicaragua turn organizing skills into improvements for their communities

Youth participating in the National Democratic Institute's Certificate in Leadership and Political Management (CLPM) program conducted a survey to identify key issues within the community. By analyzing the survey, the youth recognized that crime was increasing, so launched a campaign entitled "For a Safe Community," which lobbied the city council to take action.

- *Provide small grants and/or technical assistance to support youth-led projects.* Top leadership programs incorporate opportunities for youth to design and implement a small project focused on a topic that they are interested in and that would benefit the organization or community.³

Find existing spaces in the community where youth can participate

Before initiating a civic engagement program, it is important to identify what civic spaces already exist in the relevant community or country. Many local and/or national government institutions may already be utilizing different types of structures to solicit feedback and concerns from the communities they serve. When providing a civic engagement curriculum, it is important to incorporate national youth policies and introduce existing participation platforms. As part of this introduction, it is also important to assess why youth may not be actively engaging in these structures. The following are ways to identify gaps and build on existing structures:

- Utilize youth-led methodologies, such as [Community Youth Mapping](#) (CYM), to have youth identify the existing structures themselves.
- If a community holds a monthly town hall that takes place during the school day, the program can encourage youth to advocate for the meeting to be moved to a time that they could attend, or for the teachers to let youth miss school if they attend the town hall.

Connect youth with elders, parents, adults, and others

Many youth are eager to get involved in efforts to influence community decisions that affect the welfare of their families and society. However, sociocultural norms and institutional practices often prevent youth—and young women, in particular—from participating in public decision-making. Increasing the participation of youth in civic life requires breaking down these barriers and building youth-inclusive norms and practices. By integrating activities where youth and older generations work together, program designers ensure that communication – and hopefully with it, respect – will increase between the populations. As youth take more active roles in their community during and as a result of their civic engagement programs, older generations may recognize that youth are taking their responsibilities seriously and want to contribute to their communities. This in turn may lead older people to invite more youth to participate in their existing decision-making mechanisms and motivate them to try and understand young people's concerns.

³ USAID, [Youth Leadership Programmatic Review Final Report](#)

Collaboration across generations can also increase the success and impact of programs by creating greater collective action and should be emphasized throughout a civic education curriculum. When youth or adults act in isolation, they are only motivating a small segment of the community. By working together, these groups can increase the pressure on government officials to make changes or have access to more resources that they can pool to address key issues in the community.

A school or organization can improve relations between different generations by:

- Linking youth with adult role models who provide ongoing support during the program, including mentoring, helping young people expand their networks, and sharing their technical expertise with youth.
- Encouraging these relationships to continue after the program ends.
- Implementing multi-stakeholder workshops in which youth, civil society, and government institutions work together to identify key issues, brainstorm solutions, and create action plans. This process works best when youth and other marginalized groups are trained beforehand on how to communicate effectively and majority groups are prepared to actively listen to others. For example, all generations may be frustrated by poor health clinics and can work together to lobby the government to improve their conditions.



Glossary

Glossary

A

Accessibility—A precondition for persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society. Without access to the physical environment, transportation, information, and communication (including information and communication technologies and systems), and other facilities and services open or provided to the public, persons with disabilities do not have equal opportunities for participation in their respective societies.

Accrual Accounting—A method that records revenues on the income statement when they are earned and expenses when they are incurred—not when cash is paid.

Action Plan—A series of specific steps describing what needs to be done, how, when and by whom to accomplish one or more objectives. Written action plans can be used at the organizational, project or activity level.

Active Listening—A communication technique that requires the listener to focus on understanding, interpreting and reflecting upon what the other person is saying.

Adaptive Management—An intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context.

Advocacy—A collaborative action that works to influence policies, laws, or institutional and governmental regulations and norms to achieve meaningful improvement in the living conditions and well-being of people and groups.

Ageism—Stereotypes (how we think), prejudices (how we feel), and discrimination (how we behave) with regard to older people and the process of aging. Ageism can be directed at others or at ourselves.

Agreement Officer (AO)—The USAID official with the authority to enter into, administer, terminate, and/or close out assistance agreements and make related determinations and findings on behalf of USAID.

Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR)—The USAID official responsible for monitoring grantee progress toward achieving the agreement's purpose and for serving as technical liaison between the grantee and the AO.

The AO will delegate authority for specific responsibilities to the AOR, who typically is named in your Cooperative Agreement.

Allowable Cost—A cost incurred specifically to support or advance the objectives of your award that the USG (or USAID) will permit to be reimbursed.

