HOW TO WORK WITH USAID: BRANDING AND MARKING

SEPTEMBER 2020

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Welcome to the "Branding and Marking" module of USAID's training series.

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Branding is an important part of working with USAID. In this module, we will explain:

- What branding and marking means, and why it is important.
- The guidelines for USAID's visual identity, and
- Branding regulations for our different partners.

We will also explain how the approval process works, and where to direct questions.

Finally, we will show you how to use our visual identity.

When you have completed this module, you will know how to apply the Agency's brand guidelines and marking rules to your USAID-funded project.

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When most people think of a brand, they automatically think of a company or organization's logo. But a brand is much more. It is the essence or promise of what will be delivered or experienced.

USAID's brand reflects our unique values and principles. Equally important, it represents the good will of the American people and their commitment to providing assistance to those in need all around the world.

Branding builds credibility and trust, connects the Agency to our stakeholders, and upholds our reputation.

Marking is part of branding. It is the physical application of the USAID logo on communication products and physical assets for USAID-funded programs.

Co-branding and co-marking mean that both USAID and the partner are represented.

Remember: We all have an important role to play in amplifying and protecting USAID's brand. Whatever your role—Mission director, contracting officer, implementing partner, or something else—the work you do every day helps keep our brand strong.

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There are several reasons why "branding and marking" is important.

The U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 requires USAID-funded programs and program assets to be marked with our logo, which includes the seal, the brand name (USAID), and the tagline "From the American People."

Branding helps raise awareness for USAID's presence around the world—and ensures transparency and accountability to host countries and American taxpayers. By branding USAID programs, everyone knows where the funds come from and what they support.

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Let's begin by reviewing the USAID Brand Guidelines and the elements of our visual identity.

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Let's take a look at the USAID logo: remember, marking is the physical application of the USAID logo.

- This logo has three approved color options: two-color, black only, and white. This is to ensure that the logo properly appears in print documents and on-screen presentations.
- The two-color logo, including type mark and seal, should be used whenever possible. Our two-color logo has a blue handshake.
- The white logo should only be used on photos, in small social media graphics, and in slide presentations.
- Digital file formats are available for download at USAID.gov/branding/resources. These files are optimized for a variety of applications in both print and digital communications.
- Our logo may be placed on photos and color backgrounds, provided it is clearly legible and the background is a USAID color (if a contract-funded product).
- You are not permitted, under any circumstances, to change the USAID logo or the colors.

More detail on required size and spacing of the logo can be found in the Graphic Standards Manual sections 1.3 and 1.4.

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Typography, or font, is another critical design element. It creates brand consistency across all materials. The primary font family for USAID is Gill Sans. This clean, sans serif font, was selected for its clarity and readability.

- Garamond can be used for longer printed publications and Source Sans Pro for the web.
- We have created templates of commonly used documents. You can download them in Microsoft Word at USAID.gov/branding/resources.
- If you are a contractor, all written content must follow Chicago Style guidelines.

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Use of the USAID color palette ensures that our colors are consistent. The primary colors, USAID Blue and USAID Red, reinforce that the support we provide is from the American people.

Details on primary and secondary colors can be found in section 1.4 of the Graphic Standards Manual.

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Funding matters!

The type of funding you receive from USAID will determine which branding and marking rules apply to you.

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Are you an acquisition partner? Or, are you an assistance partner?

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Acquisition-funded projects include those secured through contracts, blanket purchase agreements, task orders, and purchase orders. These are 100 percent funded by USAID.

Here are the branding rules for these projects:

- USAID maintains exclusive branding rights.
- Administrative materials must follow the USAID [Graphic Standards Manual](#).
- Contractor logos are not permitted.
- Projects can never sub-brand.

Exceptions to these rules are administrative materials and a type of acquisition-funded project known as a grant under contract, or GUC.

You can learn more about this from your contracting officer's representative.

You may not use the USAID logo, type mark, or seal on administrative materials such as stationery and business cards.

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The project's name is one of the most important aspects of project branding. It helps everyone understand the purpose of our work.

When you choose a name:

- Be clear and concise.
- Do not use abbreviations.
- And remember, USAID must be in English.

The name may include a basic description of the project (in any language).

In creating a mark for this project, remember: Only the USAID logo may be used.

