

## Sub-Partnerships



Feedback: [howtoworkwithusaid@usaid.gov](mailto:howtoworkwithusaid@usaid.gov)

- Welcome to our e-module on Sub-Partnerships in our series on “How to Work with USAID.”
- Many organizations first receive sub-awards or sub-contracts from USAID before competing for prime awards, and thus this e-module is primarily intended for those organizations or businesses that are looking to become sub-awardees or sub-contractees.
- We hope that you find the content to be useful and appreciate your feedback, which you may send to [howtoworkwithusaid@usaid.gov](mailto:howtoworkwithusaid@usaid.gov).



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## What is a Sub-Award & Sub-Contract?

- **Sub-Award**: an award of financial assistance (money or property) made under a USAID grant or cooperative agreement by a recipient to an eligible sub-recipient. ([ADS 303](#))
- **Sub-Contract**: when a USAID Prime Contractor awards a contract to another firm to assist them in performing on a USAID contract. ([ADS 302](#); [FAR 19.701](#))
- [E-module on Types of Awards](#)



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Before we begin, let's start with a couple basic definitions.

- A **Sub-Award** is an award of financial assistance (money or property) made under a USAID grant or cooperative agreement by a recipient to an eligible sub-recipient. USAID partners need to manage sub-awards in ways that accomplish project objectives while assuring compliance with USAID rules and regulations. ADS 303 addresses specific requirements for sub-awardees under various assistance instruments.
- A **Sub-Contract** exists when a USAID Prime Awardee awards a contract to another firm to assist them. Sub-contractors may be U.S. small businesses, a large firm, or a U.S.-based or local non-profit organization. ADS 302 provides more information on sub-contracts, as well as FAR 19.701 for U.S.-based small businesses.
- These are the basic definitions, but for more detailed information, see our e-module on Types of Awards.



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## Objectives of E-Module

1. Identifying potential partners
2. Marketing your organization
3. Developing teaming agreements (roles, negotiations, exclusivity or not)



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- The main objectives of this e-module are to learn:
  - how to identify potential partners with whom you can implement programs as a sub-partner;
  - how to become better known by more effectively marketing your organization, including how to develop capability statements;
  - and what developing an agreement entails (such as roles, negotiations, and exclusivity or not) when forming a team with other partners.



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## 1. Identifying Potential Partners



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Let's begin by explaining how to identify potential partners.



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## Potential Benefits of Partnerships

- Complementary skills to implement programs
- Optimization of resources
- Publicity through project resources and tools
- Opportunities for networking
- Insight into local issues



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- Partnering with another organization comes with many potential benefits and risks.
- Let's begin with the benefits.
  - In many cases, USAID's development assistance activities require specialized skills from a multiple set of development partners. For example, one organization may not have all of the professional skills, services, and knowledge base the Agency requires to reform education in a post-conflict country. Organizations with complementary skills and experience may form a team for an award or establish subcontracting arrangements to achieve the overall development goals;
  - Other potential benefits include: the optimization of resources through coordination;
  - Enhanced publicity through project resources and tools;
  - Opportunities to network with other organizations;
  - And insight into local issues. Local organizations can bring a lot of local knowledge, language skills, and experience to the table. As a result, partnerships with local entities or organizations are paramount in doing USAID work, and thus USAID encourages organizations to partner with local partners to the greatest extent possible.



## Potential Risks of Partnerships

- Compromise of organizational vision and integrity
- Existence of competing interests
- Unclear division of roles
- Unclear division of financial benefits



- When considering a partnership, it's also important to consider risks.
  - The first potential risk of partnering is a compromise of organizational vision and integrity. For this reason, it is critical that your organization only partners with organizations that have a similar vision and that carry out their work with a high level of integrity.
  - Additionally, the existence of competing interests could be risky, as it could greatly impede cooperation.
  - Furthermore, an unclear division of roles could result in redundancy and low productivity. It is therefore important for organizations to discuss and agree on what thematic and/or technical areas and geographic scope each organization will focus on when implementing a project.
  - Finally, an unclear division of financial benefits is a serious risk that can be mitigated by way of clarification early in the partnering process, which we'll discuss later.



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## Considerations for Choosing Partners

- Mission and values similar to yours
- Credibility in the community
- Good relationship with key donors
- Program focus that complements skills/services
- Strategic geographic focus
- Financial management experience
- Service delivery history and potential



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When considering whether to partner with various implementing partners, also consider several things, such as:

- A mission and values similar to yours;
- Credibility in the community in which the project will be implemented;
- A good relationship with key donors, and especially with those that operate in your geographic area of focus;
- A program focus that complements your organization's skills and services;
- A strategic geographic focus;
- Financial management experience;
- And a positive service delivery history and positive potential for future service delivery.

