



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GUATEMALA

INTEGRATION OF USAID IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS

MAY, 2013



INDEX

SUMMARY	1
I. FTF BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT: <i>WHERE WE BEGAN</i>	2
II. PRE-POSITIONING RESOURCES: BRIDGING TO THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS	3
III. CROSS FUNDING	3
IV. SHARING STRATEGIC DESIGNS	4
V. TARGETING	4
VI. COLLABORATING ON PROCUREMENT	5
VII. THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS INTEGRATED PROGRAM –WHIP	6
VIII. NATURE AND IMPACT OF WHIP MEETINGS: WHERE WE ARE NOW	7
IX. PARTNERING FOR COMMUNICATION AND INTEGRATION	8
X. LINKING, SHARING A VISION AND TEAM BUILDING IN THE CAPITOL	9
XI. FIELD LEVEL COORDINATION	9
XII. USAID’S FORMAL COMMITMENT TO COORDINATION	9
XIII. CHALLENGES – WHERE ARE WE HEADING?	10
 ANNEX I	 12
 ANNEX II	 14

STRATEGIC PROGRAM INTEGRATION: USAID/GUATEMALA

SUMMARY

Guatemala has a well-deserved reputation for strategic integration of its poverty and malnutrition programs, integrating three Presidential Initiative multi-year strategies, USAID staff, and project-financed human and financial resources to work in Guatemala's western highlands. The Mission reached consensus upon the selection of 30 municipalities in 5 departments as well as upon a comprehensive population-based survey design and common, shared indicators that would measure the impact of the integration of its efforts. Extensive formal meetings between USAID, other USG agencies and partners working in the western highlands was an opportunity to share strategy and thinking, discuss opportunities and obstacles and develop a shared vision. After the awards of USAID grants and contracts from 3 technical offices, Departmental level meetings were organized to share project-specific information for field level technicians; departmental coordinating committees have been established and a "Letter of Understanding" among partners was signed on March 21, 2013. The USAID Mission established a multi-office technical working group and formalized its composition and roles and responsibilities in an Executive Correspondence signed by the Mission Director. This internal USAID organization is "mirrored" by a similar USG partners "central committee". USAID is in the process of hiring a US staff to live and work in the western highlands to serve as a permanent representative to advance integration among programs and staff. The strategic integration process is far from complete, but there are elements of early success that should be widely shared. This is the history of program integration, steps taken and process results recorded which

hopefully will serve as a guide to other Missions' programing. The process was not linear, several concurrent actions were underway that reinforced integration and alignment with the Government of Guatemala's food security and nutrition programs. This paper will concentrate largely, but not exclusively on the internal USAID/Guatemala processes underway with reference to relevant external interactions with stakeholders, other donors, and the Government of Guatemala. It is our intention in this document to capture "where we were", "where we are" as well as "where we're headed" as a true development partners with USG implementing agents and Government of Guatemala officials.

"I am pleased with our work to integrate USAID/Guatemala's project activities in the western highlands. Our model of program integration is an unprecedented mission-wide effort. Based upon a focused strategy, the internal collaboration on the design of procurement instruments, and extensive interaction with our partners, the Mission is forging a new way of doing business. We have a shared vision for our programs in the highlands. It is a program that recognizes the importance of increased income, increased access to health care, food security safety nets, important behavior change, education, climate adaptation and the potential long-term sustainability that comes by working with local authorities at all levels. Our programs were developed with the Guatemalan government and with valuable private sector input. The result is a program that benefits from broad support."

—Kevin Kelly
USAID/Guatemala Mission Director

I. FTF BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT: WHERE WE BEGAN

Guatemala is a priority country for five presidential initiatives, notably the Feed the Future and Global Health Initiatives¹. In October 2010, USAID/Guatemala presented its whole-of-government strategy to address poverty and chronic malnutrition to an inter-agency group in Washington, DC. The essence of the strategic overview was that Guatemala could be considered as “A Tale of Two Countries”, essentially Guatemala City and the rural areas, especially remote indigenous communities in the Western Highlands. The analysis conducted and the presentation made to Washington highlighted the concentration of poverty and malnutrition in Guatemala’s western highlands and served to focus USG investment in that region. The interagency approval of the geographic focus upon the western highlands under the Mission’s FTF multi-year strategy underscored the necessity to concentrate activities and resources (see pre and post-map from FTF MYS) in this priority area. At the same time, the Government of Guatemala led by the Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SESAN), and other donors, began revising the GOG’s national food security strategy and its sub-regional plan for the western highlands, Plan para el Occidente (PLAN OCC). Close and productive interaction with SESAN’s staff ensured that the Feed the Future multi-year strategy was fully aligned with national priorities as well and that other USG-funded activities were informed by the analysis being conducted by SESAN and other government agencies.

