

Administrator's Survey of USAID Employees

Survey question: "Do you have any suggestions for improving the ADS?"

The following table shows

Column A: A summary of specific comments received in response to the survey question. The M/AS/IRD Directives Shop received the survey responses 09/11/2001.

Column B: A tally of the number of times that specific comment appeared, listed in descending order.

Column C: The plan of action to address each comment, or an M/AS/IRD comment in response.

Column D: The status of each action.

A	B	C	D
Response	Tally of Response	Plan of Action, or M/AS/IRD Comment	Status
1. Difficulty searching (web and CD)	146	Write "ADS CD Search Guide."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADS CD Search Guide was posted to the ADS web site 03/27/2002: http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/cd/index.html
		Add Help link to Infoseek Search Guide on ADS web site.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This Help link has been made more prominent on the ADS web site.
		Create consistent metatags so that search results will reliably produce clear and consistent information for the user.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beginning January 2002, consistent metatags have been created for all new and updated files, and old files are being improved as time permits.
		Conduct monthly ADS Training sessions, in addition to the office-specific training sessions previously conducted.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We currently hold training sessions twice a month to teach participants how to search the ADS web site and CD. We encourage all employees to attend.

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<p>2. Need more training;</p> <p>2a. Don't know what the ADS is</p>	107	<p>M/AS/IRD conducts regular ADS Training sessions to educate and help users understand the ADS. Individual offices or personnel may request tailored briefings at any time. Please call the Directives Shop, (703) 276-7336.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADS Training sessions for all Agency employees have been conducted twice a month starting January 2002.</p>
		<p>Issue the "ADS Times" monthly newsletter (this supersedes the previous monthly General Notice issued by M/AS/IRD).</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beginning January 2002, the "ADS Times" has been issued to all employees every month.</p>
		<p>Include the ADS in New Hires training program.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADS Brochures were sent to the NEP Coordinator August 2002; M/AS/IRD has been in conversation with HR since fall 2001.</p>
		<p>Give presentation at EXO conference.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IRD prepared a presentation for the 2002 EXO conference but changes in the schedule caused the cancellation of the ADS presentation. We look forward to conducting a presentation at the next EXO conference.</p>
		<p>Attend Division Chiefs meetings.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have attended the M/AS, OP, Global Bureau, and Africa Bureau staff meetings. We look forward to attending more in the fall.</p>
		<p>Advertise on the EXONet.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M/AS/IRD continuously publicizes the ADS on the EXONet.</p>
		<p>Post a Powerpoint presentation to the web.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IRD is in the process of creating a Powerpoint presentation to post to the web.</p>
<p>3. Simplify; provide less detail; shorter documents</p>	74	<p>The ADS chapter format has been streamlined. IRD would like to see USAID management make the conversion of old chapters a priority.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The ADS chapter format was streamlined in Spring 2000. Conversion of old chapters to the new format is ongoing.</p>

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		Focus on writing in plain language.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plain language focus is ongoing. Many plain language workshops were held in 2000/2001.
4. Need an Index; annotated Table of Contents; summary of changes	50	Create “What’s New in the ADS” summary charts to replace the previous ADS TMs (Transmittal Memorandums).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “What’s New in the ADS” charts were created starting in September 2001.
		Update the “What’s New in the ADS” chart on the web on a real-time basis.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “What’s New in the ADS” chart was first posted to the ADS web site January 2002 and is updated real-time.
		Update the “What’s New in the ADS” chart for each ADS CD.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> “What’s New in the ADS” chart was first published on the ADS CD in January 2002 and is updated for each CD issuance.
		M/AS/IRD would like to see an Index for the ADS.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IRD is examining options for creating an Index.
5. Make it more “user-friendly”	50	ADS web site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline the ADS web site. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information on the ADS web site is now arranged and linked by key areas.
		Structure of ADS chapters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline the ADS chapter format. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The ADS chapter format was streamlined in Spring 2000. Conversion of old chapters to the new format is ongoing.
		Content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write directives in plain language. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plain language focus is ongoing. Many plain language workshops were held in 2000/2001.
6. Finish it; update it more frequently	47	Responsible offices convert old AID Handbooks (HBs) to ADS.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The HB conversion process is ongoing. No old HBs remain valid in their entirety. See the HB Status Update file for a list of still valid HBs: http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/handbk.pdf