Assistive Technologies—All tools (non-human) designed to help a person perform everyday activities: mobility aids (for example, wheelchair, walking stick, tricycle); positioning aids (specific chairs, standers); daily living aids (responsive covers, shower seats, handles); visual aids (large print books, white canes, braille, computer screens); hearing devices (amplified telephones, visual systems, hearing aids); communication aids (communication board); and cognitive aids (lists, diaries).

Audit—An independent review and examination of systems, records, and activities.

Automated Directives System (ADS)—ADS

encompasses the totality of USAID's regulations. It also includes suggested, but not mandatory, procedures and links to examples of best practices.

Award Amount—The total amount anticipated to be spent by the USG over the life of the project.

Barriers—Factors that prevent a person from having full, equal access and participation in society. Barriers can be environmental (physical, attitudinal, or communication-related), or institutional (such as policies that can lead to discrimination against certain groups).

Baseline—Data collected about specific indicators before an intervention begins that will serve as the starting points against which to measure change.

Beneficiary—An individual or institutional entity that is directly supported, improved or helped by your project.

Brand—A name, term, design, symbol, or other feature that helps people distinguish one organization, good or service from another.

Branding—All of the ways used to establish an image of an organization, product or service in its users' or customers' eyes.

Burn Rate—The rate at which an organization spends its award funds (obligated amount) on a periodic basis, typically monthly.

By-Laws—Rules governing the operation of an organization. By-laws often provide the methods for selecting directors, creating committees, and conducting meetings.

Cash-Basis Accounting—A method of bookkeeping that records expenses when cash is paid out and income when cash is received.

Civic Education—The provision of information and learning experiences to equip and empower citizens to participate in democratic processes.

Civic Engagement—Working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.

Civic Spaces—The political, legislative, social, and economic environment which enables citizens to come together, share their interests and concerns, and act individually and collectively to influence and shape new policies.

Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting

(CLA)—CLA involves strategic collaboration, continuous learning, and adaptive management. CLA approaches to development include collaborating intentionally with stakeholders to share knowledge and reduce duplication of effort; learning systematically by drawing on evidence from a variety of sources and taking time to reflect on implementation; and applying learning by adapting intentionally.

Commodity—Any item that can be bought or sold, usually a product or raw material (lumber, wheat, coffee, metals, etc.).

Communication—The process of transmitting ideas and information about the nature of your organization and the issues it deals with. An ongoing, core activity that is key to sustaining an organization.

Community—A group of people united by location or by common beliefs, values, or characteristics.

Context Monitoring—The systematic collection of information about conditions and external factors relevant to the implementation and performance of a strategy, project, and activities. This includes monitoring local conditions that may directly affect implementation and performance or external factors that may indirectly affect implementation and performance.

Cost Share—The portion of project costs not covered by the USG. This may be in-kind or cash contributions.

Culture—A set of shared values, beliefs, and practices that characterize a group. Culture is learned through socialization and endures across generations. Shared culture, including gender roles, can be part of what unites a community.

Data—The actual measurement or factual information collected about an indicator.

Deliverables—Products or outputs that must be completed and presented to the donor under the terms of an agreement or contract.

Direct Project Expenses—Goods and services specifically purchased for the exclusive benefit of one project that are charged to that project.

Disability—Long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)—A systematic approach that prevents new risk and reduces existing risk (particularly socioeconomic vulnerabilities) as well as environmental and other hazards.

Donor—Source of funding for an organization's program activities or operations. Typically, funding is for a specific intervention with a specific timeframe and budget.

A donor may be:

- an individual or group
- a large agency, such as USAID
- a multinational agency, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- a corporation, such as Nike

Employee Handbook—A written guide outlining an employer's policies, procedures, working conditions, and expectations governing employee conduct in the workplace. It may also contain information on the organization's history, its goals, and its commitments to beneficiaries and the community. (Also called an Employee Manual, HR Handbook, HR Manual, or Personnel Policy Manual.)

Enablers—In the context of humanitarian inclusion, enablers are the factors that facilitate access and participation in society for older people with disabilities.

Enabling environment—An environment that develops and supports young people's assets, agency, access to services, and opportunities and strengthens their ability to stay safe, secure, and protected and live without fear of violence or retribution. An enabling environment encourages and recognizes youth, while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive. The term "environment" should be interpreted broadly and includes: social (e.g., relationships with peers and adults), normative (e.g., attitudes, norms, and beliefs), structural (e.g., laws, policies, programs services, and systems) and physical (e.g., safe, supportive spaces).

