

TOP 10

TIPS FOR A USAID LOCAL SOLUTIONS PARTNER

4.

To articulate: articulation must be present at all levels of the program. The three most important articulations are those between USAID and the local operator, the technical and financial subjects, and the actions of the program and the gender approach.

To plan ahead: it is essential to take the necessary time to plan ahead and then to continually review the actions and take decisions about implementation.

2.

To document: it is important to build the program memory through a clear and efficient documentary process, for which it is indispensable to have forms, templates and guidelines for the work team since the start of the program.

To evaluate: it is necessary to continually and purposefully carry out monitoring and evaluation processes on all subjects of the program in order to be able to take decisions that help its implementation.

3.

5.

To follow instructions: USAID has a wide and clear documentation on the instructions that an operator must follow during the implementation process and it is essential to effectively follow the instructions.

To innovate: it is essential to take advantage of the team creativity and the possibilities of innovation generated during the implementation of the program, and to look for spaces and create options that help assure flexibility. To ensure the flexibility it is necessary that innovations can be justified, communicated and documented.

7.

To read: to understand the requirements of an implementation it is essential to read and understand USAID requirements, the needs of the context, the interests of the social actors and the specific features of each program.

Work team: to build a work team based on trust, common objectives and consolidation of actions is necessary for the programs. It is essential to consider USAID people as part of that work team and know who are the key people as counterpart. In addition, it is necessary to have enough qualified personnel for the implementation.

8.

To communicate: to know how to listen, how to dialogue, to present the results and to build effective communication channels at all levels of the program will contribute to the effectiveness of the actions.

10.

To ask: to take concerns into account, even if they seem insignificant, may help build better programs and consolidate an environment of trust and teamwork.

9.

Sustainability: since the start of the program the way to give continuity to its actions must be considered in order to achieve long term results.

Language: use the verbal, non-verbal, written language and visual culture of USAID. From day one the program should have the support of a translator.

Extra

These tips can be used for every subject of a program.

Subjects

Administration

Finance

Technical

Communications

Evaluation and Monitoring

To use these tips, it is advisable to ask the following questions.

Questions

What?

Who?

What for?

Why?



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TIPS FOR USAID WORK WITH A LOCAL OPERATOR

Tip	Description	Example
1. To know how to give instructions	USAID has a large and clear documentation on the instructions that a local operator must follow in the process of implementation. However, it's very helpful for the operator that USAID becomes a guide on how to use the instructions, which are the most important, where to look for them and how to use them.	ADS-362 is a basic document that every operator must read. However, it is useful to read it jointly by the operator and USAID in order to underline the most relevant sections for the implementation.
2. To build tools	The experience of USAID in each of the countries where it operates may help in the construction of tools, formats and contextualized guidelines that respond to USAID requirements and the needs of the context. Socialization and use of these tools will help the operator to better carry out the implementation and make the review process by USAID more efficient.	The construction and use of toolboxes and the existence of forms are relevant to expedite processes in general and to build documents (for example, M&E tools).
3. To read the context	USAID has worldwide general guidelines for the implementation of programs that apply in all contexts. This makes implementation easier by giving clarity to act. However, it is essential that the context and its characteristics can be read to determine the specificities of the program.	The communications Waiver is important in contexts of violence to ensure the safety of the team and the participants. In Colombia, many of the local operators do not have 100% bilingual personnel, for which it would be helpful for the implementation to have a Spanish version of the main documents.
4. To be flexible	USAID has specific instructions on the way to carry out the programs. However, in some occasions the operators may take advantage of creativity and innovation possibilities that may be generated during the implementation. In this cases it is relevant that USAID may be flexible to receive and approve proposals that are relevant, justified and documented.	It is necessary to generate, by joint action of USAID and the operator, intentional spaces to seek and create options that may contribute to innovation.
5. To know how to ask	To hear concerns, however small they may seem, may help build better programs, contributing to the creation of an environment of trust and team work.	It would be very important that in the figure of cash on hand of the model for advances and liquidations the operator could be consulted before subtracting resources.
6. To articulate with others	To support articulation actions between different USAID offices and the operator helps the implementation, especially in transversal subjects such as the gender approach. Moreover, it is a way of making the actions of a specific program known in the different areas of USAID.	When an operator makes a consultation on a specific subject, for example about the communications area, it would be important to generate meeting spaces with persons from USAID working in the same area. In addition, articulation between different programs funded by USAID may contribute to the installed capacity.
7. Time management	A basic element for the operator is to have the needed answers within the shortest possible time, for which it is relevant that USAID takes this element into account as a transversal axis of the implementation.	In the process of extension of a program it is understood that USAID has an approximate time to decide on it. However, this time is very long in the case of programs that are about to end and must define if their activities will be closed or if there will be continuity of the same.
8. To know how to communicate	To know how to listen, to know how to dialogue, present the results and build effective communication channels will contribute to the efficiency of the actions.	To build different ways of communication with the operator from the start of the program helps the documentation and implementation processes.
9. Team work	To build a work team with the operator is necessary to consolidate the actions. It is indispensable that the persons from USAID feel as part of the team of the operator in order to generate trust relationships, seek common objectives and build efficient communication channels.	To continually hold follow-up meetings where questions may be asked and progress and eventual problems discussed. Taking into account USAID's experience in implementation processes, it is important to share experiences with its team, as well as possible solutions and contributions for innovation.
10. Visits to the field	An important learning opportunity for USAID is to be able to visit the places where the activities of the programs are carried out, so that in this way they may understand the context and the decisions of the operator, generating in this way new proposals to improve the implementation. For this reason, it is valuable that the areas of USAID involved in the implementation can make this type of visits.	Key factors to make visits by USAID officials to the field possible are: to plan ahead and in an articulate manner with the operator, and to know and follow the travel authorization procedure of USAID.
Extra. Use of language	USAID makes a specific use of verbal, non-verbal and written language. In addition, it has a visual culture that characterizes the way to use communication channels. This makes it relevant that USAID supports the operator from the start in the process to adapt himself to the use of this language.	The construction of documents such as the quarterly report must take into account the language used by USAID, which must be kept in mind at the time of its review.



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