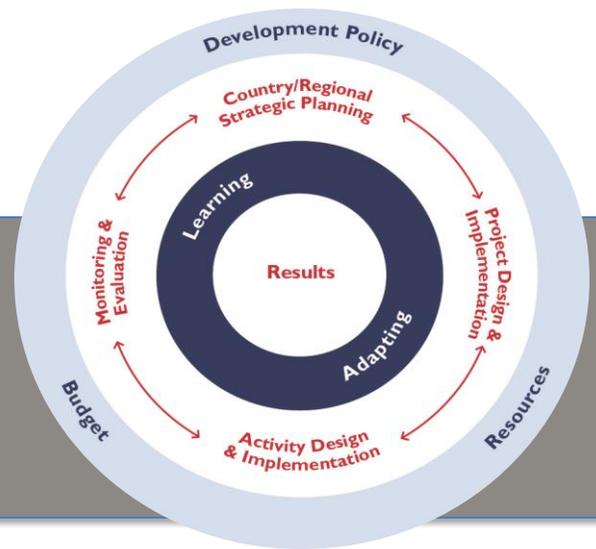


PROGRAM CYCLE

ADS 201: Program Cycle Operational Policy

Fact Sheet



The Program Cycle, codified in the Automated Directive Systems (ADS) 201 chapter, is USAID's operational model for planning, delivering, assessing, and adapting development programming in a given region or country in order to achieve more effective and sustainable results to advance U.S. foreign policy.

The Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning (PPL) introduced the Program Cycle in 2011 as a framework to link together the fundamental components of the Agency's programming:

- Country/Regional Strategic Planning
- Project Design & Implementation
- Activity Design & Implementation
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Collaboration, Learning & Adapting

The Program Cycle policy was revised in 2016 to fully integrate these components into a more complete and coherent business model. Together with ADS 200, ADS 201 replaces ADS 200-203.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles are essential for good development and serve as the foundation for ADS 201. These principles also support successful implementation of the Program Cycle:

- Apply analytic rigor: Make decisions about where and how to invest resources based on conclusions supported by evidence and analysis.
- Manage adaptively: Support intentional ways to make adjustments in response to new information and context changes.
- Promote sustainability: Generate lasting changes that can be sustained by local actors. Encourage local ownership with a focus on local priorities, resources, and implementation.
- Utilize diverse approaches for increased flexibility: Use a range of modalities to address development challenges based on country context, needs and available resources. Allow customization to better meet mission needs on program size, staffing pattern, and context.

COMPONENTS

COUNTRY/REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is the process to determine the best strategic approach in a given country or region. It is based on U.S. development policy priorities, country and/or regional priorities, and USAID's comparative advantage and available foreign assistance resources, among other factors.

PROJECT DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

Project design is the process for defining how to achieve results to ensure that efforts are complementary and aligned in support of a strategy. Each project design typically incorporates multiple activities organized around, and implemented to achieve, a common purpose.

ACTIVITY DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

Activity design is the process for further defining how to implement an activity contributing to a project. Activities are implemented through a variety of implementing mechanisms, such as a contract, direct agreement with the partner country government, grant to a local organization, or directly by USAID staff (e.g. policy dialogue or capacity development).

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Monitoring is the ongoing and systematic tracking of information relevant to USAID strategies, projects, and activities to support adaptive management and accountability structures at the Agency. It helps reveal whether implementation is on track and results are being achieved.

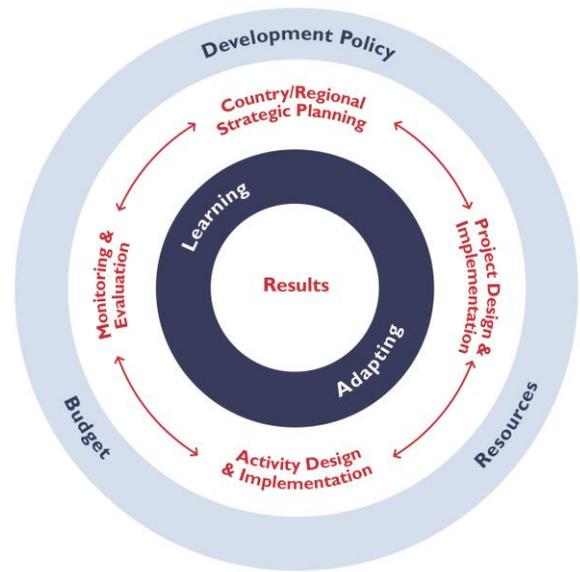
Evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of information from above components as a basis for judgements to improve effectiveness and timed to inform decisions about current and future programming. Evaluation is distinct from assessment or informal reviews.

COLLABORATION, LEARNING & ADAPTING

Strategic collaboration among a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, continuous learning, and adaptive management connect all components of the Program Cycle. Sources for learning include data from monitoring, research findings, evaluations, analyses, knowledge gained from experience, and other sources.

RESOURCES

- ADS 201 chapter at www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/200/201.
- Visit Learning Lab at USAIDLearningLab.org for more info on capacity building resources.



USAID Program Cycle