Prior to the October 2010 strategy presentation in Washington, USAID-funded activities were geographically dispersed as demonstrated by the two maps below. Additionally, while there is

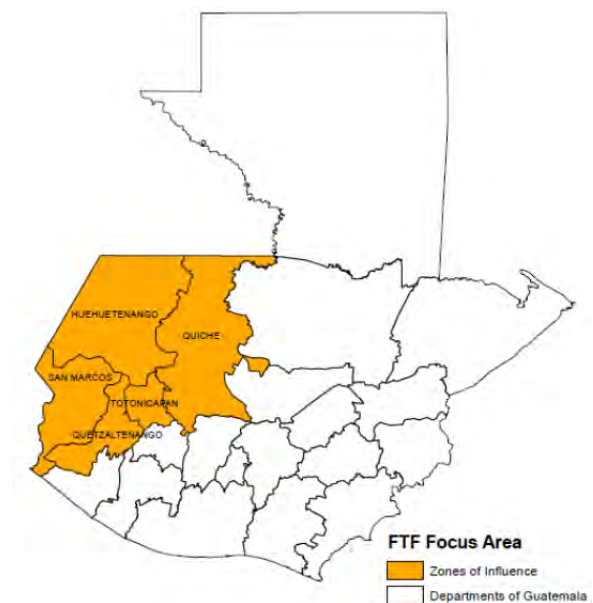
always talk of coordination, integration and collaboration, it is rarely a guiding policy for USAID investments.

“Before an integrated programmatic approach was addressed and pushed by the USAID Mission in Guatemala, most accounts and projects were managed without much coordination among them. The triangulation between Title II projects, Health, Income Generation and Democracy and Governance was literally inexistent.”

—Carlos Cárdenas
Save the Children

“My initial reaction [to integration] was ‘here we go again’, then, I realized that this time the integration was for real.”

—Sonia Dominguez
PL 480



Zone of Influence: Feed the Future

¹ The remaining three are the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), the PEPFAR and the Global Climate Change initiatives.

II. PRE-POSITIONING RESOURCES: BRIDGING TO THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS

The October 2010 Washington interagency approval of the initial FTF strategic focus upon high value horticulture and specialty coffee value chains in 5 of 6 departments of the western highlands cleared the way for the USAID Mission to incrementally fund its existing value chains activities and to request its partners to shift their focus to the western highlands. With these additional resources and time, the partners were requested to consider how increased income from rural value chains could be better channeled to address improved nutritional status of participating households and to begin implementation of some activities to gain experience with this new approach. The decision to request grantees to begin to address dietary diversity, home gardening and behavior change was important for at least two reasons: it presaged a more aggressive incorporation of nutrition-related activities into agricultural value chains and it led to linkages among “agriculture” and “health” activities thus gaining valuable experience to share with planners. Insisting that increasing income from horticulture exports



© ADINA, AGEXPORT, 2012

needed to be related to improved nutrition indicators forced alliances among USAID-funded grantees, international research institutions and local NGOs. For example, one Value Chain partner- AGEXPORT - subcontracted with the International Nutrition Institute for Central American and Panama (INCAP) and Vital Voices/Guatemala to carry-out a baseline study and advice on improved nutrition and role of women. This prior working relationship under the “bridge funding” was useful to AGEXPORT during the elaboration of responses to the Rural Value Chains Request for Application issued in the fall of 2011.

III. CROSS FUNDING:

Prior to the Washington approval of the Mission's Multi-Year Feed the Future Strategy in March of 2011, Mission leadership decided that it could not reach its objectives without directing \$1.0 million and \$.8 million of FTF resources (Fiscal Year 2010 agriculture productivity funds) to finance Local Governance and Nutrition-related activities managed by the Democracy and Governance and Health and Education Offices respectively. This strategic decision to allocate resources in support of the broader FTF Rural Value Chains Program that would be developed over the next several months, jump-started integrated program thinking and ensured a level of shared accountability, interest and close collaboration among the staff of the technical offices. In essence, the Economic Growth office, home to the FTF initiative, was forced to “follow the money” and this accountability linked Health/Education Office and Democracy/Governance Office with the Economic Growth Office activities in a substantive manner. Additionally, performance reports (the Operational Plan, the Performance Reports and bi-annual Mission portfolio reviews), require inputs from the “receiving” technical offices further supporting the integration and interaction among technical office staff.