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There are branding rules for each of the communication platforms that Acquisition partners might use.

Here are the rules for program materials:
- All project materials must follow USAID graphic standards, as presented in our manual, including using USAID's typefaces and colors.
- The USAID logo should be used on program materials to acknowledge the U.S. Government's support and funding.
- For more guidance please see sections 2.10 and 2.8 of the USAID Graphic Standards Manual and Agency Policy ADS 320, section 320.3.2.

Here are the rules for signs and plaques:

- Marking USAID program sites and vehicles is a large part of our branding efforts; see ADS section 320.3.2.4. All guidelines regarding the logo must be followed; see sections 1.3 and 1.4 of the Graphic Standards Manual.
- Temporary signs must be erected early in the construction or implementation phase. When construction or implementation is complete, the contractor must install a permanent, durable, and visible sign, plaque, or other marking.
- For consistency, the USAID logo should be positioned at the top of signs and plaques. When appropriate to show partnership with the host government, include the U.S. and host country flags at the top left and right corners.
- An optional short narrative about the program and the deliverables should emphasize the "people-to-people" aspect. We recommend you present the information in both English and local languages, with a maximum of two local languages per sign or plaque.
- Other parties to be acknowledged, additional logos, and the dates can be included at the bottom. Do not include the contractor's logos on signs, plaques, or other project materials.

Here are the rules for vehicles:

- Programmatic vehicles may be marked using either the vertical or horizontal logo.
- Vehicles that are used exclusively for administrative purposes should not be marked with the USAID logo.
- If the vehicle will have dual programmatic and administrative use, or security is a concern, we recommend using a magnetic logo that can be easily removed.

Here are the rules for commodities:

- All commodities must be marked with the USAID logo unless a waiver or exception has been granted. (We'll tell you more on exceptions and waivers later.)
- You may use either the two-color or black-only version of the logo.

Here are the rules for administrative materials:

- Administrative materials include items such as business cards, stationery, and correspondence with the cooperating government concerning contractor compliance with local law.
- Organizations with USAID contracts or acquisition-funded projects are not permitted to use the USAID logo, type mark, or seal on any administrative materials, including business cards and stationery.
- Recipients of USAID-funded contracts must prohibit employees from claiming the status of, or being perceived as a USAID employee, or member of the United States Government, or Diplomatic Mission.

- Contractors may include the words "USAID Contractor" on their business cards and stationery.

Here are the rules for social media and websites:
- Clearance requirements for the creation of project social media and web properties can be found in ADS 558. Before either are created, they must be approved. In general, separate social media properties and websites for projects are rare.
- To avoid confusion with official USAID social media channels, the USAID logo may not be used as the profile picture. A photo reflective of the project should be used instead.
- A USAID-branded photo should be displayed as the banner photo, and acknowledgement of USAID support should appear in the "Profile" or "About" section.
- All websites produced for USAID projects by contractors must have the approval of the Agency's Website Governance Board and must display correct disclaimer language as specified in ADS 558.
- The websites should follow the structure and style of the main USAID website to the greatest extent possible, including sharing top menu navigation and style sheets with USAID.gov. If this is not possible due to technical reasons, the microsite should mimic the styles and layout of the USAID external site to the extent possible.
- Further guidance can be found in the USAID Graphic Standards Manual, or can be provided by your COR.

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Now let's look at Assistance-funded projects. Assistance refers to cooperative agreements and grants. In most circumstances, these projects are co-funded and should be co-branded.

There are no rules for specific placement—but the logos have to be of equal size and prominence. Also, you will need to ensure that the space between logos equals the size of the "US" in the "USAID" logo.

Requirements for Assistance partners include the following:
- The USAID logo and the partner logo should be of equal size and prominence.
- In most cases, logos for individual projects are NOT permitted.
- Use of USAID typefaces and colors in program materials is NOT required.

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There are also rules for communications platforms used by our Assistance partners.

Here are the rules for social media and websites:
- Projects funded through assistance often take the form of partnerships.

