STOCKTAKING OF REFORMS

RESULTS OF FOCUS GROUPS AND A SURVEY CONDUCTED WITH USAID'S PARTNERS

October 1998

Stocktaking Team

PREFACE

This study was conducted under the sponsorship of Tom Fox (Assistant Administrator for Program and Policy Coordination) and Terry Brown (Assistant Administrator for Management) as part of a larger "stocktaking" effort to assess progress in bringing about reforms in the Agency's program operations.

Many staff and partners contributed to the design, analysis, and writing of the report. Principal writers were Larry S. Beyna (Management Systems International) and Chanya Charles (Academy for Educational Development). Gerry Britan (PPC/CDIE) and Diane La Voy (PPC/SPG) coordinated the effort. Liz Baltimore (PPC/CDIE/DI) led the survey design effort with assistance from: Meg Kinghorn (Interaction), Tony Pryor (AFR/SD), Diane La Voy, Hiram Larew (PPC/SPG), and Elise Storck (LPA). Larry Beyna led the study team analyzing and synthesizing the data: John Adair (Amex International), Liz Baltimore, Terry Barker (PPC/PC), Chanya Charles, Hiram Larew, Diane La Voy, and Tony Pryor. Diane Bendahmane (Environmental Health Project of G/PHN/HN) provided editorial assistance.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction. During the past four years, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has been reforming its corporate culture and the way it does business, with special emphasis on how it plans, implements and assesses the results of its development activities worldwide. In the spring and summer of 1998, a Stocktaking/Diagnostic Team of USAID staff and contractors conducted a two-staged review--a "stocktaking"--of progress in achieving the intended results of the reforms. In the first stage, the team reviewed reengineering documents and reports, led several focus groups, and conducted an Agency-wide survey of *staff* attitudes, perceptions, and experience with respect to reengineering policies and practices. In the second stage, the team conducted several focus group discussions, individual interviews, and a survey to take a similar look at reengineering from the perspective of USAID's *partners*. This report documents the results of the second-stage-- the *partner stocktaking*, provides findings from the survey, and summarizes key recommendations emanating from it.

The Partner Stocktaking Study. During the partner stocktaking, over 300 individuals working with USAID in U.S. private voluntary organizations (PVOs), host-country non-governmental organizations (NGOs), U.S. higher education institutions and organizations, and U.S. institutional contractors took the time to provide constructive, candid, detailed, and often hard-hitting responses to questions posed in the survey and focus group sessions. Some groups were over-represented in the study, others were under-represented. Over half of the survey respondents were U.S. PVOs, while only 7 percent were host-country NGOs. Very few host-country government ministries and agencies were heard from. These limitations must be considered in reading and interpreting the findings of the report.

The focus groups, interviews, and survey were all aimed at finding out what is and is not working with respect to the reforms and what USAID should do to make Agency practice more closely reflect the values, principles, and policies that have been adopted. More specifically, the team wanted to learn the source and extent of partners' knowledge of reforms in USAID; how USAID staff and offices have been working with them as partners; how the core values of the reforms (empowerment and accountability, results-oriented program operations, customer focus, teamwork and participation, and valuing diversity) are being put into practice; and what specific actions they would recommend for improvement in these and other areas of Agency practice.

Findings. The findings of the partner stocktaking are summarized in the box on the next page. Overall, partners are generally enthusiastic--possibly more so than USAID staff--about the Agency's commitment to reengineering and the values and principles that it embodies. However, they are frustrated and dissatisfied--many to the point of anger--with the

Key Findings from the Partner Stocktaking Study

Although the views of the partners vary widely among groups, and the suggestions they put forward, if implemented, could have an uneven effect across groups, there is general agreement on several key topics.

- Partners generally endorse and praise the concepts and intentions of reengineering, but they are unhappy that the reforms are not being implemented more fully, consistently, and appropriately.
- A great many partners are frustrated because most USAID managers and staff appear to lack commitment to reengineering and do not make an effort to improve their knowledge of and skill in implementing the reforms.

Advice to the Administrator

Partners want
- to be treated as real partners,
- to be assured that USAID personnel are committed to the "reengineered" operation system and possess the skills and resources to make it work,
- to see a more responsive and more accessible procurement system and a less burdensome and more appropriate approach to performance monitoring.

Reengineering Intermediate Result 1: Empowered Staff and Teams Accountable for Results

- Partners feel that they are empowered and held accountable to a moderate degree as individuals, organizations, and members of strategic objective teams.

Reengineering Intermediate Result 2: Addressing Development Needs through Customers and Partners:

- Partners report that USAID consults with them to some extent, but the level and nature of their involvement does not match USAID's own definition of partnership.
- Partners view some procurement policies as working counter to meaningful partnership.

Reengineering Intermediate Result 3: Results-Oriented Decision Making

- Partners commend the general principle of managing for results but cite problems in applying it.

Reengineering Intermediate Result 4: Responsive and Flexible Approaches for Implementation

- Partners vary in their understanding of reengineering and access to information on it.
- Partners believe USAID's reengineered operations are less flexible and responsive than intended.

inconsistent application and, in many cases, ignorance or disregard of those values and principles on the part of Agency staff and offices.

Partners are particularly troubled by the low level of their involvement on strategic objective teams and in planning USAID strategies and programs despite the rhetoric on “partnership.” Other significant areas of discontent are USAID staff’s micromanagement of partners’ activities for the purpose of managing for results, inflexible and unresponsive procurement policies and practices, insufficient training and information on reengineering not only for partners but also for Agency staff, and a burdensome and often misguided approach to defining, measuring, and reporting “results.”

On the topic of results-focus, many partners believe USAID has a tendency to define development results in isolation, not in collaboration with partners or even with host-country counterparts. They perceive an alarming bias in favor of short-term, quantifiable, and easily achievable results, and a neglect of the kinds of long-term, sustainable, and capacity-building development results they consider important. They are very frustrated with the Agency’s measurement and reporting system, which relies too often on what they consider to be inappropriate performance indicators and which has demanded more and more of their time and expense for data collection and reporting.

As for the Agency's procurement practices under reengineering, partners are frustrated by continuing delays in procurement decisions and actions, intensified micromanagement and inconsistent interpretation of the rules by contract and technical officers, and procurement policies that many partners perceive as favoring some types of partners over others. Some do not understand what their roles and responsibilities are under performance-based contracting. Specifically, they are confused about how much accountability they must assume for results that lie beyond their direct control and how much authority they are being given by the Agency to make strategic and tactical decisions about achieving the results for which they are being held accountable.

Many partners offered thoughtful advice for the Administrator on how to increase the effectiveness of USAID's reforms. They believe that the Agency needs to do much more to establish mutually supportive and collaborative partnerships. Such collaboration goes beyond merely informing partners, after the fact, of strategic and program decisions. USAID needs to share more information and training with its partners so that they can contribute more effectively. Partners strongly advised the Administrator and Agency leadership to reinforce reengineering principles and practices among USAID staff at all levels and in all offices in Washington and in the field, through example, training and skill building, and personnel actions. Finally, many partners urged the Administrator to make changes in both the procurement system and the results management and measurement system to make it easier, not harder, for them to engage in meaningful and effective development planning and activities. They recommended simpler, fairer, more partner-friendly, and less burdensome regulations, requirements, and practices. Finally, many partners encouraged the Administrator to stay on the “reengineering” track, because, despite the problems of implementation, the

principles are sound and worth the effort.

Recommendations. The findings from the partner survey, focus groups, and individual discussions, summarized above, yielded many specific recommendations for improvement. The Stocktaking Team had the difficult task of sorting and distilling them. The team believes, however, that the vast majority of partners who participated in the study would agree with the five recommendations presented below.

Recommendations

Partners recommend that . . .
1. Agency leaders and staff commit themselves to establishing true partnerships and behave accordingly.
2. USAID ensure that Agency staff understand, are committed to, and practice the values and principles of reengineering.
3. USAID improve partner access to information and training related to reengineering and program operations.
4. USAID improve the processes for measuring results.
5. USAID improve procurement policies and practices.

There is a great deal of similarity between the partners' recommendations and those offered by USAID staff earlier. Both groups are most vociferous about the necessity for USAID leadership (and staff) to commit themselves to reform. They believe that without commitment to the reforms, putting all other recommendations in place would be a useless exercise. Other points of similarity are

- an emphasis on the need for increased knowledge of the reforms among USAID staff,
- improved methods of information sharing,
- attention to problems with the USAID procurement system, and
- better indicators and methods for measuring results.

Dissimilarities stem largely from the different perspectives of the two groups.

- Staff recommend praise for those in USAID who demonstrate their commitment to the reforms, while partners tend to recommend sanctions for those who disregard the reforms.
- USAID staff believe that they are developing true partnerships with the groups with which they work, while many partners think that USAID is merely consulting them, not really involving them in decision making.
- Staff ask for specific policy and operational changes, while partners ask for consistency in the application of policy.
- Staff focus more on getting the reformed operating system to work more smoothly, while many partners press for a renewed committment to such basic concepts as partnership and local capacity building.

II. INTRODUCTION

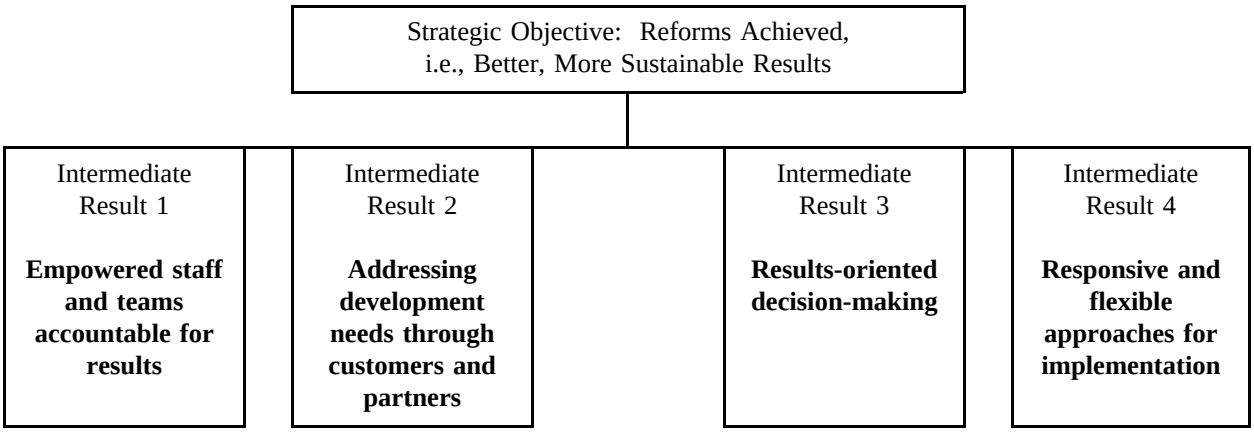
In late 1993, USAID undertook to "reengineer" its operating system--the processes for planning, approving, and carrying out its work and for monitoring and evaluating the results--as well as the supporting management and information systems. The new operating system, set forth in three core chapters of streamlined directives (the Automated Directives System) that replaced lengthy handbooks, has been official Agency procedure since October 1995.