IV. SHARING STRATEGIC DESIGNS:

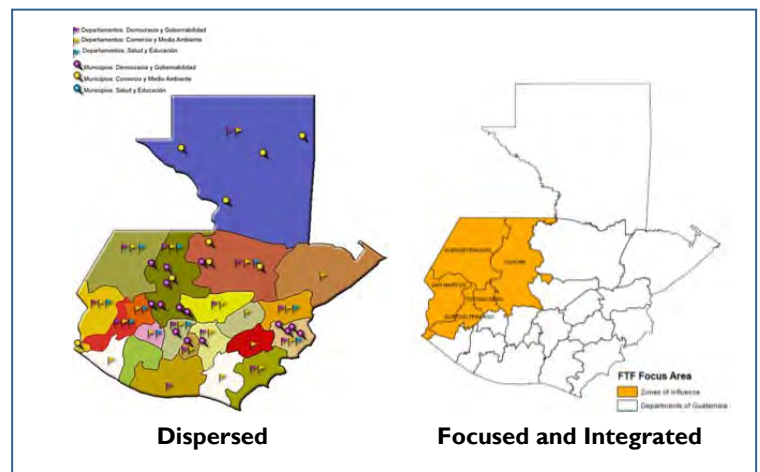
Beginning in January of 2011, consultants to the USAID mission began drafting three multiyear strategies, the FTF, the GHI/BEST and the P.L. 480 Title II Multi Year Development Assistance program (now Development Food Assistance Programs). Also in January, a high-level delegation from USDA and USAID/W Food for Peace officers conducted joint field visits to USDA and Title II project sites also in January led to a “road map” for interagency cooperation. Recognizing that reducing chronic malnutrition required more than just increased income, home gardens or better access to health facilities, drafters of the multiyear strategies shared documentation, and met often to determine how best to complement the planned activities under each strategy. USAID Guatemala technical staff established the “FTF principles”, a simple set of instructions that would be included in all solicitation documents and shared with potential bidders to ensure that separate solicitations from each technical office would unify the Mission’s approach to development in the western highlands and ensure our partner’s commitment to nutrition and coordination. Requests for Applications (RFAs) from the Health and the Economic Growth office included identical language –the FTF “Principles” -

- linking value chains with nutrition and dietary diversity,
- behavior change for improved nutrition,
- sustainability through local governance,
- leveraging private sector resources; and,
- coordination with other USAID partners.

The language in the Request for Applications for the Title II program, while not identical, was very similar.

V. TARGETING:

The GOG includes 6 departments in the western highlands, and its draft PLANOCC was targeted at sixty three municipalities within those 6 departments considered extremely vulnerable to food insecurity. USAID Mission resources, however, were limited and a decision as to the scope of the Mission program was required. The Mission’s decision that the Community Health project must work in the same municipalities where the Rural Value Chains project would be implemented at minimum ensured co-location of two flagship projects from two technical offices.



The Health and Education Office determined that they had sufficient resources to provide health services to a population of approximately 1.5 million, so the Mission needed to reach consensus on the best possible combination of municipalities whose total population was in that range and that met the other criteria for selection. The selection of the specific 30 municipalities within the 5 departments was Mission-wide effort. Based upon a typology study conducted by the International Food Policy Research Institute² the list of candidate municipalities was reduced from 113 to 70. Each technical office was then requested to submit,

² Maruyama, Eduardo and Máximo Torero, “A typology to identify the different types of rural micro regions in terms of the characteristics and development constraints and options in Guatemala”, January 2011

independently, a final set of municipalities in which they proposed to work.

The criteria used by the technical offices included:

- the IFPRI typology matrix (extent of poverty and malnutrition coupled with significant economic opportunities),
- the GOG's SESAN/IVISAN priority municipalities (Index of Risks of Food and Nutrition Insecurity),
- a Municipality Index Score (poverty, percentage of indigenous population, food security vulnerability, economic infrastructure, generation of municipal revenue),
- economic resources relationships (shared watersheds, proximity to roads, markets),
- efficiency –clustering proximate or contiguous municipalities to reduce costs of delivery of technical assistance; and,
- presence of on-going USG programs (weighted for presence of one or more activities).



© Atitán, Policy Regulatory Support Program/USAID, 2012

Because the final set of 30 municipalities wherein the Community Health and Rural Value Chains project would work was finalized in mid-December 2011 some months after the Requests for Applications had been advertised, potential bidders were given the full list of 70 candidate municipalities for their planning purposes. The two new P.L. 480 Title II projects work in 18 of the final 30 and the Local Governance project works in 5 of the final selected municipalities at this time.