Next we'll discuss how to research and identify potential partners to team up with for a project.



[E-Module](#) on Exploring Funding Opportunities to Partner with USAID

**Step 1:** Research organizations through their websites or newspaper announcements.

**Step 2:** Research the [Foreign Assistance Dashboard](#)



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Now we will provide you with some concrete steps to take to research and identify partners with which you may wish to become a sub-awardee or sub-contractor. We suggest that if you have not done so already to take the e-module on Exploring Funding Opportunities to Partner with USAID which you can access through this link.

- We first suggest that you research potential organizations through their websites or through newspaper announcements. Read through their mission statements and information on prior projects and note what may or may not be a good fit for your organization.
- For step 2, research organizations through the Foreign Assistance Dashboard. You can explore its map or search its data. Here we've shown a screen shot of ForeignAssistance.gov once you click "Explore Map" and then click on South Africa. From here, you can click on "View South Africa Data" and then click on "CSV" to download a comprehensive spreadsheet of all U.S. Government funded partners in that country.



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## Steps for Exploring Potential Partners (Cont.)

**Step 3:** Explore the Development Experience Clearinghouse website [DEC](#). Perform an advanced search.

**Step 4:** Stay informed by signing up for notifications from [Grants.gov](#), [FedBizOpps](#).

**Step 5:** Research and sign up for other development-related list-serves (not sponsored by USAID):

- [Devex](#)
- [MSI](#)
- [Professional Services Council](#)
- [Inside NGO](#)
- [Society for International Development](#)
- [InterAction](#)



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- As a third step, once you've identified the names of some potential partners, you may want to further read about their USAID-funded projects, which you may do by exploring the Development Experience Clearinghouse (the DEC). Click on the advanced search function for documents and then conduct a search using the organization's name.
- We also suggest staying informed about potential partners by signing up for notifications from Grants.gov and FedBizOpps, which is covered in our first e-module on Exploring Funding Opportunities to Partner with USAID.
- Additionally, you may want to sign up for lists on other sites listed below.



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## Steps for Exploring Potential Partners

(Cont.)

- **Local organizations located outside of the U.S.:**  
Contact your country's aid coordinator (and/or Ministry of Finance or Economic Planning).
- **U.S. based organizations:**  
Examine [FedBizOpps](#) vendor list and [PVO Registry](#) for organizations with similar missions. [E-Module](#).
- **U.S. Small Businesses:** See [Small Businesses](#), [SBA online training](#), [SBAIC](#), and [Small Business Administration's Sub-Net database](#)
- Conduct information interviews and market your organization to potential primes.

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- Local organizations located outside of the U.S. may want to consider contacting their country's aid coordinator and/or their Ministry of Finance or Economic Planning, which may be able to provide a list of donor-funded partners (U.S. and others) operating in their country. For example, in Rwanda, the Ministry of Economic Planning maintains a central database of donor-funded projects.
- For U.S.-based organizations, consider examining the vendor list on FedBizOpps and the Private Voluntary Organization, or PVO, Registry to find organizations that have similar missions. You also may want to see our e-module on Registering as a PVO.
- For U.S. small businesses, you can find more resources on our Small Business website, including links to the Mentor/Protégé Program, the Small Business Administration training, the Small Business Association of International Companies (or SBAIC), and the [Small Business Administration's Sub-Net database](#), which serves as a platform for primes to locate quality subcontractors. Small businesses can review this web site to identify opportunities in their areas of expertise.
- Once you've made a list of potential partners, contact those organizations to conduct informational interviews and market your our own organization. Following these steps will allow your organization to be more aware of what organizations are already working with USAID and what their current

projects are.



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## 2. Marketing Your Organization



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The second part of this e-module will focus on helping you market your organization to become better known to potential prime partners.



### Roles of Primes:

- Leadership of the development of the application or proposal
- Identification of the strategy
- Selection of partners
- Overall management of the project



### Roles of Sub-Partners:

- To expand the capacity of the team to achieve objectives
- To be a partner in the application or proposal development
- To provide comparative advantages and expertise in a technical area or particular service

- Prime Partners, or Primes, and Sub-Partners have different roles within the partnership.
- Primes are responsible for:
  - the leadership of the development of the application or proposal;
  - the identification of the project strategy;
  - the selection of partners;
  - and the overall management of the project.
- Sub-partners are responsible for:
  - expanding the capacity of the team to achieve objectives;
  - being a partner in the proposal development stage;
  - and providing comparative advantages and expertise in a technical area or particular service.