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		Authors update ADS material more frequently to keep it current.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IRD continually encourages authors to update their ADS material more frequently as needed.	
		Yearly certification by responsible offices for their ADS material.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yearly certification by responsible office heads for their ADS material occurs every March.	
7. Prefer old Handbooks	43	Add more "How-to" Additional Help documents into the ADS.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The following three new "How-to" Additional Help documents are being added to ADS 501 in Fall 2002: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Sample e-mail requesting ADS clearance; 2. A Sample Policy Notice issuing an ADS chapter; 3. A Timeline – Four-step process for drafting, revising, clearing, and issuing ADS directives. 	
		The new format allows authors to add optional, helpful material into the ADS.		
		The ADS Functional Series mirror the old HBs.		
8. Needs to be written in plain language	40	Conduct more plain language briefings.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Numerous plain language briefings were conducted in 2000/2001.	
		Collaboration between authors and editors to write material in plain language.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Authors are required to write in plain language. Collaboration between authors and IRD editors is an ongoing process.	
9. Want hard copy form; easier printing	30	Electronic dissemination methods, via the ADS web site and ADS CD, guarantee users the most up-to-date version of the ADS.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The ADS web site is kept current. Readers can view, print, and download both Word and PDF files from the web.	
		M/AS/IRD would like assurance that all Missions have guaranteed access to Policy Notices and the ADS CD.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M/AS/IRD is working with the LAN team on an ongoing basis to guarantee access.	
		Contact the IRM Help Desk if you experience printing problems.		

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10. Should contain useful examples, "how-to" blueprints, outlines for key documents	26	<p>Additional Help information can now be included in an ADS chapter or internally created mandatory reference.</p> <p>Additional Help documents were formerly known as Supplementary References and have always been a part of the ADS.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Including optional, helpful information in chapters began in Spring 2000. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Three new "How-to" Additional help documents are being added to ADS 501 in Fall 2002.
11. The ADS should be less vague, more clearly state what can/cannot be done; more specific guidance should be provided	19	Focus on writing in plain language.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This effort is ongoing.
		Eliminate the word "should" wherever possible, clearly state what is mandatory and what is optional.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M/AS/IRD editors continue to work with authors to eliminate "should" and clearly state what is mandatory and what is optional.
		Create an ADS Authors Guide, which contains a breakdown of specific words such as "should," "must," and "will," and explains their meaning in the context of ADS directives.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The "ADS Authors Guide to Style and Format" was issued in July 2001. It contains a breakdown of specific words such as "should," "must," and "will," and explains their meaning in the context of ADS directives.
12. Improve accessibility, especially overseas	18	M/AS/IRD contacted M/IRM. This is an M/IRM issue.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M/IRM has been upgrading the operating systems and improving accessibility to the Internet and intranet at USAID Missions and sites. Only two dozen small sites remain to be upgraded.
13. Improve the web	15	Create a "What's New in the ADS" summary chart to replace the ADS TMs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "What's New in the ADS" was first posted to the web in January 2002. It is updated as new material is posted.
		Create consistent metatags so that search results will reliably produce clear and consistent information for the user.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beginning January 2002, consistent metatags have been created for all new and updated files, and old files are being improved as time permits.
		Reformat and streamline the major ADS web site index pages, e.g., the ADS Home Page.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improvements have been made over the past 12 months.

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		IRD is in the process of ensuring that all ADS chapters on the web site are linked.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Series 100, 200, and 300 links have been completed. The chapters have been linked and verified.
14. Publicize the ADS more; put an ADS icon on every desktop	10	M/AS/IRD would also like to see an icon on every desktop.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M/AS/IRD is in conversation with M/IRM.
		Issue a Notice each time a new ADS CD is released.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M/AS/IRD has been releasing a General Information Notice for every CD issuance since 1993.
		Announce each CD release on the EXONet.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M/AS/IRD announces each new CD release on the EXONet.
		Conduct monthly ADS Training sessions, in addition to the office-specific training sessions previously conducted.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADS Training sessions for all Agency employees have been conducted twice a month since January 2002.
		Issue the "ADS Times" monthly newsletter. This supersedes the previous monthly General Notice issued by IRD.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We continue to issue the "ADS Times" monthly newsletter.
		Include the ADS in New Hires training program.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We will continue to provide HR with ADS Brochures for New Hires.
		Give presentation at EXO conference.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We have requested to be a presenter at the next EXO conference.
		Attend Division Chiefs meetings.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We will continue to attend Division Chiefs meetings.
		Advertise on EXONet.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We will continue to do this.
		Post a Powerpoint presentation to the web.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IRD is in the process of creating a Powerpoint presentation to post to the web.

