

Mandatory Reference: 527
File Name: 527maa_093003_cd33
Revision: 09/30/2003
Effective Date: 09/29/2003

Guidance on How to Open a USAID Mission

A. Introduction

This guidance outlines a strategy for performing the administrative functions of opening a new USAID Mission at an overseas Post. These procedures provide a framework for establishing the foundation of a fully operational Mission. This document is to be used as a guide to setting up a new Mission only after all necessary bilateral, diplomatic, and programmatic negotiations are complete and the Administrator has approved the new Mission.

B. Administrative Support Teams (Planning Team and Opening Team)

The Overseas Management Support office (M/OMS) coordinates with the appropriate Geographic Bureau, the Office of Human Resources (M/HR), the Office of Security (SEC), and other Offices or Bureaus as applicable, to

- a. Support an administrative **planning team** within the Regional Bureau, and
- b. Identify staffing for the **opening team**, whose members will travel to the new Post. The Geographic Bureau must advise M/OMS of any special requirements in order to determine the experience, background, or skills required of the prospective Executive Officer (EXO).

The planning team is normally organized and managed by the applicable Regional Bureau. M/OMS provides EXO support and guidance to the planning team and, when a full-time effort is required, will recommend a qualified EXO.

The opening team consists of an experienced USAID EXO, a SEC representative, and, when necessary, a USAID Controller. In the interest of economy and efficiency, the EXO on the opening team should, if practical, be made available from a nearby Mission or from USAID/W.¹ The SEC representative must determine security requirements early in the planning stage. The actual composition of the opening team will vary according to the size, complexity, and unique circumstances at each Post, although the principal administrative skills must be represented.

C. Regional Bureau and Planning Team Procedures

ADS 102.3.11 describes the initial steps the applicable Geographic Bureau will take when a decision is made to establish a new Mission. These steps include

¹ The Overseas Management Support Staff (M/OMS) will normally be the source for EXO staff support from Washington.

- a. Obtaining required USAID and Department of State approvals,
- c. Preparing a proposed functional statement, organizational chart, and staffing pattern, and
- d. Initiating the NSDD 38 process.

The planning team must carry out the following specific administrative tasks before the opening team arrives at Post:²

- a. Thoroughly review the Post report and recent information on the Post – cables, Notices, Department advisories, etc. – and, in conjunction with Department of State counterparts, discuss the characteristics and conditions particular to the cooperating country, including Embassy facilities, in providing support and services to meet USAID's needs. These discussions must include such requirements as utilities, space (both office and residential), equipment, and supplies. Historically, USAID frequently operates and controls all or part of its own administrative support services overseas. With increased emphasis on single service providers at Posts and USAID's collocation with Embassies, administrative support services are increasingly diverse. Although it may not be possible to make final decisions on administrative support services (see paragraph i. below and Section D.1.c. on ICASS) before the opening team is on the ground, this must be an early priority of both the planning and opening teams. If, prior to the opening team's arrival, the planning team determines, through discussions with the Post Management Officer in the Executive Director's office in the appropriate Geographic Bureau of the Department of State, that particular services are best provided at Post by the Embassy, a preliminary ICASS agreement is developed and the Bureau Executive Director advises the Embassy of any obligations in advance of the opening team's arrival.
- b. Arrange for an allotment of Operating Expense (OE) funds to the new Mission.
- c. Coordinate financial management activities to cover all identified fiscal requirements. Depending on the nature of the country program, a USAID Controller or a Regional Controller may need to be appointed to perform the required financial management functions.
- d. Arrange with the Department of State to use the services of the Embassy Cashier. If this is not feasible, a Principal Cashier and an alternate will need to be appointed at Post.

² When it is not feasible or possible to complete any of these tasks at USAID/W, action will normally be transferred to the opening team at Post.