During a meeting chaired by the Mission Director, technical offices proposed, defended and articulated their choices. The final listing was completed, the municipalities mapped and the information was shared with all potential bidders. All of the final municipalities selected rank high in the GOG's own ranking of priority municipalities and the list was shared with the Secretary of SESAN immediately upon completion.

In sum, the Mission's strategy therefore integrated itself geographically and reached consensus on a single proxy indicator for USAID's development assistance program in the western highlands-reduction of poverty and chronic malnutrition.

The Mission's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) which began in January, 2011 further ratified this strategic approach. The approved CDCS has a single Development Objective (DO 2) that combines the work of the Health and Education, Economic Growth and Title II program activities. Thus, there are additional approved strategic documents that further underpin the Mission's strategic integration that go far beyond simple "co-location of projects".

VI. COLLABORATING ON PROCUREMENT:

While finalizing the FTF and GHI/BEST multiyear strategies, Mission staff also began the lengthy process of issuing new procurement instruments. The Rural Value Chain, Community Health (now NutriSalud) and Title II Food for Peace agreements were being developed within weeks of each other and there was considerable interaction among the design teams to ensure consistency and complementarity. Requests for Applications (RFA) referenced the strategic documents of other technical offices and relevant studies that would provide additional background for the bidders to understand the integrated strategy that was being proposed. In addition to the inclusion of the "FTF principles" in the solicitation documentation, technical office staff

participated in the review of the final RFAs and participated in the technical evaluation committees to award grants to the winning proposals³. While seeking cross-office participation in the review or selection process is not new, with the emphasis upon concrete agriculture and nutrition linkages, this teamwork was considered extremely useful. Much of the collaboration on design and integration was conducted during or on the margins of the FTF Working Group meetings (the precursor to the WHIP).



The almost concurrent strategy design, closely followed by the release of project solicitation documents and the competitive selection process being prepared at the same time, project implementation of three major programs began roughly at the same time (July 2012). The result was effective programmatic integration. The combination of time, geographic and programmatic integration was a driving force for improved and substantive partner coordination and integration.

³ The exception was the Community Health and Nutrition project, there simply was not staff available to participate on the technical evaluation committee during that period.

VII. THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS INTEGRATED PROGRAM -WHIP

USAID/G created an intra-mission working group combining staff from all technical offices. The purpose of this working group (initially called the FTF Working Group, eventually the Western Highlands Integrated Program Core Technical Working Group) was to ensure collaboration and information sharing among the staff responsible for activities to be carried out in the target area. The initial meetings began informally starting with the multiyear strategy development process and continuing until now. The first formal meeting was held in May 2011. The agenda established for the first formal meeting highlighted the statement in the March 2011 submission of the FTF Multiyear Strategy on coordination⁴: "At the operational level, in coordination with USDA and the Peace Corps in particular, USAID staff and partners of the Economic Growth, Food for Peace, Health and Education and the Democracy and Governance Offices have an important responsibility to design, implement and monitor individual program activities to align with the objectives of the FTF MYS. This coordination began with joint selection of the western highland municipalities where the FTF program will be implemented. It will continue through participation in the design of procurement documents and selection of implementing partners, monthly "core team" meeting, joint field trips, frequent meetings with partners, etc."

Meetings were initially held weekly. The participation at the early stage included technical and support offices, but the group was too large to effect the exchange of views needed and was eventually reduced to technical staff only, with outreach to other offices as required by the agenda (see Annex I for a description of the composition, leadership, roles and responsibilities

⁴ Feed the Future Multiyear Strategy, March 2011

of the WHIP). Moving beyond a very narrow focus upon the highly visible Feed the Future initiative and linkages among the Health, Title II and Rural Value Chains project, the working group evolved in to the Western Highlands Integrated Program (WHIP) Core Technical Working Group and expanded to include education, family planning, policy and climate change.

In its simplest form, the WHIP is an internal USAID group that plans, communicates and coordinates activities within the Mission and with USAID-funded partners to effect the best integration of resources possible. The WHIP is considered both a conceptual and an operational framework for the collaborative implementation of USG-funded activities. WHIP meetings serve as a unifying structure to ensure integration and communication among busy technical staff.



© Partners Meeting, USAID, 2012

Gaining a quorum for weekly or bi-weekly meetings for busy senior USAID technical staff was not easy. Adding to already hectic meeting schedules, especially an initially nebulous cross-office collaboration effort, required considerable effort. That the process continues after two years is a credit to the Mission Director's leadership and the commitment of the team members to assume additional responsibilities.