Environmental Assessment (EA)—A detailed environment analysis that is necessary when an initial review of the program indicates that at least some program activities are likely to have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)—A systematic process to identify potential effects—positive or negative—that a project or activity may have on the environment. It includes establishing plans to monitor and mitigate any negative effects as well as ways to prevent activities that are likely to cause significant environmental harm.

Environmental Mitigation Plan (EMP)—Often included in the IEE, the EMP (sometimes called an Environmental Mitigation & Monitoring Plan [EMMP]) is a document that identifies potential environmental impacts of program activities and lays out a specific plan to monitor any negative impacts as well as the methods chosen to diminish them.

Environmental Status Report (ESR)—An annual report submitted to USAID examining a project's impact on the environment and describing what the organization has done to comply with its EMP.

Ethnic Minority—A group of people of a particular ethnicity, race, or nationality living in a country or area where the majority of people are of a different ethnicity, race, or nationality. Although a country or area may have multiple ethnic minorities, a dominant ethnic group typically comprises the majority of the population.

Evaluation—The comparison of actual project impact against agreed-on plans. Evaluation looks at what you set out to do, what you have accomplished, and how you accomplished it.

Evidence—A range of tangible/factual information that can be used to support or contradict decisions made when planning interventions.

Exception—An official decision, for programmatic reasons, to not require marking on a particular project's materials. Exceptions are usually approved pre-award in nonemergency situations.

Exchange Rate—The amount of money needed in one currency to purchase another. This process is frequently called "currency conversion."

Faith-Based and Community Organization (FBCO)—NGO whose mission and operation are guided by either faith orientation or focus on a specific community or both.

Finance Management—Planning, organizing, controlling, and monitoring financial resources to support the objectives and functioning of an organization.

Finding—Any error, exception, deviation, or deficiency noted by an auditor as a result of an examination of audit evidence. Findings are generally related to (a) compliance policies, procedures and legal requirements, (b) adequacy and effectiveness of controls and/or (c) efficiency and effectiveness of administration.

Fiscal Year (FY)—Sometimes called a financial or budget year, a period organizations use for calculating "yearly" financial statements. It may or may not correspond to the calendar year, which is January 1 through December 31. The USG fiscal year covers a 12-month period that begins October 1 and ends September 30"

Gender—The socially defined set of roles, rights, responsibilities, entitlements, and obligations of females and males held in societies. These definitions of what it means to be female or male vary among cultures and change over time.

Gender Equality—Providing the same treatment of all people, regardless of gender identity; simply pursuing equality fails to recognize the ways that gender identity informs needs, aspirations, priorities, and sensibilities.

Gender Equity—Creating conditions of fairness across all genders and identities. It involves working in response to people's gender, not despite their gender.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)—Violence that is directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex or gender identity and includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse; threats; coercion; taking away someone's right to make decisions; and economic deprivation—whether occurring in public or private life.

Gift—Any gratuity, favor, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or other item having monetary value. It includes any service as well, such as a gift of training, transportation, local travel, lodging and meals, whether provided in-kind, by purchase of a ticket, payment in advance, or reimbursement after the expense has been incurred.

Goal—The long-term result that your project is seeking to achieve.

Governance—The systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision, and accountability of an organization; typically the purview of a Board of Directors.

Horizon—The amount of time an organization will look into the future when preparing a strategic plan. This time frame typically ranges from two to five years, but the appropriate horizon depends on the sector.

Human Resources (HR)—The people who staff and operate an organization. The term is also used to describe the function within an organization responsible for implementing policies related to the management of employees.

Incidental Expenses—Expenses incurred during travel, such as gratuities and tips for services, laundry, toiletries, etc.

Inclusion—Ensuring equal access to social, political, and economic opportunities for all people, regardless of differences in personal characteristics or identities.

Inclusive Development—The concept that every person, regardless of identity, is instrumental in the transformation of their own societies and that their inclusion throughout the development process leads to better outcomes.

Inclusive Local Development—A development model that promotes equality and the widest social participation at the grassroots level. It is based on the key notions of decentralization and local citizen participation and the principle that inclusion leads to better outcomes. Under this model, development policies and programs are designed, planned, implemented, and evaluated in ways that allow all people - including those with disabilities - to contribute to the transformation of their societies.

