



## The Mitchell Group, Inc. - Monitoring & Evaluation – Experience The Client Can Count On:

Whether our work takes the form of consultation to schools, professional development for teachers, disaster relief or agriculture project assessment, The Mitchell group is ready to meet the needs of USAID or other clients by making sure the right M & E tools are in place. We undertake rigorous field-testing of our programs and serve as evaluators on a wide range of initiatives developed by other organizations. In our commitment to building bridges between research and practice, we also help others develop their skills and strengthen their ability to base their instructional decisions on data and analysis.

In an era of diminished resource allocations by governments, it is vital that tax payers and their representatives know that money spent in development projects is being used wisely and with optimum results. Confronted with shrinking resources, USAID operating units managers rely increasingly on timely, accurate information that monitors progress towards meeting objectives/benchmarks so they can learn what kinds of resource allocation and use are giving them the best results.

Management and determining resource requirements for development and humanitarian programs is only made possible by collecting, verifying, analyzing and reporting information. Gathering and sharing relevant, accurate, verifiable information is crucial to informed decision-making, particularly in an era of decentralized decision-making.

### The Mitchell Group – Monitoring and Evaluation Program Overview

#### Management of Four USAID Global Evaluation IQCs--25-30 M&E Task Orders implemented

TMG's monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning, and reporting and evaluation/assessment capabilities have been developed and sharpened through our global implementation and management of five USAID Indefinite Quantity Contracts (IQCs), providing "quick-response" technical and management services in diverse areas such as:

- Strategic planning
- Performance monitoring and evaluation;
- Management consulting services; and
- Education and human resources development and training.

Under these IQCs, TMG provided expert consulting services to USAID's overseas missions, as well as Washington based units. TMG was able to assist in formulating and conducting strategic planning exercises to appraise the efficiency, performance, effectiveness and impact of a specific program for trade policy, deregulation, and financial sector strengthening by enhancing institutional and individual capacities for economic policy research and analysis.

To date, TMG has been awarded over 25 Task Orders (TOs) to provide expert consulting services to both USAID/ Washington and operating units overseas.



## Sectoral/Functional Areas Experience

TMG has extensive experience and expertise in key areas of human capacity development, government and democracy, disaster/conflict mitigation, economic growth and agriculture with specific experience implementing USAID and other donors' long-term programs

### Example, which demonstrates our experience:

#### Basic Education:

TMG has managed USAID basic education programs in Benin, Ghana, Haiti, Namibia and Swaziland. TMG also managed a USAID Global Human Capacity Development (HCD) IQC, which provides broad opportunities worldwide. To date we have implemented HCD monitoring and evaluation task orders under this IQC in Benin, the DRC, Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria, and India.

## Benin Success Story

TMG's capabilities in providing primary education are based on its implementation and management of a major effort in Benin, the objective of which was to institute educational reforms and implement an effective, efficient, and equitable and sustainable primary education system throughout the country by 2002. TMG provided 288 person months of long-term technical assistance (TA) and significant short-term TA, as well as training, and commodity procurement. At the end of the contract significant progress had been achieved through innovative interventions in teacher training, curriculum development and achievement testing, community and parent's participation, strategic planning and school mapping, and financial management.

TMG helped support a complete overhaul of Benin's primary learning system to one stressing skills rather than rote memory. New curricula for all primary school subjects were developed, tested, and implemented nationwide. New and innovative teaching methodologies for primary school children were institutionalized. The Primary Leaving Exam (CEP) was completely restructured leading to a CEP success rate of over 90% for students in the 1999–2000 school years. Approximately 21,500 teachers and 100 school inspectors were trained in the use of the new curricula and its teaching methodologies. Textbooks, workbooks, teacher guides and pedagogical charts were developed, tested and locally printed for all Grades 1-4. Additional accomplishments included strong support for girls' education through the creation of a National Girls' Education Network, resulting in a sustainable increase of 16.65% in the gross enrollment rate for girls since 1995, many of whom came from disadvantaged regions. Finally, to ensure that all Beninese children obtain quality education, TMG's Educational Planning Team (EDT) provided key leadership in the establishment of 10 Fundamental Quality Level standards or norms for primary education reform in Benin. The EDT also conducted a major decentralization study to promote more community participation in Benin's education system and conducted extensive school mapping activities using practical, state-of-the art GIS tools and techniques.

