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**STRATEGIC TRAINING FOR USAID/BENIN**  
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## INTRODUCTION

*Strategic Training for USAID/Benin* has been produced in response to the Mission's expressed interest in adapting its approach to training to a results-oriented environment. The document follows a one-week visit by two consultants from AMEX International whose work was funded through the Human Resources Development Assistance Project.

The present document comprises two parts. Part One, "The Principles of Strategic Training," describes the nature and significance of the concept, delineates its central elements, and gives examples of the abrupt changes that adoption of strategic training will bring about. Part Two, "Guidelines for Training Implementation," is intended to serve operating units of USAID/Benin in the execution of each phase of the training cycle. The entire document is firmly grounded in the HRDA *Best Practices Guide* and is fully consistent with Agency policy. It provides the basis for a new approach to training which supports the Mission's results-orientation and advanced teamwork with its partners. The approach presented applies to all training, irrespective of technical area, location, or duration.

We trust that *Strategic Training for USAID/Benin* will provide the impetus and direction for substantive change in the programming of training for the Mission and its partners. There is no doubt that the principal beneficiary of this process will be the ultimate customer.

**PART I: THE PRINCIPLES OF STRATEGIC TRAINING**

**A. The New Approach**

*Changes from the past*

Strategic training is not a new name for an old concept. Many of the ways in which the Mission has planned training, selected candidates, and evaluated programs will change radically if strategic training is adopted. Long-term training is likely to shrink as a percentage of the overall portfolio, and study and observation tours will be subjected to a new discipline. Third parties, including the Government of Benin, will no longer be able to propose viable candidates unless they are active partners in a Results Package.

Does this departure from old ways imply that the Mission must reject its accumulated knowledge on training? Fortunately it does not. It means, in fact, taking the best of lessons learned and fitting them in the context of reengineering. The HRDA *Best Practices Guide* and accompanying subguides, which are based on the finest contemporary thinking on training, have largely accomplished this task. They articulate the mechanism of strategic training for development assistance. USAID/Benin should absorb Best Practices into its programming and ensure that partners and contractors alike embrace the new approach.

Strategic training is a powerful tool, an indispensable companion to results focus. It does not sit easily, however, with the old ways of doing business, and as it takes its place in the Mission, it will leave some victims:

- Scholarship programs and their equivalent in study tours;
- General response to needs in important partner institutions;
- Training that lies outside the perimeters of an operating unit's focus, even when deemed to support highly worthy causes.

For those who believe USAID's mission is to cultivate the best and brightest of Benin through long-term academic programs or special study tours, who wish to do broad-based institution-building, and who desire to be able to respond to great needs, wherever they may lie, these losses are real. Nonetheless, the advantages of doing training strategically offer generous compensation. And it is the only way to do training under the directive of results-orientation.

*Description*

Strategic training is known in corporate and consulting milieus as *high-impact* training. In the USAID context, strategic training is high-impact training that *directly* furthers attainment of intermediate results. It differs from much traditional training in targeting very specific objectives rather than in aiming at general improvement. Traditional training was typically activity-based and was evaluated in terms of outputs, such as numbers of people trained, or inputs, such as number of courses offered. Strategic training, on the other hand, is judged by *outcomes*: its impact on trainees, their job behavior, and the performance of their organizations. The cozy assumption that all training is good is not so much contested as left irrelevant. In the new context, training will not be funded, whatever its intrinsic value, unless it fits clearly in a results framework.

Another way that strategic training can be described in contradistinction from traditional, activity-based training is through its emphasis on performance change. Strategic training strives unabashedly to change individual job performance and organizational performance through the transfer of new knowledge, skills, or attitudes.

The performance concept has been unnecessarily mystified. In the training context, an individual job performance change is something one does in the workplace that one did not do before. Of course that change should be clearly attributable to the learning or attitudes acquired during training. The description of organizational performance change is similar: something the organization does better or differently as a consequence of the training of its personnel. Since USAID/Benin's assistance is channeled through institutions or well-defined target groups, strategic training's focus on organizational results should be of great potential usefulness to the various teams bent on obtaining measurable successes.