Incurred Close-out Costs—An Agreement Officer (AO) may approve an organization's request to incur close-out-related expenses during the 90 days between the award end date and the submission of the final report. These expenses may only cover close-out-related costs. No implementation or other costs are covered. No additional funds are granted. Therefore, an organization must have sufficient funds remaining in its award to cover these costs.

Indicator—A particular characteristic or dimension that will be used to measure change. Height is an example of an indicator.

Ineligible Items—Goods or services that cannot be purchased under any circumstances.

Initial Environmental Examination—A survey of reasonably foreseeable effects of a proposed project or activity on the environment. It is a simplified version of a more comprehensive examination of environmental impacts called the Environmental Assessment.

In-Kind Contribution—Non-cash resources contributed to a project. This may include volunteer services, equipment, or property.

International Travel—Any travel between two countries.

Intersectionality—The interaction of multiple factors—such as disability, age, and gender—which can create multiple layers of discrimination as well as legal, social, or cultural barriers. This interaction can further hinder a person’s access to and participation in humanitarian action and, more generally, in society.

Key Personnel—Individuals directly responsible for managing the agreement, or those personnel whose professional/technical skills are certified by the AOR as being essential for successful implementation of the project.

LGBTI—Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex. These terms refer to people whose sexual orientation or gender identities differ from traditional expectations of males or females in particular societies. They are also referred to as sexual and gender minorities.

Life Expectancy—Reflects the overall mortality level of a population and is calculated as the average number of years that a newborn is expected to live during a given period.

Life-Course Approach—A lifecourse approach recognizes the importance of timing and circumstances in understanding causal links between exposures and outcomes across a person’s life.

Life-Cycle Approach—This approach takes into consideration major developmental stages in a person’s life, such as a young person’s current emotional and physical state and their interests.

Lobbying—Any person influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress, in connection with any USG action, including the award, extension, renewal, amendment, or modification of any USG contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

M&IE—Meals and incidental expenses.

Mainstream services—Services intended for general use rather than for use entirely or primarily by persons with disabilities.

Management—The responsibility for directing the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Management Decision—The evaluation of a recommendation by management and a decision about an appropriate course of action.

Marginalized Groups—People who are typically denied full access to legal protection or social and economic participation and programs (such as police protection; political participation; or access to healthcare, education, employment) in practice and/or in principle for historical, cultural, political, or other contextual reasons.

Marketing—The overall processes and activities that contribute to your organization’s public image, that, when developed effectively—and reinforced by the good work of your staff—helps earn the trust and confidence of beneficiaries, local leaders, and donors.

Marking—Applying a graphic identity or logo to program materials, public communications, or project signage to visibly acknowledge contributors; it identifies organizations supporting the work.

Medical Model—A model that seeks only medical/rehabilitation systems and special services to “repair the broken”: the individual with impairment is seen as the problem to be solved and responsibility for disability lies with the person who must be ‘fixed’.

Men’s Engagement—A process to recruit men as allies in women’s empowerment by providing opportunities for them to improve their knowledge about issues that negatively affect the situation of women. This definition is grounded in the idea that women and men are partners who should work hand-in-hand to achieve gender equality.

Micro-Purchase Threshold—The amount your organization sets under which your procurement process may be simplified. For example, if your micro-purchase threshold is \$1,000, you may be required to secure a minimum of three bids on items above that amount but not on items equal to or below that amount.

Micro-Purchase Threshold—The amount your organization sets under which your procurement process may be simplified. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 2.101 defines the micro-purchase threshold at \$3,500. (It is important to review the regulation to see if it has been updated). Organizations may set a more restrictive threshold. For example, if your micro-purchase threshold is \$1,000, you may be required to secure a minimum of three bids on items above that amount but not on items equal to or below that amount.

Mission—Takes the vision a step further by summarizing the actions the organization is going to take to make its vision a reality. It is a statement that clarifies the purpose of the organization and its daily business.

Modified Total Direct Cost—TDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to \$25,000 of each subaward. MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditure, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, and participant support costs.

Monitoring—Periodic tracking (for example, daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually) of your project's progress by systematically gathering and analyzing data and information about what you are doing, whom you are reaching, and whether your activities are being implemented as planned.

Multiple Discrimination—Discrimination based on more than one characteristic, such as gender and age (referred to as intersectional discrimination) or taking place on more than one occasion over time (cumulative discrimination).

Nationality—For purposes of USAID's procurement rules, nationality refers to the place of incorporation, ownership, citizenship, or residence of suppliers of goods and services.

Negotiated Indirect Rate Cost Agreement (NICRA)—NICRA is a rate negotiated individually between an organization and the USG to cover indirect costs.

