

TIP SHEET: WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING A DRG INTEGRATION STRATEGY

Democracy Rights and Governance (DRG) integration strategies can be developed to address a wide range of development challenges in varying political and social environments. As you develop your strategy, it is important to consider several questions related to the goals of integration, how integration will be managed at the Mission, language and entry points, and the enabling structures implementing partners need to effectively implement DRG integration.

What are you trying to achieve through DRG integration? How does DRG integration fit into the Mission's broader goals? Is DRG integration being pursued as part of a broader Mission integration strategy? Are you integrating DRG principles into other sector's programs? Are you integrating other sector priorities in DRG activities? Are you operating in a closed or open political environment? Are you going to co-fund activities? Having a clear Mission goal and definition for integration has important implications for how the DRG integration strategy is implemented.

What is the national country context? As you craft your strategy, it is important to think about the political environment, host country development strategy, and different tools and strategies you may want to use to implement DRG integration. Some questions to consider include: Are you operating in a closed or open political environment? Are there openings within national level policies to pursue DRG integration? Have Political Economy Analyses, DRG Assessments or other sectoral and social assessments revealed governance challenges throughout the Mission's portfolio? How does the Mission understand the environment? Is the Mission focusing on national or local level programs?

What is the Mission environment? Additional questions to consider include, where is the Mission in its CDCS process and implementation cycles? Where does the DRG integration strategy fit within this context and what does the Mission's enabling environment look like?

- **Are mandates in place for DRG integration?** What flexibility exists within Country Development Cooperation Strategy? Are Mission Orders in place? Are the activity design processes accommodating to input from different technical offices?
- **Where are you in the program cycle?** Designing a CDCS, designing new programs, mid-way through implementation or nearing project endpoints?
- **What flexibility exists within Mission funding?** Are you thinking of co-funding activities? Is there significant a DRG budget? Is there an ability and willingness to work with the limitations of Presidential Initiatives or Earmarked funding?
- **What resources can the DRG Office offer to promote and support DRG integration?** Tools and approaches, an understanding of the operating environment, access to relevant policymakers across sectors, collaboration between DRG and other activities?
- **What is the role of Mission leadership?** Are they supportive of DRG integration? Is there a role for the Program Office to play? What about OAA?
- **How is DRG integration perceived?** Is there a clear understanding about all of the facets of democracy, governance, and human rights work? What is the Mission's past experience with DRG integration or integration writ large within the country? Do staff have experience working on DRG integration strategies at other Missions or donors?
- **Is the Mission culture collaborative or competitive?** How will you work with other sectors? Are there opportunities for sharing successes and failures? Are you able to participate in joint field visits?

Establish a Common Understanding and Identify Entry Points. A misperception often exists among technical sectors about DRG goals, conflating DRG with only elections and human rights. Using terms related to participation, inclusion, transparency and accountability can help break down some of these misperceptions and provide an entry point to speak to other sector experts to identify DRG constraints. While not expected to be an expert on each sector, it is helpful if DRG Officers have a basic understanding and learn the language of different technical offices and the key actors who they work with. Each country and context is different, however common entry points and goals for DRG integration may be:

- Improving accountability in service delivery
- Enhancing the enabling environment for social development
- Promoting evidence-based and inclusive policy development process
- Strengthening CSO capacity to advocate for social rights or policy reforms
- Addressing Public Financial Management and Corruption

How to manage the DRG integration processes. What type of management structures are you going to implement to ensure the implementation and institutionalization of DRG integration? One way to robustly integrate DRG principles across sectors is during the activity design phase, starting at the development of a concept note. In addition, other structures may need to be in place within a mission to encourage cross-sector collaboration and build it into Mission processes. Some approaches and mechanisms to consider include:

- **CDCS Strategy:** How will integration be written into your CDCS strategy? Is it a cross-cutting Support Indicator, Intermediate Results under each Development Objective, a standalone DRG Development Objective, or written some other way into the CDCS?
- **DRG Integration Advisor.** Some Missions created a DRG Integration Advisor position to work with each technical team and find entry points for DRG integration. The Advisor, seen as the go to person for DRG Integration, can sit within the DRG or Program Office and duties could include working with each sector to identify DRG entry points, learning the language of each technical team, traveling on joint-field visits, contributing to new activity designs from concept to solicitation phase, and organizing Mission and Implementing Partner wide trainings on DRG principles and approaches.
- **Mission Order.** Numerous Missions created Mission Orders for Gender and Social Inclusion or D4R, cross-cutting issues that are integrated similar to DRG. The creation of a Mission Order for DRG integration stresses the importance placed on integration by the Front Office, creates organizational processes, and can define the roles and responsibilities of each office.
- **DO Teams, DG Backstops, etc.** How will the DRG team interact with other teams to promote the inclusion of DRG principles into programming and identify entry points?
- **AOR/COR and Activity Managers:** For activities that are co-funded across sectors, missions may designate the Primary AOR from the DRG office and the alternate from a relevant technical office (or vice versa). Some missions created Activity Managers, where in addition to the AOR/COR, the Activity Managers are able to also provide technical oversight of implementing partners.
- **Incentivize Staff:** Integration is a departure from the traditional way of designing, managing, and implementing activities. Mechanisms such as spot awards, including integration in staff work objectives, and utilizing the Ambassador awards process to award integration champions can help to instill a culture of integration.
- **Opportunities for Sharing and Collaboration:** Create opportunities for Mission staff to come together and share information about their activities and sector. Are there common

challenges that each sector faces? Are there lessons learned that could be useful to other sectors?

Mechanisms for Implementation. Providing a clear mandate and direction for DRG integration to implementing partners can lead to robust DRG integration. It can set clear priorities and decrease the probability that DRG integrated activities and approaches will fall second to other program priorities.

Some tools implemented by Missions to implement DRG integration include:

- **Contractual Mechanism:** Using adaptive management processes, some Missions include “Windows of Opportunity” language, giving partners the flexibility to implement, collaborate, and coordinate DRG integrated activities. IPs can also be required to submit annual integration work plans, identifying the DRG integrated activities and how it is beneficial for each implementing partner. Participating in an activity’s design process, beginning at the concept design phase is another way to strengthen DRG principles and approaches.
- **Field Coordination:** Some Missions created field based positions to promote district or regional collaboration among partners. Others experiment with giving an implementing partner the responsibility for coordinating at the district level.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning:** There are a variety of ways to measure integration. Some Missions developed cross-cutting DRG indicators, other have done analyses of Presidential Initiatives and earmarks to identify relevant indicators, while others use standard F-indicators, or impact evaluations.

An integrated DRG strategy can be labor intensive, requires the buy-in of the entire Mission, and that implementing partners begin operating differently. Nonetheless, an integrated strategy can be important tool for a Mission to creatively address critical development challenges. A DRG integration strategy can help other sectors unlock governance constraints inhibiting the success of programs and strengthen principles related to participation, inclusion, transparency and accountability, thereby bolstering the sustainability of the Mission’s entire portfolio.