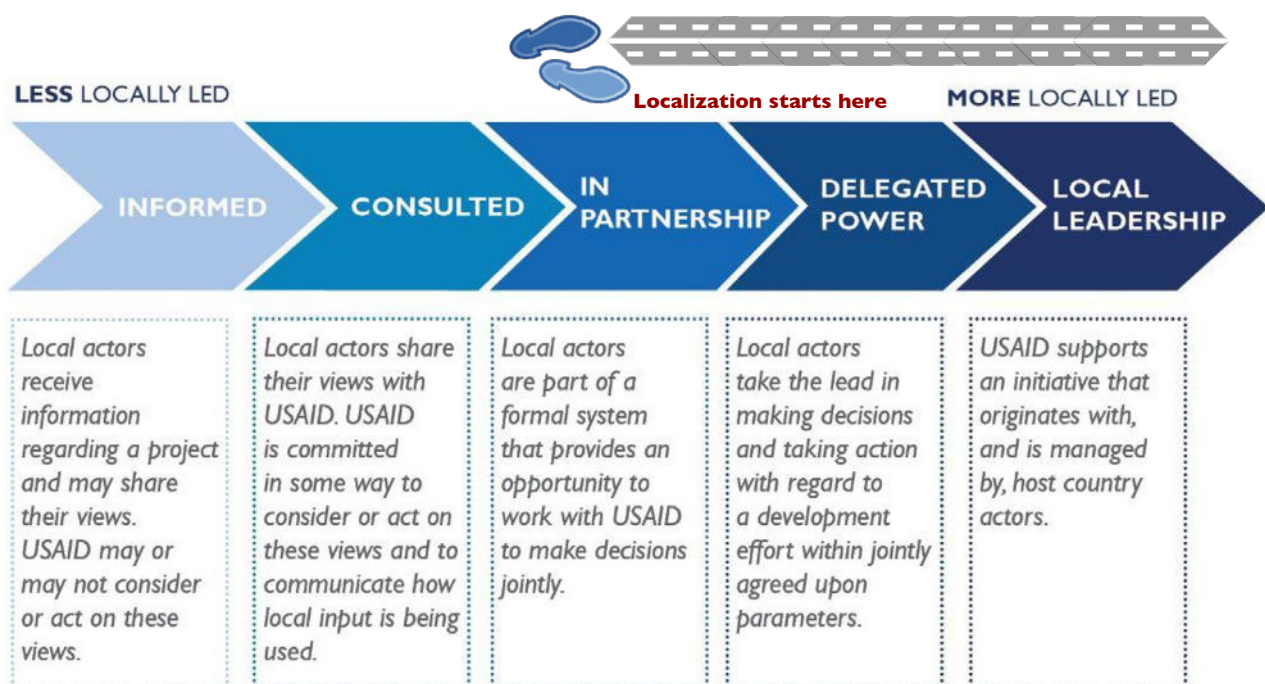# SOCIAL IMPACT
ADVANCING DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

Three Simple Rules to Support Localization in Our Work

What is LOCALIZATION?

Localization is a power-shifting process.

It shifts decision-making power to local actors to address development challenges. Where there has been greater localization, local actors make decisions to: (1) set priorities; (2) design and implement; (3) allocate resources; and (4) adapt development programming based on learning. In the below USAID spectrum of locally-led development, Social Impact considers its work with USAID to be "localized" when there is at a minimum "in partnership" decision-making.

Localization starts here

LESS LOCALLY LED — **INFORMED** → **CONSULTED** → **IN PARTNERSHIP** → **DELEGATED POWER** → **LOCAL LEADERSHIP** — **MORE** LOCALLY LED

INFORMED	CONSULTED	IN PARTNERSHIP	DELEGATED POWER	LOCAL LEADERSHIP
Local actors receive information regarding a project and may share their views. USAID may or may not consider or act on these views.	Local actors share their views with USAID. USAID is committed in some way to consider or act on these views and to communicate how local input is being used.	Local actors are part of a formal system that provides an opportunity to work with USAID to make decisions jointly.	Local actors take the lead in making decisions and taking action with regard to a development effort within jointly agreed upon parameters.	USAID supports an initiative that originates with, and is managed by, host country actors.

LOCALIZATION IS NOT:

1. Consulting or informing local stakeholders; that is common courtesy and good sense.
2. Only strengthening local capacity; if there is no shift in power, it is not localization.
3. Procurement of local goods and services; if there is no shift in power, it is not localization.

SMART RULES are guidelines for how we carry out our work.

The Smart Rules described below are specific to increasing localization in our work with USAID. They are meant to be simple and almost always universal. For that reason, there are not many.