**USAID/HCD Education, Training and Human Resources Development IQC:** Under this global IQC, TMG provided short-term advisory and technical assistance services in the areas of education (from early childhood through higher education), training, communications/information technologies, and other areas of human capacity development. TMG has provided educational services and conducted evaluations and studies for USAID/Democratic Republic of the Congo, USAID/Nigeria, USAID/Malawi, USAID/India and USAID/Benin.



## Governance & Democracy:

Good governance is the foundation of a strong economy. A nation's ability to enforce laws, manage resources, and deliver services directly affects its economic performance. Fair, open, and transparent government is increasingly being called for by people all over the world. The Mitchell Group helps countries address the challenges of sound governance, from the foundations of constitutional law to the mechanics of public administration. We leverage information technology to transform the way institutions govern themselves. Through e-government solutions we also improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of government. Using traditional consulting as well as Web-based tools, we help strengthen individual institutions, including civil service entities, public enterprises, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

**West African Regional Program (WARP) Success Story.** Through almost seven years of direct technical assistance and training (spending close to \$8 million), with significant elements of monitoring and evaluation, TMG provided long- and short-term technical assistance and training to strengthen the institutional capacity of regional institutions in the Sahel. Throughout implementation, TMG maintained offices in three regional sites: Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger and worked closely with USAID/WARP and USAID/Mali. Project interventions were also carried out in all nine Sahelian countries. Through the regional institutions, TMG assisted these countries in policy reviews and the design of programs on natural resources management, food security, agrosocioeconomic research, population, education policy, and agricultural, hydrological and meteorological information and training. TMG also provided technical assistance related to decentralization and stakeholders' participation, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and organizing training, workshops, seminars and study tours—all of which are relevant to this project.

Specific DG supported programs under WARP were designed to shape community-level natural resource initiatives. TMG facilitated and provided grassroots policy development aimed at developing programs at the farm and community levels. These programs fostered increased participation by local leaders and, at present nine farmers' platforms are functioning across the Sahel. Also, grassroots' committees provided inputs to the national environment action plan, which aids in monitoring the use of natural resources at the local level. In Senegal, many of TMG's recommendations were incorporated into a series of local laws establishing "rural communities" and ensured communal management. Overall, communal management has contributed to consensus building in the use of resources and has improved food security for over 30 million farm-level inhabitants in the Sahel. This level of DG success would not have been possible without an effective monitoring and evaluation system in place throughout the contract.

## Economic Growth:

An increasingly globalized economy with both stringent technical trade requirements as well as trade opportunities, political instability, and government institutions unable to respond to changing market conditions present challenges for growth in emerging markets. TMG encourages policy makers to eliminate laws and practices that protect entrenched, "well-connected" industries; and, help developing countries through flexible, pragmatic approaches that respond to market conditions and opportunities.

On the policy side, we emphasize the long-term economic and financial benefits of competition and liberalization. We know that given the right policy environment, basic business skills training, market exposure, and appropriate industry linkages, small and medium-sized enterprises can be the engine of growth for an entire economy.



