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**Meeting Notes from USAID CDCPP Meeting
Tuesday, August 26, 2008
Ronald Reagan Building
11:00 am**

USAID: [REDACTED], Acting Asst. Administrator, LAC; [REDACTED], Director, Cuba Program; [REDACTED], CTO, CDCPP

DAI: [REDACTED]

Explanation to The Hill regarding CDCPP: to empower pro-democracy, pro-human rights and those looking for alternative visions for the island. The program seeks to expand the reach of their ideas and activities, to build and fortify networks and their capacity to act, and to increase the flow of communication to and around the island.

Meeting Deliverable: Provide USAID/LAC with a simple organization chart of roles and responsibilities of key personnel on project team.

Background on Cuba & USAID

- Program started in 1996; it has channeled approximately \$75 million to date to programs encouraging greater democracy and free enterprise in the island.
- In 2003 there was a crackdown and many who questioned the regime are currently in jail with long sentences.
- humanitarian assistance and support to political prisoners became key component of Cuba funding. They provided medicine, food, and other lifeline items.
- The three other USG partners on Cuba:
 1. OTI
 2. DRL
 3. WHA
- The four partners hold weekly coordination meetings.
- LAC meets weekly with OAA, the USAID procurement office.
- Cuba Desk at State now has small funding
- USG has between five to seven different transition plans. The project will not be asked to write a new one.. Analysis requested by USAID/CUBA may be used to inform the plans or “enrich the thinking.”

→ CDCPP is not an analytical project; it's an operational activity.

→ USAID approval is needed for everything. We cannot freelance.

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Opportunity for Change

- Since Raul Castro assumed power there has been marginal changes in the economic sphere, but still no political opening has occurred.
- Strengthening the capacity of democracy and human rights change agents is an important component of this project; however, building this network is risky because of the security threats. USAID/CUBA expects the grantees will protect their privacy on their own. The program is not pressing (and will not press) them to disclose networks. Support to improved communications will be important.

Introduction given by AA/LAC

- CDCPP is a unique program within USAID and within the broader administration. This project has received and will continue to warrant intense political scrutiny and pressure for results and fiscal integrity.
- CDCPP demands continuous discretion.
- The project was not classified because USAID wanted to send the message that this is transparent process. Also, a classified project imposes significant security, documentation burdens and delays on all its stakeholders.
- Target populations for grants are those NGO reaching out to pro-democracy and human rights change agents and those Cubans with a different vision for their country.
- USAID is not telling Cubans how or why they need a democratic transition, but rather, the Agency wants to provide the technology and means for communicating the spark which could benefit the population. CDCPP will provide a base from which Cubans can “develop alternative visions of the future”
- This project will be difficult to implement because an “ossified” Cuban government prevents change, and because most government’s resources go to finance its police and control machinery..
- This Administration expects immediate results from this program, definitely before mid-January.

Political Scrutiny and Praise

- The Cuba program attracts significant attention and scrutiny by the US Congress, where some support and others question existing activities.
- There is, of course, skepticism on this project, influential political and civic leaders have the perception that this program is paying too much for work that could be significantly less expensive through other contract or award options.

Point of Emphasis: CREATIVITY to implement this project in the face of opposition from the Cuban State—one anchored in the past and resistant to change-- while protecting the security of participants and change agents.

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Two Immediate Objectives of CDCPP:

1. Grants Under Contract
2. Bring new communication options to the island.

DAI Strengths

- USAID would like to tap into the global network of contacts that DAI has in terms of democracy promotion, to activate networks outside US (EU & LAC) interested in going to Cuba. Planes flying from outside the US looks less conspicuous.

Current Grants

- Right now there are 10 grantees. They are not all operating with broad networks. They would be sensitive to weaken their security and those of their clients by sharing any information with anyone, DAI included.
- Over past 10 years, USAID has worked with 40 grantees.
- USAID will work closely with DAI and pertinent background information will be shared.
- [REDACTED] will be the conduit for reaching out to the grantees

Current Events

Project team must stay well informed on events in and around the island. Sources could include:

