

USAID Alliance Anosy

Jennifer TALBOT

Abstract

The USAID Anosy Alliance played a coordination role for USAID financed programs in order to ensure their synergy and alignment and contribution to the implementation of the Anosy Regional Madagascar Action Plan. The Alliance worked closely with the Anosy Region and three of its Technical Government Services (Regional Direction for Rural Development, Regional Direction for Health, Family Planning and Social Protection, and the Regional Direction for Environment, Water and Forests and Tourism) in order to reach the objectives for Commitments 4, 5, and 7 of the MAP. The USAID Alliance used annual planning, regular meetings and results monitoring by Commitment to facilitate the coordination, implementation, and dissemination of results among USAID programs and the Government. After serving as an example of regional coordination for several years the USAID Alliance will now need to adapt its role as the Anosy Region takes on the regional coordination of development actions. The USAID Anosy Alliance should adapt its role to one of coordination support to the Region as well as internal coordination of USAID implementing partners programs. In order to truly achieve USAID's NHWP strategy in the Region and improve the efficiency of regional coordination, USAID should carry out preliminary spatial and programmatic planning at the regional level with all the USAID partners, other key regional actors and the Government to ensure the coordination of objectives, methodologies and intervention zones before the finalization of the contracts for the USAID programs.

Introduction/Context

USAID Madagascar has supported the environment, health, and rural development sectors in the Anosy region for the past 15 years and also provided technical assistance to regional planning mechanisms and tools. In 2003 ? or 2004 ? the USAID Environment and Rural Development office adopted a strategy of Nature, Health, Wealth, and Power which focused on the linkages among the different sectors of USAID's programs. In an effort to better coordinate the diverse USAID implementing partners in the Anosy region and to better coordinate with other regional partners and the regional government and technical services, the USAID Environment and Rural Development and Health, Population, Nutrition office established the USAID Anosy Alliance in 2004. This was the same year that the national decentralization policy established the "Region" of Anosy and made two political appointments, the Regional Chief and the Director of Regional Development, with whom the USAID Anosy Alliance would collaborate very closely. The short term objective of the USAID Anosy Alliance was to support the Regional government in the implementation of the Anosy Regional Development Plan (PRD) and then later the Regional Madagascar Action Plan (MAP). This regional MAP reflects regional priorities and supports the national Madagascar Action Plan, established by the Government of Madagascar to lead the development in the country from 2007-2012. USAID Alliance programs in the Anosy Region currently contribute to three MAP Commitments, 4: Rural Development and Green Revolution, 5: Health, Family Planning, and the Fight Against HIV/AIDS, and 7: Cherish the Environment.

The long term objective of the USAID Anosy Alliance is to serve as a model of coordination for the regional development actors such as WWF, CARE, PSI, ASOS . . . in order to re-invigorate Regional coordination mechanisms and enable the eventual phase out of the Alliance. In order to reach this second objective, the USAID Anosy Alliance worked closely with the regional government structures to support regional monitoring and coordination of development programs, including regional planning mechanisms and tools such as the Regional Development Committee (CRD), the development and monitoring of the PRD, (before the existence of the Regions) and then subsequently the development of regional information management systems for the Region and the Regional Technical Government Services.

Approach

The members of the Alliance include three categories of partners:

- 1) USAID implementing partners who receive funding to implement USAID programs,
- 2) Other regional development partners who receive funding from other donors, and
- 3) Three of its Regional Technical Government Services (Regional Direction for Rural Development (DRDR), Regional Direction for Health, Family Planning and Social Protection (DRSPFPS), and the Regional Direction for Environment, Water and Forests and Tourism (DREEFT).

During 2004-2005, the Alliance was chaired by PACT Madagascar. PACT, or Participating Agencies Collaborating Together, is an American NGO that was implementing a USAID-funded good governance program. During this beginning stage, the Alliance held monthly meetings to exchange information and develop and monitor a common annual work plan which was still aligned with USAID technical sectors and not yet with the PRD. In addition to the regional USAID partners, the majority of these meetings were attended by representatives from USAID and USAID implementing partners from Antananarivo and representatives of the Region and the Regional Technical Government Services.

During 2006 USAID hired an individual consultant to lead the Alliance and then during 2007 the Jariala project took the lead. Jariala is the USAID funded project in support to the forestry administration that is implemented by International Resources Group. In 2008, CARE International took over the lead of the Alliance. Throughout 2006-2008 the regular Alliance meetings continued, but were adapted to the partners' preferences and workloads. Instead of monthly meetings, the partners preferred bi-monthly meetings, and the work plan became a compiled work plan representing all of the USAID financed programs that was aligned with the PRD in 2006 and then realigned with the MAP in 2007. In 2008, when the Region redefined its priorities within the Regional MAP the Alliance realigned its programs to support these regional priorities.

Results

Since the establishment of the Alliance in 2006, there have been many technical results in rural development, health and environment that have contributed to the objectives of the PRD and the MAP. Some examples from 2007 are shown in the following table.