- The social media channels for Assistance projects do not need to reflect the look-and-feel of official USAID platforms and should not use the USAID logo as a profile picture. Use an approved project logo or a photo reflective of the project as the profile picture.
- Acknowledge USAID and other partners in the "Profile" or "About" section.
- Websites produced under grants or cooperative agreements should be approved by the USAID Website Governance Board. In addition, they should display the USAID logo on the homepage in equal size and prominence to other partners. However, the logo does not need to appear in the top banner.

Here are the rules for administrative materials:
- Administrative materials include, but are not limited to, business cards, stationery, and correspondence with the cooperating government concerning partner compliance with local law.
- Recipients of USAID-funding must prohibit employees from claiming the status of or being perceived as a USAID employee or member of the United States Government or Diplomatic Mission.
- These materials may use the phrase "USAID Grantee."

Here are the rules for commodities:
- All commodities must be co-branded and co-marked with the USAID logo unless a waiver or exception has been granted. (We will tell you about exceptions and waivers later.)
- We manage branding and marking for all U.S. foreign assistance to promote a consistent approach across the Agency. We also do this to emphasize that USAID's support is "from the American people."

Please see the Graphic Standards Manual for more information.

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Let's move to questions about who can provide approvals on branding, the branding process, and exceptions or waivers.

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How does the branding and marking process work? And who gives approvals?

To start, you'll find the specific requirements for branding in every request for proposal (RFP) or Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

- In some cases, you are required to submit a Branding Implementation and Marking Plan as part of your response to the solicitation or application.
- However, usually only the successful offeror is required to submit a branding and marking plan.

A partner will need to develop a Branding and Marking Plan:
- Acquisition awards require a Branding Implementation Plan and Marking Plan.
- Assistance awards require a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan.

During the award kickoff meeting, the contracting officer (CO) or agreement officer (AO) briefs the contractor or recipient on monitoring and enforcement of marking requirements.

Your contracting or agreement officer's representatives—CORs and AORs—are your points of contact for reviewing materials and answering questions.

For more detail, refer to Branding and Marking in USAID's Direct Contracts and Requirements for Branding and Marking Assistance—that's ADS sections 320.3.2 and 320.3.3.

Remember, it is everyone's responsibility to help enforce branding standards. In cases of non-compliance, corrective action must be taken. See the Audit of Requirements for Marking within ADS section 320.3.8.

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Are exceptions to the branding rules ever made? Yes, but they are rare—and are usually approved before the award is made. If an exception needs to be granted after an award is made, you must submit a request to your COR or AOR. If approved, you will need to revise the submitted branding and marking plan.

Exceptions are generally granted in non-emergency situations. If an emergency situation arises during the implementation of a program, a waiver (not an exception) would likely be used.

Possible reasons for exceptions are included on this slide. This list can be found in ADS 320.3.2.5. For clarification or questions, you can also contact your COR or AOR.

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USAID's Principal Officers have the authority to waive, in whole or in part, the Agency's marking requirements.

A Principal Officer may only grant a waiver upon determining that USAID-required markings would pose compelling political, safety, or security concerns, or that marking would have an adverse impact in the host country.

In truly exceptional circumstances, the Principal Officer may approve a blanket waiver by region or country.

When evaluating a request for a waiver from an implementing partner, the Administrator or a Principal Officer must adhere to the following principles:

- USAID marks programs, projects, activities, public communications, and commodities.
- Waivers should be exceptional and rare.
- The strong presumption is that implementing partners will mark with the USAID identity.
- Waivers must be specific to a project whenever possible.
- Waivers must be time-limited and reviewed by USAID at least every six months.
- When considering a waiver for safety or security concerns, a Principal Officer must consult with the Regional Security Officer (RSO), or Emergency Action Committee at the relevant U.S. Embassy or Embassies.
- Principal Officers should rescind waivers as soon as circumstances allow.

All requests for waivers must include a written justification that follows the standard waiver format. There are other detailed requirements; for more information read 320.3.2.6.

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We hope this training module has given you a good overview of the basic regulations for branding and marking. On the next slide, you will find a list of additional resources.

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Here are the websites we shared during this training series. Remember, when in doubt, consult your COR or AOR!

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Thank you for taking the time to learn about USAID's branding and marking requirements and your role in ensuring compliance. We all have an important role to play in amplifying and protecting USAID's brand.

We also suggest that you and your staff review the other modules available in our "How to Work with USAID" training series.

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