*Advantages*

In the U.S. corporate sector, strategic training has cut costs and conferred extensive benefits. It offers similar potential to USAID. The following are reasons why:

☛ *Clarity of purpose*

No manager, auditor, or trainee should ever have to ask why a given training activity was programmed, what it was meant to do for beneficiaries, or how it fit into the Mission's development hypothesis.

☞ *Better results*

Strategic training gets quicker and clearer results because it focuses on the *outcomes* of training rather than on the inputs or numerical outputs.

☞ *Ease of monitoring*

Monitoring becomes easy because one cannot do strategic training without knowing clearly what one wants. That simple requirement will suffice in itself to render monitoring a straightforward process. This should be good news to all teams in USAID/Benin that are working in a reengineered environment.

☞ *Improved reporting*

USAID's domestic stakeholders are clamoring for results. Interestingly, training is one area in which USAID has frequently produced demonstrable impact, but reports have often been absent, unfocused, or untimely. Strategic training, through its clarity of purpose and ease of monitoring, will greatly benefit reporting.

☞ *Better management of contracts and grants*

Operating units will have contracts and grant agreements that are much clearer in regard to expected outcomes, or performance, of the implementing organization. They will be able to assess the quality of performance through results achieved, rather than by tasks completed. They will be able to hold training conducted by entities with grants to the same standards as that performed by contractors.

☞ *Enhanced relations with local partners*

Local organizations, both private and governmental, that benefit from USAID-funded training will enjoy closer, more effective relationships with operating units. Training provided to host-country public agencies, for example, has often been driven by exhaustive needs assessments. Trainees have been selected for poor as well as for good reasons. Strategic training will impose a new discipline on both the focus of training and the selection of trainees. This discipline will facilitate working relations and lead to results more fully satisfactory to all parties.

## **B. Planning Strategic Training**

### ***Conditions precedent***

There are two overarching conditions precedent for strategic training.

#### **1. *Strategic training must fit in a Results Framework.***

In the USAID context, training cannot be called strategic unless it meets this condition. The first question to ask is, How does the proposed training contribute *directly* to an intermediate result?

#### **2. *Strategic training must seek to address an organizational, or group, performance problem.***

Frequently the organization is a formal institution, such as a ministry; sometimes it comprises an informal group, such as farmers in a geographical region. In other instances, the organization may be a department, or division, of a larger institution. The important factor is that whatever the entity, it have a recognizable output which can be measured. The question to ask is this: What is the institution (group, organization) not doing now that we would like to see it do after assistance in order to achieve the expected results?

Strategic training is clear about organizational performance. It seeks to effect, or contribute to, changes in specific performance areas, such as productivity, quality of service, or efficiency in processes. It seeks these changes because they are shown in the Results Framework to be necessary for achieving a determined objective.

For any training activity, the responsible party in a Results Package Team should be able to explain in concrete detail the organizational performance problem to be addressed. Training programmed simply to strengthen a partner institution is not strategic.

These, then, are the two primary conditions for strategic training: that it directly contribute to intermediate results, and that it directly address an organizational performance problem.

### ***Other important criteria***

Strategic training is never projected on the basis of intuition, best guesses, or hunches about what is needed. This does not imply that every aspect of planning requires a formal study: needs assessments of institutions can sometimes be conducted by simple walk-throughs, or documented by personnel with long tenure and reliable insight. But a coherent logic must

support each proposed training activity. The six criteria below embrace the essential elements of this logic.

- *All training responds to identified needs in the group, organization, or institution.*

These needs should be directly relevant to the institutional performance problem. A ministry of education may have needs ranging from wordprocessing skills for all clerical personnel to executive leadership for the minister. But if a results package focuses on financial management, it should not attend to training needs outside of the finance department, no matter how persuasive the case for their importance.