Spurred by the Government Performance Reporting Act and by government-wide reinvention efforts, the reforms have built on Agency experience and core values. Program operations are to be oriented toward *results*, rather than on tracking inputs and outputs, so as to eliminate steps that do not contribute to the achievement of the objectives. The perspectives of the end-users ("*customers*") of USAID's programs are to inform how activities are designed, carried out and evaluated, so as to ensure that the intended results are valued and sustained in the host country. *Teamwork*--centered on "Strategic Objective Teams" that include USAID staff from different units, implementing partners, donor partners and other stakeholders--is to overcome many of the delays and reversals typical of bureaucratic, sequential decision making. (Whether through strategic objective teams or other forms of collaboration, USAID is to work cooperatively with partners "to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives...and secure customer participation.") Finally, teams are to have the necessary authority ("*empowerment*") to work for the results for which they are accountable, adjusting the particular activities and approaches as necessary.

In November 1997, the Assistant Administrators for Management and for Program and Policy Coordination launched a "stocktaking" of the reforms in Agency operations. Intended to guide senior management actions to clarify, refine, and accelerate the reforms, the assessment was proposed and guided by the Stocktaking/Diagnostic Team, consisting of about a dozen USAID staff and contractors from several bureaus and the field. The stocktaking effort was premised on a "results framework" for the intended results of the operations reforms given on page 6.

In the first stage of the effort, completed in the spring of 1998, the team reviewed documents on the Agency's experience with the new policies and procedures during the past several years, led a series of focus group discussions and interviewed Agency staff and a small number of partners on selected topics, and conducted an extensive survey of Agency staff's perceptions, opinions and recommendations on the reforms in Agency operations. The results were reported in "Stocktaking of Reforms in Agency Operations," which is available on the Agency's external web-page at http://www.info.usaid.gov/pubs/stock_report/.

USAID Reengineering: A Conceptual Results Framework



In the spring of 1998, the team pursued a second stage of the stocktaking, focusing this time on the perspectives of partners. Focus groups and a survey gathered the views of over 300 partners collaborating with USAID on programs. The majority were grantees and contractors, the largest number of these being U.S. private voluntary organizations (PVOs). The number of partners from host-country governmental and non-governmental organizations represented in the responses was disproportionately small. Nevertheless, the partner stocktaking encompassed the views of a great variety of partners, including officials and staff from U.S. private and voluntary organizations; U.S. higher education institutions, associations, and research organizations; U.S. institutional contractors; host-country organizations and governments; and other donor organizations.

This report presents the results of the stocktaking of partner perspectives on the Agency reforms. Section III, which follows this introduction, describes the methodology and the participants in the focus groups and survey. Section IV on the findings discusses how partners are perceiving and experiencing the Agency's new approaches, policies, and practices. Finally, Section V presents the partners' recommendations for improving the reform process. When possible, comparisons are drawn between the staff and partner stocktaking efforts.

In this partner stocktaking, as in the original stocktaking report, the information is treated more as a "snapshot" than as a gauge of change over time. The partner focus groups and survey provide the Agency only with baseline information against which change and progress may be measured in future research efforts.

III. METHODOLOGY AND PARTICIPANTS

The design of the stocktaking effort with USAID's partners was based primarily on the four intermediate results (IRs) from the "reengineering results framework" (see page 6). It parallels the design of the Agency staff study undertaken earlier. However, given partners' different roles and experience, the questions they were asked differed from those used with Agency staff. As a result, the findings from the two studies can be compared only at a general level.

Focus Groups

Focus Group Design. Three focus groups were designed for three different sets of partners: PVOs, higher education institutions, and U.S. institutional contractors. The focus groups sought to elicit partners' opinions on what was and was not working well in the "reengineered" USAID and what changes should be made. To focus the discussions, the study team developed an outline consisting of the following topics:

- the amount and type of training on USAID's reforms that the partners had received,
- the kinds of information on the reform process that they routinely receive and the sources of that information,
- the extent to which USAID involves them in decisions relating to Agency strategic objectives, in the field and in Washington,
- the contribution of USAID's core values to effective development work and the extent to which they reinforce or conflict with one another,
- the positive and negative implications of the Agency's results focus,
- performance-based contracting and the emphasis on performance in grants and other mechanisms, and
- recommended actions to increase the effectiveness of the reforms.

Given their expectation that USAID partners in the focus groups would not be equally involved with the Agency, the study team kept the format flexible to let the three groups concentrate on the topics most relevant to their experience.

Each focus group was to last an hour and a half and was to be facilitated by members of the Stocktaking Team. Several USAID staff would be included in the focus groups, both to hear what partners had to say and to contribute to the discussions.

Participants and Administration. Focus group participants were recruited with the help of Interaction (for the PVO focus group), the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) (for the higher education group), and the Professional

Services Council (PSC) (for the contractor group). These organizations helped identify and recruit potential participants.

Given the relatively short notice, the response was very encouraging and much appreciated. The higher education focus group was held on February 26, 1998, at the NASULGC offices. Participants included seven partners from institutions and associations across the United States, six USAID/Washington staff, and two USAID staff who served as facilitators. Although it had not been planned as part of the focus group effort, nine additional higher education partners who could not attend the focus group were linked to the session through a teleconference. The U.S. institutional contractor discussion was held on April 10, 1998, at the offices of Chemonics, Inc. Twenty contractor representatives, three USAID staff, and two USAID facilitators participated. The PVO focus group was held on April 28, 1998, at the Interaction Forum. The group included eight PVO representatives, and two USAID facilitators. USAID staff took notes on all the discussions.

Analysis. The Stocktaking Team reviewed the notes from the three focus groups (and the teleconference) and distilled them into brief summaries organized by topic. These summaries were treated as qualitative data in developing the findings and recommendations presented in this report.

Survey

Survey Design. A nineteen-question survey, a copy of which is presented in Appendix 1, was developed on the basis of the four intended outcomes in the framework. The questions aimed to elicit information in the following areas:

Respondent Characteristics

Questions 1-3 asked what type of partner organization the respondents worked for, whether they worked primarily outside or within the United States, and in which USAID region the USAID programs they worked with were located (AFR - Africa, LAC - Latin America and the Caribbean, ANE - Asia and the Near East, ENI - Europe and the Newly Independent States).

IR 1: Empowered staff and teams accountable for results

Questions 11-14 covered partners' perceptions on the extent to which teams, individuals, or partner organizations are empowered to make decisions to achieve agreed-upon objectives and held accountable for making decisions and implementing Agency-related work. All four questions were multiple-choice, involving scales from "hardly at all" to "to a great extent."

IR 2: Addressing development needs through customers and partners

Questions 9, 10, and 17, all multiple-choice questions, asked respondents to rate the increase in USAID's consultations with them and other partners and characterize the ways they interact on a regular basis with USAID offices and with USAID's customers.

IR 3: Results-oriented decision making

Question 16, an open-ended question, asked respondents to identify the strengths and weaknesses in USAID's results-focused approach to operations.

IR 4: Responsive and flexible approaches for implementation

Questions 4-8 asked respondents about their experience accessing specific Agency documents and information resources and obtaining training and information on the Agency's reformed approaches, policies, and procedures and Question 15 asked them to rate the extent to which the Agency's operating system is more flexible, as intended under reengineering.

Advice to the Agency Administrator

Question 18, an open-ended question, asked what the Administrator should do to move Agency practice closer to principle in the areas covered by the survey.

Reengineering in General

Question 19, another open-ended question, asked for additional comments on USAID's reforms.

Survey Respondents and Administration. The Stocktaking Team decided that, since there was no practical way of selecting and recruiting a representative sample of Agency partners to be surveyed, the questionnaire should be made available through the Internet, and all partners should be invited to respond. The survey was put on the Agency's website and an e-mail notice and a sample flyer on the survey were sent to all Agency staff, who were encouraged to share the flyer with the partners they knew. A reminder was e-mailed to all mission directors. The initial deadline for the receipt of questionnaires was July 15, 1998.

Because these initial notices yielded fewer responses than expected, the team extended the deadline to August 30 and sent copies of the survey to all the institutional contractors on a list maintained by the Office of Procurement; the Bureau of Humanitarian Response/Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation (BHR/PVC) sent the survey to its list of PVO partners.

As of August 31, 265 responses had been received. These served as the basis for the analysis. The few additional responses that arrived after the deadline were not included in the analysis, but the study team is quite certain that they would not have materially affected the findings given in this report.

To safeguard anonymity, respondents were not asked to identify themselves or their organizations. It is not possible to determine the percentage of organizations on USAID's PVO and contractor lists who responded to the survey because more than one individual per organization may have sent in a survey form. However, it is known how many questionnaires were received from the different types of partners, whether those partners were located within or outside the United States, and the regions in which those partners did business with USAID. These data are shown in the table on page 11.

Analysis. Of the fifteen specific questions about the reforms, twelve were multiple choice. Responses to these lent themselves readily to quantitative analysis. In analyzing the quantitative data, the study team first looked at the responses from the entire sample and then disaggregated the responses by

- type of partner organization,
- primary work location (outside or within the United States), and
- membership or nonmembership on a strategic objective team.

It was not possible to disaggregate the responses by USAID region because many respondents indicated that they worked in programs in two or more regions, and there was no way to link their responses to their experiences in a specific region.

In several quantitative questions respondents were asked to choose one of five standard responses: "don't know," "hardly at all," "somewhat," "to some extent," and "to a great extent." Unfortunately, because the responses did not include "not at all," a positive bias may have been inadvertently built into these questions. Also, when analyzing the data, the study team felt that "somewhat" and "to some extent" are so close in meaning that they should be given equal weight in computing an average. After excluding the "don't know" responses, the study team calculated average ratings by assigning one point to "hardly at all," two points to "somewhat" or "to some extent," and three points to "to a great extent."

In several questions, respondents were asked to check all items that applied to them from a list. For these questions, the study team calculated the percentage of those checking each item.

The summary data from the quantitative analyses are presented in Appendix 2.

The remaining three survey questions (16, 18, and 19) asked for written comments. The study team carried out a content analysis of these responses, counting the responses that fell into specific categories. The results of this analysis appear as Section IV on the findings. Also included are a great many quotations from respondents. These represent the *full range* of opinions received and should not be read as the "average" opinion.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS			
Respondent Characteristics	**Sub-Group**	**Number**	**Percentage of Total[1]**
Type of partner organization in which respondent works	U.S. Private Voluntary Organization (PVO)	135	51%
	U.S. Higher Education Institution, Association, or Research Entity (referred to in this report as a "U.S. Higher Education Partner")	40	15%
	U.S. Institutional Contractor	46	17%
	Non-Government Organization (NGO) Association, or Firm Based in a Host Country (referred to in this report as a Host-Country "NGO Partner")	18	7%
	Other (This group includes 2 from a Government Ministry, Agency or Local Government of a Host Country and 4 from a Bilateral, Multilateral, or Other International Donor or Financial Institution. They were included here because of their small numbers.)	26	10%
Locale in which the respondent works	Primarily Outside the United States	181	69%
	Primarily Inside the United States	81	31%
Region(s) with programs in which respondent works	Africa	129	49%
	Asia and the Near East	100	38%
	Europe and the Newly Independent States	112	42%
	Latin American and the Caribbean	133	50%
	Other	27	10%

[1]In the locale category, 3 respondents did not answer. In the region category, respondents were asked to check all the regions that applied; therefore the total is more than 100 percent.