- e.** Obtain instructions from the Office of Financial Management (M/FM) for managing and installing the OE budget.
- f.** Consult with the Office of Information Resources Management, Telecommunications and Computer Operations Division (M/IRM/TCO) on cable, fax, and other communications support services.
- g.** Consult with the Office of Administrative Services, Consolidation, Property and Services Division (M/AS/CPD) on the diplomatic pouch schedule, mailing list, and commercial courier services. Obtain from the Office of Administrative Services, Information Resources Division (M/AS/IRD) copies of the latest ADS CD and State InfoRegs CD. The ADS may be accessed through the USAID intranet (<http://inside.usaid.gov/ADS/>) and the Department of State reference materials, e.g., Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) and Standardized Regulations, are available on the Department's intranet and on the FOIA external website (<http://www.foia.state.gov/FAMDIR/fam/fam.asp>).
- h.** Release a USAID General Notice regarding the opening of a new Mission, including the address, method of communicating, pouch schedule, APO information, etc.
- i.** Procure and ship basic office equipment, such as computers, printers, copiers, calculators, and office supplies. (The opening team can probably obtain expendable office supplies through ICASS or from local vendors.) Acquire a basic supply of all commonly used USAID forms, many of which are now available electronically through the USAID intranet. If there will be no initial access to the intranet, contact M/AS/IRD about obtaining the forms on a CD or diskette (refer also to ADS 505, Forms Management Program, or the USAID Forms Catalog). Most other frequently used non-USAID forms are available on the InfoForms CD. You may also requisition forms in hard copy from M/AS/IRD.
- j.** Establish motor vehicle requirements and initiate procurement directly from the vendor or authorized distributor. (See AIDAR 706.302-70 on Mission Directors' motor vehicle waiver authority and ADS 536 on Use and Control of Official Vehicles for further details.)
- k.** Coordinate with the IRM/TCO analyst at IRM Customer Service: Services: Customer Support (<http://irmtcoweb.usaid.gov/services/index.html>) for the applicable geographic region in order to determine the standard current desktop and LAN configurations for USAID and initiate procurement. You must begin consultations with IRM in the planning stage for timely acquisition and installation of information technology (IT) equipment. In addition, you must make arrangements with the Diplomatic Telecommunications Service Program Office (DTSPPO) for communications links through the Embassy and/or VSAT equipment/connections. Contact IRM/TCO for assistance and guidance. For essential points of contact in IRM, visit

<http://irmtcoweb.usaid.gov/contacts/index.html>.

l. Coordinate with M/OMS to determine the availability of surplus equipment within the area from other Missions and U.S. Government agencies.

m. Consult with the Office of Security (SEC) on physical security countermeasures, security communications equipment, armored vehicles requirements, and other security issues.

n. Draft and prepare required Mission Orders and ensure that the proper authorities required for the new operation are obtained. For example, delegations of authority (see <http://inside.usaid.gov/M/AS/OMS/authority.doc>), personnel ceilings and current allotments, and appropriation symbols and amounts must be issued. Sample Mission Orders may be viewed in the EXO Toolbox at <http://inside.usaid.gov/M/AS/OMS/>.

D. Opening Team Procedures

1. Administrative and Security Support

Depending on the circumstances, opening team members may or may not travel to the Post concurrently. The procedures below are primarily tasks that will be implemented by the EXO, in cooperation with other parties.

Every effort must be made to establish AIDNET access as soon as practicable. Initially, opening team members must also be equipped with laptop computers with CD ROM and at least one compatible printer.

Upon arrival at Post the EXO must contact the Embassy Management Officer and Regional Security Officer and hold discussions on administrative and security support. These discussions must cover the temporary support the Embassy is capable of providing and administrative requirements peculiar to the needs of USAID. These discussions also must include the following:

a. The reason USAID has a presence in the country, the type of program proposed, and the number and categories of personnel, i.e., U.S. Direct Hires (USDHs), Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs), and U.S. Personal Services Contractors (USPSCs), to be assigned and recruited. USDH numbers will have been established and approved through the NSDD-38 process.

b. The methods under which the Embassy operates, and the relationship with the host government, such as

(1) Attitude of the host government and possible support that can be expected.

- (2)** Availability of resources on the local economy (i.e., personnel and commodities).
- (3)** Availability of office space and residential units— U.S. Government leasing versus Living Quarters Allowance.
- (4)** Interim support, if required, that the Embassy can provide in areas such as
 - (a)** Office and/or residential space;
 - (b)** Transportation;
 - (c)** Building maintenance;
 - (d)** Custodial/general services functions;
 - (e)** Local personnel administration;
 - (f)** Communications, files, and messenger service;
 - (g)** Security support, e.g., guards, storage of classified materials, etc.;
 - (h)** Host country requirements and practices involving currency exchange, import and customs regulations, tax exemption, etc.; and
 - (i)** Development and installation of an accounting system for the Mission in accordance with Financial Management requirements.
- c.** Discussion of and arrangements for larger team support, ICASS implications and services, etc. If the level of ICASS support is already determined, it would be appropriate to negotiate the ICASS service agreement.
- d.** Other U.S. Government and international agencies active in the country; their purpose and the program relationships of each.
- e.** Arrangements for introductions and appointments with appropriate representatives of other U.S. Government, international, and host government entities.

2. Host Government Contacts

The objectives of these contacts are to

- a. Establish a working relationship to effect implementation actions between the host government and the Mission;
- b. Determine the extent to which the host government can provide support for the program, such as transportation, supplies and equipment, maintenance, etc.; and
- c. Identify problem areas that may require resolution. For example, consider any special import restrictions or laws that could impinge on the quality and timing of USAID logistical support, or any special currency regulations the new Mission might encounter.

3. Other Contacts

Other U.S. Government agencies may be present at Post. The opening team must establish contact with these agencies to ascertain how they obtain various support services, e.g., through a single ICASS provider. Contacts may also be made with other donors and international and private sector organizations, particularly if private sector outsourcing is being considered for some support services.