Adherence to this discipline will affect needs assessments. Rather than plunging directly into training needs assessments, operating units should conduct organizational performance assessments, of which evaluations of training needs form one part. Failure to conduct organizational performance assessments risks omitting other necessary solutions to a performance problem or even proposing training when it is not a solution at all. Secondly, needs assessments should focus on relevant organizations or sub-organizations. In the past, Missions have commissioned sweeping training needs assessments for entire institutions without regard to the results framework. This practice should cease. Targeted needs assessments will save costs and generate far more useful studies.

- *The impact of the training can be described in terms of changes in workplace performance.*

Any manager who proposes a training action should be prepared to describe not just the institutional performance problem to be addressed but also how the training will change the way trainees work once they return to their jobs. This criterion holds firm whether the trainee is a bookkeeping clerk or a chief executive officer.

Some staff may protest, initially, that to describe workplace changes is an unreasonable demand, that it requires excessively detailed knowledge. It is neither one nor the other. To propose training as a means to improve institutional performance is tantamount to proposing that specific jobs be performed differently or better. One does not train an institution, one trains individuals. And in most professional contexts one trains them to perform in some different or improved manner on-the-job. To propose results-focused training is to know what that job performance should be.

- *Strategic training rests on an analysis of requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes.*

Training imparts knowledge, skills, and attitudes. That is all it can do. This limited function makes it arguably the most powerful tool available to development professionals, since only effective transfer of knowledge and skills can provide sustainability of programs.

Should a manager who proposes a training program be able to specify the precise knowledge or skills to be acquired through it? Not necessarily, although he or she should have some notion of requirements, since he has already identified job performance changes. But before the training delivery is contracted out, there must be precise analysis of needed skills. These skills or knowledge must be the right ones to enable trainees to make the desired changes in their workplace. The logic of progressing from acquired skills to job application to organizational (group) results is flawless, and all Mission personnel should understand it. It is the essence of strategic training.

- *The choice of training location and duration should match real needs.*

Far too frequently, training in the past was divided into short-term, long-term, in-country and participant based on budgetary preconceptions rather than on training requirements. The historic bias in favor of U.S. training was reflected in Handbook 10, which did not even address in-country programs. The new guidance contained in ADS 253 has taken into account the very favorable evaluations of in-country training in many missions.

Short-term training is likely to find favor in a results-oriented environment. In-country training enjoys advantages of cost-effectiveness and ease of oversight, among others. Decisions on length of training and location will most likely be the right ones when they are dictated by the objectives for the training itself. Strategic training will ask, What is the best length of training and location to obtain the learning necessary to effect changes in the workplace? The Mission should avoid long-term overseas training unless the payoff for realization of Strategic Objectives is certain and evident.

- *Training programs should aim at right numbers of trainees*

*Right numbers* can be equated to the concept of critical mass, which argues that one must train sufficient numbers of people in an organization to make an impact on its performance. The concept is correct, but it has been too often interpreted to mean that one should train as many people as feasible. In fact, under some circumstances the *right number* could be one or two persons; in others it could be fifty. The organizational performance analysis should precede any estimates of numbers.

- *Trainees should be selected on the basis of their ability to effect the workplace and organizational changes desired.*

The implications of this criterion may disrupt established procedures. In the worst cases of trainee selection, missions have simply accepted a given number of people in lists sent by ministries. Such lists almost invariably include persons who are being rewarded with a privilege, who are being removed for convenience, and who have compelling personal reasons for travel.

In the better cases of selection, formal committees select trainees based on their academic prowess, their ability to articulate their objectives, and their record of professional competency. Such criteria are not unimportant, but they fail to satisfy the most basic requirement of strategic training.

Strategic training does not inquire first into the innate abilities of the candidate; it asks who are the people that perform the jobs requiring change. The questioning begins by asking, What is the organizational (group) performance change the training is proposed as a solution for? Then, What are the jobs that require better or different performance? Finally, Are the people who currently do those jobs capable of learning the new skills required, and are they competent to apply them? If the answer to the last question is affirmative, then the pool of candidates has been identified—as long as the problem being addressed falls clearly within a results framework.

Selecting the right trainees means understanding the purpose and scope of the results package which the training is intended to support. A government clearing house cannot perform the selection function. Nor can a well-meaning body of eminent persons. Only individuals associated with the results package can make such selections. Since USAID/Benin has already begun involving partners in its planning, the Mission should encounter little difficulty in adjusting its selection procedures.