- Several blogospheres were mentioned by the AA/LAC that key staff should keep read: *Babalu Blog* (conservative Cuban/American supports US programs promoting increased freedom in the island) and *Cuban Triangle* (questions effectiveness of US policies and programs) run by [REDACTED] Peters)
- *The Miami Herald* and *El Nuevo Herald*
- Below are the referenced websites during the meeting:
 - Babalu Blog: <http://www.babalublog.com>
 - Cuban Triangle Blog: <http://cubantriangle.blogspot.com>
 - "The Cuba Puzzle":
<http://www.miamiherald.com/multimedia/news/cubapuzzle/index.html>
 - YouTube Video Referenced in the Article Above:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32yXSUa8_nY

Three Immediate Deliverables:

1. Workplan—rough draft September 2; final draft September 8
2. Grants Under Contract, New Media, Quick Response Platform (time-defined, set-up, and maintained).
3. The GUC portion should include a meta-manual (context), a manual (for public consumption, and the approach to build and process grant pipelines.
4. *Recruitment—all key personnel should have joined the team by September 8.

Quick Response Platform

- Defined beginning, middle, and end
- 72 hrs.: capacity to launch expected presence in three days. We also need to show that we have the "rope" needed to pull in what we need. Our presentation must be convincing.

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Grants Under Contract

- The GUC was conceived as an instrument to award USAID grants to smaller NGO.
- Check on Non-presence program operations—waiver or deviation (████ working on this)
- USAID envisions grant ceilings in the \$250-\$500K for well qualified to US NGOs
- Under GUC regulations, non-US NGOs have no funding ceiling.
- Cuban security apparatus is very strong so non-US NGOs should be vetted
- USAID has some contacts in mind for grantees
- For grants, think strategically, not in terms of volume.
- Question to consider: how to do competitive grants

→ FIRST GRANT TO BE AWARDED BY END OF SEPTEMBER

Training important, but not one of the three priorities:

M&E

- Begins on Day One
- Importance of monitoring plan

Training

- This will be task-specific (discrete sessions)
- Not an ongoing program
- Analytic work to inform task-specific training
- Neither analysis nor training will start next month. **Must focus on three priorities.**

████ (CTO) shared three principles:

1. Protect Mission Director (in this case USAID/CUBA director).
2. Strongly disappointed about absence of three principal project officers.
3. WORKPLAN as overriding immediate priority.
4. "No daylight between us."

Response to Public Inquiries/Media Inquiry

Yes, we have been awarded CDCPP and we are working with USAID on discussions, but the project is not fully operational yet. Please refer other questions to █████ of USAID.

→ "Nothing anywhere." We must not post anything on our website or issue a press release on the awarded contract..

Hold off on these positions:

1. NGO Training Specialist
2. Operations Manager
3. Recruiter
4. Analytical Team Leader

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**Memorandum of Conversation: CDCPP Staffing Updates
Wednesday, September 27, 2008**

DAI
11:30 am

USAID: [REDACTED], CTO, CDCPP

DAI: [REDACTED]

Meeting Deliverables

1. Notes
2. CDCPP organigram updated, including staff names

CDCPP Organigram: The Organizational Chart will be updated to reflect changes to project staffing to better respond to project emphases, and to include [REDACTED] noting their roles within the DAI structure.

Communications Protocol: Protocol will be established and agreed upon between USAID and DAI to ensure that key personnel are involved in all decisions.

Work Plan. An early draft of the work plan, based on pre Tuesday 26 principles, has been done. It will be shared with the CTO.

- Plan shared, comments made and pertinent contract language noted.
- Plan with specific actions, calendars and budgets will be completed as of Sept. 8. as well as the required operational plan and GUC operational Guidelines (as per Contract section F.2.A.

Start up: DAI has formed a start up team. This team currently includes:

Name	Start-Up Role	Email Address
[REDACTED]	Start-Up Team Leader: provide leadership and guidance on start-up process.	[REDACTED]@dai.com
[REDACTED]	Workplan Team Leader: lead workplan writer and responsible for delegation of tasks pertaining to workplan	[REDACTED]@dai.com
[REDACTED]	Program Support: provide key support to workplan, in particular, NM, Component I, and Grants Under Contract	[REDACTED]@dai.com
[REDACTED]	Operational Inputs: provide operational support and leadership to start-up team	[REDACTED]@dai.com
[REDACTED]	TAMIS set-up and customization: responsible for start-up and upkeep of TAMIS	[REDACTED]@dai.com

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	system	
██████████	System Administrator: provide administrative support to TAMIS	██████████@dai.com
██████████	Project Coordinator: primary point of contact for all administrative and project logistics	██████████@dai.com
██████████	Project Assistant: provide project support assistance	██████████@dai.com
██████████	Administrative Support : provide project support assistance as needed	██████████@dai.com

Their overriding priority is timely completion of a quality work plan and all its components, and to build the capacity to award the first project grant.