VIII. NATURE AND IMPACT OF WHIP MEETINGS: WHERE WE ARE NOW

A review of the minutes of the meetings of the FTF Working Group and WHIP Core Tech Team meetings highlights the role and importance of the structured interaction. The first meeting established the overall purpose and objectives: to develop common approaches with implementing partners, to share approaches (health care service delivery, Title II activities), experiences and plan next steps including developing agendas for partner meetings. Subsequent meetings examined the partners' directory that had been developed and discussion of the mapping of interventions by partner, as well as identifying priority municipalities to begin field level integration. When the GOG made changes to the leadership of SESAN in July 2011 and in anticipation of the change in government in January 2012, sessions were held to discuss how to preserve the analysis conducted and how to brief and coordinate with the new administration. As the Mission moved from multiyear strategy development through procurement to implementation the focus of the meetings shifted correspondingly. Meetings became less strategic information sharing and planning and more operational in nature, indicators and monitoring and evaluation, developing agenda for partner meetings and field level coordination activities. Complementing the WHIP meetings, team members shared reports of interest, invited team members to events and even traveled on site visits together. Subsequent partner meetings included considerable brainstorming on the nature of the FTF and its linkages with health and nutrition activities, linkages with other programs especially the integrated programs implemented by Title II partners, and "selling" partners on the importance and value-added from coordination of efforts. Perhaps the single greatest gain from the extensive meetings in addition to sharing

information on each other's programs was the establishment of positive working relationships among the partners and the adoption of coordination as a binding policy, not a wish.

"Integrated programming is like a marriage... when you are single you get used to make decisions by your own and live with the consequences by yourself... in this new way of living, you have to take your partner into consideration to make the smarter decision because the consequences will be shared."

—Sonia Dominguez,
PL 480

While impossible to attribute to the meetings themselves, technical staff have an improved understanding of the projects carried out by other offices, and were thus able to identify opportunities for collaboration. Frequent and active participation in structured meetings on program integration and coordination improved relationships among staff of technical offices that led to better communication and collaboration and support (offers from the Local Governance office to map project activities, an Economic Growth Office's project provision of technical assistance to Mayor's to manage municipal woodlots). While much remains to be accomplished USAID-funded partners have expressed appreciation for USAID's efforts to integrate their activities and to share consistent and coordinated information with them.

IX. PARTNERING FOR COMMUNICATION AND INTEGRATION:

USAID/G held over 20 meetings with its partners from the Health and Education, Economic Growth, PL 480 and Local Governance offices as a means to share information on USAID's goals and objectives, which partners were undertaking what activities, where, with what level of

resources and with what successes and challenges. The initial meetings were opened by the Mission Director and his participation was critical for convening partners and for underscoring the Mission's commitment to operating differently. Opening the first meeting the director commented that raising income was vital, but insufficient. Providing greater access to health care in isolation from other programs was critical, but also insufficient to address the complex twin goals of reducing poverty and reducing chronic malnutrition. He stated that he would be insisting upon BOTH improved income and better access to health in an integrated, sustainable fashion and challenged all the participants to begin to reflect on how this could best be done. Subsequent meetings included the presentation of the FTF strategy, FTF indicators, the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy as well as presentations of cross-cutting issues by key partner staff. During a two week period, there were five partner meetings in which each partner presented its activities in each of the five departments, thus increasing general knowledge about the education, health, family planning, policy, Title II and economic growth activities in each of the target departments. Upon completion of each of the five departmental level presentations, USAID partners selected "lead" implementing partners to plan initial coordination activities.



X. LINKING, SHARING A VISION AND TEAM BUILDING IN THE CAPITOL:

The sum of the results of USAID's extensive partner meetings and internal organization to effect better integration among projects in the Western Highlands led to improved linkages between us and our partners and a shared vision and a clear sense of team. However, there was a strong sense that this level of organization and integration now needed to be replicated, or mirrored, with activities in the Western Highland departments and the selected municipalities.

XI. FIELD LEVEL COORDINATION:

More than a year ago, the WHIP team decided to concentrate and pilot its initial activities in the department of El Quiché for several reasons. Key partners had extensive on the ground experience and excellent access to the Governor and several mayors as well as an enviable track record of results. With support from one of its projects USAID organized a series of meetings to plan the first partner meeting in Quiché. Partners with activities in Quiché were invited to present their activities following a common template and asked to participate in working groups to discuss field level coordination approaches and roles and responsibilities of a departmental coordination committee. There were more than 14 formal presentations as well as opportunities for centrally funded support projects to explain their programs as well. This first meeting was followed two months later with a second to select a lead partner and collaborate on a letter of understanding among partners that would formalize their agreement to integrate their activities in the field. That letter of understanding was signed by the Quiché partners in the USAID office; the Mission Director also signed as a

witness. Both the Quiché meetings and the letter of understanding serve as the model for future departmental level coordination planning meetings to be held in the coming months.



