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B R A S I L



ABC Agência Brasileira
de Cooperação
MINISTÉRIO DAS RELAÇÕES EXTERIORES

Photo: Isadora Ferreira

**STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK
FOR TRILATERAL
DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERSHIP**



Photo: João Roberto Ripper



Photo: Walter Bowen

PRESENTATION

As the Western Hemisphere's two largest democracies and two largest economies, the United States and Brazil have embarked on a new era of strategic partnership. During his March 2011 visit to Brazil, President Obama and President Rousseff signed protocols that forge innovations in development partnership in third countries. These protocols reflect recognition of Brazil's economic rise and desire to apply its considerable domestic experience in decreasing poverty and increasing social inclusion in the international arena. It is in the United States' interest to become Brazil's partner considering its growing agenda of South-South technical cooperation. It is in Brazil's interest to structure its emerging cooperation agency to improve South-South technical cooperation, through exchange of knowledge and best practices with other development partners. To seize these opportunities, the United States and Brazil have developed a strategic framework of trilateral development cooperation to achieve these objectives.

The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) is responsible for coordinating Brazil's development cooperation. Established in 1987 with the dual mandate of managing incoming foreign technical cooperation and promoting Brazilian South-South cooperation, the latter has become ABC's primary focus, reflecting the commitment of Brazil to share its successful development experiences with other developing countries. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) works in Brazil since 1961 in initiatives to promote sustainable development.

CONTEXT

The protocols signed in March 2011 help define the United States and Brazil's common development objectives abroad. These include economic growth, education, food security, women's advancement, health care, and greater social inclusion. The geographic focus is Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America in those countries facing the greatest poverty challenges. This formula lends itself to selecting countries of mutual national interest and where USAID and ABC can complement one another's comparative advantages in addressing those challenges.

The Strategic Framework for USAID and ABC trilateral cooperation is intended to be a template. It describes, in practical terms and based upon experiences to date, how the agencies will work together to achieve common development objectives. It provides ample latitude for USAID and ABC to draw upon their comparative advantages and their own country's development resources and technical expertise while working to-

gether, using their own institutional structures and processes, to achieve that common development result. The two agencies will work in concert and in close collaboration. In sum, the Strategic Framework allows USAID and ABC to work in parallel toward a common objective to reach the intended development impact.

PHASES

The Strategic Framework for USAID/Brazil and ABC trilateral cooperation has four phases, some of which occur concurrently while others sequentially. These include program conception and buy-in; design; implementation; and, evaluation. A brief and generic description of each phase is outlined below. In practice, there will be several variations to this strategic theme but the overarching principles should remain the same.

1. PROGRAM CONCEPTION AND BUY-IN: ABC, in coordination with the concerned Brazilian Embassy, will identify a demand from a third-country nation and articulate a measurable development impact. USAID/Brazil and ABC will analyze the development landscape, assess third-country capacity to contribute and benefit from the program as well as sustain its results beyond the program's completion date.

This analysis has several parts and steps. ABC will engage government and non-government entities that could provide technical cooperation; evaluate whether or not the Brazilian technical cooperation contributes and aligns itself with the national development policies of the beneficiary country; and identify the amount of financial resources needed to cover the expenses related to the Brazilian inputs to the concerned project.

During this process, ABC will work with the Brazilian Embassy in that country to identify a focal point which will be oriented by ABC. USAID/Brazil will work with USAID/Washington Latin American and Caribbean Bureau, the cognizant USAID Regional Bureau, and USAID Mission management in the third country to discuss the viability of achieving the envisioned development impact and financial resources that might be applied to such an initiative.

Once USAID/Brazil and ABC analysis confirm the development impact is attainable, ABC, joined by a Brazilian specialized institution, and USAID will organize joint missions to the third country, to discuss the basic elements of the technical cooperation proposal and obtain buy-in from all parties involved. If successful, the program would move forward.



Photo: José Calas

2. PROGRAM DESIGN: ABC will coordinate the Government of Brazil's project design, since one or more Brazilian entities is likely to have the leading implementation role in the third-country. Embassy/Brazil in the Third Country will maintain close coordination with the third-country Government. USAID/Brazil will engage and coordinate with the USAID/Third Country Mission to factor in both USAID Missions contributions (e.g., staff expertise, USAID-specific grant or contract needed to achieve its portion of the program's results or other inputs ABC needs to achieve its intended results). ABC, USAID/Brazil and the USAID/Third Country Mission will draft a five-page Activity Design Document that clearly outlines the development challenges, intended results impact; impact indicators; roles and responsibilities; detailed program budget; implementation milestones and timeframes, and mid-term and end-of-program evaluation timeline.

The Trilateral Cooperation Agreement between ABC, USAID, and the Third Country will be based upon the key components of the Activity Design Document. The Agreement should be written at a strategic level but with clear articulation of the development challenge, intended development impact, and a brief overview of the three governments' roles and responsibilities. This can be accomplished in a four- to five-page Agreement. The Activity Design Document will be an Annex to the Agreement.

3. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION: For the specific purpose of this Strategic Framework, "Trilateral Cooperation" is defined as ABC and USAID working together with a Third Country Government to obtain a mutually agreed upon development impact. "Cooperation" can take many forms. Its shape will be driven by the development challenge's relative complexity, the number of Government of Brazil institutions involved that ABC will manage, what USAID/Third Country resources are required, and finally, expectations for Third Country contributions. In sum, "trilateral cooperation" will have no formula beyond the governing principles outlined in this Strategic Framework.

ABC and USAID should strive to make program design and implementation as simple as possible. Therefore, the agencies must have a common strategy for program implementation.

ABC, USAID, and Third Country program implementation will progress in parallel. Communication between the three parties is essential. The three parties will take the lead to ensure that milestones are reached and hold a formal, annual review for each program. A High-level Steering Committee with representatives from ABC, USAID and the benefiting country will assess the program's performance and solve any issue raised during its implementation.

4. PROGRAM EVALUATION: Capturing lessons-learned is an important part of the learning process that improves future trilateral program performance. An evaluation should be conducted at the middle and end of the program by ABC and USAID. ABC will evaluate Brazilian technical expertise and USAID U.S. technical expertise. The mid-term evaluation should help inform implementation and any needed adjustments to help ensure programs achieve their intended development impact.

INSTITUTION BUILDING

Staff exchanges have proven to be an excellent way to share best development practices. ABC and USAID should take advantage of this hands-on opportunity. Exchanges between ABC/Brasilia and USAID/Brasilia are yielding dividends for both development agencies. This exchange initiative for Brazilians could be expanded to include USAID/Washington and other USAID Missions. The information gained from these exchanges should be shared widely to benefit staff members from both agencies.

CONCLUSION

To maximize the development impact of USAID and ABC trilateral cooperation in Third Countries, two important messages should be disseminated, internalized, and put into operation in both organizations. First, trilateral cooperation is a priority for the United States and for Brazil. As such, USAID missions should work with USAID/Brazil and be prepared to utilize a portion of their program budget as a catalyst to make the trilateral cooperation successful. And, secondly, trilateral cooperation is an organic process that will evolve. No two country programs are likely to be identically shaped or implemented. It is unnecessary to re-invent processes and procedures that have proven successful in achieving the desired development impact. It is important to think creatively about how to approach the development challenge, consider all the tools and resources that USAID, ABC, and the Third Country can apply to the challenge, and then choose the simplest and fastest path forward to achieve the result. This Strategic Framework for Trilateral Development Cooperation is an opportunity to strengthen the United States and Brazil's strategic partnership while working together to reduce poverty.

