

**Functional Series 300  
Acquisition and Assistance**

**INTERIM UPDATE 05-04**

**SUBJECT:** New Marking Rule for Assistance Awards

**NEW MATERIAL:** As part of our branding campaign to credit the American people for the foreign assistance they finance, we engaged in “Administrative Rulemaking” to revise our marking requirements for grants and cooperative agreements. Tomorrow, the Final Rule titled, “Administration of Assistance Awards to U.S. Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs); Marking Requirements,” will be published in the Federal Register; it can be accessed at [www.usaid.gov/branding](http://www.usaid.gov/branding). It is a new federal regulation that officially requires all programs, projects, activities, public communications, and commodities we (partially or fully) fund to be “marked” with, or visibly bear, the new USAID Standard Graphic Identity that clearly communicates our aid is, “From the American People.” Our new Marking requirements for U.S. NGOs will become effective on January 2, 2006. USAID Agreement Officers will incorporate these marking requirements in all new awards—and some existing awards if funds are available—obligated after that date.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 08/25/2005

**ATTACHMENT:** [NGO Letter](#)

ADMINISTRATOR

USAID General Notice  
ES  
8/25/2005

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We engaged in rulemaking to provide for NGO participation in formulating the new rule. We posted a first draft of the rule in the Federal Register last December, and we received more than 40 comments from implementing partners. We significantly revised the rule based on those comments and the suggestions of our own staff, especially employees from our field missions.

Our new requirements include implementing partners providing a “Branding Strategy,” indicating how they propose naming and promoting programs we fund, and a “Marking Plan,” detailing program materials that will showcase the USAID Identity.

While we are determined to increase the visibility and value of U.S. aid, we intend for this new policy to be carried out reasonably, erring on the side of safety. Therefore, marking requirements can be “waived” by Mission Directors for the life of a project or, in extreme circumstances, by region or country for security reasons. Our goal is to mark projects, not people, so we are not requiring the USAID Identity on partner vehicles or offices.

In fact, there are many program materials we do not intend to mark, such as election ballots, so we have added a set of “Presumptive Exceptions” to the rule to ensure our new marking policy does not compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program, diminish its credibility, or undercut host-country ownership. These can be approved by the Agreement Officer, thereby expediting the “exceptions” process.

Our team has worked hard to develop a marking policy that is fair to both our partners and U.S. taxpayers who fund our work. Unlike contractors—who are no longer permitted to use their own corporate logos on the program materials we finance—our policy for assistance awards is to “co-brand,” placing the USAID Identity next to the NGO’s logo and ensuring equal size and prominence.

Attached is a copy of the letter I sent to all NGOs who have received assistance awards from our headquarters in Washington, D.C. Missions are to forward this letter to their own recipients of grants and cooperative agreements.

We will hold a meeting to explain this new rule to NGOs on Friday, September 23, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m., at the Ballrooms of the National Press Club. Missions should ask their implementing partners to have representatives from their headquarters attend. In the coming months, we will produce a *Partner Co-Branding Guide* detailing examples of these new marking requirements. In the meantime, employees and partners should visit [www.usaid.gov/branding](http://www.usaid.gov/branding) for interim guidance. Today, I just wanted to alert you that the rule is final and will be published.

Secretary Rice said at our recent Mission Directors' Conference, "You are, in many ways, our best public diplomacy story." Our new marking rule is part of a larger campaign to generate more positive perceptions about our country overseas. We saw during the tsunami relief effort that, when people in developing countries know the aid they are receiving is from America, it has a profound impact on their perceptions of the United States. Recent polls by the State Department and Pew Research show favorability toward the United States doubling in Indonesia thanks, in part, to our well "branded" U.S. aid.

Andrew S. Natsios

Attachment: NGO Letter

Points of Contact: Questions concerning this Notice may be directed to Joanne Giordano, Senior Advisor to the Administrator, [jgiordano@usaid.gov](mailto:jgiordano@usaid.gov) or John Niemeyer of the Office of the General Counsel at [jniemeyer@usaid.gov](mailto:jniemeyer@usaid.gov)

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