



# THE MITCHELL GROUP GRANTS & FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

TMG has gained considerable experience in grants and financial management on several related projects during the past 20 years. TMG has also carried out extensive work with international private voluntary organizations/PVOs, indigenous non-governmental organizations (PVOs/NGOs) and with other not-for-profit organizations extensively in Africa.

Our Grants Management work supports USAID and other organizations missions by carefully reviewing solicitations for applications, processing applications, negotiating awards, managing administrative and financial aspects of awards, monitoring progress against expenditures, resolving audit problems, and closing out awards when the projects are completed. TMG Grants Management Staff can also arrange workshops and training sessions for recipients and program officials to keep the USAID grants community current on procedures and requirements relating to grants and cooperative agreements.

## TMGs Grants Management Tracks Information

**Proposal Information** — TMG tracks data on proposals and screening, review, and approval decisions made by the evaluation committee. Through proposal evaluation forms and activity logs, a record of discussions and negotiations with applicants, along with corresponding dates, is held in one central location

**Grant Information** — builds off existing information for approved proposals. The system houses the grant agreement, performance plans, and contract templates. The system also tracks technical assistance and training associated with each grant and monitors progress toward specific targets or results by individual grantee and by the grant program as a whole.

**Financial and Disbursement Information** — records and tracks budget commitments, obligations, disbursements, counterpart contributions, and program income, both by individual grantee and for the grant program as a whole.

## I. TMG Financial/Grants Management A Proven Track Record of Accountability and Strong Management –

### Experience Includes:

**TMG/USAID American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA)** Under this \$1.7 million contract, TMG provided assistance to DCHA/ASHA in reviewing, evaluating and maintaining audits of grants made to sponsors of overseas institutions. About 70 grant applications were submitted each year for ASHA's \$15–30 million program, which awarded 20 to 25 grants annually. This contract focused on strengthening institutions' capacity to prepare better grant applications and improving the accountability of grantees and local partners. TMG completed preparatory work and prepared briefing books for panels of independent reviewers to use while examining grant applications. With about 70 grant applications submitted each year for ASHA's \$15-30 million program, the process was streamlined in awarding 20 to 25 grants annually. In addition, TMG developed and maintained tracking systems for grant application evaluation recommendations,



financial reviews, A-133 audits and grant close-out procedures. TMG provided technical assistance and training to more than 100 grant recipients (U.S. sponsors) and sub-recipients (overseas schools and hospitals).

Also under the contract, TMG conducted pre-award and post-award site visits with potential and actual grantees to increase their programmatic and financial management capacity as well as build proposal-writing skills. TMG also developed and maintained systems for both programmatic and financial accountability, thus increasing grantee capacity for successful grant implementation. TMG further provided technical assistance and training to ASHA staff and its grantees in grant design requirements, application review procedures and grant approval criteria. The workshops conducted also included sessions on designing and preparing grant proposals. TMG provided training to staff of over 70 sponsoring institutions annually regarding the compliance and audit requirements under Federal and USAID rules and regulations. TMG focused on strengthening grantee audits, including financial reviews and tracking of A-133 audit reports.

Finally, TMG completed several modules of a grant monitoring system. This is a client-server-based system with graphical user interface (GUI) to track and manage grants awarded under the ASHA program. TMG was responsible for the complete system—both designing/developing the database management system (DBMS) and the GUI. ASHA's new Grant Management System now has the capability to rank institutions/applicants, generate complex reporting, analyze grant information, generate graphics, and provide query/search capability.

**USAID/Haiti Incentives to Improve Basic Education (IIBE):** Under this \$2 million contract, TMG provided long- and short-term technical assistance and training to the Government of Haiti and the Haitian Foundation for Private Education (FONHEP), an umbrella organization of private and parochial education institutions. TMG's contract was implemented within a larger program (\$25.2 million) to improve FONHEP's management of USAID's resources, including small grants made to participating institutions, and promote administrative efficiency and equity of access in primary schools. TMG provided budget, financial management technical assistance and training, and audit services to facilitate implementation of basic education activities carried out by FONHEP's members, worked on improving personnel management skills and conducted data-gathering activities. The primary objective of our financial management advisors was to fully implement the components of an enhanced accounting and reporting system to produce timely and accurate data for managerial decision-making.