If implemented by Social Impact staff, these smart rules could have a butterfly effect, leading to greater localization in our work with USAID. For each rule, we have listed how to carry out the rule, those who are responsible and accountable for the rule, the reason for the rule, and the intended impact.

See also the complementary menu of localization services.

SMART RULE #1: SCOPE FOR LOCALIZATION
Always use the Locally-Led Development Spectrum when scoping services or tasks.

How do you implement this rule?	When scoping a new task or service with a USAID operating unit or when writing a proposal in response to a solicitation, ask USAID counterparts directly or - in the case of proposals - have an internal discussion to identify where on the locally-led development spectrum we want to be. Based on the response, engage in a conversation about how to achieve that level of localization with the time and resources available. With USAID, communicate and resolve any potential misalignment between resourcing or the overall approach and their desired level of localization.
Who is responsible and accountable?	• **Responsible:** Project managers, task managers, research managers, proposal managers, proposal tech leads • **Accountable:** Chiefs of Party, supervisors, technical directors, proposal tech leads
What is the rationale for this rule?	By opening up this conversation, Social Impact can bring awareness to USAID counterparts on what level of localization they will achieve. This awareness may lead USAID to rethink their current level of localization. If not, it at least assures all that there is a shared understanding of USAID's localization agenda vis-a-vis the task or service.
What is the intended impact?	In a best case scenario, the USAID counterpart may realize their prioritization of localization is too low and may increase it. In addition, the scoping may reveal that there is not enough time or resources to achieve the intended level of localization, enabling alignment between USAID's intentions and the scope.
What are we trying to avoid?	USAID thinking that it is achieving localization if it is not; avoiding localization in name only.
Additional resources / examples:	See USAID Learns' (Vietnam) two-pager on collaboration options, updated scoping template that incorporates this question, and research scoping guide.

SMART RULE #2: CO-CREATE WHERE POSSIBLE
Co-create with local actors whenever and wherever possible.

How do you implement this rule?	Depending on the task, ask yourself: can this be co-created with local actors? Common tasks that SI carries out that could be co-created include: • Activity designs • Research and evaluation scopes of work and recommendations • Facilitation plans • Proposals for funding Social Impact cannot be out in front of USAID, however. The decision to co-create ultimately rests with USAID; therefore, apply smart rule #1 and then use the scoping process to align their localization aspirations with the right approaches. The further to the right on the localization spectrum USAID wants to be, the more critical co-creation becomes.
Who is responsible and accountable?	• **Responsible:** Project managers, task managers, research managers, proposal managers • **Accountable:** Chiefs of Party, supervisors, technical directors
What is the rationale for this rule?	By engaging local actors in co-creation, Social Impact will support USAID in achieving "in partnership" (described above in the localization spectrum. Co-creation actively shifts power to enable joint decision-making. Note that some USAID staff may be averse to the term co-creation. Other synonymous terms that may be more useful in those situations: co-design; co-ownership, joint decision-making in XX process, etc.
What is the intended impact?	Local actors engaged in joint decision-making with USAID or other international actors.
What are we trying to avoid?	Only informing or consulting local actors in the course of our work.
Additional resources / examples:	See USAID's co-creation guide.

SMART RULE #3: MAINTAIN LOCAL SYSTEM AWARENESS
Consider the local system when selecting local consultants or partners[1] to implement a USAID program, service, or task.

How do you implement this rule?	• Conduct a rapid local system mapping (at a minimum an informal analysis with staff with local knowledge or during capture if a proposal) when embarking on a new program, service, or task. • Identify critical local actors in the local system who stand to win or lose from the initiative and who could be seen as credible change agents or who might block change. • Determine partnering or hiring strategies based on this information.
Who is responsible and accountable?	• **Responsible:** Project managers, task managers, research managers, proposal managers • **Accountable:** Chiefs of Party, supervisors, technical directors
What is the rationale for this rule?	Selecting the right local consultants and partners with unique perspectives and credibility in the local system to drive change is imperative.
What is the intended impact?	Partnerships and consultant selections that meet local needs and reinforce positive trends
What are we trying to avoid?	Partnerships or consultant selection that is blind to local contextual dynamics or results in negative, unintended consequences. This can be even more important in active conflict settings.
Additional resources / examples:	In the USAID/Mexico Civil Society Resilience Activity, Social Impact works with both small and nontraditional organizations that have never received funding from USAID and with larger local organizations that act as "anchor" partners. Larger local organizations have the resources, experience, and capacity to support smaller actors and can sustain networks or drive greater impact within a local system. The 5Rs Framework is an important tool for understanding the role of local actors in a local system.

1 Local partners are local actors that "work with USAID as either direct contractors or recipients or as sub-awardees, whether under acquisition or assistance."