



## **BRANDING AND MARKING GUIDELINES OF ASSISTANCE AWARDS**

### **BRANDING STRATEGIES AND MARKING PLANS**

USAID's framework legislation, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, section 641, requires that all programs under the Foreign Assistance Act, including assistance awards, be identified appropriately overseas as "American Aid."

For assistance awards the Apparently Successful Applicant for new awards prepares and submits a **Branding Strategy** that will be negotiated and finalized as part of the assistance award. The Branding Strategy describes how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned; how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and cooperating country citizens; and identifies all donors and explains how they will be acknowledged.

The Apparently Successful Applicant also submits a **Marking Plan**. The Marking Plan will detail the public communications, commodities, and program materials intended to visibly bear the USAID Identity. The marking plan will be customized for the particular program, project, or activity under the resultant grant or cooperative agreement.

The Marking Plan may include requests for approval of a **Presumptive Exception or Exceptions**. Exceptions are programmatic in nature, and reflect the categories of foreign assistance that USAID generally does not want marked. Presumptive Exceptions exempt a general marking requirement for a particular USAID-funded public communication, commodity, or program material or other deliverable, or a *category* of USAID-funded public for communications, commodities, and program materials, or other deliverables that would otherwise be required to visibly bear the USAID Identity.

#### **Submission Requirements: Branding Strategy**

At a minimum, the Apparently Successful Applicant's Branding Strategy will address the following:

##### **(1) Positioning**

*a. What is the intended name of this program, project, or activity for public outreach purposes?*  
**Guidelines:** Please include the suggested name in English as well as in Serbian. Please note that the name can differ from the official project name in the technical application.

USAID prefers to have the USAID Identity included as part of the program or project name if possible and appropriate. It is acceptable to "co-brand" the title with USAID's and the Apparently Successful Applicant's identities.

For example: "The USAID and [Apparently Successful Applicant] Health Center."

b. If it would be inappropriate or is not possible to "brand" the project this way, *please explain and indicate how you intend to showcase USAID's involvement in publicizing the program or project - how the materials and communications will be positioned (i.e., as from the American People, jointly sponsored by USAID and the host-country government, or in some other way);*

For example: School #123, rehabilitated by USAID and [Apparently Successful Applicant]/ [other donors].

Note: the Agency prefers "made possible by (or with) the generous support of the American People" next to the USAID Identity in acknowledging our contribution, instead of the phrase "funded by."

c. *Standard positioning, size and prominence of logos on program and outreach materials.*

Note: Please specify. Normally, the USAID and partners logs are of the same size and prominence. The USAID identity is most commonly positioned in the upper right-hand side corner and partner logos in the upper left-hand size corner (and in the center position if there are more than two logos). Please provide a sample word document that will illustrate the standard branding.

d. *Will a program logo be developed and used consistently to identify this program? If yes, please attach a copy of the proposed program logo.*

Note: USAID prefers to fund projects that do NOT have a separate logo or identity that competes with the USAID Identity.

e. *What is the desired level of visibility?*

Please specify.

## **(2) Program Communications and Publicity**

a. *Who are the primary and secondary audiences for this project or program?*

Guidelines: Please include direct beneficiaries and any special target segments or influencers.

For Example: Primary audience: schoolgirls age 8-12, Secondary audience: teachers and parents—specifically mothers.

b. *What communications or program materials will be used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries?*

Guidelines: These include training materials, posters, pamphlets, Public Service Announcements, billboards, websites, Press releases, success stories, beneficiary testimonials, professional photography, videos, webcasts, and so forth.

c. *What is the main program message(s)?*

Guidelines: For example: "Be tested for HIV-AIDS" or "Have your child inoculated."

Please indicate if you also plan to incorporate USAID's primary message – this aid is "from the American people" – into the narrative of program materials. This is optional; however, marking

with the USAID Identity is required.

*d. Will the recipient announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens? If yes, what press and promotional activities are planned?*

Guidelines: These may include media releases, press conferences, media interviews, public events, and so forth.

Note: incorporating the message, "USAID from the American People", and the USAID Identity is required.

