



Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

USAID/OFDA strongly encourages partners to follow the new proposal guidelines, with special attention to the Additional Program Description Requirements (APDRs). In an attempt to better measure the impact of humanitarian assistance, APDRs include core indicators for program reporting. By using the exact language provided for each indicator, partners will help USAID/OFDA improve the validity of its global monitoring efforts.

USAID/OFDA's WASH programming outlines three main focus areas for 2007-2008:

TRANSITION THINKING NEEDS TO ENTER HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM DESIGN

Since Fiscal Year (FY) 2002, USAID/OFDA has averaged annual expenditures of \$72.5 million in the WASH sector. Compared to other sectors, this funding includes many infrastructure projects that will fail over time without appropriate tie-ins to longer-term institutional programming and management structures—either from host country governments or donors. Standard exit strategies that “hand over” to local authorities have been largely inadequate. To maximize the benefit of contributions in the sector, USAID/OFDA will strongly encourage transition thinking during the planning of humanitarian WASH projects. These designs need to consider technology choices, such as protected hand dug wells—i.e. lined, sealed, or closed with water lifting devices—over drilled boreholes or household washing devices in place of communal ones. Designs should also consider innovative management structures, including privatization of water facilities (where appropriate) and utilization of entities, such as women's or youth groups, rather than “democratically-elected, gender-balanced” water committees that often fail.

By pushing the envelope of relief programming during the design phase of interventions, USAID/OFDA hopes to maximize the present and future benefits of its sizeable investments in the sector.

HYGIENE PROMOTION NEEDS TO BE INNOVATIVE

Though many partners understand the necessity of personal hygiene in the fight to reduce diarrheal disease in emergency settings, others still consider water point maintenance as the primary target for hygiene promotion. In addition to water point maintenance efforts, USAID/OFDA strongly encourages household level interventions. To this end, USAID/OFDA will propose water testing at both the water point and household levels to ensure quality provision and identify areas where transport, storage, and usage behaviors are impacting health. When attempting to impact behavior, USAID/OFDA will consider inclusion of material inputs, such as leaflets and hand washing devices, as an improvement over message transmission alone. Finally, USAID/OFDA will encourage monitoring of hygiene behaviors through baseline and impact Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) surveys.

LATRINE PROJECTS NEED TO ENSURE MAINTENANCE

In disaster settings, USAID/OFDA only promotes communal latrine blocks in the first stage of the response. Thereafter, communal latrines will be considered at institutions, such as schools and health clinics. USAID/OFDA considers the early transition from communal to household latrines a critical step to strengthen maintenance efforts and reduce disease incidence.

THE USAID/OFDA PARTNERSHIP

USAID/OFDA greatly appreciates the contributions of all partners in defining and refining this core sector of humanitarian response. The office is a partner in the effort by providing technical assistance and funding innovation. To this end, USAID/OFDA regularly contributes to the development of the WASH cluster, is currently developing a new, simplified water purification unit to replace existing units, and will fund several research projects in FY 2007 to improve the understanding of WASH best practices in emergency and transition contexts.