### **C. Monitoring Strategic Training**

#### ***The Four-Level Model***

Training is used to transfer knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Program managers expect that trainees will learn and apply their acquired learning effectively on their jobs. They then hope that the changes in job performance will induce a positive impact on the trainees' organizations. This progressive path moves across four levels: the learning environment, the

transfer of knowledge and skills, application to the job, and organizational results or institutional performance. At each level the value, or worth, of a training activity increases.

Proper monitoring follows each level for every training program. Monitoring training in this manner allows for timely correction when required, timely refinement of future programs, and accurate assessment of the reasons for both successes and failures.

In reengineered missions, monitoring is a mandate: it cannot be avoided, nor can it be deferred until late in projects, as is the case with evaluations. Monitoring is ongoing and signals activity managers when there are problems to attend to. Monitoring also allows for accurate, on-time reporting.

### ***Monitoring Responsibilities***

Monitoring has commonly been viewed as a time-consuming, complex, and thankless process. The system proposed for strategic training bears none of these burdens. It is simple, transparent, well-documented, and easy to teach. Much of it can and should be out-sourced. Training providers, for example, should be held responsible for monitoring levels one and two: trainee satisfaction with the learning environment and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Contractors with results package responsibilities that encompass institutional performance may be held responsible for monitoring at levels three and four: application of learning to the workplace and impact on organizational performance.

By outsourcing monitoring responsibilities in this manner, the burden is positioned where it normally should be, and Mission staff are relieved of direct involvement.

The Training Implementation Plan offers further information on recommended procedures for monitoring, and the Best Practices subguide, *Monitoring Training for Results*, covers the subject in greater detail.

### **D. Strategic Objective and Results Package Training Plans**

USAID/Benin has an excellent Country Training Plan produced in 1994. Except for ongoing activities, however, it should now be considered obsolete. Country Training Plans served the purpose of special projects, such as HRDA, and seldom if ever reflected missions' true levels of investment in training. In an environment of results-focus and flexible Results Packages, a new approach is in order. Strategic Objective Teams or—even better—Results Package Teams should prepare their own training plans for two reasons: to ensure the correct rationale for training, and to contract effectively for services.

*Ensuring the Correct Rationale*

The first step in preparing an SO/RP Training Plan lies in institutional performance analysis. Any intermediate result which requires that an organization or group (such as farmers or women traders in a given region) do something differently or better than what it is doing at present presupposes an institutional performance gap. Performance analysis will determine whether or not training is required. Since institutional performance is the sum of job outputs, organizational performance gaps can only be closed by having some jobs done differently or better.

Not all job performance requires training. If a typist knows wordprocessing but does not have a computer at his disposal, procurement, not training, will suffice to boost the typist's daily output. Closing performance gaps demands training when new skills or knowledge are required to do a job in the fashion desired. This is the kind of simple, straightforward analysis that should precede every proposal for training; it forms the essence of the training plan. The basic questions the responsible operating unit should ask are:

1. What does the organization we are targeting assistance towards have to do after assistance that it is not doing now in order to further realization of the intermediate result?
2. What jobs need to be done differently, and in what way, in order to achieve this improved organizational performance?
3. Is training—the transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitudes—required to effect the desired job performance? Why?

Once these questions have been answered on the basis of sound knowledge of the organizations, the rationale for training is established. Every additional step follows logically from this basic analysis, and procurement of services through performance-based contracting becomes a transparent process.

*Contracting for Training Services*

Contracting for strategic training requires considerable work in advance of the procurement. The rewards for doing this work properly are clear expectations and improved contractor performance. The rewards are the same in strategic training funded under grants.

Prior to reengineering, contractors' performance in delivering training was judged almost exclusively on the basis of outputs: how many courses they delivered, persons they trained, participants they placed. This is not to say there was no surveillance of training quality, but

such as there was usually ceased after level 1: trainee appraisal, or satisfaction, with the program. Rarely did missions, or their evaluation teams, trace the effects of training on jobs and organizations. Usually they either did not possess the appropriate models for assessing impact, or they lacked clearly formulated objectives for doing so.