## West African Regional Program (WARP) Success Story

TMG has supported trade based economic growth initiatives in USAID's West Africa Regional Program (WARP) through the Permanent Inter-state Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) activities in regional and international trade. Direct technical assistance was provided to the nine Sahelian countries. TMG's hands-on expertise focused on conducting policy analysis, promoting improved linkages between regional economic objectives and national policies, and supporting strengthening of regional integration and institutions. One of the principal objectives of the project was to encourage policies, which support the private sector and facilitate intra-regional trade. Specifically, TMG has supported CILSS's major program in Food Security; Promotion of small and medium enterprises in the processing of agricultural and food products unit; to develop promotional strategies for local small and medium enterprises, and launched them into a vibrant processed food and agricultural products sector; and promoted an institutional and economic environment favorable to the agricultural product sector.

## Economic Growth – Global Examples – A Proven Track Record of Results

TMG's economic growth experience has been significantly developed through its management and global implementation of two USAID IQCs in the areas of strategic planning performance monitoring and evaluation; management consulting services; and education and human resources development and training. Under these IQCs, TMG provided expert consulting services to both missions, USAID/Washington and Operating Units overseas in trade and economic growth initiatives. The following selected examples demonstrate this experience.

**USAID/EGAT-Evaluation of Competitiveness Analysis:** Working with USAID/EGAT, TMG is undertaking 12-month comprehensive and significant integrated evaluation of USAID's overall competitiveness exercises and programs already completed and currently underway. The purpose of this work is to learn how to improve USAID's approach to country competitiveness in order to achieve more sustainable results. The team will conduct two extensive field evaluations of competitiveness activities in both USAID-presence and non-presence countries (possibly Mongolia and Thailand). Based on the assessments of contractors involved with competitiveness, other donor activities, and the two field evaluations conducted, the team will prepare a primer/handbook for USAID competitiveness and trade capacity building offices, and a comprehensive evaluation report for policy makers responsible for decision-making on the Agency's strategic objective on Economic Growth and Trade Issues.

**USAID/Jakarta Evaluation of Partnership for Economic Growth (PEG):** Working with USAID/Jakarta, TMG implemented an evaluation of the Partnership for Economic Growth (PEG) contract, which consisted of three components (technical assistance, grants for partnership, and training). The evaluation team, consisting of two expatriate consultants and a local specialist, determined the extent to which the activity is achieved its targets through compiling success stories and lessons learned. The team reviewed the PEG activity, with a focus on its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

**USAID/Egypt: Interim Evaluation of Community Resource Mobilization:** In March 1994, USAID provided a five-year grant to Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE)/Egypt to carry out a Community Resource Mobilization (CRM) Program. The purpose of the CRM Program was to substantially improve the quality of life for 100,000 low-income households in four governorates of Middle and Upper Egypt by March 1999, through increased household income or improved community services. The main components of the CRM were: 1) enhanced community development, 2) community awareness for the environment, 3) growth in small and micro-enterprise and, 4) extended



activities initiated under the Village Self-Reliance (VSR) and the Community Initiated Development (CID) Programs. TMG provided a team of expatriates and local Egyptians to evaluate progress toward achieving CRM's established intermediate goals, identify constraints and success, provide guidance and recommendations for required midcourse adjustments that were necessary to improve the effectiveness of program delivery. The team visited a sample of the villages/impact areas where the projects were implemented and interviewed beneficiaries, community volunteers, and CARE project staff. The team then based their findings, conclusions and recommendations on data, documents, and other information provided by the grantee, USAID project officer, USAID Micro-enterprise officers, as well as site visits, interviews, and significant sampling.

**USAID/Egypt Evaluation of Development Economic Policy Reform Analysis Activity (DEPRA).** The purpose of DEPRA is to support the Egyptian government's economic reform program for trade policy, deregulation, and financial sector strengthening by enhancing institutional and individual capacities for economic policy research and analysis. DEPRA also assisted the Ministry of Economy (MOE) to develop the research capabilities, information base, and analytical experience needed to enhance the MOE's policy reform process. This activity is being carried out by a consortium of consulting firms working jointly with the Egyptian government primarily the Ministry of Economy and International Cooperation (MOEIC). TMG provided a team, comprised of expatriates and local Egyptians, to conduct a mid-term evaluation of DEPRA. This evaluation consisted of three sets of tasks: 1) Assess the extent to which DEPRA activities in the last two years have contributed to the Activity's purpose, 2) Recommend changes in operating procedures to increase the Activity's effectiveness and efficiency and, 3) Discuss both benefits and consequences associated with USAID exercising its option to extend DEPRA. TMG suggested changes in policy emphases and institutional arrangements that may be in order to enhance effectiveness in the current policy environment.