Examples of USAID Anosy Alliance Contribution to Madagascar Action Plan 2007

Commitment 4: Rural Development and a Green Revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 irrigation dams rehabilitated, • 256 ha additional irrigated rice fields created, • 7 Water User's Associations and 3 farmers' associations operational
Commitment 5: Health, Family Planning and the Fight Against HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23,782 insecticide treated mosquito nets distributed • 686 community family planning product distribution agents operational • 6 youth-friendly reproductive health clinics operational
Commitment 7: Cherish the Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 new community forest management transfers created and 15 previous established transfers evaluated and renewed • 1077 charcoal makers trained in improved techniques • 134 ha reforested

The majority of these technical results are the individual results of one or more implementing partner's individual activities, sometimes jointly accounted for as in the case of the community family planning distribution agents or the support to community forest management transfers. However, certain activities such as the reforestation and the distribution of mosquito nets even though they were led by one partner were carried out in the field in collaboration among several Alliance partners. The presence of the USAID Anosy Alliance created an enabling environment for these types of opportunistic collaborations and supported technical exchanges, which served to improve the quality and the scope of the interventions.

In addition to the technical results there have also been organizational and institutional results.

- 1) The USAID Anosy Alliance has increased communication, coordination, and collaboration among the partners which has improved the quality of implementation of the respective programs.
- 2) In addition, regular contact, discussions, and information exchanges have increased understanding of the NHWP strategy and empowered certain partners to incorporate this strategy into their on-going programs.
- 3) The Alliance approach has facilitated the coordination of regional development actions among USAID funded partners and their government partners and ensured the succinct communication of results, to the Region and the Regional Technical Government Services.
- 4) The Alliance with the Region and the Regional Technical Government Services catalyzed the creation of regional task forces and organization of meetings on subjects such as the domestic household energy, protected areas, sorghum, and HIV/AIDS. This has encouraged discussion and coordination of key regional issues and the development of collaborative programs.
- 5) USAID Alliance implementing partners have also supported the regional planning and coordination process through support to the CRD and the development and monitoring of

the PRD as well as the development and support of regional information management systems.

6) The Chief of Region and the Director of Regional Development have actively participated in all the planning and coordination activities since the creation of the Alliance. This has shown a sincere dedication on the part of the Region to follow and manage regional development activities and an appreciation of USAID's efforts to help the Region meet goals set out in the PRD and the MAP.

7) In 2008, the Region embraced the role of regional coordination of development partners by establishing their own regional planning and monitoring system based in part on the Alliance system. This is an important result of the Alliance and the years of technical support given to the region, since the Alliance was originally developed as a temporary model for regional coordination.

Discussion/Analysis

Even though the Alliance has created an enabling environment for coordination and communication in the Anosy region for the USAID implementing partners, other partners, and the Government, the collaboration and synergy for the implementation of field activities is still limited. This limitation is mostly due to the establishment of the specific objectives and timing for the implementation of each USAID program without enough preliminary regional level concertation. This means that the regional level coordination and communication of the Alliance is only able to look for opportunistic synergy and collaboration between partners who are implementing pre-determined programs and to then retro-fit these into the regional government priorities.

The regional USAID Anosy Alliance partners are enthusiastic about the NHWP strategy and have tried their best to retro-fit their programs to include aspects of the integrated approach and to collaborate with multi-sectoral partners. However the full adhesion of key partners to the NHWP strategy and in turn the effective implementation of this strategy in the region and in the field is hindered by the lack of an overarching pre-existing global NHWP framework for all projects and programs.

While the Alliance has been able to coordinate and ensure communication among the USAID-funded partners it is obviously inherently limited in its scope of influence and authority over the coordination of other projects, donors and government technical services. This is precisely the role that the Region is beginning to play as the regional coordinating body, which has the sphere of influence, the official mandate and the authority to coordinate all of the actors in the region.

Over many years, USAID has provided support to the region, first to the Regional Development Committee (before the existence of the Region) and the subsequently to the Region to become strong planning and coordinating structures. In 2008, the Region has the information and monitoring systems in place and is now poised to take on this coordination role. This is evidence that the USAID Anosy Alliance is beginning to achieve its long term objective of regional coordination by the Region. However, even as the Region fully assumes this coordination role, the USAID Anosy Alliance should continue to provide technical support to the Region and to the Regional Technical Government Services for their regional planning, monitoring and

information management systems. At the same time, the USAID Anosy Alliance should adapt its role to the expanding and changing role of the Region by focusing on 1) internal preliminary spatial and programmatic planning among USAID partners, 2) aligning its activities and programs with the priorities of the Regional MAP, as well as 3) building technical and organizational capacity of USAID Anosy Alliance partners by through trainings and exchange visits.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the USAID Anosy Alliance has been an effective tool for coordinating the programs of USAID implementing partners in the Anosy Region and in aligning and reporting results to the Regional Technical Government Services and Region and in supporting the implementation of the MAP. It has also contributed to the empowerment of the Anosy Region to assume the role of regional coordination, planning and monitoring of regional development. However, in order to ensure a more effective coordination of the USAID strategy of integrated NHWP programming at the regional level and in the field it will be necessary to pre-align all of the USAID programs in the region within an overarching pre-existing global NHWP framework. This will mean that USAID mission in Madagascar will need to establish this overall framework for all of its sectors at the national level and then ensure and participate in preliminary spatial and programmatic planning at the regional level with all the USAID partners, other key regional actors and the Region and the Regional Technical Government Services. This will ensure the pre-alignment of USAID programs with regional priorities and existing programs before finalizing the objectives, methodologies, timing of programs, and intervention zones in the contracts for the USAID implementing partners. In addition, the Region and the Regional Technical Government Services will need to continue to strengthen their coordinating mechanisms, monitoring and information management systems to effectively plan, monitor and evaluate the Regional MAP. In this new Regional context the USAID Anosy Alliance should adapt its role to one where it will offer technical support to the Region and the Regional Technical Government Services as well as provide internal coordination, training and support to the USAID implementing partners.