Caveats

The table above breaks down the survey respondents by type. The number of U.S. PVOs that responded to the survey exceeded all other partner groups. Over 50 percent of the surveys returned came from them. Under-represented groups included host-country government ministries or agencies--only two responses were received--and bilateral or international donors--only four responses were received. There was a similar lack of balance in the focus groups. Only three groups--one for PVOs, one for contractors, and one for higher education

institutions--were held; there was no group for host-country governmental or non-governmental officials or other types of partners. It is important to keep these factors in mind when considering the findings and recommendations. Under-representation of host-country organizations is especially unfortunate because of their centrality to the development processes that USAID supports. Another important caveat is that all partners do not speak with one voice; their perspectives on particular issues may differ. For example, PVOs and contractors have markedly different perspectives on some procurement issues; solving a problem identified by a PVO might create a new problem for a contractor and vice versa. At the same time, there is considerable agreement on the overall thrust of the findings.

IV. FINDINGS

The findings of both the focus groups and the survey are presented in this section, and where possible, they are compared with the findings of the stocktaking among Agency staff completed earlier in 1998. There are seventeen findings: two major, broad findings; eleven specific findings directly related to the four reengineering intermediate results from the framework given in Section II (page 6), and four suggestions for the USAID Administrator.

General Findings

Finding 1: Partners generally endorse and praise the concepts and intentions of reengineering, but they are unhappy that the reforms are not being implemented more fully, consistently, and appropriately.

When asked for additional comments on USAID's reforms (Question 19), approximately 175 comments that could be classified as positive or negative were received from the 145 respondents who answered that question. About 40 percent of the comments were positive and 60 percent negative. Most of the positive comments related to the values and principles inherent in USAID's new policies and procedures. Partners spoke positively about the desirability of more flexible and streamlined processes, customer focus, managing for results, broader participation, effective collaboration with partners, and sustainable development. Many applauded USAID for its efforts and encouraged the Agency to keep moving in what they felt was the right direction. Some acknowledged the difficulties encountered in changing an organization and its culture but encouraged the Agency to keep trying.

> *"It's a move in the right direction."*
> -- U.S. PVO working in AFR and LAC
>
> *"USAID's change to a more participatory and transparent process has contributed to more effective partnerships...."* -- U.S. PVO working in ANE, ENI, and LAC
>
> *"Keep trying; it's important; we all recognize that you have made progress and that this is not easy."* -- U.S. PVO working in AFR, ENI, and LAC

While numerous partners applauded USAID's reengineering intentions and theory, many of those same partners and a great many more expressed frustration and disappointment with how the reforms are being carried out (or, in many cases, are being ignored). In addition to many general comments about USAID's not "walking its talk" and reengineering as more form than substance, partners in both the focus groups and the survey were quite negative about USAID's failure to accept them as true partners, inadequate information and training for partners, unsatisfactory procurement policies and practices, and problems with USAID leadership and staff, such as mixed messages, micromanagement, and unprofessionalism.

Findings from the Partner Stocktaking Study

General:

1. Partners generally endorse and praise the concepts and intentions of reengineering, but they are unhappy that the reforms are not being implemented more fully, consistently, and appropriately.
2. A great many partners are frustrated because most USAID managers and staff appear to lack commitment to the reforms and do not make an effort to improve their knowledge of and skill in implementing them.

Reengineering Intermediate Result 1: Empowered Staff and Teams Accountable for Results:

3. Partners feel only moderately empowered and held accountable as individuals, organizations, or members of teams, and their feeling of empowerment is not as strong as their feeling of being held accountable.
4. Partners perceive strategic objective teams to be slightly less empowered and held accountable than do USAID staff.

Reengineering Intermediate Result 2: Addressing Development Needs through Customers and Partners

5. Partners report that USAID is consulting with them to some extent, but, for the most part, the level and nature of their involvement does not match their expectations.
6. Partners view some of USAID's procurement policies and practices as working counter to meaningful partnership and other reengineering values.
7. PVOs and higher education partners believe that changes in procurement practices have led to a growing tendency for the Agency to treat grants and cooperative agreements like contracts, with results as required deliverables, and to a narrowing of the USAID "playing field" so that only larger partners with more USAID experience have a good chance to compete.
8. Many partners report that they regularly consult with USAID's customers, most commonly through site visits, meetings, and telephone or e-mail interactions.

Reengineering Intermediate Result 3: Results-Oriented Decision Making

9. Partners commend the general *principle* of managing for results.
10. Partners report that they are experiencing some serious problems with the Agency's new focus on results. These are caused by (a) inconsistent or poor implementation of the results approach among USAID staff; (b) inappropriate results and performance indicators; and (c) the increasingly heavy burden that measuring results is placing on partners.

Reengineering Intermediate Result 4: Responsive and Flexible Approaches for Achieving Results

11. Partners view USAID's reengineered operations system as less flexible and responsive than intended.
12. Partners have less access to information on reengineering and program operations than they need.
13. Partners vary considerably in their knowledge of and skills in USAID's reengineered approaches, policies, and procedures.

Advice to the Administrator

14. Partners want the Administrator and the Agency as a whole to listen seriously to them, i.e., to establish and maintain a meaningful partnership of minds and ideas.
15. Partners want the Administrator and USAID's senior leadership to ensure that Agency staff have the skills, resources, and commitment to make reengineering work.
16. Partners want the Agency procurement system to be more responsive, more accessible, and more sensitive to differences among types of partners.
17. Partners want USAID to develop a more appropriate, more flexible, and less burdensome approach for defining, measuring, and reporting program performance.

"There has been a lot of busy activity on the part of USAID, but it has not fundamentally changed what we do in the field....Reengineering has not reduced the bureaucracy; it has replaced it with a different one." -- U.S. institutional contractor working in AFR and ANE

"In some ways it seems that reengineering has produced greater centralization." -- U.S. higher education partner working in AFR

"So far, it appears that the changes...are more form than substance. There still needs to be more flexibility in allowing PVOs to try innovative strategies. There is still too much micromanagement by USAID. That said, there have been some improvements and there are some very good people working within USAID." -- U.S. PVO working in LAC

"USAID is a political entity which takes direction from State, NSC, Congress, etc. Hence, it is not an autonomous manager of its resources; it is an administrator of other people's management decisions. Hence, application of the reengineering model, designed...for private industry is fundamentally flawed by a USG agency." -- U.S. institutional contractor working in ANE

"From a field perspective, I feel that reengineering has done little to improve impact of our activities and, in fact, takes precious time away from our activities, thus diminishing our impact." -- U.S. PVO working in AFR

"You may have reformed the wording, but you have not reformed the organization and its people." -- U.S. PVO working in LAC

The same pattern of positive reactions to the principles of reengineering coupled with negative observations about its implementation showed up in the survey question asking respondents to note the strengths and weaknesses of the Agency's focus on results (Question 16). Nearly all respondents who answered the question pointed out both the strengths of the results-focus concept, and the weaknesses in how the concept is being interpreted or carried out.

Although the study team did not record the specific comments of partners in the focus groups, the general sense of those discussions is consistent with the results of the survey. In all three groups, partners noted that the basic reengineering concepts are good, but many problems exist in how those concepts are applied, especially with respect to partners.

Finding 2: A great many partners are frustrated because most USAID managers and staff appear to lack commitment to the reforms and do not make an effort to improve their knowledge of and skills in implementing them.

A great many partners are frustrated (some to the point of outright anger) with the spotty and slow application and institutionalization of reengineering in the daily practices of USAID leadership and staff. The ratios of negative to positive comments in answers to open-ended survey questions on USAID's reforms and the focus on results (Questions 19 and 16) are approximately ten to one and four to one, respectively. These reactions do not differ notably by type of partner or location; in other words, the frustration is widespread.

Many partners observed that "reengineering" is not universally understood or uniformly applied by USAID staff and operating units. Differences between Washington and field staff

and technical and contract officers, across different field offices, and among staff in the various sectors and top and mid-level managers were all cited as causing confusion in the implementation of the reforms.

Many partners are troubled by the lack of Agency discipline in making sure that staff put the reforms into practice, especially those that relate to partners. According to one of the partner focus groups, there appears to be very little real accountability in USAID, whether for results or for the administrative and program processes that are expected to lead to results. Several respondents mentioned that USAID staff performance in implementing the reforms did not appear to affect promotions, onward assignments, or other incentives.

> *"[One weakness is] contacting people at USAID. Often phone calls are not answered and e-mails ignored."* -- U.S. higher education partner working in LAC
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> *"It is very difficult to 'reengineer' when USAID employees will not return phone calls or respond to written communications."* -- U.S. PVO working in AFR, ENI, and LAC

Partners observed a lack of clarity within the Agency about lines of authority, levels of real empowerment, and accountability that prevents it from helping partners achieve its development results. For example, the Agency's foreign service national employees (FSNs), in many cases, have been given more responsibility in the name of empowerment and accountability, but they have not been given the necessary training to carry out their responsibility effectively. In some cases, they are not given the authority to make decisions without being second-guessed, questioned, or over-ruled by other Agency staff.

Many survey respondents cited a lack of professionalism, trust, collaboration, and consultation and too much micromanagement on the part of some USAID staff in dealing with partners. These criticisms get at the heart of what true partnership means.

> *"All direct hires come and go, but FSNs serve as institutional memory of most USAID missions. Delegate them greater authority, and hold them accountable for decisions taken, if you want to build a true and lasting culture based on results."* -- an NGO partner working in LAC

All of this said, it is worth noting the suggestion made in the U.S. institutional contractor focus group: it is unrealistic to expect that all of USAID's missions will be able to put the reforms in place at the same rate and with equal success. Similarly, work in some of USAID's sectors is inherently more results-focused or more partner-focused than others.