Procurement of training services can begin at several points. If an operating unit knows precisely what knowledge and skills must be taught, it can contract directly for the design and delivery of the training based on that information, or it can contract for appropriate off-the-shelf delivery. In many cases, however, the rationale for the training may stop short of such precision and will require a final refinement of training needs analysis. Any such analysis should be set in the most narrow possible focus, that is only those needs required to bring about the new job performance which has been identified. *There is no excuse in strategic training for conducting comprehensive institutional training needs assessments.*

In many cases, contractors (or grantees) may have broad responsibilities for results packages. In those instances where a contractor has funds available for training and has identified a need, it should follow exactly the same procedures for establishing the rationale for training as any other responsible entity.

When procurement for training services is secured through competitive bidding, the operating unit has an excellent opportunity for selecting the best provider by asking the right questions in a solicitation document. An RFP might, for example, require the offeror to describe how it proposes to monitor training at the different levels. Or it may simply require that the contractor follow the *Best Practices Guide* in planning, implementing, and monitoring strategic training.

One cannot require a training provider which has no control over the many factors that influence institutional performance to be responsible for change at the level of the organization; the training provider cannot even be held responsible for application of learning to the job. But it can and should be held responsible for demonstrating that it has provided an environment propitious to relevant learning and that the trainees have acquired the essential elements of the curriculum.

**PART II: GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION**

**INTRODUCTION**

“Guidelines for Training Implementation” is intended to serve all operating units of USAID/Benin in the execution of each phase of the training cycle. It should not be viewed as an optional, or alternative, approach; it should be employed as a directive for all training for each SO Team and Results Package. It applies equally to contractors and grantees. Following the guidelines presented in this document lends a guarantee that all training funded by the Mission, directly or otherwise, will support strategic objectives in the most effective possible manner.

“Guidelines for Training Implementation” is founded on the HRDA *Best Practices Guide* and relevant subguides. These in turn derive from the most current thinking on high-impact training from leading corporations, universities, and management consulting firms. The *Best Practices Guide* has adapted this thinking to development assistance as implemented under USAID's reengineering effort.

As this document is intended to facilitate the practical application of Best Practices, its format is designed like a checklist for ease of use. The sections follow as closely as possible the flow of the training cycle from planning to follow-up, recognizing that many activities are continual and resist being attached to a single phase. Each section commences with a brief overview and follows with a checklist of specific guidance and references to the relevant sections of the *Best Practices Guide*.

The concepts are presented here without explanation. The user, nonetheless, must understand them thoroughly. Partially explained in Part I of this document, they are fully covered in the *Best Practices Guide* and its accompanying booklets. Adherence to these Guidelines for Training Implementation will assure the total integration of results-focused training into the portfolio of USAID/Benin with its partners. Guidance on the logistics and administration of training programs should be sought in former Handbook 10, ADS 253, and the Mission Order on Training.

**A. The Planning Process**

Unlike training for general development, strategic training has a precise and narrow focus. Unlike activity-based training, it concentrates on impact rather than inputs. Only those actions which fit clearly in a Results Framework and which have a logical connection to organizational or group performance change can be designated strategic training. Planning for strategic training, therefore, commences at the level of an organization, group, or institution. It asks what organizational performance changes need occur in order to realize an intermediate result. From that point on, it works backwards along the value-added continuum of training, from changes to the way trainees perform their work to the new skills or knowledge they will need to acquire. Strategic training cannot be planned or programmed on the basis of general institution building for primary partners. It can only be programmed to cause specific performance changes.

*The principal criteria for effective planning*

- Verify that the training proposed fits clearly in a Results Framework.
- Ensure that the training addresses an organizational, or group, performance problem. This problem must be expressed in terms that are specific and measurable.
- Describe the impact of the training on changes in workplace performance. These changes are ones which will be made by trainees who apply to their jobs the learning acquired during the training.
- Specify the knowledge, skills, or attitudes the training will impart.
- Make the choice of training location and duration match real needs.
- Estimate correct numbers of trainees, based on the organizational performance analysis.
- Estimate costs.
- Be clear on the person with first-line responsibility for the program.