It should be noted that before the TMG contract began, FONHEP's grant from USAID was suspended following audit findings of repeated systemic failures. Our financial management advisors conducted detailed reviews with FONHEP staff and others to ensure timely implementation of improvements in this internal control system. Substantial improvement was noted within six months. FONHEP's cooperative agreement was subsequently re-activated, with TMG carrying out co-signatory responsibilities for FONHEP funds.

**USAID/Benin CLEF Contract:** Under this contract, TMG provided significant technical assistance and training to assist USAID and the Benin Ministry of Education to establish a local Girls' Network. The aim was to administer a \$1 million small-grants program to: develop and implement strategies to promote girls' education and classroom equity; finance grassroots interventions for girls' schooling; create a functional national network; and develop a monitoring system to monitor grant funds and equity for the target group. In setting up the Network to begin implementation of the grants, TMG designed a financial management system to track all grants made, developed a procedures manual to guide grants implementation, and trained the Network staff to administer and manage the grants program. Three grassroots organizations promoting girls' education were eventually selected by the Network to receive grants and implement



programs designed to promote solutions to gender and equity issues in different sub-prefectures of Benin; establishing village communities to monitor girls' progress at school; developing income-generating activities for parents of school-age children; and working with parents of student associations.

**American Business Center (ABC) Program:** Under this program, TMG provided two long-term employees to the U.S. Department of Commerce under a two-year contract to supply grant management support and financial analysis for Russia and the Newly Independent States. These specialists helped the ABC Program Office by assessing grantees' adherence to the Federal cost principles and USAID guidelines which govern the use of grant funds under this USAID-financed \$12 million program. Spreadsheet models were extensively used to evaluate financial and operational progress towards sustainability.

**USAID/Mali: Animal Productivity and Export Project (APEX):** This project aims to promote sustainable improvement in the productivity and incomes in the livestock sector of the Malian economy. TMG a subcontractor to Washington State University, provides expertise in financial analysis, accounting, auditing, budgeting and financial planning and controls. Technical assistance also includes support provided to strengthen the projects financial management system by training cooperating country staff.

## II. The Mitchell Group - Experience in Ensuring Funds Liquidity and Transfers

**Administration of Local Currencies:** TMG's extensive experience in local currency transactions ensures that we will always be able to provide USAID with the most favorable U.S. dollar to local currency rates of exchange available through legal and proper channels. We have the institutional knowledge needed to properly control local currency accounts. At present we are using such accounts in Benin, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Rwanda. We have established procedures for wire transfers of U.S. dollars from our Citibank account to overseas banks and conversion to local currency. This method almost always provides a better rate of exchange than having Citibank make the conversion in the United States prior to the transfer.

**Funds Transfer and Liquidity:** In the absence of a secure way for wire transfers to field offices and programs from TMG's U.S. bank (Citibank), TMG usually transfer funds outside of normal banking channels through one of its non-bank Financial Service Providers—INTL Global Currencies, Ltd., and Western Union International. Both of these service providers have local network agents in virtually every country in the world, and are able to provide local currency or checks within 24 hours of an order by TMG. TMG will use Global Currency Intl. preferentially, since they often provide local currency at better than the official rate of exchange by acquiring local currency through official debt conversion programs and other legal sources. Western Union International, which has a slightly larger network than Global Currency Intl., will be used whenever this is more advantageous for us.

TMG has made arrangements with Global Currency Intl. and Western Union International that our payment to them be made only after confirmation of receipt of funds in-country. With this safeguard in place, all transfers are completely secure. When reliable banking services have been reestablished, TMG will use wire transfers from its U.S. Citibank account to its local accounts. TMG continues to use its non-bank service provider(s) whenever this is more advantageous, e.g., in making a payment to a local vendor that cannot readily be handled by drawing a check on TMG's in-country bank account. All transactions through Global Currency Intl. International and Western Union International fully and completely comply with the USA Patriot Act of 2002, Executive Order 13224, and all other applicable laws, and are strictly ethical, legal, and proper.