Network Analysis—An analytical approach that tracks and identifies relationships across various stakeholders within a system.

Non-Funded Extension (also called a No-Cost Extension)—When the recipient requests an extension to the agreement's period of performance, either to complete program activities that were delayed through no fault of the recipient or to carry out additional activities within the project's scope using unspent funds.

Non-governmental Organization (NGO)—A legally constituted organization created by private persons or organizations with no participation or representation of any government.

Objective—A shorter term achievement that contributes toward achieving the goal.

Obligated Amount—The amount the USG has committed to spend on the project to date, which may be a portion of the award amount.

Older Citizens Monitoring (OCM)—An activity where groups of older people monitor access to essential services and advocate for improvements based on their findings. It promotes dialogue between older people, civil society, governments, and service providers.

Older People—A term used to describe someone in later life, which can vary depending on a country's life expectancy. For statistical purposes, age 60 and over is frequently used to describe older people.

Older People's Associations (OPAs)—Community-based organizations that mobilize older people to improve their own lives and to contribute to the development of their communities across multiple domains.

Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)—Representative organizations that are run by persons with disabilities, working to advance their rights by raising awareness in society, and advocating for their equal rights as citizens. In many low- and middle-income countries, OPDs are community-based organizations operating on the grassroots level and strongly integrated into their local communities.

Origin—The country where a commodity is mined, grown, or produced.

Outcome Harvesting—An evaluation technique that starts with programming outcomes and works backwards to determine whether and how an intervention contributed to these outcomes.

Outcome Indicator—An indicator that measures longer-term change, such as in effectiveness or partnership building. "Percent of organizations with a 1/3 increase in funding" is an example of an outcome indicator.

Output Indicator—An indicator that captures the immediate result of an activity. "Number of people trained" is an example of an output indicator.

Pause and Reflect—A component of learning and adaptive management; the act of taking time to think critically about ongoing activities and processes and to plan for the best way forward.

Pension—A policy instrument whereby a state or national government provides regular cash transfers to older citizens. It is commonly utilized to reduce poverty among older people and their dependents and increase older people's access to services.

Per Diem—The maximum amount of money that the USG reimburses per day to cover lodging and meals and incidental expenses when traveling in connection with your program.

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)—A structured, measurable plan to help an underperforming employee improve to the expected level of performance in his/her position.

Performance Management Plan—A reference document that contains your targets, a detailed definition of each indicator, the methods and frequency of data collection for each of those indicators, and who will be responsible for collecting the data.

Performance Review or Appraisal—A structured process to review and discuss an employee's performance of assigned duties, achievement of goals, and fulfillment of responsibilities over a specific time period.

Pipeline—The amount of funds obligated but not yet spent.

Pitching—Presenting the mission and purpose of your program/organization in a manner that is clear, concise, convincing, and compelling to your audience.

Poaching—Hiring someone away from their current job—working for another project, a competitor, or host country government—to join your organization.

Political Economy Analysis—A structured approach to examining power dynamics and economic and social forces that influence development.

Prevention programs—Programs that focus on preventing violence in the first place by addressing its root causes. A gender-based analysis is needed to identify the root causes of GBV. Such an analysis typically identifies women's low status, the imbalance of power, and rigid gender roles.

Prime Recipient—An organization receiving direct financial assistance (a grant or Cooperative Agreement) to carry out an activity or program.

Procurement—The process of acquiring goods, supplies and services in support of program activities.

Program Income—Program Income is money earned by a program for the benefit of the program itself. It is generated from charging fees for services or from sales of commodities.

Program Income is different from income-generating activities, through which a program's grantees or beneficiaries keep income earned.

Prohibited Source—Any person who is seeking official action by the USG employee's agency or does business or seeks to do business with the employee's agency.

Project Based Learning—A teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge.

Promotion—A tactic other than paid advertising (for example, special events, posters, T-shirts, flyers) used by a marketer (for example, a CSO) to increase the awareness of a product, service or idea among specific target audiences.

Protection—Ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of relevant bodies of law—i.e., human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law. Human rights and humanitarian organizations must conduct their activities in an impartial manner (free from discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, or gender).

Rapid Assessment—A structured evidence review that often includes key informant interviews and desk research. The scale of a rapid assessment is much smaller than an evaluation, allowing the assessment to be completed within a shorter timeframe (days or weeks instead of months).

Reasonable Accommodation—Necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden on providers—where needed in a particular case—to ensure persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others.