**USAID/Agricultural-Led Export Business (ALEB):** is a central component of USAID/Egypt's Growth through Globalization strategy to support Egypt's private sector. ALEB's mandate is to provide technical assistance and support to Egyptian food processing companies in order to enhance their global competitiveness and increase exports of their products. TMG, under a subcontract to Abt Associates, provides three key components of the project, including monitoring and evaluation support, capacity building and training, and procurement support. TMG also provides expert technical assistance to support gender training/WID activities in small business development and other private sector initiatives.

## **M&E Experience - Five USAID Projects:**

1. USAID Nigeria – MEMS Project
2. AFR/SD,
3. DCHA/ASHA,
4. DCHA/OFDA,
5. USAID India &

TMG has in depth experience monitoring and evaluating complex multi-sector programs and rapid response to conflict, post-conflict and transitional settings and mobilizing short-and long-term technical assistance.

TMG has the capacity to mobilize a diverse range of expertise rapidly in response to requests for short- and long-term



technical assistance. TMG has also had long experience supervising the initiation and implementation of multiple and complex activities simultaneously, as requested by our clients, host country officials, USAID missions and subcontractors. TMG's management structure allows for flexibility and rapid response to client needs. For rapid response, these experienced professionals supervise a diverse, multilingual professional staff and expert consultants from our database of over 2,000 candidates.

The following examples demonstrate The Mitchell Groups ability and experience in monitoring and evaluation complex programs within normal as well as conflict, post-conflict and transitional settings.

### **1. USAID/Nigeria MEMS Project**

USAID/Nigeria Monitoring & Evaluation Management Services (MEMS) Task Order (GSA MOBIS Schedule)

TMG is currently implementing a \$5 million Task Order to develop a comprehensive performance management, monitoring and reporting system for USAID/Nigeria. Specifically, TMG is establishing a mechanism to help USAID/Nigeria's four Strategic Objective (SO) Teams: Social Services, Governance and Democracy, Health and HIV/AIDS and Economic Growth (Improved Livelihoods) and its implementing partners supporting these SOs, to carry out their performance measurement, activity monitoring, and planning responsibilities under the new Country Strategic Plan 2004-2009. Additionally, TMG is providing quick response, short-term technical assistance to the four SOs to conduct surveys, studies, assessments, and evaluations as required.

Visit <http://www.nigeriamems.com> for more information.

### **2. USAID's Africa Bureau, Office of Sustainable Development (AFR/SD)**

Monitoring and evaluation is key element in our support to USAID's Africa Bureau, Office of Sustainable Development (AFR/SD), as it is crucial to effective program and project design. TMG has utilized its extensive experience in designing and implementing M&E plans to increase the relevance, efficiency, time and cost effectiveness of the data collection and analysis that allows USAID project managers, mission directors and staff to improve the performance of USAID activities.

We develop performance standards, performance monitoring plans (PMP) and indicators for Annual Reports and other reporting tools, such as the On Line Presidential Information Network (OPIN) to track progress. TMG also provides classroom and hands on training on indicators and PMP use for project personnel. One effective example was the course held to evaluate USAID's Africa Bureau's Environmental Assessment Capacity Building Program Environmental Impact Assessment program, which helped reorient the program to emphasize 'training of trainers' and move more training and responsibility to the field.

