

## RWANDA

**Methodology:** The case study team carried out 23 interviews and site visits in-country, including with USAID/Rwanda technical offices, the Program Office, Government of Rwanda (GOR) officials, implementing partners, local organizations, and other donors. Fieldwork occurred from May 8-22, 2015. Interview data were complemented by background documentation from USAID/Rwanda and other stakeholder sources.

**Country Context:** Rwanda has achieved laudable development advances since the 1994 genocide but continues to face notable challenges to growth. Health indicators are improving GDP is projected to grow six percent annually in 2015 and 2016. However, nearly a quarter of Rwandans experience food insecurity each year, a large majority of the population lacks electricity, and the GOR relies on foreign assistance for 40 percent of its annual budget. In terms of the DRG environment, there is very little political opposition and civil society is weak, with limited citizen involvement in design of government services. USAID/Rwanda's current CDCS 2015-2019 is closely aligned with the GOR's objective to transform Rwanda into a knowledge-based, service-oriented economy with middle-income country status by 2020. International donor efforts are closely coordinated.

**Mission Factors:** DRG budget constraints was one impetus for DRG integration. Ninety-nine percent of the Mission's funding is linked to initiatives or earmarks, which limits flexibility and discretion in allocating programmatic funding. Furthermore, only one percent of the fiscal year (FY) 2015 budget is allocated to DRG, and the DRG budget was zeroed out in FYs 2013 and 2014. Lastly, government-to-government support was cancelled due to foreign policy concerns about the provision of direct funding from the USG to the GOR.

The current CDCS features a sector-based approach, as staff had concerns during CDCS formation that an approach using cross-cutting development objectives (rather than sector-based development objectives) would bring coordination challenges, funding constraints and burdensome organizational change. DRG integration is generally characterized by PITA principles: participation, inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability, yet Mission staff generally think of DRG in relationship to core DRG programming in human rights and democracy-focused activities. During interviews, there was a lack of clarity among staff as to how DRG integration is relevant to their sectoral work, but once PITA principles were explained, most sectoral staff acknowledged that they were already working on PITA issues to varying degrees. Mission leadership played an essential role in facilitating understanding of DRG principles and encouraging DRG integration as well as cross-sectoral programming writ large in the Mission.

**Intentionality of Integration Efforts:** DRG integration in USAID/Rwanda was born out of necessity. As noted above, limited DRG funding called for a creative solution to enable DRG programming to continue, which helped to facilitate collaboration between DRG and other sectors. In addition, Health, Economic Growth, and Education funding was reallocated to the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) and Land activities, both of which featured DRG management. For the most part, DRG integration has been spearheaded by the Front Office and reinforced by the Program Office with the support of DRG staff.

The CDCS provides some guidelines for cross-sectoral programming, including working groups, joint reviews, and collaborative activity design processing, but competing priorities for Mission staff appear to hinder their ability to engage with sectors outside their own in a concerted, on-going basis. The CDCS acknowledges that the objective of DRG integration is to create a multiplier effect to enhance sectoral outcomes. The CDCS recognizes integration across all sectors, not just DRG integration, as vitally important. Although some sectors are already engaging in work that focuses on the PITA principles,

their programs could be strengthened through more direct focus and engagement with DRG integration principles and approaches. Technical office interviewees noted that there are unexplored avenues for further DRG integration.

**Achievements and Lessons Learned:** USAID/Rwanda is in the growth stage of cross-sectoral programming, and can learn a number of lessons from activities pursued thus far. Cross-sectoral teams and cross-sectoral oversight of projects and activities has set the stage for an interdisciplinary approach to meeting Mission objectives, and this is a strategy that can be used to promote more robust DRG integration. The Mission's promotion of activity-level contributions to DRG integration has provided opportunities for various technical sectors to further the achievement of DRG principles. For example, the HICD activity has seen success in working with public health and agriculture-sector organizations to strengthen advocacy capacity and equip organizations to improve internal systems, human capital development, M&E, and information technology. The successful integration of gender across sectors following a Gender Advisor's Mission-wide gender assessment coupled with integration requirements from Washington, demonstrates the importance of intentionality in institutionalizing integration.