© Partners Meeting Quiché, USAID, 2013

XII. USAID'S FORMAL COMMITMENT TO COORDINATION:

On January 17, 2013, following the first Quiché meeting, the Mission Director sent a letter to the Quiché partners thanking them for participation, acknowledging their possible concerns and expressing his commitment to integration of activities in the Western Highlands. (See ANNEX II for text) That letter stressed the importance of coordination and integration, advised that USAID has established an internal coordination mechanism (the WHIP Technical Working Group) reporting to him and that he would be seeking examples of effective field level coordination as part of the bi-annual portfolio reviews.



"Uh oh, looks like we didn't coordinate enough!"

The Director's letter stressed with clarity USAID's commitment to integration; the letter was well received by USAID partners.

USAID/Guatemala has since formalized the composition and role of the WHIP Core Technical Working Group (see Annex I). At the same time, USAID is collaborating with its partners to establish a single "central committee" for partners at the national level to "mirror" the structure and responsibilities of the WHIP Core technical Working Group. The diagram below highlights the emerging structure and relationships among the WHIP, the central and departmental coordinating committees and the planned role of a US Personal Services Contractor to live and work in Quetzaltenango to further support coordination efforts in the Western Highlands.

XIII. CHALLENGES – WHERE ARE WE HEADING?

Numerous challenges to institutionalization of the WHIP remain. This summer, there will be the turn-over of senior US staff that were instrumental in the early elaboration of the multi-year strategies and the WHIP process. In anticipation of the turnover, there has been a concerted transitional plan for new WHIP team members and new USAID officers have been actively engaged in the meeting processes. Fortunately, key Foreign Service National staff has extensive knowledge and experience with the process to continue to provide leadership, and continuity. Additionally, there are no anticipated changes in the composition of USAID partners' leadership and they will also provide continuity and leadership for the integration process, especially as the "central committee" begins to play its coordination role between USAID's WHIP and the departmental level coordination committees.

There will be changes in the GOG Administration beginning in January 2015. It is believed that a

new Administration will not fundamentally affect the high priority on food security and nutrition, especially with the active engagement to date of prominent private sector leaders. Nor is it likely an Administrative change would affect the USAID and USAID partners' integrated implementation approach. Nonetheless, there will be new actors on the GOG side that will need to be briefed and brought in to the process underway with USAID and its program partners.

The single largest challenge will be faced as the projects begin active implementation. The engagement of USAID and partner staff in planning and awarding grants and contracts is an important phase, but as we shift in to full implementation phase, there are likely to be some additional hurdles to overcome, especially demands on time for coordination and the inevitable trade-offs between collaboration and achievement of results.

The success of the integration of efforts can be measured in a number of ways. In the future, will there be USAID partners annual work plans and budgets that reflect integration (or cross-referencing) among projects? Has the WHIP Core Technical Working Group continued to function and are there qualitative measures that can be assessed of its efficiency? Has the WHIP and the collaboration with partners in various sectors achieved a "one voice" approach to the development challenges faced? Is there evidence of a "one voice" approach to interactions with local officials?



© PCI, 2012

USAID has invested in a quasi-experimental, population based survey that will measure the impact of the health, Title II and rural value chains programs. The baseline for that study began in late May 2013 and a mid-term and final impact evaluation will be completed in 2015 and again in 2017. While outside the scope of work of the baseline per se, there may be evidence that the integration efforts are reflected in those findings?

USAID/Guatemala acknowledges that its initiative to effect improved integration and coordination among partners is a true learning process, a process it is undertaking with its staff and with the staff of its implementing partners. The Mission also acknowledges the inherent challenges of changing its ways of doing business. The ultimate success of this effort can be measured through improved nutrition and reduced poverty among the targeted beneficiaries of the Western Highlands.



© S. Dominguez, USAID, 2008

USAID/Guatemala Western Highlands Integrated Program (WHIP) Technical Working Group – April 24, 2013

The purpose of this executive correspondence is to document and advise staff on the background, purpose, composition, roles and responsibilities and reporting requirements for an inter-office working group that will help to ensure integration of staff and financial resources of USAID-funded activities and approved coordination with our partners in the Western Highlands.