In addition, TMG reviews mission annual reports and country strategy papers to ensure that they are compatible with overall agency and bureau goals. By developing scopes of work, TMG selects evaluators and manages the evaluation process, as well as conduct evaluations and data quality assessments of Annual Report indicators. After collecting, assessing and analyzing the data and performance monitoring indicators, TMG also recommends improvements to PMP and data collection systems.

Finally, TMG develops and maintains database and tracking systems to constantly monitor activities and track the status



of projects on an ongoing basis.

### **3. USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (DCHA/OFDA)**

TMG managed a complex \$12 million Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) contract for over six years. Because of the nature of OFDA's work – short notice reaction to natural and man made disasters, providing support services in this context is particularly challenging. Despite these challenges, TMG successfully delivered services required under the contract through six tumultuous years—including 403 declared disasters. During this time, TMG provided close to 50 staffers on-site at USAID/Washington, with diverse backgrounds, such as disaster information support services, correspondence and records, MIS services, and training to monitor, evaluate and facilitate OFDA's response to natural and man-made disasters. Management of this project was particularly challenging given the constantly changing requirements stemming from OFDA's mission. It necessitated a great deal of flexibility and the ability to make and implement rapid decisions, while still meeting long-term requirements. It also entailed the ability to juggle multiple, conflicting demands from multiple sub-clients within OFDA.

Implementing this contract required identifying appropriate data collection and analysis techniques, quickly developing and clearing reports, writing speeches and talking points, and coordinating with other offices to disseminate information. Information Specialists collected, analyzed, synthesized and disseminated information regarding pending and on-going disasters. Different product formats and templates, including Situation Reports, Fact Sheets and Information Bulletins, were developed to meet reporting needs based on target audience and type of disaster. Information specialists deployed overseas to work with missions to provide reporting for the U.S. Government and to serve on assessment teams. Information specialists also drafted information strategies, participated in country and regional strategy development, and supported portfolio reviews. In addition, these information specialists were responsible for producing OFDA's Annual Report, the Action Officer's Handbook (which provided procedures and lessons learned), briefing materials, conference proceedings, and meeting notes. The unit also maintained OFDA's Disaster History Database, Commodity/Services Database, Mission Disaster Relief Officer (MDRO) Contact List, listserves, and mailing lists.

### **4. USAID/BHR Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (DCHA/ASHA)**

For this global, multi-sector program, TMG worked extensively with ASHA to help facilitate reforms in health and higher education and create partnerships in development with higher institutions of learning abroad espousing U.S. ideas and principles. Over the period of the contract, TMG provided a long-term M&E specialist to collect, analyze and report relevant data and information (i.e., grants review and application process, etc.) to ASHA's project managers and policy makers. This specialist also assisted ASHA in conducting research and collecting information relevant to the preparation of ASHA's R4s on institutional reforms and partnerships with U.S. institutions of higher learning or firms with interest in developing countries. TMG provided technical assistance and training to more than 100 grant recipients (U.S. sponsors) and sub-recipients (overseas institutions). Throughout contract implementation, TMG prepared and compiled annually major documents for USAID, listing all grantees and total funding provided for tracking purposes for ASHA and other USAID offices, and to report to Congress.

### **5. USAID/India:**

TMG undertook an evaluation of USAID/India and USAID/DCHA's humanitarian response and rehabilitation program for an earthquake in Gujarat State, India that affected 15.7 million individuals and caused \$450 million in infrastructure



losses. TMG assembled the eight-person evaluation team including the team leader and a design engineer from the U.S along with 6 local data collection staff. The evaluation focused on two components. The first examined USAID's rapid response program that provided \$9 million in emergency assistance grants implemented by DART, CARE, WHO, UNDP, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Vision International (WV) and DOD. The second component focused on a recognized longer-term need for earthquake recovery launched through a new Special Objective, namely the Gujarat Earthquake Recovery Initiative (GERI). This latter program addressed the longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts through additional \$8 million of grants to CARE, WV, and CRS to rebuild homes, community centers, schools, and re-instituting critical child survival and health services.