4. Housing

Temporary lodging allowance is limited to three months after the date of first arrival at Post (see Standardized Regulation 121); therefore, living quarters arrangements for permanent Mission personnel must be given top priority.

At most Posts where USAID has Missions, employees reside in government-leased or government-owned quarters. Where feasible and authorized by the Inter-Agency Housing Board (IAHB), employees may lease their own quarters and be reimbursed in accordance with the provisions of the Standardized Regulations (Living Quarters Allowance). USAID will follow existing practice at the Post with regard to employee living quarters. At Posts where government-furnished quarters are provided, USAID policy is to participate in joint housing pools for leasing and maintenance under ICASS, unless it can be clearly shown that participation is not advantageous to the U.S. Government. See State (99)10504 for guidance.

5. Office Space

Existing statutes and Agency policy dictate that Missions must be situated in U.S. Embassy compounds. You may obtain detailed information on the interagency collocation policy and waiver procedures from either SEC or M/OMS. As a general rule, Missions with less than 50 desk positions must be located in the Chancery building or, when applicable, a Department of State annex building in the compound. During the initial planning stages the Agency will normally determine whether the Embassy can

accommodate the Mission in existing space. For Missions with more than 50 desk positions, USAID requires separate facilities in Embassy compounds.

In practice, however, the Department of State may not have sufficient space in existing Embassy chanceries to accommodate USAID offices or Missions, particularly at older Embassies. In this event, it may be necessary to secure offices outside of Embassy compounds. To locate a USAID office outside an Embassy compound, an exception to current security standards is required. Contact M/OMS - Real Property and SEC for more information.

U.S. Embassies can be helpful in locating leased office space. If U.S. Government-owned property is not available, office space must be leased. All functional leases for offices must meet the required security standards for the type of facility, e.g., commercial or stand-alone. The Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security must approve a collocation waiver request before you sign the lease. You must not enter into a lease for functional space of any kind without the expressed approval of SEC, M/OMS, and the Regional Security Officer (RSO) at Post. In all cases, the opening team is to adhere to the most recent State Department and Agency security guidelines and security standards for office buildings. (See ADS 561-568, Security)

6. Cleaning and Custodial Services

Cleaning and custodial services for office space may be provided for in the lease (for non-collocated offices) or through contract arrangements.

The custodial and maintenance responsibilities for U.S. Government-held residential properties are set forth in ADS 535, Real Property Management Overseas.

7. Procurement

Some initial procurement for the new USAID Mission should have been coordinated or executed by the planning team in Washington. If not, it is imperative that the opening team initiate procurement of essential office equipment, furnishings, and supplies, including IT equipment/software, residential furniture/furnishings, motor vehicles, and essential services at the earliest possible time.

8. Interim Transportation Arrangements

Order all non-project activity vehicles to be titled to the U.S. Government, including participating agency vehicles, directly through the vendor (see ADS 536, Use and Control of Official Vehicles). Procure all project activity vehicles to be titled to the cooperating government in accordance with procedures dealing with activity commodity procurement.

Until the vehicles arrive at Post, make arrangements for interim transportation. The opening team may

- a. Arrange with the Embassy for motor pool assistance,
- b. Seek assistance from other U.S. Government agencies,
- c. Request the host government to provide transportation, or
- d. Lease vehicles or contract for the transportation.

9. Records Management

The Information Program Office in the Chancery must maintain classified material unless otherwise approved by the RSO at Post. In addition, the opening team must identify a secure container, e.g., approved safe or a bar-lock safe, and a restricted area essential for safeguarding sensitive but unclassified materials. (See ADS 502, The USAID Records Management Program)

10. Property Records System

The Agency has standardized on BarScan© systems as its automated property records system. The opening team must establish a mandatory property records system to reflect the receipt and control of nonexpendable property in accordance with ADS 534, Personal Property Management Overseas.

11. Foreign Service National (FSN) Personnel

Local staff recruitment, processing, and hiring require coordination with the Embassy Personnel Officer and RSO. The opening team requires access to the FSN local compensation plan and must have copies of the AIDAR and related forms/macros available.

Initially, employment of FSN personnel must be limited to the minimum practicable level. A basic staffing plan will have been developed during the planning stage and will serve as a guide. The services to be provided to USAID through ICASS will influence the types and numbers of administrative FSNs. Support operations, i.e., cleaning and custodial services, must be carried out by third party contract or non-personal services contract rather than by FSN PSC personnel whenever practicable.

12. IT Systems

See the discussion in Section C.k above. Contact the appropriate M/IRM client analyst at IRM Customer Service: Services: Customer Support (<http://irmtcoweb.usaid.gov/services/index.html>) for detailed guidance. Contact IRM/TCO for specific guidance and assistance.

527maa_093003_w100203