## ADS 201 Additional Help

# DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION DISSEMINATION PLAN

Transparency is a key principle of evaluation at USAID. As noted in ADS 201.3.6.2:

> "Evaluation must be transparent in the planning, implementation, and reporting phases to enable accountability."

ADS 201.3.6.7 operationalizes this principle by requiring Operating Units (OUs) to plan for evaluation dissemination:

> "OUs must design evaluations to be useful to decision-making, and develop an Evaluation Dissemination Plan. Missions or Washington OUs should consider how key partners and other development actors would best receive evaluation information and plan their communications products accordingly, including using products in addition to the evaluation report to share its findings, such as slide decks, videos, infographics, podcasts, or other means."

ADS 201.3.6.10 B further supports dissemination following the completion of the evaluation report:

> "OUs will promote transparency and learning by disseminating evaluations when the evaluation report has been completed. Missions and OUs should update and follow the Evaluation Dissemination Plan developed during the evaluation planning stage and consider dissemination channels [...] Missions and OUs should openly discuss evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations with relevant partners, donors, and other development actors. Missions can help build local evaluation capacity by sharing evidence from evaluations among development partners."

ADS 201mah, Evaluation Report Requirements outlines the necessary elements of an evaluation report that support transparency and the dissemination of findings. Necessary elements include the evaluation purpose and questions; essential information about what is being evaluated (e.g., strategy); and methods and findings.

A *dissemination plan* helps ensure that evaluations are useful and shared effectively. This guidance document and the associated template are intended to assist USAID

Missions and OUs develop a dissemination plan that satisfies the ADS requirements and USAID's interest in transparency, accountability, and learning. USAID Missions and OUs may use the dissemination plan template as a guide to formulating and drafting dissemination plans.

**Timing:** Evaluation managers should begin initial planning for dissemination at the early stages of an evaluation—after a decision to evaluate has been made but prior to completing the evaluation statement of work (SOW). This way, dissemination products and activities can be written into the evaluation team's SOW, and appropriately resourced and budgeted. As work progresses, the dissemination plan may be updated or revised as needed based on new information or learning.

**Components:** The first step in developing an evaluation dissemination plan is identifying stakeholders. With input from the program office, technical specialists, and implementing partners, the Mission or Washington OU should identify the groups or individuals who are likely to be affected by or interested in the evaluation results. Missions or Washington OUs should decide on who is included in this group during the stakeholder identification stage. A smaller group of stakeholders (including the host government counterpart, key beneficiary groups, or local research organizations) should be consulted during the design phase. Additional tools are available for stakeholder analysis, such as the Evaluation Stakeholder Participation Planning Matrix.

For each identified stakeholder, the Mission or Washington OU should think through USAID's goal in disseminating the evaluation results. Are we aiming to change policy? Influence the design of other projects or activities? Contribute to the technical knowledge base? Satisfy accountability concerns? Attract a new partnership? Prevent repetition of mistakes?

Articulating a goal for dissemination assists with the next step—identifying the appropriate communication tools. These may include tools such as reports, briefs, blog posts, press releases, graphics, and emails to listservs. They may also include more involved efforts including presentations, meetings, facilitated workshops or discussions, videos, and journal articles. Again, for the identified stakeholders, consider the most effective ways they receive and digest information and if there are existing forums or channels through which to reach them. Factors to consider include:

- Literacy level and native language;

- Access to the Internet, radio, or other sources of media;

- Existing websites, journals, or email listservs where dissemination would be appropriate;

- Planned events or decision-making points; and

- Resources available for design and editing.

The evaluation manager should identify a responsible party and timeline for each dissemination activity. In some cases, the development and dissemination of knowledge products from an evaluation may be included in the SOW for the evaluator(s). In others, USAID or another stakeholder should take the lead. For the timeline, consider external factors—such as the political cycle or project design decision points—that may influence your communications objectives, and build in time for copy editing, design, and translation, if necessary.

An evaluation dissemination plan may include products or activities that are designed to monitor and document the impact of the evaluation and the associated knowledge products. These may include a follow-up survey or feedback forms at events. Use of evaluation knowledge products can help inform future information sharing with the same or similar audiences, and promote utility.

**Limitations and exceptions**: Per ADS 201mae, Limitations to Disclosure and Exemptions to Public Dissemination of USAID Evaluation Reports, before becoming publicly available, evaluation reports must be adjusted to remove information that should not be shared publicly. Further information is provided in the mandatory reference.

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