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15. Too cumbersome	10	The ADS chapter format has been streamlined.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The chapter format was streamlined in Spring 2000.
		Convert old chapters to the new format.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conversion is ongoing.
		Focus on writing in plain language.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plain language focus is ongoing.
		Write "ADS CD Search Guide."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADS CD Search Guide was posted to web at http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/cd/index.html on 03/27/2002.
		Conduct regular ADS Training sessions to teach people how to search the ADS.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADS Training sessions for all Agency employees have been conducted twice a month since January 2002.
16. Limit changes; highlight changes in color or bold	10	Include current use of asterisks to indicate changes in ADS training.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This topic is included in the ADS Training sessions.
		Describe what the asterisks stand for in ADS chapters.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An explanation of what asterisks stand for is included in all new and revised ADS chapters.
		Colored text is not Section 508 compliant and therefore cannot be used.	
17. The ADS should provide guidelines, not rules; should be more flexible	9	The ADS is a directives system, therefore it <i>must</i> contain rules and regulations. According to the definition, a directive is an authoritative instruction or direction; specific order; especially : an authoritative instrument issued by a high-level body or official.	
		ADS 501 was modified in Spring 2000 to allow authors more flexibility when writing policy directives and Additional Help material.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This revision to ADS 501 was completed in Spring 2000.
		Authors are encouraged to empower Agency personnel whenever possible.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This effort is ongoing.

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		Guidelines are generally addressed in Additional Help references that offer further assistance to employees in understanding their responsibilities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IRD encourages authors to provide Additional Help references wherever possible.
18. More clearly distinguish between requirements and suggestions	9	In the ADS, the difference between mandatory requirements and suggestions is indicated by the use of standard terminology. "Must" is used to designate a mandatory action or requirement. "Should" is used to indicate a strongly encouraged action.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The "ADS Authors Guide to Style and Format" was issued in July 2001. It contains a breakdown of specific words such as "should," "must," and "will," and explains their meaning in the context of ADS directives.
		All ADS material must be written in plain language. The purpose of plain language is to ensure that the intended audience understands the material on first reading.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The plain language focus is part of the ongoing collaboration between authors and M/AS/IRD editors.
		M/AS/IRD conducts regular ADS Training sessions to educate and help users understand the ADS. Individual offices or personnel may request tailored briefings at any time. Please call the Directives Shop, (703) 276-7336.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADS Training sessions for all Agency employees have been conducted twice a month starting January 2002.
		The distinction between "must" and "should" will also be addressed in the October issue of the "ADS Times." This issue was also addressed in a previous ADS Information Notice.	
19. Improve linking	9	Whenever possible, we now link all the way to the exact external regulation, e.g., CFR, USC, rather than the issuing agency's home page.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This effort is ongoing.
20. Field Missions should have more input	8	Request Geographic Bureaus to seek appropriate input on clearance documents, including overseas Missions. Request authors to consider circulating pre-clearance drafts to the field for review and input.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> These requests were made during briefings given to clearing officials in Fall/Winter 2001.