Partners' frustration with the Agency's leadership and staff is widespread, but, in the survey and in the focus groups, partners cited several examples of meaningful partnership, of beneficial procurement and other mechanisms, of effective leadership at the operating unit and strategic objective levels, and

Four Partners' Overview of "Reengineering"

"The cover letter to this survey said that USAID's reengineering is premised on 'achieving results that our customers value by engaging in better partnerships and teamwork.' An excellent premise, that has not been put into practice at all by the Bureau we work with most. Integrity and respect are important parts of partnership and we have seen very little of either. They do not work cooperatively, and the results we report on are not 'mutually agreed upon.' Our concerns with the SO and IRs were never addressed. We report on the indicators we are forced to report on, and the true 'end-users' in the field generally find the indicators laughable and a depressing waste of development assistance funding. We provide all the data USAID has asked for and then seem to be endlessly asked for additional data, even asked to draft the R4 for our project officer. I applaud USAID seeking input from its 'partners' via this survey. My experience with USAID over the last three years leads me to expect that my answers will be ignored because it is not what USAID wants to hear. As a strong supporter of development assistance and of all aspects of USAID's stated objectives, I am completely disappointed in what the Agency has become and in the future of reengineering." -- U.S. PVO working in all four regions

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"I've worked within and outside of USAID for over 15 years. I think the foundations in the OPS BAA report need to be looked at time and time again. Some of the essence of that report has been lost as procurement and contract issues have impeded progress. Concepts like the Expanded SO team, which include partners much more, should be reinvigorated. Recognize that what reengineering calls for will mean much more time because of the nature of teamwork, but that should be valued, not dismissed as useless (partners need to understand and support this as much as USAID staff!). Information technology and its contribution to doing 'business' needs to be better understood--the technology part of it (NMS [New Management System] to the contrary) may be much easier to accomplish than the human aspects of use, interaction, communication, and collaboration. The human dimensions need a great deal more attention as USAID moves further into the Information Age...." -- U.S. Institutional Contractor working in AFR

"Reengineering is understood well by M/OP [Management/Office of Procurement], PPC, and LPA [Legislative and Public Affairs Bureau], and there has been good leadership in this regard within each of those bureaus. At programmatic and operational levels, reengineering often is not at all apparent. It appears that many senior career staff ignore or are not cognizant of new policy guidance regarding grants and cooperative agreements, for instance. It has been necessary to give USAID officers copies of new M Bureau policy guidance when they seemed to be requiring things contrary to new policy. Partnership in many quarters of the Agency is a PR word rather than a deed. Some Agency senior managers refer to partners in belittling terms. There remains obsession with control and fixation on narrowly (pre-)defined results and indicators. Control is exercised in many ways--such as requiring inappropriate clearances and suggesting that things may not go well for future funding unless certain directives are followed. There should be required training for senior managers in the Agency's new way of doing business, and rewards and sanctions tied to performance." -- U.S. higher education partner working in all four regions

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"It was a good intention, but at least within the ___ center, it has not resulted in less work, paperwork and bureaucracy, but rather more for us. We have to report on too many indicators, which are not representative of what we really do and accomplish. We feel like we are being micromanaged even more now than ever before. Such a system can work only if the individuals implementing it can let go of the old way and relinquish their 'power positions,' but in our case that is not the case. I spend at least 50 percent of my time on the job corresponding, reporting or collecting data for USAID's performance monitoring, and I don't think that is how conservation is achieved." -- NGO working in AFR, ANE and LAC

"The people we deal with at USAID are great." -- an "Other" partner working in ENI and LAC

"Good staff support to answer questions and concerns." -- U.S. PVO working in ENI

"[I]n the context of our university linkage project we have been able to work very effectively because those with whom we deal in Washington understand our objectives and provide us the flexibility necessary for effective implementation. It is hard to tell whether we are just lucky in dealing with outstanding USAID personnel or if this reflects a new system or both." -- U.S. higher education partner working in AFR

so on. These examples, however, appear to be the exceptions rather than common practice, at least in the eyes of the partners.

IR 1: Empowered staff and teams accountable for results

For USAID's reforms to succeed, individuals, teams, and partner organizations must be empowered, with real authority, to make decisions to achieve agreed-upon objectives, and they should be held accountable for the decisions they make and the work that they implement.

Finding 3: Partners feel only moderately empowered and held accountable as individuals, organizations, or members of teams, and their feeling of empowerment is not as strong as their feeling of being held accountable.

"In a few missions where I have seen full partner engagement and empowerment of FSNs and implementing partners, the results are well worth the time and energy." -- U.S. institutional contractor working in AFR

Regarding *empowerment*, partners who are strategic objective team members reported in the survey that their teams are empowered "somewhat or to some extent" to make decisions to achieve agreed-upon objectives. Host-country NGO partners reported a slightly higher-than-average rating of team empowerment, and U.S. institutional contractors, a slightly lower-than-average rating. The same pattern of responses held for partners' perceptions of individual or organizational empowerment, although partners working primarily inside the United States reported being slightly less empowered than partners working outside the United States.

"Few of the team leaders responsible for partnerships and team leading have any formal training or preparation for this important role. As a consequence, strategic planning meetings, performance monitoring plan development, etc. are often poorly led. Many team players are numbed into agreement/consent by lengthy and badly facilitated processes." -- U.S. Institutional Contractor working in all four regions

Regarding *accountability*, partners who are members of strategic objective teams reported that they are being held accountable "somewhat or to some extent" for their decisions and work, but their sense of accountability is somewhat stronger than their sense of empowerment. Both host-country NGO and U.S. PVO partners have higher-than-average perceptions of team accountability, and U.S. higher education partners and institutional contractors rated their team accountability relatively lower.

Individual or organizational accountability received higher average ratings than team accountability across the board. The levels of perceived accountability are slightly higher for partners working outside the United States than for those working inside the United States.

Finding 4: Partners perceive strategic objective teams to be slightly less empowered and held accountable than do USAID staff.

While the data from the stocktaking surveys of Agency staff and partners are not totally comparable, they suggest that partners see strategic objective teams as a little less empowered and accountable than staff do. The partners' survey rated team empowerment at slightly less than "somewhat or to some extent" (1.8 point average), while Agency staff rated it slightly higher (2.1). Similarly, partners gave team accountability a 2.0 rating, while staff gave it a 2.2 rating.

"There is a big difference between 'consulting with us' (Q 9 of the survey) and acting on what we say." -- NGO working in AFR and LAC

IR 2: Addressing development needs through customers and partners

The reforms call for increased participation of customers and partners in planning, achieving, and monitoring and evaluating development programs. In discussions with partners and in the survey, "customers" were defined as "the recipients of USAID assistance," "partners" as the groups who work with USAID (listed in Question 1 of the survey).

"Staffing constraints make it difficult to apply reengineering principles--especially those involving consultation with stakeholders and clients." -- U.S.-based Bilateral, Multilateral or Other International Donor or Financial Institution working in AFR, ANE and LAC

"The USAID personnel in our program are so overworked they do not have time to engage us in such discussions [i.e., of results]." -- U.S. PVO working in ENI

Finding 5: Partners report that USAID is consulting with them to some extent, but, for the most part, the level and nature of their involvement does not match their expectations.

In the survey, partners reported that USAID is consulting with them and their colleagues "somewhat more" than in the past. Between one-fourth and

"USAID has become much more consultative and supportive. While they tend to promote results, what we most appreciate is the value added they have also provided through their own team and individual experience and technical capacities to ensure that those results are achieved." -- U.S. PVO based in ANE

"Each mission is different....USAID/Lithuania did an EXCELLENT job reengineering, and my experience there was terrific. Partners were empowered, appreciated the involvement and the program worked better for it. USAID/____ is different. 'Partners' is not an accurate word, and even the staff are not empowered to make strategic decisions. Local perspectives are entirely ignored and are not sought out. The Mission has been missed from the reengineering process entirely." -- U.S. institutional contractor based in ENI

one-third of all the respondents reported that they interact with USAID through the following mechanisms: regular meetings on strategic planning, implementation, and performance measurement; consultation focus groups, meetings, or interviews; regular meetings concerning procurement actions; and regular meetings to evaluate program results or the effectiveness of development approaches. Host-country NGOs as a group reported relatively more participation, and U.S. higher education partners reported relatively less. Partners working outside the United States report more evidence of consultation than those working inside the United States, and, as expected, partners serving on strategic objective teams reported considerably more involvement in USAID's program operations than non-team members.

"The principles behind reengineering are excellent: to manage for results, adapt to changing circumstances, enter into true partnerships, etc....Some of the processes that some bureaus and missions are using are good, too: lots of training with partners on the principles and practices, developing strategic objectives and intermediate results in true partnership and working to develop SOs and IRs that reflect the realities of development assistance....

"The actual practice of reengineering at USAID to me seems a complete failure. USAID staff seem to apply the principles inconsistently within a single office, and across offices. Our project officer seems to have listened to none of the training; we quote the definitions of SO and IR that we were taught by USAID and he has made up his own different set of definitions. Many USAID staff have misunderstood (or made no attempt to understand) the focus on results and have lost sight of the many PROCESSES that USAID assistance contributes to, many of which take years to show results...things like capacity building and institutional strengthening, which are so critical to long-term results and which are what so many of USAID's customers in health care, conservation, democracy, etc. are seeking assistance with...." -- U.S. PVO working in AFR, ANE, and ENI.

Despite evidence of participation and the reports of some meaningful, successful partnerships, the survey and the focus groups convey the predominant impression that teamwork and participation are simply not working the way they were intended. It is revealing that, in the survey, about 20 percent of the partners identified themselves as members of strategic objective teams (Question 11), yet only about one-third of partners on teams reported that they meet regularly with their teams (Question 10). This discrepancy suggests that partners' involvement on teams is less than full.

Although the evidence suggests that there may be more consultation with partners now than in the past, most partners' involvement in program decision-making appears to be limited to providing input through consultation, often after planning and other decisions have been made. Partners do not see their involvement as a true partnership, with staff and partners working together as peers. Similarly, many partners described a tendency among strategic objective teams to operate as internal USAID teams, with little meaningful involvement of partners. In many cases, partners are not on strategic objective teams at all, and, if they are, it is just for consultation purposes.

One PVO partner suggested that partners with demonstrated experience levels in particular sectors should be more involved in strategic objective teams. Each strategic objective team might survey potential PVO and NGO candidates in a particular sector or country and make an individual nominated by the partner community a permanent, or perhaps rotating, member of the team.

Partners' concerns about the amounts and types of consultation suggest that USAID needs to clarify its expectations regarding the respective roles of USAID staff and partners in program operations and communicate them more effectively. For example, the roles of contractors, grantees, and USAID "cognizant technical officers" (CTOs) are structured (and limited) by acquisition and assistance processes and regulations. While effective teamwork requires open communication and collegial give-and-take of ideas, formal norms of communication govern the grant and contract processes. In the USAID context, partners are often involved in both kinds of relationships. This can be confusing. It is worth noting that currently the Agency is revising its guidance on how to engage partners without incurring conflicts of interest and documenting effective techniques that missions use.

> *"Things are getting out of control in the RFP [request for proposal] area. The COs [contract officers] are freelancing, with the result that many RFPs are customized to a frustrating extent. Everything is different. OP has to get things back under control. No sign at all that it is happening."* -- U.S. institutional contractor working in all four regions

According to the U.S. PVO focus group participants, some USAID missions have been successful in involving their partners in decision-making, but those successes are personality-driven, not system-driven.