**REFERENCES**

Best Practices Subguide no.1: *Contribute to Strategic Planning*

**B. Collaborating With Stakeholders**

Training planned in isolation from stakeholders could be strategic in theory but doomed to failure or mediocrity. Strategic training is a natural consequence of the reengineering exercise in USAID and is supportive of the core values of customer focus, teamwork, empowerment, and results-orientation. It is through collaboration with the diverse stakeholders of a training program that one reinforces core values and greatly bolsters chances of success in results. Stakeholders invariably include the Results Package team, the beneficiary organization or group, the ultimate customers, and the trainees themselves. They also include the entity responsible for organizing and managing the training. Collaboration with stakeholders confers a sense of ownership of the training across a broad audience and a shared responsibility for its outcomes. Collaborating with stakeholders is a responsibility of both the Results Package Team and the actual implementing organization. The criteria below do not distinguish among these responsibilities, which will vary from program to program.

- Identify stakeholder group.
- Identify client in beneficiary organization.
- Hold stakeholder meeting.
- Get agreement on organizational performance problem.
- Secure cooperation of client.
- Obtain a written training agreement with beneficiary organization.
- Make stakeholder collaboration a responsibility of implementing entity.

**References**

Best Practices Subguides:

*Collaborate with Stakeholders*

*Contribute to Improvements in Organizational Performance*

**C. Identifying Training Needs**

Strategic training mandates a new approach to the identification of training needs. In the past, needs assessments bore no direct, causal relationship to a measurable result, and they commonly were inventories of a vast range of needs in entire institutions. Under strategic training, a needs assessment is conducted only after an organizational performance problem has been clearly identified and traced to required changes in individual job performance. The needs assessment then reveals precisely what learning must be acquired to change, or improve, job performance. Under strategic training, then, needs assessments are likely to target only some small part of a large institution. They apply to whatever intermediate result is in question in a Results Framework. Properly planned, a training needs assessment forms part of an overall organizational performance assessment. The training needs assessment will actually identify certain knowledge, skills, or attitudes that are to be transferred to trainees.

- Articulate the measurable performance change desired for the group or organization.
- Describe deficiencies in actual job performance that need to be overcome. As with the organizational performance change, the job requirements should have been identified in a previous assessment, study, or evaluation.
- Ascertain that training is a proper part of the solution to the problem.
- Determine the knowledge, skills, or attitudes necessary to give the trainee the capacity for effecting the workplace changes.
- Discuss these determinations with stakeholders from the beneficiary group or organization.
- Make certain that the training provider is given the mandate to impart this knowledge or these skills.

**Reference:**

Best Practices subguide, *Identifying Training Needs in the Partner Institution*

**D. Selecting Trainees**

Strategic training imposes new discipline on the selection of candidates. It will not admit of a scholarship-type selection, in which the primary criterion for choosing one candidate over another is his or her academic or professional qualifications. In strategic training, the planning process discloses the jobs that must be performed differently or better in order to solve, or contribute to resolving, an institutional performance problem. Responsible parties should ask, Who are the persons currently performing those jobs? Are they capable of learning new ways? Will they have the ability and good will to apply their learning after training? If so, then these people, or some number of them, represent the right candidates for selection. If not, then one must seek other individuals who will be hired to perform the jobs in question and who have the requisite aptitudes. *Only people involved in a Results Package or Strategic Objective Team can make proper selections.* This point is extremely important, since only those people will have the knowledge of the performance issues and solution system to make correct judgments.

- Constitute a selection committee from the concerned Results Package Team.
- State first the target group, organization, firm, or institution.
- Express the performance change desired.
- Specify which jobs must be performed differently and how.
- List the persons who do those jobs now.
- Inquire into their ability to learn from and apply training.
- Make selections from this pool of candidates or seek others better qualified.