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21. Provide help line support; "ask Jeeves"	7	M/AS/IRD has for many years operated an ADS mailbox that is monitored daily; we respond to questions within 24 hours.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The mailbox address is ads@usaid.gov .
		Make the "Ask ADS" link more prominent on the ADS web site; requests are responded to within 24 hours.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The web link is http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/contacts.html
		Include in the "ADS Times" a Frequently Asked Questions section, and a link to the ADS mailbox, which is monitored daily. (The monthly ADS Information Notice also used to include a Q&A section.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The monthly "ADS Times" includes an FAQ section; send questions to ads@usaid.gov
22. Link more to the FAM, AIDAR/FAR, etc; provide a single source of information rather than many sources	7	<p>The ADS links to rather than repeats information because this is mandated by the Paperwork Reduction Act; EO 12861, Elimination of One-Half of Executive Branch Internal Regulations; and EO 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review.</p> <p>M/AS/IRD continues to provide a single source of information through the ADS rather than many sources.</p>	
23. Streamline the clearance process	5	ADS 501 has been revised to streamline the ADS clearance process.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The clearance process was revised in January 2002.
		Previously authors could obtain an exception to the ADS clearance process by contacting M/AS/OD. To improve response time, M/AS/IRD will become the approving office for clearance exceptions as of Fall 2002.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADS 501 is being revised to include the M/AS/IRD Division Chief as the new approving office for clearance exceptions as of Fall 2002.
		Policy and procedure changes to the ADS mandated by the BTEC have been granted an exception to the ADS clearance process.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This exception was implemented in June 2002.
		ADS 501 specifies a streamlined clearance process for new and revised ADS definitions.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The abbreviated clearance process for definitions was put in place in January 2002.

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24. Have contractors write the ADS; provide more assistance to authors	5	<p>It is the responsibility of each office head to determine who writes their ADS material.</p> <p>M/AS/IRD provides assistance to authors in the form of –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Editorial support (ADS material is edited for grammar, style, plain language, and logical order of material); ▪ Technical assistance with word processing and formatting; ▪ Creating Additional Help items to assist authors; ▪ Sending “how-to” e-mails to the DW list, a global address list that reaches the entire community of ADS authors and coordinators; ▪ Providing help support to anyone who contacts the ADS Mailbox; ▪ Assigning individual editors to specific ADS Series for personalized attention; and ▪ Facilitating the writing of ADS material with the goal of getting it published and keeping the ADS current. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> These actions are all ongoing.
25. More vetting of drafts; better review system	4	Highlight this need at a meeting with ADS clearing officials.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Briefings were given to ADS clearing officials in Fall/Winter 2001.
		The need to vet drafts prior to formal ADS clearance is specified in ADS 501.	

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26. Stop changing the format and terminology	4	<p>The ADS has not undergone any format changes since Spring 2000, and that was a major streamlining which improved the format. Only minor tweaks have been made since then, as dictated by technological improvements (e.g., the hyperlinking format).</p> <p>In response to feedback from PPC, “policy” was changed to “policy directive” and “procedure” to “required procedure.” The .3 chapter header was renamed to reflect this terminology change.</p>	
27. Problems with pdf documents	4	<p>Issue instructions on how to download the most recent version of Adobe Acrobat Reader.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M/IRM issued a General Notice on how to download the most recent version of Adobe Reader on 09/28/2001. Access this Notice at http://iapp1.usaid.gov/notices/notDetail.cfm?msgID=4774&currmo=9&curryr=2001&prevnext=no</p>
		<p>Please contact the IRM help desk with specific printing problems.</p>	
28. Direct Hires should be responsible for the ADS	3	<p>Direct Hires oversee ADS authors, who in many cases are Direct Hires themselves.</p> <p>Direct Hires are responsible for clearing ADS material, and for certifying the ADS as part of the yearly certification.</p> <p>A Direct Hire office oversees the management of the ADS, which is supported by CCI, Inc.</p>	

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29. Give more detail; quote rather than link to external regulations	3	<p>The ADS links to rather than repeats information because this is mandated by the Paperwork Reduction Act; EO 12861, Elimination of One-Half of Executive Branch Internal Regulations; and EO 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review.</p> <p>Linking rather than repeating information also eliminates the need for authors to write duplicative policy.</p> <p>Whenever possible, the ADS now links to the specific external regulation rather than the home page, which is more user-friendly.</p> <p>The number of respondents who asked for shorter documents and less detail outranks this request by 74 to 3.</p>	
30. Change the name from ADS	3	The ADS now has name recognition. At this point we believe it would be counter-productive to change the name from ADS.	
31. Include a summary when issuing a Notice	3	Authors are encouraged to include a summary of new and revised material when they issue a Policy Notice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This effort is ongoing.
		When new or updated material is posted to the web, IRD provides a summary of the material on the "What's New in the ADS" page.	
32. Complimentary comments	122	Thank you, we appreciate your feedback.	