> *"Nothing has changed. Missions and AID/Washington offices occasionally go to some effort to make it appear that decision-making is more consultative, but they greatly exaggerate and/or misrepresent the degree of consultation in which they have engaged with 'partners.' There is less consultation today than 10 years ago." -- U.S. higher education partner working in all four regions*

In the higher education institutions focus group, a participant pointed out that the costs of participation, in terms of time and travel, often inhibit partners' participation. E-mail is sometimes an acceptable alternative, but USAID should not assume that all its partners have access to e-mail. Higher education partners also expressed a desire to have more opportunities to comment on development objectives and participate in the development and testing of new strategies and models.

Finding 6: Partners view some of USAID's procurement policies and practices as working counter to meaningful partnership and other reengineering values.

Partners had a lot to say about USAID's procurement policies and practices both in survey comments and in the focus groups. For example, participants in the U.S. PVO focus group and many survey respondents perceived a tendency within the Agency to treat grants and cooperative agreements like contracts, with generally more restrictions and requirements. In addition, U.S. PVOs and U.S. higher education partners are concerned about what they perceive as a shift in USAID toward using competitive procurements for activities that used to be carried out under grants.

Partners express uncertainty about procurement policies and practices. They believe that the rules of the game are not clear, and, in many cases, they feel badly treated by the system. Two key procurement issues raised are the apparent advantages of incumbency and the different rules that govern contractors' and non-profits' relationship to USAID during conceptualization of and competition for RFPs or RFAs. That non-profits are allowed to consult with USAID while contractors are prohibited from doing so is viewed by contractors as unfair and detrimental to USAID's work in the long run. Partners want a transparent procurement system--one with clear rules understood by all.

In the U.S. higher education partner focus group, participants cited cases in which association partners are being forced to serve as subcontractors to private firms to do work that they once did on their own under grants, both unsolicited and solicited. This appears to be due, at least in part, to the decision of an increasing number of operating units to combine what used to be discrete grant activities into large procurements, for which U.S. higher education partners are not positioned to compete on their own.

> *"The frustration of land grant universities with USAID has resulted in their turning to USDA as a preferred partner for international activities."*
> -- U.S. higher education partner working in all four regions

According to one partner's survey response, if USAID truly wants to work with universities in its programs, it must not require a 25-percent matching contribution from them because universities cannot use public funds earmarked for student education to underwrite international development activities. (The Agency abolished the 25-percent matching requirement in 1994. Current guidance delegates authority to the operational unit to determine the appropriate level of contribution.)

In short, on the topic of procurement, USAID's various partners want fairness of opportunity and respect for their different strengths and experiences in doing business with and for USAID. They do not want USAID and its staff to treat all its partners as a monolithic, like-minded, mutually supportive, and equally positioned group. For-profit firms are not the same as non-profit PVOs, host-country NGOs, and higher education institutions. Moreover, USAID's partners' relationships with one another can vary depending on the circumstances: on one occasion several partners may be competing for limited USAID business and support; on another, those same partners may be collaborating to win USAID business or to implement a USAID program.

At an operational level, many partners cited procurement delays (due, apparently, to inadequate staff and procedures), difficulty in getting information about requests for proposals (RFPs) and requests for agreements (RFAs) in Washington and in the field, and variation across staff and offices in the interpretation of procurement rules. For example, a major source of frustration for some institutional contractor partners--but clearly not all, given their differences--is the continued dissimilarity in approach and philosophy between USAID technical officers (CTOs--Cognizant Technical Officers or COTRs--Contract Office Technical Representatives) and USAID contract officers (COs). A number of partners expressed the view that with some exceptions, compared to technical officers, contract officers tend to be less willing to take risks, take more time to make decisions affecting the funding of partners' activities, and exert more control over inputs needed by partners for flexible implementation (which strikes at the heart of performance-based contracting). Some partners expressed the opinion that USAID should make it easy for contractors implementing performance-based contracts to manage their inputs flexibly, through such mechanisms as timely approval of short-term technical assistance.

According to quite a few partners, performance-based contracting is causing problems and even alienating some USAID partners. For some, performance-based contracting has done little to reduce micromanagement by both CTOs and COs. Performance-based contracting is new and not well understood by many USAID staff and partners. Some are confused and filled with trepidation about developing and interpreting RFPs, reaching agreement about the results that fairly lie within the contractor's manageable interest, setting standards for and scoring contractor performance, and approving award fees. Finally, performance-based contracting was cited as exacerbating the problems of conflict of interest and inhibiting consultation, especially at the important stage of program and activity design.

> *"A cost-reimbursable IQC [indefinite quantity contract] structure relying upon audited indirect rates was long overdue. It permits access by USAID to institutional know-how and intellectual property, from which USAID had previously been cut off, as the old 'bid a multiplier' approach necessitated the use of consultants for staffing USAID assignments. Its appearance in the ENI local government assistance IQC is noted and appreciated."* -- U.S. institutional contractor working in ANE, ENI, and LAC

Partners' perceptions of USAID's procurement approach are not all negative, however. Several partners offered positive observations about the procurement system since reengineering. For example, one survey respondent noted more consistency in what RFAs and RFPs ask for and how they ask for it and in how proposals are scored. Another noted that posting RFAs and RFPs on the Internet for public comment is a step in the right direction. A third pointed to the task-order mechanism as an attempt to break out of the "tyranny of the contracts process." In the U.S. PVO focus group, the PVC RFA workshops and the use of e-mail to conduct procurement business were given high marks.

Finding 7: PVOs and higher education partners believe that changes in procurement practices have led to a growing tendency for the Agency to treat grants and cooperative agreements like contracts, with results as required deliverables, and to a narrowing of the USAID "playing field" so that only larger partners with more USAID experience have a good chance to compete.

Many partners are upset about what they perceive as USAID's growing tendency to include specific USAID-determined results and deliverables in grants and agreements, which previously allowed much more flexibility and autonomy. According to these partners, this trend not only affects the USAID-partner relationship--i.e., changes it from a more collegial to a more commercial one--but also limits experimentation with new approaches and tools. The outcome of such experimentation may not be easy to determine at the outset. The Agency's focus on results also presents difficulties for partners in defining the specific results for which they are to be held *accountable* and which they will be empowered to achieve.

> *"By focusing on results and requiring quarterly reporting, the new system encourages contractors, grantees, and cooperators to stay in closer contact with customers. This is a strength...."* -- U.S. PVO working in ENI

Many partners report that USAID's results-focused strategies (combined with efficiencies in contracting and reduced budgets and staff) are making it harder for small partners and small-scale activities to obtain USAID's support. Smaller partners simply cannot afford to pay the overhead costs of bidding on contracts and writing competitive grant proposals. If they do win the work, they cannot absorb the added, unreimbursed costs of collecting data and reporting results above and beyond the requirements of their grants and contracts.

Finding 8: Many partners report that they regularly consult with USAID's customers, most commonly through site visits, meetings, and telephone or e-mail interactions.

The survey asked partners to check all the mechanisms they used to consult regularly with USAID's customers, defined as "the recipients of USAID's assistance." Sixty-one percent reported that they use site visits, 50 percent regular meetings, 48 percent regular telephone or e-mail interactions, 40 percent planning workshops, 33 percent surveys, and 24 percent focus groups. None of the respondents reported using rapid appraisal methods.

About the Results Focus of the New Operations System:

"Strengths: This gives the mandate for accountability and forces everyone to plan their actions according to results hoped for. It also puts much more emphasis on evaluation to improve our achievement of results. In our case, it has forced a very healthy discussion among grantees of USAID in the same program to coordinate efforts to achieve results as a program. The planning and coordination focused on results has resulted in a better designed and more effective program.

"Weaknesses: This can and should be overcome, but there is a real tendency to trivialize indicators of long-term and complex process results in the area of the environment, because of ease of measurement. For example, when the results we want are policy changes or behavior changes, the tendency is to select indicators such as 'number of persons trained' or 'number of hectares' because of ease of measurement. We need more training and research to develop more relevant indicators for these types of results." -- U.S. PVO working in LAC

U.S. PVOs and U.S. contractors reported the greatest use of mechanisms for consulting customers and U.S. higher education partners the least. Partners working outside the United States make greater use of every mechanism for consulting customers than those working inside the United States. Strategic objective team members use the mechanisms more than non-members. The most common mechanisms used by strategic objective team members are site visits and regular meetings with their customers.

Nearly half of the survey respondents reported that they regularly use "other" mechanisms besides the ones listed in the survey question. Although not all respondents identified what those other methods were, several mentioned day-to-day contact within USAID-funded activities, evaluations, and training needs assessments.

IR 3: Results-oriented decision making

An increased focus on results in planning, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating development programs is an important aspect of the reforms. It is especially important for strategic objective teams to increase their use of performance information in making decisions about program strategies and activities.

Finding 9: Partners commend the general *principle* of managing for results.

In the focus group discussions and in answer to survey Question 16, partners expressed a nearly unanimous positive opinion of the Agency's new focus on results. According to the partners, the focus on results has several strengths: it emphasizes clarity in program planning and implementation; it views development strategies in a comprehensive and flexible way; it is built on the solid logic of the results framework, i.e., the concepts of measuring performance at the level of program results and promoting partner participation. Agency

> *"USAID does a fairly good job of updating policies and procedures, but does a fairly poor job of getting that information onto the Internet and keeping it current."* -- NGO working in AFR, ANE, and LAC

staff held similar positive opinions about the focus on results.

Finding 10: Partners report that they are experiencing some serious problems with the Agency's new focus on results. These are caused by (a) inconsistent or poor implementation of the results approach among USAID staff; (b) inappropriate results and performance indicators; and (c) the increasingly heavy burden that measuring results is placing on partners.

According to USAID partners, shifting to a focus on real impact and end results has helped USAID staff and partners to think more clearly about program designs and implementation. They also noted that, in missions where leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the purpose of "reengineering," managing for results is worth the time and energy.

> *"The new system seems designed to achieve more sustainability in projects, and this is a positive thing. The focus on results also helps planners and practitioners better organize their work...."* -- U.S. PVO partner working in AFR
>
> *"...[W]here individuals and teams understand how to use information and are able to 'translate' it into adaptive management action, they can be quite effective."* -- U.S. institutional contractor working in AFR

In general, however, partners are concerned about inconsistent or poor implementation of reforms related to results. For example, according to some institutional contractors, an unfortunate by-product of the use of results frameworks and results packages is that short shrift is being paid to design in some USAID quarters. The lack of funds specifically dedicated to program and activity design exacerbates this perceived tendency. According to some USAID partners, RFPs now include very little documentation and are based on insufficient analysis. As a result, they believe, contracts are founded on weak design, and, in some cases, contractors have to do design work on their own without compensation.

Contractors cite some attempts to address this problem. For example, some operating units have integrated design and implementation in a single contract; others have funded separate concept papers and implementation tasks. These approaches are still more the exception than the rule, however.