Response Programs—Programs that focus on providing direct services to survivors of violence—through psychosocial support (counseling) or the provision of shelter, legal aid, or health services.

Restricted Commodities—Goods or services that cannot be purchased without specific advance written permission.

Scenario Planning—Identifying existing and emerging trends that may affect programming, determining plausible outcomes or scenarios, and taking steps to monitor and mitigate risks.

Sex—The classification of people as male or female. At birth, every infant is assigned a sex based on a combination of biological characteristics, including: chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs, and genitalia.

Shared Project Costs—Goods and services used by multiple projects (and for which a vendor cannot invoice each project separately) that are charged to each benefiting project based on a reasonable and consistent manner.

SMART—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound.

Social model—A model that assumes that persons with disabilities are disadvantaged not because of their individual characteristics but as a result of limitations imposed on them by environmental and external barriers. Disability is thus a result of how society is organized.

Social norm—A pattern of behavior in a particular group, community, or culture that is accepted as normal and to which an individual is expected to conform.

Social Protection—The set of policies and programs, sometimes referred to as social security, designed to reduce and prevent poverty across the life course.

Source—The country from which a commodity is shipped (or the cooperating country itself if the commodity is located therein at the time of the purchase).

Specialized Services—Services that aim to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.

Stakeholder—An individual, community, or institutional entity that will be affected by, or who can affect, your project.

Stocktaking—A structured review and assessment of ongoing efforts and options going forward.

Subrecipient—An organization receiving financial assistance to carry out an activity or program through a primary recipient (or other subrecipient).

Supervision—The process of fostering and reviewing staff performance according to the defined standards of the organization.

Supportive Supervision—A process that uses dialogue and constructive feedback to help staff, volunteers, or entire organizations improve their performance in pursuit of the organization's mission, while also setting goals for personal growth and development.

SWOT analysis—A process of considering the strengths and weaknesses within your organization, plus factors outside your organization that offer opportunities or pose threats.

System for Award Management (SAM)—A searchable database that provides a comprehensive list of individuals, firms, and organizations that are not eligible to receive USG funds. Grant recipients are responsible for using this online database to check vendors prior to contracting for services or making any purchases.

Target—A specific, planned level of result for an indicator you expect to achieve within a defined period of time.

Theory of Change—A description of the conditions and actions that will allow a project to achieve a long-term goal.

Thinking and Working Politically—An approach to working with development actors and the “operating environment” that encourages active engagement with context and design of programs aligned with a domestic support base in order to generate reform momentum, along with a willingness to work with partners to help navigate political obstacles.

Unallowable Cost—A cost the USG will not reimburse, either because of regulations or because the cost is not reasonable or appropriate.

Unbroken Chain of Movement—A chain of movement that allows people to access all places and services through the basic RECU steps (Reach, Enter, Circulate, Use) without encountering obstacles or barriers. This chain of movement must be unbroken. If one of the links is missing, efforts to provide access through the remaining links may nevertheless fail.

Unit Cost—The actual cost of your program divided by the actual number of targets reached.

Unobligated balance—The portion of the award amount that is not yet obligated.

Value Added Tax (VAT)—Tax levied on the purchase of goods and services, similar to sales tax in the U.S.

Vehicle—“...[S]elf-propelled vehicles with passenger carriage capacity, such as highway trucks, passenger cars and buses, motorcycles, scooters, motorized bicycles and utility vehicles” (22 Code of Federal Regulations 228.13 (b)).

Violence against women (VAW)—The most prevalent form of GBV. VAW is violence directed at women because they are women. It is associated with how women are seen and treated in their societies. VAW is endemic across the world, affecting on average one third of all women globally in their lifetimes.

Vision—An inspiring statement of what an organization is striving to achieve. CSOs often focus on the problem they hope to solve by painting a picture of an image they have for the future after the problem has been solved or the situation measurably improved.

Voice—“Voice” means ensuring people can access information, participate in decisions that affect their lives, express their opinions and have those opinions heard, and meet and debate with others.

Waiver—An official decision, for circumstantial reasons, to not require marking on a particular project’s materials. Waivers are usually approved post-award in response to adverse circumstances such as compelling political, safety or security concerns that affect implementation.

Weighted Average Exchange Rate—The average of the exchange rates over a given period of time.

Workplan—A detailed narrative that lays out your planned activities, the resources required to implement them and the targets you intend to reach.

Youth Voice—Ensuring youth voice requires creating opportunities for youth to share their needs, ideas, and opinions with others.



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