

**USAID's Performance Reporting  
EDITING AND STYLE GUIDE  
11-17-08**

In general, please adhere to the grammar, spelling, and punctuation rules cited in the Associated Press (AP) Stylebook. Subhi Mehdi has a copy for reference. Also use the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) General Style Guidelines for government-related general guidelines, which can be found at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a11/current\\_year/s95.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a11/current_year/s95.pdf). The OMB General Style Guidelines supersede the AP Stylebook when a conflict occurs.

The following list provides additional guidance. It supersedes the AP Stylebook and OMB General Style Guidelines when a conflict occurs.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

- Avoid excessive use of abbreviations and acronyms.
- Do not introduce an acronym if the word is not repeated.
- Use "USAID," not "A.I.D."
- Use the abbreviation "U.S." (with periods) when used as an adjective, e.g., U.S. assistance. Spell out "United States" when used as a noun, e.g., in the United States. U.S.' or U.S.'s should not be used.
- Use "U.S. assistance" versus "USG assistance."
- Include all acronyms or abbreviations used in the acronym list.
- Use the English translation of indigenous organizations.
- Always use numeral with percent sign ("5%") except when beginning a sentence ("Five percent"). When % is used with numbers expressing a range, use % with each number, e.g., 5% to 10%.
- Use "FY" rather than "fiscal year" followed by four figures, e.g., FY 2001 (space between "FY" and year). Also use four figures for calendar year, e.g., 2000.
- Use "P.L. 480" rather than "PL-480."
- Use "CSH" for the Child Survival and Health Programs Fund account (formerly Child Survival and Disease Programs Fund, CSD), rather than CS.
- Make sure months are spelled out and not abbreviated.
- Always spell out "e.g." and "i.e."
- The Department of State should be subsequently referred to as "the Department."
- The Director of Foreign Assistance is DFA.
- The Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance is State/F
- The President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief is the President's Emergency Fund or the Emergency Fund.
- State names get abbreviated when with a city (e.g. Biloxi, MS) and spelled out when alone.

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- Do not establish acronyms of USAID offices with preceding "M/" (e.g., M/CFO, M/CIO, M/OAA) as this may not be understood by readers outside USAID.
- Do not use the acronyms USAID/W or AID/W, keep the spell out USAID/Washington.
- Do not use the acronym CO, keep the spell out Contracting Officer. The same for AO, keep as Agreement Officer.
- Do not use the acronym CS, keep the spell out civil service (lowercase). The same for FS, keep as foreign service (lowercase).
- Use HHS as acronym for the Department of Health and Human Services, not DHHS.

Numbers

- Spell out numbers one through nine. Use figures for numbers 10 and greater. An exception with spelling out numbers one through nine is when referencing a range, e.g., 8 to 23. For these cases use figures for both.
- When stating a percentage, always use the numeral, e.g., 5%, except when beginning a sentence.
- Spell out numbers that begin a sentence.
- In tables and text containing four-digit figures or more, use a comma, e.g., 1,276; 10,416; 115,000.
- Do not use the comma between month and year when the day is not used, e.g., September 2001.
- Form the plural of numbers by adding an "s," e.g., in the 1990s.
- Use numbers for dollar figures; spell out thousand, million, billion (do not use K, M, B in text), e.g., \$23 billion.

Capitalization

- Capitalize the "g" in "government" when referring to the governing body of a country, e.g., U.S. Government, Government of Thailand. Do NOT capitalize government when used in a general sense, e.g., Asian government, communist governments. Also, do not use USG for U.S. Government.
- Capitalize the "a" in Agency when referencing USAID or other specific "agency", else lowercase.
- Capitalize the following government terms as outlined:
  - Federal (all cases including Federal Government)
  - Nation (for cases when referring to the United States else lowercase)
- Do NOT capitalize the government terms congressional and presidential unless they are contained in a title.
- Use Internet (capital "I"), not internet.

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- Capitalize the “t” in “tribe” when referring to a specific tribe, e.g., Indian Tribe. Do not capitalize when used in a general sense.

Punctuation

- Comma and period: Enclose within quotation marks (e.g., “health,” and “health.”).
- Period: One space at the end of each sentence (single space).
- Colons and semicolons: Do NOT enclose within quotation marks (e.g., “program”- and “program”-);).
- Colons: Two spaces after a colon (e.g., “E-Government: As a web-based...”)
- Hyphen: Use between words when combined to form a unit modifier immediately preceding the word modified, e.g., less-developed countries, long-term development.
- In sequences within sentences, use a comma before the last item in the sequence. Example: Expanded diversity awareness training for new employees, managers, and supervisors.
- For the following, please note whether a hyphen is used or not used:
  - a. policymaker
  - b. policy-making
  - c. decisionmaker
  - d. decision-making
  - e. multiyear
  - f. nonexpendable
  - g. counterterrorism
  - h. counternarcotics
- Use long dashes with no spaces on either side and not double dashes (e.g.” GAO states, “In fiscal year 2006, auditors for one CFO Act agency, the U.S. Agency for International Development (AI D), provided positive assurance—which is an opinion based on the nature and extent of audit work performed—that AI D’s financial management systems substantially complied with the requirements of FFMIA.”).
- For cases like “small and medium-sized” don’t put hyphen on the first word (should *not* be “small- and medium-sized”).
- No spaces around “/” (e.g. and/or).
- For serial lists within a sentence put parens around the number [e.g. (1)] and *not* just the right side [e.g. 1)].

Miscellaneous

- Do not use personal pronouns in the narratives (e.g. we, our). The only exceptions are the Administrator and CFO messages/statements and direct quotes.
- Form the plural of acronyms (and numbers) by adding “s,” e.g., PVOs, 1990s. Do NOT use “’s” to form plural; the apostrophe indicates possession, not plurality.
- Use database, not data base.

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- Use website, not Web site, Website, or web site. Also, should be web-based.
- Use online, not on-line; time line, not timeline; bottom line, not bottomline.
- Use crosscutting, crosswalk [no hyphens].
- Use interagency, not inter-agency [no hyphen].
- Use government-wide not governmentwide; also use department-wide, administration-wide [with hyphen]. However, use worldwide and nationwide [no hyphen]
- Use re-engineer and not reengineer.
- Data is treated as plural.
- Use antidumping and not anti-dumping, antiboycott and not anti-boycott [no hyphen]. However, use anti-terrorism [with hyphen].
- Use well-being [with hyphen] and not well being.
- Use ongoing and not on-going.
- Use toward not towards (do not use the "s")
- Use ad hoc not ad-hoc or adhoc
- Use non-governmental organization, not nongovernmental organization.
- For cases where a formal name is used for an act, plan, report, etc.. (e.g. Performance and Accountability Report, Thrift Savings Plan, Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act), the references to the report, plan, or act should be lower case (e.g. the report ..., the plan....., the act...).
- Italicize report names (e.g., *FY 2008 Agency Financial Report*, *FY 2007 – FY 2012 Strategic Plan*, and *FY 2008 Congressional Budget Justification*)