> *"There is a danger that the focus on short-term results becomes overemphasized, with the presumption that something must be achievable in the very short run or it may not be worth doing."* -- U.S. institutional contractor working in ENI and LAC

Partners observed that the Agency's focus on defining results has given rise to tensions and, in some cases, counterproductive tendencies. Managing for results can conflict with the reality that resource allocation is often driven by political and policy considerations. In addition, the

focus on results unintentionally promotes a tendency to manage for low-level, easily achievable, short-term results that are easily quantifiable. Performance-based contracting reinforces this tendency. As one partner put it, if USAID is interested only in short-term results, it should expect "underpromising" from its partners. Furthermore, for some partners, e.g., higher education institutions, USAID's focus on short-term results limits their ability to partner with the Agency because so much of their strength lies in long-term capacity building and research and development.

The focus on managing for results sometimes causes Agency staff to screen out thoughtful consideration of the process of development and broader development outcomes, both of which are considered very important by partners and the host-country community. Collateral benefits that accrue to partners themselves, particularly those located within host countries, may also be overlooked. In some cases, a narrow focus on results distances USAID from such key stakeholders as host-country governments and PVOs.

> *"The end results are measured in quantitative terms, like the amount served or the number of lives saved. However, the quality of the service should be equally important."* -- U.S. PVO working in ENI

The higher education institutions focus group discussed the difficulty of putting together a results package in response to an RFP or RFA when much of what the strategic objective team has developed and written about the results framework (generally with little involvement of its partners) has been distilled into a mere paragraph or two in the RFP. In their view, this is not a meaningful focus on results.

> *"Completely inconsistent messages have been given to us about what our indicator information is for; first, we were assured it was all to be used to defend the existence of USAID to Congress; then we were told it was to protect the bureau that funds us from losing funds to other bureaus; then we were told it was to compete our project against other projects funded by the same bureau."* -- U.S. PVO working in AFR, ANE, and ENI

Many partners had a great deal to say about USAID's use of performance indicators and performance measurement. With some exceptions (e.g., U.S. PVO focus group participants praised the Food-for-Peace indicators), partners questioned the quality and appropriateness of many of the indicators in use. Particularly troubling, in their view, is the failure of indicators to capture such important development results as capacity building and sustainable change.

Partners questioned the wisdom of using different indicators in operating units with similar programs and expected results and of changing indicators mid-stream, as they feel is frequently done. They objected to USAID's insistence on collecting performance data annually, when such data are either unavailable or unreliable. They expressed confusion over the many lists of indicators issued by USAID/Washington. Partners would like the Agency to establish common indicators for common activities and results but also to allow indicators to be customized for programs with

unique characteristics.

Many partners expressed anxiety about the Agency's increased emphasis on tying funding of partner activities to performance and viewed some indicators as questionable. Many partners, particularly U.S. PVO-based partners, have lost much of their autonomy in deciding how to measure program effectiveness and impact. Some even suggested that USAID staff are using performance measurement for the wrong reasons, i.e., to obtain greater resource allocations for their units or programs, rather than for managing for results.

One loud and clear message from partners is that USAID's requirements for collecting data and reporting results for Washington's use are burdensome and time-consuming and detract from program implementation. Several U.S. PVOs report having to hire additional staff merely to meet USAID's new measurement and reporting requirements. Furthermore, the annual R4 reviews are forcing partners repeatedly to justify and promote their activities.

IR 4: Responsive and flexible approaches for achieving results

For the reforms to succeed, the Agency's program operations system must be responsive and flexible enough to make it possible to achieve results in a reasonable amount of time, and the Agency's managers, teams, and partners must possess skills and have access to the information required to plan, achieve, and measure results.

Finding 11: Partners view USAID's reengineered operations system as less flexible and responsive than intended.

> *"Question 15 [about the degree of flexibility in USAID's current operating system] is not answered because there is no 'Not at all' option. USAID has reneged on the guiding principles of cooperative agreements. In doing so, their basic value has been lost. They are now micromanaged like never before, run like contracts, and exist in name only....[Al]most everything we did with USAID worked better before the current administrator came on board."* -- U.S. PVO working in ANE and ENI

Question 15 asked partners for their views on the extent to which USAID's operating system is more flexible than it was in the past: is it a system that permits change as more is learned and as situations change? The average response to this question was midway between "hardly at all" and "somewhat or to some extent." It was the lowest average score in the entire survey. Among the types of partners, host-country NGOs were relatively more positive on this question than their colleagues, yet giving it only a "somewhat" rating.

Finding 12: Partners have less access to information on reengineering and program operations than they need.

A little over one-third (37 percent) of the partners surveyed are aware of and/or use the Agency's Automated Directives System, the system that replaced the Agency handbooks and that now includes all the major directives and guidance on the Agency's reformed program operations and support processes. Only 7 percent are aware of and/or use the Operations Business Area Analysis report, which was the basis for many of the program operations reforms. Less than one-third (31 percent) of those who identified themselves as participating in discussions about USAID's reengineered approaches, policies, and procedures read "On Track," the Agency's reengineering digest; only 8 percent receive RFNET e-mail, a free-flowing electronic discussion of issues relating to USAID's approach to managing for results; and only 2 percent receive GPNET, an electronic means of sharing information and opinions about issues in participatory development.

Except with respect to "On Track," U.S. institutional contractors are far more connected with USAID's information-sharing mechanisms than most other partners, and partners working primarily inside the United States have relatively more access/use than those working outside the United States. U.S. higher education partners have a relatively high awareness/use of the Automated Directives System, but otherwise they appear to be relatively unconnected to information resources.

When asked a general question about the extent to which they are able to access information on USAID's reforms from the USAID website (Question 8), the average response (among those who didn't select "don't know") was "somewhat or to some extent." This average is consistent across all partner sub-groups. In the institutional contractor focus group, participants observed that USAID's Internet site is being used by some missions to share information in creative ways, but there is still no substitute for talking to real USAID people.

A comparison of the data from the partners and Agency staff surveys suggests that the ability of partners to access information is comparable to that of Agency staff. Partners rated the extent to which they are able to access information from USAID's website as "somewhat or to some extent" (2.0). The average rating of Agency staff was similar (2.1).

> *"We must have missed getting literature on USAID reforms."* -- U.S. PVO working in ENI

In their focus group, several U.S. PVO participants expressed uncertainty as to whether they had access to information and materials about reformed policies and procedures. In the higher education institutions focus group, participants observed that it takes too much time to find out who to talk to in USAID about the reforms or anything else. They said they were frustrated because frequently one USAID office is not aware of what another is doing with respect to "reengineering." As one partner put it, "There seems to be no center for reengineering in the Agency, no locus for helping ensure consistency and continuity in the Agency's reform effort." These observations suggest that USAID could do much more to

coordinate its reform efforts and to let its partners know what information is available and how to access it.

Partners had ideas on how USAID could increase access to valuable information. For example, the Agency could put R4s, minus the budgets, on the website or prepare a public information package on each bureau's stated objectives, budget, and existing and planned contracting mechanisms.

Finding 13: Partners vary considerably in their knowledge of and skills in USAID's "reengineered" approaches, policies, and procedures.

Half the partners surveyed reported having received no training on USAID's reengineered approaches, policies, and procedures. About one-third have done some learning on their own. Just under 20 percent received training from the USAID office funding their program and 10 percent from some other USAID office or mission. Host-country NGOs were an exception: half of the 18 respondents received training from USAID.

During the institutional contractors' focus group session, a participant observed that firms that do a considerable amount of business with USAID have a reasonable grasp of reengineering, and some individuals are very knowledgeable.

Participants in the higher education institution focus group expressed their need to learn more about what USAID itself is learning and teaching its own staff in training programs. Indeed, they want to be included in the training programs. Partners stressed that, if training is important for USAID staff, it is no less important for USAID's partners--*all* its partners, including host-country counterparts.

Advice to the Administrator

In the focus groups and in their answers to Question 18 of the survey, many USAID partners suggested ways for the Administrator to align the Agency's practices with the principles of USAID's reforms. Almost all of the recommendations implied acceptance of these principles and of USAID's basic organizational structure. Only a few survey respondents suggested major overhauls of the foreign aid apparatus, such as creating a foundation-like mechanism to administer

Procurement: Advice from Some Institutional Contractors

"Fully staff the contracts office to reduce the backlog and fix or abandon the NMS."

"Simplify procurement regulations to the maximum extent possible under law."

"[Train] procurement agents in the philosophy of using their skills to support USAID's technical programs instead of merely trying to get the cheapest restricted airfare, car rental, etc."

"[C]ontinue revision of contracting procedures to allow contracts for design and implementation and to eliminate restrictions on future work for contractors' participating in evaluation and design work."

development assistance.

The advice is summarized in four major findings about what partners would like to see happen.

Finding 14: Partners want the Administrator and the Agency as a whole to listen seriously to them, i.e., to establish and maintain a meaningful partnership of minds and ideas.

Partners want to provide more meaningful input through increased participation on strategic objective teams and other USAID groups, including those working on needs assessment and planning and the development of performance measurement systems. They want true consultation, not mere information sharing, especially among partners in the field who are directly involved in activities. They want mechanisms to be established so that they can vent their problems with USAID and suggest improvements without retribution. They appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback through the stocktaking effort and would like more discussions of this type.

> *"[R]einforcing the partnership value--the presumption that partners selected through elaborate procurement processes are trustworthy and competent--would be useful."* -- U.S. institutional contractor working in ENI and LAC

In their view, true partners would be given more autonomy to carry out the activities that USAID has assigned them, would be trusted to do a good job without being micromanaged, and would be included in developing joint program objectives and strategies. They want more training in USAID's reengineered policies and approaches so that they can function as effective partners. They want USAID to refrain from developing objectives and strategies exclusively from its own perspective.

In addition to wanting a voice in developing Agency programs, partners also want a role in assessing Agency performance in putting the principles and values of "reengineering" into practice. For example, one partner suggested that a focus group of USAID staff and selected partners could be established to review and comment on the stocktaking reports and provide feedback in open discussion with the Administrator. The members of such a focus group should be "real folks" who are doing the hands-on work--i.e., participants--not mission directors or presidents of partner organizations.

Finding 15: Partners want the Administrator and USAID's senior leadership to ensure that Agency staff have the skills, resources, and commitment to make reengineering work.

Partners are asking the Administrator to do everything in his power to ensure that there are adequate numbers of staff, especially in the field, to manage USAID's programs and to work with USAID's partners effectively. They want the Agency to stem the rate of "burnout" of

overwhelmed staff who have too much to do and inadequate support. Agency staff they work with should understand the new policies and practices and know how to apply them consistently. Directives and regulations on program operations and policies that most affect partners, such as procurement and consultation, should be applied consistently. Program technical staff and contract officers should work *together* to ensure that grant, contract, and cooperative agreement activities are designed and implemented with the best interests of the programs and their customers in mind. They believe that USAID staff should not be reduced simply to passing on burdensome performance measurement and reporting requirements to partners, who are already overburdened themselves.