**Challenges:** The absence of intentionality is rooted in Mission staff's somewhat limited understanding of DRG integration as articulated through the lens of the PITA principles. Staff perceive that DRG is focused on democracy and human rights, which are sensitive issues within the Rwandan political context, and are wary of straining their relationship with the GOR and threatening sectoral gains. Additionally, the Mission's decision not to adopt a CDCS with cross-cutting development objectives may have hindered the development of more robust processes and procedures to ensure systematic and comprehensive DRG integration. Lastly, unlike gender integration, there are no clear Agency requirements to ensure DRG integration is pushed forward in the face of competing staff priorities and workload.

**Conclusion:** USAID/Rwanda has set a solid foundation for further DRG integration of its portfolio in the future despite a sensitive country environment, its decision not to pursue a CDCS with cross-cutting DOs, and lack of specific guidance from the Agency in this early formulation stage of the DRG integration effort. These three factors – as well as other considerations, including the press of business and the decision to maintain sector-based Mission offices, structures, and processes in alignment with DRG integration – are primary contributors to the Mission's opportunistic approach to DRG integration, which has been relatively effective given the caveats listed above but lacks a systematic approach that would elevate it to the next stages of deepened integration. As Mission staff do not have a shared understanding of DRG integration, a first step could be to hold internal sessions to build a common vision, discuss how to best use these principles to complement the CDCS and current practices, strategize how to operationalize this approach with consistency, and discuss how to go about implementation in a flexible manner that will identify challenges and allow staff to develop the needed solutions. Washington could support this process as the Mission discusses DRG integration and reaches a working consensus on how best to move forward.

Specifically, the Mission may want to explore the following topics:

- The relationship between cross-sectoral programming and DRG integration and how they, individually or combined, support the Mission's CDCS and development goal. Specifically, are there opportunities in the Mission to increase the integration of PITA principles into other sectors in a more robust and intentional manner in order to enhance or amplify outcomes in those sectors, particularly in upcoming activity design processes?
- Related, review and evaluate, if appropriate, if and how other technical offices advance their sectoral objectives using the PITA principles in current programming. What terms and approaches are used

that are similar to PITA)? What impact are these efforts having on current programming? Are there ways for the Mission's DRG Office to assist other offices to enhance these efforts?

- Review and revise the Mission's programmatic and operational systems, structures, and processes to better align with and support DRG integration. This could include regular cross-sectoral programming reviews, permanent integrated working groups, cross-sectoral programming portfolio reviews, pooled funding efforts, and others.
- Strengthen communication with USAID/Washington, including the DRG Center, to seek for technical assistance, training and guidance on lessons learned from other CSP case studies, resulting guidance, upcoming CSP training and related support.

Washington's role is pivotal in deepening the understanding of DRG integration and its advantages and challenges, and developing an approach that is Agency-wide yet flexible for individual Operating Units.

Considerations for USAID/Washington-led initiatives include:

- Continue to identify and document evidence of how development approaches that incorporate DRG integration impact the Agency's effectiveness in reaching its development objectives. Specific examples should be reflective of the evidence of positive and negative findings that explain both instances when sectoral or DRG outcomes have been amplified.
- Provide Operating Units with more specific guidance on how to understand, define, program, and operationalize DRG integration effectively, including a range of options and considerations. It would be useful if guidance encompassed a range of support, including expanding existing formal and informal communication, as well as coaching, mentoring, and other support mechanisms.
- Develop a web-based DRG integration course and a DRG integration training module.
- Expand on disseminating information across the Agency to share research findings, as well as to incorporate DRG integration principles and success stories into the Mission Director newsletter, consultations and conferences.
- Assist missions by providing guidance and project/activity examples that facilitate and encourage integrated programming and joint funding.
- In closed or closing environments, the "best fit" approach may be a more intentional and robust approach to programming around the PITA principles. This means adjusting and adapting "best practice" technical solutions to better fit the local political, social, and cultural context.
- In closed or closing environments (and, perhaps, with all cases), missions may be more effective if they pursue DRG integration in a broader effort of cross-sectoral programming along with supporting core DRG programming.