CDCPP Priority Areas

- Grants Under Contract
- New Media
- Quick Response Platform
- > Staffing

Two paths/definitions

1. Predictable, process-bound approach- need full time staff.
2. Response to ambiguity—task driven responses. Does not warrant full time staff.

Personnel to fit these paths:

- **COP: Contract situation needs to be finalized within two weeks,**
 - ██████████ will be acting until the new COP is formally appointed
 - ██████████ will lead the start up to deliver immediate outputs and results required in the three programmatic areas.
- **GUC Team Leader:** ██████████
 - Team leader will join the team by Sept. 8.
 - Consultations with her are already in progress on programmatic content and decisions • ██████████ will be working on the project part time from 9/3-9/7, and then full time 9/8.
 - She is already engaged and has provided inputs to the workplan, platform, and operational plan.
 - The grants will be linked to budgets, TAMIS, M&E and GIS.

Target: Frist grant awarded by NLT September 30.

Grants program, manual and pipeline development should be clearly reflected in WP. Following regulations, GUC must have close USAID participation (e.g. grant selection committee) and all the rules and regulations observed by USAID must also be followed by GUC. Pertinent copy of regulations to be sent by CTO (already done).

Quick Response Team Leader (aka QRP Team Leader).

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Quick Response Team Leader should not be full time. Primary task is to define, implement, and leave ready for deployment the quick response platform. Then, the major task is to preserve “state of readiness.” [REDACTED] to meet with DAI start-up team Friday, August 29.

- Platform ready for in depth joint analysis with USAID/CUBA : 9/30 deadline.
- Establish reliable and rigorous mechanism to preserve its “State of readiness” (i.e. deployment in 72 hours)
- Response to triggers- decisions “above” DAI scope, but able to launch immediate response. DAI should track events to ensure the organization can anticipate, as much as possible, request for quick deployment.

Support for **QR Team Leader:**

- After workplan and grant mechanism, this is the most urgent priority. Pertinent project resources should be available to collaborate in the establishment of the Quick Response Platform on an AS NEEDED basis..

NM [will be discussed in detail during next session] For the purposes of the work plan, and not to deviate from contract language, NM is included as parts of the GUC. This element requires specialized knowledge and is the most sensitive component in a very sensitive project.

Ops Manager

- [REDACTED] keep [REDACTED] as full-time split between Quick Response Team Leader and Ops Manager.
- [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is not familiar with DAI and would be an unsuitable Ops Manager.
- We can set her as a discreet QRTL and she will ramp up full time later on.
- Use her time to reinforce grants..
- She’s aware on partners on ground for rapid mobilization.
- The OM must have DAI experience..

• **Analytical Team Leader**

- Don’t see analysis as key component. This analytical function is task driven, therefore it does not warrant a full time leader. Move to STTA.
- [REDACTED] (the proposed Analytical Team Leader) is working on the workplan and will be billed for now, but not in the future.
- [REDACTED] will also be retained at a 10% level to be a content leader for STTA.
- Note: DAI will need to discuss all staffing changes with our contract department. and USAID with OAA (its contract office).
- [REDACTED] stressed project is grants focused.

• **Recruiter: Delete position.**

• **NGO training specialist:** [REDACTED] advised against this full time position. It is more task driven and should be STTA.

- Overflow tasks may be done by STTA pool.

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Communications

- Internal and External Communications: [REDACTED] was introduced and we briefly discussed protocol for respecting the sensitive nature of this project.
- The CTO stressed the need for internal transparency between USAID and DAI; any external communications should be cleared by USAID/CUBA. While the project communication protocol is finalized and approved, all request for information should be referred to the CTO.
- Project “official” or “contract” communications demands careful wordmanship and crafty use of terms. No reference whatsoever to the new media component.

Recruiting: How to recruit- description of the project and no mention of the country? Should use general language previously approved by USAID, and [REDACTED]. **Recent CTO response included below as of 8/29:**

DAI is seeking a [Position Title] to support a Washington, D.C.-based project focused on promoting democratic governance in Cuba. Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), this program fosters conditions in Cuba which lead to a peaceful transition to stable democratic governance