Partners want the Administrator to insist that reforms are made a reality, both through his words *and* actions. Agency officials who embrace reengineering and truly manage for results should be rewarded; those who passively or aggressively resist should be held accountable and disciplined. Promotions, new assignments and other staff incentives, and performance reviews should serve to institutionalize reengineering. Real authority, not merely more responsibility, combined with fair accountability, should be assigned to the staff and strategic objective teams whom reengineering was designed to empower. Senior staff should demonstrate more trust in the competence and good intentions of those they supervise. Partners want to see more professionalism and integrity among the Agency staff with whom they do business.

> *"I doubt that the principles can be properly implemented without increases in staffing--especially in the field (and to a lesser extent the technical offices in the regional bureaus) but realize this will not happen. The use of PSCs [personal services contractors] as a substitute for direct hire staff is an inadequate response."* -- U.S.-based Bilateral, Multinational, or Other International Donor or Financial Institution working in AFR, ANE, and LAC

One partner suggested that the Agency develop a set of minimum changes/standards for implementing reengineering--i.e., a mission management index--for use in rating each mission annually. All missions would have to meet the minimum standards by a certain date. Indicators and targets would be set, and mission directors would be evaluated on how well their missions met their targets. Another partner suggested that strong evidence of service to customers and partners should be one of the criteria for staff promotion. Evidence could be in the form of letters of recommendation or evaluations from customers and partners.

Finding 16: Partners want the Agency procurement system to be more responsive, more accessible, and more sensitive to differences among types of partners.

Partners recommend an increase in qualified staff in contracts offices so that backlogs can be reduced and actions taken on a timely basis.

They believe that USAID should develop clear, uniform guidance for USAID staff and Agency partners on procurement regulations. It is the opinion of partners that both contract and technical officers should interpret the regulations more consistently and in ways

supportive of programs, especially when conflict of interest and modifications necessitated by strategic and implementation changes are issues.

Non-profit partners favor a reversal of what they perceive as a trend toward more contracts and fewer grants and cooperative agreements. They believe such a trend limits flexibility and creativity in finding development solutions. For-profit partners feel that they are at an unfair disadvantage because they are denied program planning information that is shared with non-profit partners. Smaller partners and those with relatively less experience with USAID want a more level playing field, one that gives them a fair chance to be awarded Agency grants and contracts. A desire for more access to information that will enable them to respond better to RFPs and RFAs, especially about USAID strategies, is common to all partners.

Finding 17: Partners want USAID to develop a more appropriate, more flexible, and less burdensome approach for defining, measuring, and reporting program performance.

Partners want results frameworks and strategic plans that not only reflect the input of the Agency's partners but also are jointly owned and implemented by the Agency *and* its partners, not by USAID alone. These results frameworks and strategies should place greater emphasis on sustainability.

Partners want performance indicators that make good sense programmatically: indicators that are used consistently across similar programs and operating units where consistency is warranted, and indicators that measure important long-term development processes and capacity-building, as well short-term program impacts. Finally, partners would like to see a less burdensome R4 data collection and reporting process.

Procurement: Advice from Some PVOs

"Use the proper assistance instruments--cooperative agreements and grants--[and] give PVOs and contractors flexibility in strategy and innovative approaches. Be sure CAs are not seen by technical personnel as contracts."

"Change OP. The contracting officers and negotiators are intentionally delaying cooperative agreements and modifications and treating PVOs poorly; e.g., they hang up on people on the phone. Many other PVOs have commented on significant delays and difficulties with OP."

"It is difficult to get answers to basic questions on rules and requirements of USAID. [I] suggest a phone hotline to assist recipients of USAID's contracts, etc. to help find the answer."

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM USAID'S PARTNERS

The general message of the USAID partners' stocktaking effort is that Agency "core values" underlying "reengineering" are sound, but that current implementation of the reforms is unsatisfactory (findings #1, #9, #10). Also, a number of recommendations can be derived from the findings; these are given below.

1. Partners recommend that agency leaders and staff commit themselves to establishing *true* partnerships (findings #5, #14).

Partners believe that USAID must make its relationship with them a partnership of ideas and activities by giving them more autonomy, more trust, more participation on teams and in other groups, and consultation that goes beyond one-way information-sharing. USAID must involve partners more meaningfully in assessing program needs, planning program strategies, and developing performance measurement approaches. To enable this level of engagement, USAID must train partners and give them information about the reformed operations. The Agency must ask for and listen more to feedback from partners, especially those implementing activities in the field.

Creation of true partnerships requires changes in attitudes and behavior. Partners want the Agency to facilitate these changes by allowing field staff more time and opportunity to relate to their partners and customers in meaningful, productive ways. This requires a shift of personnel to the field and from "internally-focused" to "outward-focused" functions. Getting out to understand partners' activities with customers should be a priority, not micromanaging implementation from inside the mission.

2. Partners recommend that USAID ensure that Agency staff understand, are committed to, and practice the values and principles of reengineering (findings #2, #15).

USAID must provide additional training, career support, and incentives to USAID staff to be facilitators and partners, not just to be contract and grant managers, and USAID must hold staff accountable for applying the principles of reengineering and refrain from rewarding those who resist. This recommendation cannot be carried out without the strong support of Agency leaders.

3. Partners recommend that USAID improve partner access to information and training related to reengineering and program operations (findings #12, #13).

USAID must provide training and information about principles and procedures of USAID's reformed operations to all partners on a regular basis.

4. Partners recommend that USAID improve the processes for measuring results (findings #10, #17).

Partners want USAID to make performance measurement, data collection, and reporting less expensive and time-consuming. USAID must also develop better and more appropriate indicators, and allow for more qualitative reporting.

5. Partners recommend that USAID improve procurement policies and practices (findings #6, #7, #11, #16).

USAID must align procurement policies and practices with reform values. Partners believe that USAID staff should respond more quickly to contract applications and resist any tendency to use contracts in place of grants and cooperative agreements. In addition, USAID must find ways to help smaller, grassroots NGOs, PVOs, firms, and universities to enter USAID's family of partners and to compete with large organizations.

Comparison with USAID Staff Recommendations

The above recommendations from the partners' stocktaking exercise closely parallel those gleaned earlier from USAID staff, as shown in the table below. Both sets of recommendations emphasize the need for Agency leaders to demonstrate their commitment to the reform vision; the partners emphasize commitment to partnerships, while the staff mention a broader range of reforms. Both groups point to the need for USAID staff to increase their knowledge about the reforms and how to translate them into action, and both call for the alignment of Agency systems and procedures with reform values and vision. Finally, both staff and partners recommend improved methods for sharing information.

Comparing the results of the two stocktaking efforts reveals some differences and similarities that do not show up in a comparison of the recommendations alone. Both groups gave their most vociferous responses about lack of commitment to reform, but the partners were more indignant and angry. They emphasized the need for the Agency to enforce discipline among its staff and in some way to penalize those who do not implement the reforms, while Agency staff stressed the need to acknowledge or praise those who demonstrated their commitment. Staff focused their criticisms on USAID leadership; partners focused more on USAID staff. Briefly, both groups conveyed the idea that a commitment to the reforms is a sine qua non: if commitment to the reforms is lacking, putting all the other recommendations in place would be a useless exercise.

Partners are highly supportive of USAID's core values as a way to improve the impact of development work. They believe that adoption of the core values would bring about a fundamental or sea change in USAID. The perspective expressed by USAID's staff was usually narrower. Their eyes are trained on the machinery to put the core values in place.

STOCKTAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff Stocktaking Recommendations	Partner Stocktaking Recommendations
Agency leaders at all levels embrace, express and demonstrate reform vision and values.	Agency leaders and staff commit themselves to establishing *true* partnerships and behave accordingly
Agency managers at all levels make this vision a reality by systematically implementing the reforms.	
Clarify operations policies and procedures--the rules of the game for program operations, their interpretation, and how they are determined.	Ensure that Agency staff understand, are committed to, and practice the values and principles of reengineering
Allocate needed resources for staff and partner training. Fund and implement training in three critical areas: operations systems and core values, skill-building for new responsibilities, and managing through results-oriented teams.	
Reward behaviors consistent with the reform vision and values.	
Improve critical systems and procedures to support the reform vision and values.	Improve the processes for measuring results
	Improve procurement policies and practices.
Learn from Agency experience by maintaining active channels of communication within the Agency and between it and its partners.	Improve partner access to information and training related to reengineering and program operations

They believe that the machinery is working but not as well as they would like, while many of the partners look in vain for fundamental change at the conceptual level.

Another major difference is in the definition of “consultation.” USAID staff appear to believe that consultation with partners constitutes partnership. Partners think that consultation is only one aspect of a broader notion of partnership comprising shared decision making.

Recommendations about operations and policies coming from USAID staff were more specific than those coming from partners. Staff were asking for specific changes; partners were asking mainly for consistency in implementing change. Although partners had specific ideas on measuring results and procurement practices, these varied widely among types of

partners. The PVOs were most concerned about what they perceived as a bias against them inherent in the use of performance measures that downplayed capacity building and sustainability--their strong suit, and in a perceived trend from cooperative agreements toward contracts.

Perhaps the most basic contrast between the two stocktaking assessments is that USAID staff emphasized practical matters and the difficulty of effecting authentic change in any organization, while the partners saw the assessment as a way to petition USAID to live up to its promises.

Appendix 1: PARTNER STOCKTAKING SURVEY

U.S. Agency For International Development (USAID)

PARTNER SURVEY ON REFORMS

To USAID's partners in the United States and in other countries:

The Administrator has asked our bureaus to do an assessment or "stocktaking" of USAID's progress in reforming ("reengineering") its program operations. These reforms are premised on clearly focusing our business processes on achieving results that our customers value by engaging in better partnerships and teamwork.

To assess the extent and impact of the Agency's reforms, we must understand the views and concerns of our partners. We ask that you help us by completing this survey, which asks about your experience working in partnership with USAID--that is, working cooperatively toward mutually agreed-upon objectives and results.

Responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential. Although some background information is asked, individuals and/or organizations cannot be identified by their responses and the software does not record your e-mail address. Only the aggregated results of the survey will be shared.

We are particularly interested in your responses to the open-ended questions and in your suggestions for actions to address short and longer term issues of concern. Your responses will be submitted electronically when you save the survey at the end.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. The survey will take approximately 15-30 minutes to complete. We encourage you to pass this survey to other partners working with USAID and to submit your responses to this survey by July 15, 1998. Please contact Liz Baltimore, Chanya Charles, Hiram Larew, Peggy Schultz or Tony Pryor at *stocktaking@usaid*.gov for questions or additional information. *The USAID website address for this "Partner Stocktaking Survey" is http://www.info.usaid.gov/new.html under What's New; respondents can go directly to the survey using http://209.135.238.67:591/survey/index.htm. Responses may also be mailed to: U. S. Agency For International Development (USAID), 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Bureau For Policy and Program Coordination, #6.07-093, Attn: Liz Baltimore, Washington, D. C. 20523-6802.*

Tom Fox
Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination

Terry Brown
Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Management

For purposes of analyzing the survey data, we need to know a few things about you. For each of the following questions, please choose the response that applies to you.

