



# LESSONS IN LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT: USAID/DRG's SHIFTING APPROACH

## Governance

USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance's (USAID/DRG) long-term emphasis on locally led development has allowed staff from across its subsectors to learn a number of lessons on how to more effectively operationalize this practice over the years. Indeed, the nature of the work undertaken by the DRG Bureau makes locally-led development inextricably linked to much of its programming. This document profiles some of the changes implemented by USAID/DRG's Governance subsector in response to these lessons. It should be noted that the lessons learned highlighted in this document should not be viewed as set in stone, keeping in mind that improving development programming is an ongoing process. A more in depth overview of USAID/DRG's Governance subsector's shifting approach to locally led development and additional documents from this series profiling other USAID/DRG subsectors can be found [here](#).

## GOVERNANCE'S SHIFTING APPROACH TO PROGRAM DESIGN



### SHIFTING TOWARD LOCAL LEADERSHIP

**1. Lesson learned:** rather than being led by external experts, the diagnostic assessments that help shape the design of public financial management (PFM) programs are increasingly led or jointly-led by partner governments, supporting greater understanding and ownership.

**2. Lesson learned:** involving government officials in key decisions, such as the validation of program scopes of work or the hiring of consultants, supports greater collaboration and, in turn, the likelihood of sustainable results.

**3. Lesson learned:** in contrast to a top-down approach, leveraging participatory approaches to municipal or community-level program design ensures that programs are guided by and adapted on an ongoing basis in line with partner priorities, facilitating increased partner ownership and enhancing the longevity of results.

**4. Lesson learned:** adopting a "light-touch" approach to activity implementation, whereby USAID limits their involvement in a system, including the provision of funding, and instead acts as a facilitator, including by facilitating constructive dialogue between local actors, can support local ownership and the sustainability of results.



## SHIFTING TOWARD A SYSTEMS APPROACH

**5. Lesson learned:** rather than implementing partners determining the priority of tasks within a legislature, DRG staff have increasingly turned to political economy analyses (PEAs). These help uncover hidden social and political dynamics and provide a clearer picture of the key stakeholders and their incentives, supporting greater local ownership and better attainment of results.

**6. Lesson learned:** program design should look beyond government and consider all key stakeholders that impact and/or are impacted by PFM reform, including civil society and the private sector, given that their support (or lack thereof) can influence the attainment and sustainability of results.

## GOVERNANCE'S SHIFTING APPROACH TO MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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## SHIFTING TOWARD A MORE LOCAL-CENTRIC APPROACH TO PROJECT MONITORING

**7. Lesson learned:** co-creating indicators and outcome expectations with partners is an important step in the process of better emphasizing partner priorities and supports partner buy-in.

**8. Lesson learned:** participatory processes in monitoring and evaluation, such as convening local partners to discuss program impacts and activity results, can help partners feel more invested in the monitoring and evaluation process and its findings as well as more motivated to act on them. They can also ensure that the evaluation is responsive to the priorities of partners.