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## Considerations for Forming a Team

- Not too many partners.
- Clear roles and responsibilities for all partners.
- Key local knowledge.
- Coverage of all aspects of the Statement of Work (SOW) but minimize duplication of effort.
- Enough resources to fund sub-partner activities.
- Coverage of management and technical aspects.



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- The selection of a team's partners and sub-partners is crucial. Here are some things to consider when forming a team:
- A team should not have too many partners,
- and all partners should have clear roles and responsibilities.
- Local partners can bring an invaluable perspective to the project and can be critical for its success. Local partners can also contribute to the sustainability of the project, as they will still be present once USAID funding for the project ceases.
- Additionally, the team should cover all aspects of the Statement of Work, but should minimize duplication of effort.
- Sub-partners should ensure that the prime formulates a budget that contains sufficient financial resources to fund sub-partner activities.
- Finally, the team should ensure that there are sufficient personnel for the project's management and technical needs.



- **Primes select sub-partners that they know about.**
- **How to become better known?**
  - Market your organization, particularly for aspects the prime needs (e.g. cost share).
  - Check out the [business forecast report](#).
  - Ask around as to who is applying for a particular award.
  - Update capability statements and submit unsolicited ones.



- Primes select sub-partners that they know about. Therefore, the question is: How does my organization become better known?
- You may take several steps to improve awareness of your organization and its activities.
  - Market your organization with the prime's needs in mind. For example, you may wish to explain your organization's ability to share costs that will be incurred.
  - Also, check out the business forecast report, which is linked here. There you will see listing of upcoming notices of funding opportunities for USAID projects. See our first e-module on exploring funding opportunities for a more in-depth explanation of the business forecast report.
  - Next, ask around the NGO community as to who is applying for a particular award. Market your organization accordingly after such research so that you can position yourself more strongly than your competition.
  - Importantly, update your organization's capability statements. You also should submit unsolicited capability statements to primes so that they can be made aware of why you are an ideal sub-partner for the project at hand. We'll next cover how to put together a capability statement.



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## Capability Statement Basics

- **Purposes**
  - A door-opener for new partners
  - Proof of qualification and past performance
  - It will set you apart from your competitors
- **1-2 Pages**
  - All critical information on first page
  - Avoid paragraphs!
  - Use short sentences and bulleted lists
  - Contact information
  - PDF with your organization's name in file name
- **Specifically related to individual partner's needs**
- **Visually interesting**
  - Organization's brand and logo



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- Having a professional capability statement is a vital marketing tool. In these next few slides, we cover how to put one together.
- Your organization's capability statement has many purposes:
  - it's a door-opener for new partners;
  - it serves as proof of your qualifications and past performance;
  - and it will set you apart from your competitors.
- Your organization's capability statement should be **only** 1-2 pages long.
  - Make sure all the critical information is on the first page.
  - Avoid paragraphs; instead use short sentences and bulleted lists.
  - The capability statement should include your organization's contact information.
  - Finally, it should be a PDF with your organization's name in its filename.
- Your organization's capability statement should be specifically related to a target partner's needs; therefore, it should be customized for each target partner.
- Finally, it should be visually interesting and written on a template that has your organization's branding and logo.



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## Four Elements of Successful Capability Statements

### 1. Core Competencies

- Short introduction followed by key-word heavy bullet points.
- NOT everything your organization is able to do, but the core expertise of a firm

### 2. Past Performance

- List past organizations for whom you've done similar work.
- If the past projects do not relate to the targeted partner's needs, do not list it.
- May include experience with U.S. Government-funded projects or other donors, or if new, performance and experience of key personnel.

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- The following are four elements of successful capability statements.
  - The first element is core competencies.
    - You should write a short introduction about your organization followed by bullet points that include key words, so that your organization can be easily found when a prime conducts an Internet search.
    - You don't need to list everything your organization is able to do, but instead, include your organization's core expertise.
  - The second element is past performance.
    - You should proceed by listing past organizations for whom your organization has done similar work. Prioritize the list by starting with the work that your organization has done with relevant projects.
    - Don't list past projects that are unrelated to the partner's needs.
    - Past performance may highlight experience working on U.S. Government funded projects, but you also could list projects working with other donors and/or working with the host country government and/or the broader community at large. If you're a relatively new organization, alternatively you could highlight the past performance and experience of key personnel.