**Reference:**

*Best Practices Guide*

**E. Preparing Trainees**

No trainee should enter training without a clear understanding of the explicit purpose of the program. Under non-strategic training, participants often departed for study tours, internships, seminars, and degree programs with only broad notions of improvement and a commitment to submit a written report upon return. But trainees are principal stakeholders in any training program. As such, they have a vested interest in its success. The success of training only begins with the increased capacity of the trainee; it ends by closing an institutional performance gap. This is equally true of in-country and U.S. or third-country training; it is equally true of long and short-term strategic training. The entity responsible for the training, whether a Results Package team, a grantee, or contractor, has a responsibility to prepare the trainees for their experience.

- Whenever practicable, meet directly with trainees, either individually or as a group.
- Explain the intermediate result for which the training is programmed.
- Describe the institutional performance problem to be addressed and how it relates to the intermediate result.
- Explain how certain jobs must be performed differently in order to close the group, or organizational, performance gap.
- Describe in clear, objective, and measurable terms the new job performance that will be expected of the trainee after the training.
- Secure the trainee's concurrence with this expectation.
- Require that the trainee prepare an action plan prior to the training which details how he or she will make the changes necessary.
- Do not require of the trainee the traditional trip report. Require that he or she agree to cooperate with follow-up monitoring of the training.

**Reference:**

*Best Practices Guide*

**F. Monitoring Training**

Under reengineering directives, continual monitoring, rather than end-of-project evaluation, is a mandatory procedure. Monitoring strategic training is important because it permits timely correction of problems, it provides solid evidence of success, and it serves as the vehicle through which accurate reporting on results can be made swiftly and easily. Monitoring is not a mysterious body of knowledge accessible only to specialized experts. The model developed under the Best Practices series offers an approach easily understood and applied by managers in any technical field. In the present context, we are not concerned with overall programs, i.e. with program objectives, planning, and administration. We are monitoring here the results, or effects, of training. We are tracking impact: what happens to individuals, their jobs, and their organizations once training has begun, and after it is completed.

- Ascertain that the planning has been strategic, i.e., has begun with an analysis of institutional performance change, working backward to knowledge and skills through changes in individual job performance.
- Make a simple statement of the baseline for job and organizational performance. The baseline is the present state of performance or capacity as opposed to the desired state.
- Plan to apply the four-level monitoring model: satisfaction, learning, application, and organizational results.
- Determine which party will be responsible for monitoring at each level. (Normally the training provider is responsible for levels one and two.)
- Write monitoring responsibilities into contracts and grant agreements; when applicable, include levels 3 and 4 responsibilities in written training agreements.
- Examine and approve the monitoring approach and instruments of each party.
- Specify schedules for providing monitoring data.
- Require data and data summaries rather than narrative reports.
- Give timely feedback on and recognition of monitoring reports.

**G. Follow-on**

USAID generally uses *follow-on* to refer to post-training activities that ensure, enhance, and leverage the impact of training. Unfortunately, the term is often used with great vagueness and is associated closely with participant alumni associations. Equally unfortunately, follow-on is often an after-thought. Despite misconceptions, follow-on is indispensable to the overall success of programs using strategic training. Furthermore, follow-on cannot be planned effectively after training has been completed. Because it is intended to get the greatest possible impact from training, it must be incorporated into the planning and implementation phases of the training cycle to be effective. Alumni associations are only one among many options for post-training activities, and they are far from the most important for follow-on for strategic training.

- During the planning phase, describe in precise terms the nature of the impact desired from the training at organizational and program levels.
- Establish working relationships with stakeholder groups, especially with customers in the beneficiary organization.
- State a follow-on objective for any training program or group of similar programs, including in-country.
- Contact existing local associations and societies that might have an interest in knowing about the training or in using or employing trainees.
- Ensure that trainees know clearly the programmatic objectives of their training.
- Perform monitoring scrupulously. Monitoring at levels 3 and 4 (workplace application and organizational results) *is* part of follow-on.
- Enter into projects for alumni organizations slowly and carefully, asking questions about purpose, interest, funding, and sustainability.



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