Background: USAID/Guatemala has embarked upon an ambitious program to reduce poverty and chronic malnutrition in selected municipalities of 5 departments of the Western Highlands. A successful approach to these two objectives requires a single, integrated strategy and close cross-sectoral collaboration within the USAID Mission and with our partners. To ensure this integrated strategic implementation, coordination and reporting function, the Mission has organized the Western Highlands Integrated Program (W.H.I.P.) Core Technical Working Group team with composition representing each technical office with assistance as required from the Mission's support offices. This WHIP Core Technical Working Group will have the following duties and responsibilities. This staff notice clarifies the purpose, composition, roles and responsibilities and reporting requirements of that team.

Purpose: As technical representatives of the USAID/Guatemala program for the Feed the Future and Global Health Initiatives, Global Climate Change Initiative and the Local Governance and Title II Programs, and working under the overall direction and guidance of the Mission Director, provide oversight to the implementation of all the USAID-funded activities in the Western Highlands. Oversight includes monitoring the achievement of results; ensuring collaboration among USAID technical offices and their program resources and partners, coordination of activities among USAID/Guatemala, USAID/Washington and USG agencies at Post, and reporting on overall program progress as needed.

Composition: A standing committee that includes representatives from each technical office and from the Planning and Program Support Office and the Office of Acquisitions and Assistance as necessary. The standing committee will be chaired by the designated Agriculture Officer or other person designated by the Mission Director and includes representatives from the following offices:

- Economic Growth: Agriculture and Environment
- Health and Education
- Food Security
- Democracy and Governance
- Planning and Program Support ⁵
- Office of Acquisitions and Assistance¹

⁵ As needed depending upon agenda

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Formalize coordination and communication mechanisms among technical offices, and implementing partners (the USAID partners “Central Coordination Committee”) working in different initiatives through periodic meetings;
- Contribute insights into the implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting on activities;
- Advise on implementation issues facing WHIP program activities and propose resolutions;
- Communicate with GOG stakeholders, partners and Washington on progress;
- Share annual plans and budgets, quarterly reports, success stories and other relevant documents with the WHIP Technical Working Group team;
- Contribute to a shared-site data base of activities, documents and reports to be established by the Monitoring and Evaluation Contractor;
- Coordinate and communicate with USG agencies at Post working in related fields;
- Provide oversight and communication with departmental level WHIP coordinating committees; and
- Other duties as identified.

Reporting: The WHIP Core Technical Working Group will report on a quarterly basis to the USAID Mission Director to present status of the integrated program, the work of the “Central” and departmental coordination Committee, the analytical work of any consultants, etc.



USAID | GUATEMALA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

January 15, 2013

Dear Partners,

I greet you cordially, wishing you success in your activities. I hereby would like to thank you and your staff for your participation in the first Quiche departmental-level coordination meeting, conducted in El Quiche on December 6. I recognize your time is important and I fully support the work that was conducted by you all.

I would like to stress that I personally was briefed on the results of the meeting and I wish to share some things with you. First, it is important that all partners working on programs in the Western Highlands (Feed the Future, Global Health or other initiative) understand who is implementing what activities, in which areas (municipalities, or communities), with what level of resources and what proposed targets. Therefore the initial presentation of the various project activities was important to ensure that everyone had an understanding of the planned and on-going activities funded by USAID.

From that starting point, I understand that you were asked to participate in working groups with the single objective of determining how best to effect coordination in Quiche. The recommendations you made – periodic coordination meetings, mapping of municipal and community-level activities and recognition of the central role of locally elected officials, among many other suggestions – are useful and we thank you because they will strengthen our interventions. The PRS project has shared with you the names of proposed points of contact and the memory aid of the workshop.

I know that the coordination efforts we are insisting upon are not an easy step for you. It is also new to USAID staff as well. For far too long we have implemented and reported on activities in “isolation” –health activities reporting exclusively upon health programs, or value chain projects reporting only upon the results anticipated in their current agreements. Within USAID Mission we are also learning this new way of implementing programs. I also know that there remain concerns in your minds –how will our individual program results be measured; will there be “double counting” in achievement of results; will I be helping a potential competitor gain credit for specific activities? There are probably other concerns that I am not aware of and I urge you to share them with your AORs or CORs and ask that they share them with office directors so that we may address these concerns as they arise in order to improve our program impact.