*e. List key milestones or opportunities anticipated to generate awareness that the program, project, or activity is from the American people, or an explanation if this is not appropriate or possible.*

Guidelines: Such milestones may be linked to specific points in time, such as the beginning or end of a program, or to an opportunity to showcase publications or other materials, research findings, or program success. These include, but are not limited to, the following: Launching the program, announcing research findings, publishing reports or studies, spotlighting trends, highlighting success stories, featuring beneficiaries as spokespeople, showcasing before-and-after photographs, marketing agricultural products or locally-produced crafts or goods, securing endorsements from ministry or local organizations, promoting final or interim reports, and communicating program impact/overall results.

*f. Please provide any additional ideas about how to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.*

Guidelines: One of our goals is to ensure that both beneficiaries and host-country citizens know that the aid the Agency is providing is "from the American people." Please provide any initial ideas on how to further this goal.

### **(3) Acknowledgements**

*a. Will there be any direct involvement from a host-country government ministry? If yes, please indicate which one or ones. Will the recipient acknowledge the ministry as an additional co-sponsor?*

Note: it is perfectly acceptable and often encouraged for USAID to "co-brand" programs with government ministries.

*b. Please indicate if there are any other groups whose logo or identity the recipient will use on program materials and related communications.*

Guidelines: Please indicate if they are also a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.

### **Submission Requirements: Marking Plan**

The Marking Plan will include the following:

- (1) A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the recipient will produce as a part of the grant or cooperative agreement and which will visibly bear the USAID Identity.

These include:

- program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other programs, projects, or activities that are physical in nature;
- technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audio- visual productions, public service announcements, Web sites/Internet activities and other promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID;
- events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences, and other public activities; and
- all commodities financed by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs, and all other equipment, supplies and other materials funded by USAID, and their export packaging.

- (2) A table specifying:

- the program deliverables that the recipient will mark with the USAID Identity;
- the type of marking (include information about any logos, as well as their positioning, size and prominence); and
- when in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking.

- (3) A table specifying:

- what program deliverables will not be marked with the USAID Identity, and
- the rationale for not marking these program deliverables.
- should you not want to request any exemptions from marking, kindly note this in your Marking Plan.

### **Presumptive Exceptions**

The Apparently Successful Applicant may request a Presumptive Exception as part of the overall Marking Plan submission. To request a Presumptive Exception, the Apparently Successful Applicant must identify which Presumptive Exception applies, and state why, in light of the Apparently Successful Applicant's technical proposal and in the context of the

program description or program statement in the USAID Request For Application or Annual Program Statement, marking requirements should not be required.

A Presumptive Exception exempts the applicant from the general marking requirements for a particular USAID-funded public communication, commodity, program material or other deliverable, or a category of USAID-funded public communications, commodities, program materials or other deliverables that would otherwise be required to visibly bear the USAID Identity.

USAID marking requirements may not apply if they would:

- (i) USAID marking requirements would compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials;
- (ii) USAID marking requirements would diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent;
- (iii) USAID marking requirements would undercut host-country government “ownership” of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or audits, public service announcements, or other communications better positioned as “by” or “from” a cooperating country ministry or government official;
- (iv) USAID marking requirements would impair the functionality of an item;
- (v) USAID marking requirements would incur substantial costs or be impractical;
- (vi) USAID marking requirements would offend local cultural or social norms, or be considered inappropriate;
- (vii) USAID marking requirements would conflict with international law.

Specific guidelines for addressing each Presumptive Exception are:

For Presumptive Exception (i), identify the USAID Strategic Objective, Interim Result, or program goal furthered by an appearance of neutrality, or state why the program, project, activity, commodity, or communication is ‘intrinsically neutral.’ Identify, by category or deliverable item, examples of program materials funded under the award for which you are seeking an exception.

For Presumptive Exception (ii), state what data, studies, or other deliverables will be produced under the USAID funded award, and explain why the data, studies, or deliverables must be seen as credible.

For Presumptive Exception (iii), identify the item or media product produced under the USAID funded award, and explain why each item or product, or category of item and product, is better positioned as an item or product produced by the cooperating country government.

For Presumptive Exception (iv), identify the item or commodity to be marked, or categories of items or commodities, and explain how marking would impair the item's or commodity's functionality.

For Presumptive Exception (v), explain why marking would not be cost- beneficial or practical.

For Presumptive Exception (vi), identify the relevant cultural or social norm, and explain why marking would violate that norm or otherwise be inappropriate.

For Presumptive Exception (vii), identify the applicable international law violated by marking.