## Four Elements of Successful Capability Statements (Cont.)

### 3. Differentiators

Succinct, clear, and customized statement that relates to the specific needs of the partner

### 4. Organization Data

<p><b>Organization Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Size of your organization</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Your revenue</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Number of employees</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Geographic area served</li> </ul>	<p>List <b>pertinent codes as applicable</b> to your organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">DUNS</a> and <a href="#">(N)CAGE Code</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Socio-economic certifications: 8(a) (for small businesses), HUB Zone, SDVOB, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> NAICS (just the numbers)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> GSA Schedule Contract Number(s)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other US federal contract vehicles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> BPAs and other federal contract numbers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> State Contract Numbers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Whether you accept Credit and Purchase Cards</li> </ul>
<p><b>Contact Information:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Name (a specific person)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Address</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Phone (main and mobile)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Email (to a real person, not info@)</li> </ul>	

- The third element is differentiators. Include a succinct, clear statement that relates to the specific needs of the prime. This will help readers understand why they should pick your organization over competitors.
- The fourth and final element is organization data.
  - Include one or two short sentences with a description of your organization that details pertinent history. These sentences should include the size of your organization, your revenue, the number of employees you have, and the typical geographical area you serve.
  - You also should include the name of a specific person that should be contacted if the prime is interested in pursuing your organization, your organization’s address, a main and mobile phone number for your organization, and a specific point of contact’s email address.
  - You also will want to list pertinent codes if applicable to your organization as listed in the right hand column of the table. For more information on how to obtain a DUNS number and (N)CAGE code, see our e-modules on these subjects. Most of the other codes pertain only to U.S.-based organizations or small businesses.



# Capability Statement Example

**CAPABILITY STATEMENT**

Your Logo Here

TargetGov Tip: This is a company & person template. Show your logo and contact information, with a specific person's name, phone and email.

**Core Competencies**

Write your Capability Statement to reflect your audience. An example first sentence is, "Your Company is able to help the Target Agency or Home Community in their requirements for [specific requirements]."

Show introduction statement relating the Company's Core Competencies to the agency's specific needs followed by keyword heavy bullet points.

**TargetGov Tip:**

- No long paragraphs
- Use short sentences followed by keyword heavy bullet points
- Create a new document for each agency mission or specific opportunity
- Call this document a Capability Statement
- Preferably, the Capability Statement is one page, one side
- Go to two sides only if absolutely necessary
- Save and distribute as a PDF, not a Word, PowerPoint or other format

**Differentiators**

Identify what makes you different from your competitors and how this benefits the targeted agency.

**TargetGov Tip:** Answer your key differentiators to the needs of the agency, prime or leasing partner.

**Sample Differentiator Questions**

- Why did your biggest customer select you?
- How and why is your company the best choice for the needs of the opportunity or agency?
- What is it about your services/products that make you stand out from the rest?

**Company Data**

Put one very brief paragraph of company description starting previous facts here.

**TargetGov Tip:** Readers will visit your website for additional information. Make sure your website is constantly updated and government-focused.

List Specific Codes:

- Socio-economic certifications (8(a), HUB Zone, SDVDB, etc.)
- DUNS
- NAICS
- CASB Code
- Accepts Credit and Purchase Cards
- OSA Schedule Contract Number(s)
- Other Federal Contract Vehicles
- BFAs and other federal contract numbers

**Past Performance**

List past customers for whom you have done similar work. Prioritize by related agency, to all federal to other governments to commercial contracts. If the past projects do not relate to the targeted agency's needs, do not list.

**Formatting:**  
Name of the Agency, Department, or Company, Contract # (if applicable), Value, Timeframe, Brief description of the work done. Include metrics or customer benefits. End with Contract Name, Position/Title, Email, Phone.

**TargetGov Tip:** Ideally, include specific contact information for immediate references. Include name, title, email, and phone.

Your address, phone numbers (voice, mobile, and fax), email, website, and other related contact information.  
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Here is an example of how to format a capability statement. In this example, you see that it includes a section for

- core competencies,
- past performance,
- differentiators, and
- company or organization data.

This is just an example of many different styles, and you can choose one and tailor it to best suit your organization.



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### 3. Developing Teaming Agreements



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In the third and final portion of this e-module, we'll learn about teaming agreements, which are simply an agreement between prime and sub-partners to form a team to combine resources to bid on or apply to a notice of a funding opportunity.



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## Benefits of Teaming Agreements

### For a Sub-Partner:

May obtain access to government business that would otherwise be denied to it by teaming with the larger prime in bidding for government work.

### For a Prime:

Can achieve greater control over its costs and more certainty through a pre-bid teaming agreement with a potential sub-partner.



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- A teaming agreement is beneficial for both the sub-partner and the prime.
- The sub-partner can obtain access to a U.S. government funded project that it would otherwise not have the resources to implement on its own by teaming up with the larger prime in submitting an application or proposal in response to a USAID notice of funding opportunity.
- A prime can achieve greater control over its costs and more certainty through a pre-bid or pre-application teaming agreement with a potential sub-partner.