As many of you will recall when we began our initial partner meetings, we recognized that in order to address poverty and chronic malnutrition, we needed to encourage and strengthen linkages among our projects. In this way we gain from our individual and project experiences and resources and can create synergies and collaboration to improve achievement of results, especially in the field. Because I believe very strongly in the value of coordination among our partners I have asked that our AORs and CORs include in

our periodic portfolio reviews the extent to which their partners have shown evidence of effective cooperation in the field work. I have also institutionalized an internal USAID structure that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities for coordination and collaboration within the Mission programs that are implemented in the Western Highlands. The chairperson of that working group will report to me periodically on the results of our integrated efforts in the Western Highlands.

Again, I wish to thank each and everyone that joined the Mission staff last week in Quiche and to let you know I will continue to closely monitor our progress with the Mission policy of cooperation and integration of efforts.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kelly
Mission Director



USAID | GUATEMALA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

15 de enero de 2013

Estimados socios:

Los saludo cordialmente, deseándoles éxitos en sus labores. Por este medio quiero agradecerle, a usted y a su personal, por su participación en la primera reunión de coordinación a nivel departamental que se realizó en El Quiché el 6 de diciembre. Reconozco que su tiempo es importante y apoyo completamente el trabajo realizado por todos ustedes.

Deseo hacer énfasis que me han informado de los resultados de la reunión y deseo compartir algunos puntos con ustedes. Primero, es importante que todos los socios que están trabajando en programas del Altiplano Occidental (Alimentando al Futuro, Salud Global u otra iniciativa) comprendan quién está implementando cada actividad, en qué áreas (municipios o comunidades), con qué nivel de recursos cuentan y cuáles son los objetivos propuestos. Por lo tanto, la presentación de las diferentes actividades de los proyectos, fue importante para asegurar que todos estuvieran al tanto de las actividades planeadas con fondos de USAID.

Empezando con este punto, comprendo que a ustedes se les pidió participar en grupos de trabajo, con el único objetivo de determinar la mejor forma de coordinar acciones en El Quiché. Las recomendaciones que ustedes hicieron –reuniones periódicas de coordinación, mapeo de actividades municipales y actividades a nivel de comunidad, así como el reconocimiento del papel central de las autoridades locales, entre otras muchas sugerencias, son muy útiles y les agradecemos ya que fortalecerá nuestras intervenciones. El proyecto PRS ha compartido con ustedes los nombres de los puntos de contacto propuestos y la ayuda de memoria del taller.

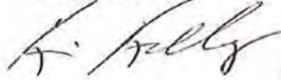
Sé que los esfuerzos de coordinación en que estamos insistiendo no son un paso fácil para ustedes. También es algo nuevo para el personal de USAID. Desde hace tiempo hemos implementado y reportado actividades “aisladas” –actividades de salud, exclusivamente sobre programas de salud, o proyectos de cadenas de valor, reportando únicamente los resultados anticipados en sus acuerdos actuales. Dentro de la Misión de USAID, también estamos aprendiendo sobre ésta nueva forma de implementar programas. Sé que hay dudas, entre ellas, –¿cómo serán medidos los resultados individuales del programa; se “contarán dos veces” los logros de los resultados; estaré yo ayudando a un posible competidor a obtener crédito por actividades específicas? Probablemente también tengan otras dudas de las cuales yo no estoy al tanto y los insto a que las compartan con sus AORs o CORs y les pidan que ellos las compartan

con los directores de oficina para que podamos abordarlas conforme surjan, con el fin de mejorar el impacto de nuestro programa.

Como muchos de ustedes recordarán, cuando iniciamos con las reuniones de socios, reconocimos que para abordar la pobreza y la desnutrición crónica, era indispensable establecer y fortalecer vínculos entre nuestros proyectos para definir un abordaje integral a ésta problemática. De esta forma obtendríamos experiencias y recursos que pueden crear sinergias y colaboración para mejorar el logro de resultados, especialmente en el campo. Debido a que creo firmemente en el valor de la coordinación entre nuestros socios, he solicitado que nuestros CORs y AORs incluyan en nuestras revisiones periódicas de portafolio, la medida en que sus socios han presentado evidencia de cooperación efectiva en el trabajo de campo. También he institucionalizado una estructura interna en USAID que define claramente los papeles y las responsabilidades para coordinar y colaborar dentro de los programas de la Misión que son implementados en el Altiplano Occidental. El coordinador de ese grupo de trabajo me va a reportar a mí periódicamente sobre los resultados de nuestros esfuerzos integrados en el Altiplano Occidental.

Una vez más, deseo agradecer a cada uno de ustedes por acompañar al personal de la Misión en la reunión que se llevó a cabo en El Quiché y les informo que seguiré monitoreando muy de cerca nuestro progreso con la política de cooperación e integración de esfuerzos.

Atentamente,



Kevin Kelly
Director de Misión

