TIP SHEET: MAKING THE CASE - COUNTERING COMMON ARGUMENTS AGAINST DRG INTEGRATION

Presidential Initiatives and Earmarked funding won't allow me to co-fund or integrate activities.
Yes, it is true that Initiative and Earmarked funding can limit flexibility. However, DRG integration is an Agency priority. In 2014, Administrator Shah endorsed **USAID's Action Plan for Cross-Sectoral DRG Integration** marking the importance of DRG integration to USAID programming. The Action Plan was developed by a group comprised of members from the Bureaus for Food Security and Global Health, the Education and Forestry and Biodiversity Offices in the E3 Bureau, and the Global Climate Change and Power Africa initiatives. This group identified barriers to DRG integration and entry points to encourage cross-sectoral programming.

Missions all over the world, including those in Rwanda, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Indonesia found creative ways to work with and around Initiatives and Earmarks to integrate DRG principles into programs funded with these funds. Creative management techniques include Alternate AOR/COR arrangements to ensure that both sectors are able to achieve desired outcomes, the identification of cross-cutting indicators, and strong Mission leadership support advocating for DRG integration.

My programs already have too many indicators; I don't want to add new ones focusing on achieving DRG objectives.
In interviews, implementing partners often state that they are doing this work because it is important for achieving broader project objectives, however they are not reporting on it. Activities that promote DRG objectives (participation, inclusion, transparency, and accountability) could include strengthening civil society, engaging with local government or community bodies, and supporting policy change. Implementing partners can easily report on the work that they are already doing. In Nepal, the Mission is developing custom cross-cutting indicators and identified indicators in Earmark or Initiative that could be used to report against the cross-cutting indicators. The DRG key issue is another reporting opportunity to capture the work already being done.

I already work at the local level, DRG activities only focus on human rights, elections, and national level politics, and it will jeopardize my ability to implement. While some DRG work focuses on elections and human rights, DRG integration looks at how to strengthen DRG principles such as participation, inclusion, transparency and accountability, principles that are relevant to nearly all of USAID programs. Using a DRG lens when designing an activity can strengthen how these principles are applied. DRG staff are keenly aware about the political environment that affects all USAID programs. They have developed tools such as Political Economy Analysis (PEA) can help the Education, Health, Economic Growth, Climate Change or other sectors to identify constraints towards achieving development objectives. A PEA could be used when designing a PAD to identify how policy decisions are made, why systems (even bad ones) are kept in place, who are the key sector actors and change agents, and help to narrow programming to what may be most feasible, focusing resources on where they can have the most impact.

Other DRG approaches can be helpful for 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, and addressing Public Financial Management and corruption.

Limited DRG budgets is the driving factor for DRG integration, not a desire to strengthen sectoral development programs.

While an important tool to coordinate activities and strategy, co-funding activities are not necessary for DRG integration. Missions from Malawi to Guatemala or Nepal implemented DRG integration strategies due to a recognition that poor governance is the main inhibitor towards achieving sectoral development outcomes. Integrating governance is a way to unlock sector specific challenges. In many instances, integrating DRG principles is a way to strengthen the impact and sustainability of projects. As programs mature, it is an opportunity to move USAID programs to the next level.

My programs are already in the middle of implementation; it is too late to integrate DRG principles.
While DRG integration is most robust when written into the design of an activity, there are various opportunities throughout an Activity cycle to implement integration. Mission-wide and implementing partner trainings on issues such as Social Accountability, Do No Harm, or the national political context can provide an opportunity to discuss DRG openings and challenges in each sector and identify potential activities.   Project mid-point reviews provide another opportunity to reflect on the success of a program, challenges and where, if necessary, it needs to be retooled. This is an opportunity to ensure that programs are meeting their objectives and understand how some DRG issues may negatively affect their outcomes. Some Missions require that partners meet at the district or local level to identify opportunities to coordinate. Using a DRG lens can help identify such opportunities and support efforts to work across sectors to find mutually beneficial opportunities for collaboration and coordination.

I need proof that integration works.
There is a growing body of work studying the connection between DRG integration and sustainable development. USAID is in the process of commissioning Impact Evaluations in Guatemala, Malawi, and Nepal to measure the effectiveness of integration. See *Tip Sheet: Evidence in Support of DRG Integration* for articles about the relationship between DRG integration, sectoral outcomes, sustainable development and in particular on the use of Social Accountability tools.

How can I trust the DRG Office to address my priority issues?
For co-funded activities, some Missions created Activity Manager Positions to help an AOR/COR based in the DRG Office to manage an activity. The Activity Managers are responsible for providing technical advice to ensure that sectoral needs are met. Other Missions assign an AOR from the DRG office and alternate AOR from the relevant technical offices. These arrangements help to build trust between DRG and other offices.

Is DRG integration a substitute for standalone DRG programming?
DRG integration is not a substitute for standalone DRG programming. Instead it is another tool or way of approaching project design and implementation that can help other sectors achieve development outcomes.