

# PROGRAM CYCLE GUIDANCE

ADS 201 Additional Help

## DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION DISSEMINATION PLAN

Transparency is a key principle of evaluation at USAID. As noted in USAID’s [ADS 201.3.5.10](#):

“Evaluations at USAID should be...Transparent: Findings from evaluations will be shared as widely as possible with a commitment to full and active disclosure.”

[ADS 201.3.5.15](#) operationalizes this principle by requiring Operating Units to plan for evaluation dissemination:

“Missions and Washington OUs must plan for dissemination and use of the planned evaluation. Missions or Washington OUs should consider how key partners and other development actors would best receive evaluation information and plan their communications products accordingly.”

[ADS 201.3.5.18](#) further supports dissemination following the completion of the evaluation report:

“Missions and Washington OUs will promote transparency and learning by disseminating evaluations when the evaluation report has been completed. Missions and OUs should follow the dissemination plan developed during the evaluation planning stage. Missions and OUs should openly discuss evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations with relevant partners, donors, and other development actors.”

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 Operating Units 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 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, identify the groups and/or individuals who are likely to be affected by or interested in the evaluation results. A smaller group of stakeholders (perhaps including the host government counterpart, key beneficiary groups, or local research organizations) will be consulted during the design phase. Decide on who will be included in this group during the stakeholder identification stage. Additional tools are available for stakeholder analysis.

For each identified stakeholder, 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 e-mails 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
- 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 would 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 copyediting, design, and translation, if necessary.

Finally, an evaluation dissemination plan may include products that are designed to monitor and document the impact of the evaluation and the associated knowledge products. These may include, for example, a follow-up survey or feedback forms at events.

**Limitations and exceptions:** Before becoming publicly available, evaluation reports must be adjusted to remove information that should not be shared publicly. Further information is provided in [ADS 201mae Limitations to Disclosure and Exemptions to Public Dissemination of USAID Evaluation Reports](#).