Q Status - I currently work for (please choose one):
[] US Private Voluntary Organization
[] US Higher Education institution or association or research entity
[] US Institutional Contractor
[] Non-government Organization, association or firm based in a host country
[] Government ministry, agency or local government of a host country
[] Bilateral, multilateral, or other international donor or financial institution
[] Other

Q2 Location - My work in partnership with USAID programs takes place primarily:
[] Outside the United States
[] In the United States

Q3 Region - My work with USAID is primarily in (please check all that apply):
[] Africa region (AFR)
[] Asia and Near East region (ANE)
[] Europe and Newly Independent States region (ENI)
[] Latin America and Caribbean region (LAC)
[] Other

Q4 Info - Are you aware of and/or use the following USAID documents?
[] Operations Business Area Analysis Report
[] Automated Directives System (previously the handbooks)

Q5 Info - If you participate in discussions about USAID's reforms ("reengineering") approaches, policies and procedures, (please check all that apply):
[] Do you read the On Track newsletter? [] Do you receive RFNET e-mail?
[] Do you receive GPNET e-mail?

Q6 Info - If you are not currently subscribing to any of the above methods of communication about USAID's reforms ("reengineering"), you are invited to please send your request indicating your name, address and internet address to stocktaking@usaid.gov and you will receive an immediate response to your request. Please indicate your chose(s):
[] On Track Newsletter [] RFNET e-mail [] GPNET e-mail

Q7 Info - Have you received skills building training on USAID's reforms ("reengineering") approaches, policies and procedures?
[] Yes, from the USAID office providing the funding [] Yes, from other USAID office or mission [] Self-learned [] No training on USAID's reforms [] Other

Q8 Info - Are you able to access the information you need on USAID's reforms ("reengineering") approaches, policies and procedures from the USAID website, www.info.usaid.gov?
[] Don't know [] Hardly at all [] Somewhat [] To some extent [] To a great extent

Below are questions pertaining to some of the principles of reforms which guide how the entire Agency currently operates. Please answer the questions based on your experience.

Q9 Part - Do you think USAID is consulting more with you and other partners now than in the past?
[] Don't know [] Hardly at all [] Somewhat [] To some extent
[] To a great extent

Q10 Part - Please indicate which of the following ways you interact with USAID offices in the United States and/or in other countries, on a regular basis. (please check all that apply):
[] I am a member of USAID's Strategic Objective Team and I meet regularly with the team
[] I interact regularly in meetings and/or discussions with USAID in planning its strategic objectives, implementing activities and measuring performance
[] I participate in focus groups, meetings or interviews through which USAID regularly seeks my opinion or experience
[] I interact regularly in meetings and/or other discussions with USAID concerning procurement actions (contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, others)
[] I interact regularly in meetings and/or other discussions with USAID concerning evaluating results of programs or effectiveness of development approaches
[] Other

Q11 EmpAcc - If you are a USAID strategic objective team member, to what extent is your TEAM *actually empowered (given the authority)* to make decisions to achieve agreed upon objectives? (please choose one)
[] Don't know [] Not at all [] Hardly at all [] To some extent
[] To a great extent

Q12 EmpAcc - To what extent are you or your organization *actually empowered (given the authority) by USAID* to make decisions to achieve agreed upon objectives? (please choose one)
[] Don't know [] Not at all [] Hardly at all [] To some extent
[] To a great extent

Q13 EmpAcc - If you are a USAID strategic objective team member, to what extent is your TEAM actually *held accountable* for making significant decisions and implementing the work that it does? (please choose one)
[] Don't know [] Not at all [] Hardly at all [] To some extent
[] To a great extent

Q14 EmpAcc - To what extent are you or your organization *actually held accountable by USAID* for making significant decisions and implementing the work that you do.
[] Don't know [] Not at all [] Hardly at all [] To some extent
[] To a great extent

Q15 Res - USAID's current operating system was designed to be more flexible and permit change as more is learned, or as situations change. Based upon your experiences, do you find this to be the case?
[] Don't know [] Not at all [] Hardly at all [] To some extent
[] To a great extent

Q16 Res - USAID's reforms ("reengineering") focuses on results. Based on your experience, what strengths and weaknesses do you find in the USAID approach?

Q17 ResCus - How are you *regularly* consulting with USAID's enduser customers (the recipients of USAID's assistance)? (please check all that apply)
[] Survey [] Focus group [] Rapid appraisal [] Regular meetings
[] Regular telephone/e-mail interactions [] Site visits [] Planning workshops
[] Other

Q18 Adv - What one thing would you advise the *USAID Administrator* to do so that the Agency's practices might better reflect its stated principles?

Q19 Adv - Do you have any other comments you would like to share regarding USAID's reforms ("reengineering")?

Thank you for helping us with this survey. The analysis of this survey will be posted on this website by the end of July 1998.

Appendix 2: QUANTITATIVE DATA FROM 265 SURVEY RESPONDENTS[1]

Question	Score on a scale of 1-3 for most items (exceptions are noted in the Question column)									
	All	Type of Partner					Locale		SO Team Membership	
		U.S. PVO	U.S. Higher Education Institution, Association or Research Entity	U.S. Institutional Contractor	NGO, Association, or Firm Based in a Host Country	Other[2]	Works primarily *outside* the U.S.	Works primarily *inside* the U.S.	SO Team Member[3]	Non-SO Team Member[3]
	n = 265	n =135	n = 40	n = 46	n = 18	n = 26	n = 181	n = 81	n = 57	n = 209
IR 1: Empowered Staff and Teams Accountable for Results										
11. Extent to which team is empowered	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.7	2.2	2.3	2.0	2.0	2.0	---
12. Extent to which individual or organization is empowered	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.8	2.4	2.2	2.2	1.9	2.0	2.1
13. Extent to which team is held accountable	2.2	2.3	2.0	1.9	2.5	1.9	2.2	2.0	2.1	---
14. Extent to which individual or organization is held accountable	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.7	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.5

1 Unless otherwise noted, the scores were calculated as follows:
(# of “Hardly at all” responses x 1) + (# of “Somewhat" and "To some extent” responses x 2) + (# of “To a great extent” responses x 3)]
divided by [(# of total responses) - (# of “Don't know” responses)]

Among all the average scores calculated for all respondents on all 3-point scale questions (i.e., the average scores for Qs. 11-14, 9, 8, and 15 in the first column of the table), the mean average rating was 2.0. This figure allows a point for comparing the relative strength of average ratings for each of the 3-point scale items. For example, the average rating for the extent to which individuals feel teams are empowered (Q. 11, 2.0) is very close to how people responded, on average, to all the questions; the average rating for the extent to which USAID’s operating system is seen as flexible (Q. 15, 1.6) is a relatively low average rating; and the average rating for the extent to which respondents feel that they or their organizations are held accountable (Q. 14, 2.5) is a relatively high average rating.

2 This group includes 2 host country ministry or agency officials, 4 officials from other donors or financial institutions, and 20 respondents who chose the "other" category.

3 "SO Team Member" includes all respondents who answered Question 11 ("If you are a USAID strategic objective team member...."); "Non-SO Team Member" includes all respondents who did not answer Question 11.

Question	All	U.S. PVO	U.S. Higher Educ., et al.	U.S. Inst. Contractor	NGO, et al.	Other	Outside U.S.	Inside U.S.	SO Team	Non-SO Team
IR 2: Addressing Development Needs through Customers and Partners										
9. Extent to which USAID is consulting more with partners now than in the past	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.8	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.8	2.0	1.8
10. Percentage who: Are SO Team Members and meet regularly with the team	8%	7%	0%	7%	22%	19%	10%	4%	35%	---
Interact regularly in meetings/discussions with USAID in planning SOs, implementing activities, and measuring performance	26%	18%	22%	28%	44%	54%	31%	16%	44%	21%
Participate in focus groups, meetings or interviews through which USAID seeks opinion or experience	23%	20%	15%	26%	33%	31%	24%	20%	32%	20%
Interact regularly in meetings/discussions with USAID concerning procurement actions	31%	33%	22%	26%	33%	46%	34%	27%	42%	29%
Interact regularly in meetings/discussions with USAID concerning evaluating program results or effectiveness of development approaches	36%	34%	37%	33%	50%	44%	38%	31%	42%	34%
17. Percentage who regularly use the following to consult with USAID's customers: Survey	33%	31%	27%	39%	39%	31%	35%	28%	40%	31%
Focus group	24%	27%	10%	30%	17%	19%	27%	15%	33%	21%
Rapid appraisal	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Regular meetings	50%	54%	37%	54%	44%	50%	57%	36%	65%	46%
Regular telephone/e-mail interactions	48%	51%	41%	50%	44%	46%	52%	41%	49%	48%
Site visits	61%	66%	46%	65%	44%	62%	68%	44%	72%	58%
Planning workshops	40%	42%	37%	39%	39%	38%	48%	23%	47%	38%
Other	49%	19%	20%	11%	28%	19%	20%	12%	19%	18%

Question	All	U.S. PVO	U.S. Higher Educ., et al.	U.S. Inst. Contractor	NGO, et al.	Other	Outside U.S.	Inside U.S.	SO Team	Non-SO Team

IR 3: Results-Oriented Decision Making (No quantitative questions)										
IR 4: Responsive and Flexible Approaches for Achieving										
4. Percentage who are aware of and/or use: Operations Business Area Analysis report	7%	2%	5%	20%	6%	12%	5%	10%	9%	6%
Automated Directives System	37%	29%	46%	54%	28%	10%	34%	41%	39%	37%
5. Percentage who: Read the "On Track" newsletter	31%	46%	0%	25%	17%	19%	35%	22%	19%	34%
Receive RFNET e-mail	8%	4%	0%	26%	6%	15%	5%	15%	9%	17%
Receive GPNET e-mail	2%	1%	0%	7%	0%	0%	1%	4%	4%	1%
7. Percentage trained in USAID's reforms ("reengineering") approaches, policies, and procedures through: USAID office-funded training	17%	15%	12%	11%	44%	27%	17%	16%	23%	15%
Other USAID office or mission	10%	8%	7%	13%	11%	15%	10%	7%	12%	9%
Self-learning	35%	33%	39%	48%	22%	31%	31%	42%	37%	34%
Percentage who have received no training	49%	53%	56%	35%	44%	42%	51%	46%	37%	53%
8. Extent able to access the information needed on USAID's reforms ("reengineering") approaches, policies and procedures from the USAID website	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0
15. Extent to which USAID's current operating system is flexible and permits change as more is learned or as situations change	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.5	2.1	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.8	1.6