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## Teaming Agreements

- Reflect the role of each sub-partner
- Are legally binding and negotiated by people with authority
- Should be signed as early in the application/proposal phase as possible
- Are needed before a partner can review confidential material in a draft. Do not share you application/ proposal without this agreement.



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- Teaming agreements reflect the role of each sub partner, as well as the prime.
- Teaming agreements are legally binding,
- Teaming agreements are negotiated by people with authority from both organizations,
- and should be signed as early in the application proposal phase as possible.
- Finally, they are needed before a partner can review confidential material in a draft.
- Do not share your application or proposal with the potential partner without first having a signed teaming agreement in place.



## Sample Teaming Agreement

### TEAMING AGREEMENT - RFP

Between

**Prime**

And

**[Name]**

**[Address]**

For

**PROPOSAL NAME**

RFP No. #

The purpose of this teaming agreement (the "Agreement") is to set out the understanding between the Prime Name and Subcontractor name (hereinafter referred to as the

- In the Resources section of this e-module, you can find a template that you can use to draft a teaming agreement between your organization and a potential partner. Here we've shown a screen shot of the first page of the sample.



## Types of Sub-Partners

### Exclusive sub-partners:

- Will only work with the prime if it wins the award.
- May share confidential information with the prime according to teaming agreement.

### Non-exclusive sub-partners:

- Can work with several primes irrespective of who wins.
- Do not share information with other non-exclusive sub-partners.

### Supporting partners:

- Key collaborators (e.g. Ministry of Health) who may provide letters of support.

- In your teaming agreement, one important area your organization must consider is whether it wants to be an exclusive or non-exclusive sub-partner or a supporting partner.
- An exclusive sub-partner will only work with the prime if the prime wins the award. In the teaming agreement template provided in the Resources section of the e-module, an exclusivity clause is already included, for example. As outlined in your teaming agreement, you may share confidential information with the prime.
- If the sub-partner is non-exclusive, it can work with several primes irrespective of who wins. To maintain the confidentiality of your application or proposal ideas and budget, it is important not to share information with other non-exclusive sub-partners.
- The third type of partner is a supporting partner who serves as a key collaborator. For example, the Ministry of Health in a given country can be a supporting partner for a project. These organizations often provide letters of support for the application or proposal.



## Summary

- Carefully consider the benefits and risks of partnering.
- Be proactive about marketing yourself and reaching out to organizations that interest you.
- Developing teaming agreements is an important step in the partnership formation process.
- Do not compromise your organization's needs!



- To summarize what we've learned today in this e-module, when considering sub-award partnerships, carefully consider the benefits and risks associated with partnering with another organization and discuss among your staff.
- To increase your organization's visibility, be proactive about marketing yourself and reaching out to organizations that interest you, including having updated capability statements that you can customize for each potential partner.
- Developing teaming agreements is an important step in the partnership formation process. Make sure that yours does not compromise your organization's project-related and financial needs.



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## More Information

- For more information on these subjects, please consult the following sources:
  - [10 Steps for Managing Sub-grants](#)
  - [NPI Resource Development Training - Partnerships](#)
  - [The Teaming Agreement](#)
  - [Elevator Pitch 101](#)
  - [Marketing and Money](#)
  - [Marketing for NGOs - Strategies and Tips](#)
- Other [e-modules](#)
- Feedback: [howtoworkwithusaid@usaid.gov](mailto:howtoworkwithusaid@usaid.gov)



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- For more information on these subjects, please consult the sources through the links listed here.
- You also may benefit from the other e-modules in this series, including our e-modules on exploring funding opportunities to partner with USAID and registering in federal award systems, among others. Visit this link to access the other e-modules.
- This concludes our e-module on sub-award partnerships. We hope that you have found it to be helpful. We encourage your feedback, which may be sent to [howtoworkwithusaid@usaid.gov](mailto:howtoworkwithusaid@usaid.gov).



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## Cumulative Knowledge Check

The following questions will check how well you have understood the content in this E-Module.

Instructions: Read each question carefully and select your answer before clicking “submit” and moving on to the next question.



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The following questions will check how well you have understood the content in this E-Module.

Read each question carefully and select your answer before clicking “submit” and moving on to the next question.

After you have finished all of the questions, click “finish” to proceed to your results.

True or False: Sub-partners are responsible for leading the development of project applications or proposals.  
True  
False

### Sub-Partnerships

Quiz - 5 questions

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Slide 7: [Max CDN](#)

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